

Making the past serve the present:
The instrumental use of historical memory by China's paramount leaders

by

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B.A., Providence College, 2007

M.A., Webster University, 2018

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Abstract:

Communist Chinese paramount leaders instrumentally use historical memory to secure and then retain their authority as the “core” of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC). The leaders examined include Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. Core leadership refers to the political and ideological dominance of an individual leader over the collective leadership within the CPC’s political culture. This authority is not granted with any formal title of leadership but must be earned. Its level of influence can vary and can shift over time as paramount leaders struggle for influence with the collective leadership. A key component for gaining this leadership is crafting and then disseminating a historical narrative which promotes their claim to leadership and subsequently the adoption of their governing philosophy as the party-state’s guiding ideology. I argue that these core leaders wield historical memory to achieve and then maintain this influence. The redefinition of historical memory legitimizes their ascension to supreme power, as well as promoting their governing philosophy as the supreme guide to government and party policy. Employment of historical memory further sustains their power and garners support for their preferred policy positions. To map the shifts in their relative instrumental usage, I employ a Political Discourse Analysis approach to quantify the instrumental uses of historical memory within each leaders’ discourse, relying heavily, although not exclusively, on their Selected Works. This mapping displays the variance over time in the core leader’s relative use of historical memory and allows me to correlate such changes to alterations of their authority as core leaders based on existing scholarship. In addition, I identify four broad categories (Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal), to which specific instrumental uses of historical memory by core leaders may be assigned. These categories allow the investigation of the political objectives pursued by the core leaders through the instrumental usage of historical memory. Furthermore, I display the shifts diachronically by leaders in the proportion of each category within their discourse, as well as dissect that usage based upon specific audiences (Party, Domestic, and Foreign). The distinction in their usage offers further evidence for the political intent of such usages within their discourse. By actively shaping and propagating purposefully selective historical memory, Communist Chinese leaders can better secure their position as core leader, promote their ideology, and pursue their policy objectives.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

One of my favorite jokes about Soviet Russia goes something like this: A fortune teller, worried about their future employment, calls into a radio station in the Soviet Union, asking an official if the Party knows the future.¹ “Of course!” answers the apparatchik, “We’ve known what the future is going to be for ages. It’s the past that’s the problem! It keeps changing!”² At the risk of sucking out any humor by explaining the joke, as the Party had established a predetermined future, only memory of the past was available to be changed in response to shifts in circumstances. These shifts were especially necessary to explain new leadership taking power. To justify these alterations, legitimize new leadership, and in turn generate political power, reinterpretations of collective memory and its selective invocation was indispensable for the Party and a constant requirement, or so goes the joke.

Retaining their position and generating political power is a primary concern for national leaders. That political power serves as the currency by which they advance their policy preferences and influence their followers to retain their authority. As Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) describe, remaining in office is an overriding motivation for political leaders in authoritarian and democratic societies. They achieve this objective by creating influence and distributing benefits to a supportive winning coalition.³ While power is essential for this endeavor, its sources can be diverse. Beyond the allocation of limited material resources, which Bueno De Mesquita et al. detail in their work, other mechanisms may be utilized. One often-used source of political power comes from collective memory of history. Historical memory refers to the collective perception of the past by a community. Henry Rousso (1991) explains, “. . . collective memory exists first of all in its manifestations, in the various ways by which it reveals itself.” He

¹ Leaving aside that a good fortune teller should be able to foretell whether they would have any future employment, and if not, then they weren’t a very good fortune teller to begin with.

² A more succinct version of this joke, “The future is certain; it is only the past that is unpredictable.” – Old Soviet Joke, Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China’s Superpower Future*, page 149.

³ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M Siverson, and James D Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival*, pages 7-8.

continues referencing historical memory of the trauma of occupied France in World War II, “(it) . . . reveals itself in political, social, and cultural life . . . that trauma has been perpetuated and at times exacerbated.”⁴ It is more than mere recollection of the past, it can be used for political purposes and manipulated by political actors in such a way to maximize its utility. Historical memory serves as a primary building block of nationalism and can legitimize authority domestically and internationally. In addition, it can frame debates and policy options, praise allies, diminish opponents, and either enshrine or suppress episodes in public memory. Many political cultures use historical memory in their politics, including in Communist China. The instrumentalization of historical memory by Communist Party of China (CPC) paramount leaders is a central and enduring feature of modern mainland Chinese political culture.

The use of historical memory for political purposes can be an effective tool, but it is not without potential pitfalls. As a prerequisite, its use requires at least some knowledge and investment of the event by the intended audience. Knowledge is needed both by the politician and their target, and as a result, the breadth of possible historical references is inherently limited. It is possible to raise awareness and identification with a historical event, but this requires allocation of time and resources. In addition, if it is employed clumsily, it may prove ineffective. More dangerously, adversaries may also employ the same historical memory and reinterpret it in a more compelling way that is contrary to the political leader's original intention. This threat is acutely dangerous as the leader may have invested political capital into a particular interpretation and may face difficulties if they reverse course to criticize it. Therefore, establishing supremacy over interpreting relevant historical memory is a great asset for any leader.

Historical memory permeates Chinese political culture and its associated discourse. Court histories, starting with the Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE) text Sima Qian's *Shiji*, provide a window into the political dynamics of the various dynasties. In addition, these histories often convey the domestic and international context in which the dynasties they chronicled operated and the philosophical

⁴ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, page 10.

discussions underlying the resultant policy debates. Kung-chuan Hsiao (1979) shows how even foundational philosophical leaders, such as Confucius and Mencius, drew upon the past dynastic periods to add luster to their arguments.⁵ These scholars did more than simply copy past precedents but rather used the past to invest their newly formulated arguments with gravitas by association. This practice extended into the modern era. For example, Hsiao criticizes the early 20th-Century thinker Kang Yuwei for committing this very sin in his use of Confucius to advance his reform proposals. He chides, "K'ang Yu-wei's efforts 'to borrow [the authority of] the past' [in order to lend plausibility to his own views]."⁶ Despite any disparagements, the use of the past to justify present proposals remains a hallmark in Chinese political discourse.

In his study of Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) strategic discourse aimed at countering the Mongols, Alastair Iain Johnston (1995) discerned not only a reliance on history within that dialogue but also what I would classify as instrumental usage. Discussing the use of what he calls Confucian-Mencian categories of strategic discourse, he writes, "Confucian-Mencian categories were sometimes used to redefine the strategies of earlier rulers. These alleged strategy precedents then would be used to justify the correctness of the present choice."⁷ Jonathan Unger (1993) similarly found that interpreting history had 'special significance' in China for the past two thousand years.⁸ Official organs representing the Communist Party of China (CPC) have concurred with this sentiment. In 2019 the *People's Daily Department of Commentary* wrote the following regarding Xi's use of historical anecdotes in his public addresses, "He (Xi Jinping) often makes the past serve the present by quoting ancient fables, fairy tales, and historical

⁵ See: Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought: Vol. 1*, page 39, for a table displaying attitudes by Confucian, Legalist, Mohist, and Taoist schools to previous dynastic traditions.

⁶ Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought: Vol. 1*, page 136. All brackets and quotation marks replicated from the text added by the translator Fritz Mote to clarify its meaning for English language readers.

⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism, Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, page 245.

⁸ Jonathan Unger, *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China*, 1993. p. 1

events to explain the present and reality in a clever way . . ."⁹ Using historical memory as a political tool remains prevalent in Chinese political culture, including under the CPC's aegis.

Recognizing the importance of the instrumental use of historical memory, this study will examine its employment by paramount Chinese leaders at the national level from the People's Republic of China (PRC). The leaders studied include Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. While each leader has engaged in the instrumentalization of historical memory, their propensity, application, and intended purpose appear to differ. Not only are there certain distinctions between each leader's application, but there also exists variance within an individual leader's instrumental usage over time and across differing audiences, indicating more than a habit of rhetoric.

Traditional Chinese culture and Marxism offer incentives for leaders to display acumen as historically literate political theorists. The reverence for the Confucian-scholar archetype as the primary purveyor of political theory is an important component of Chinese political culture. The Confucian examination system made articulating a political philosophy a requirement for participation in government. W.J.F Jenner (1992) argues that the focus on education as the basis for civil service embedded itself within Chinese political culture. Furthermore, Donald Munro (1977) asserts that this tradition of displaying literary skills, including those related to historical memory and political theory to bolster the legitimacy of the ruling regime, was embedded into Confucian education.¹⁰ In addition, demonstrating an understanding and a contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory was a major source for legitimating political power, both in China and in other Communist states. Political struggles would often take the form of ideological contests over competing interpretations. One clear example can be found Mao Zedong's struggle against figures such as Wang Ming over ideological control of the CPC.¹¹ In both the Chinese and Marxist tradition, a leader is expected to articulate a political theory and possess a wealth

⁹ People's Daily, Department of Commentary, translated by Jing Luo, *Narrating China's Governance: Stories in Xi Jinping's Speeches*, 2019, p. vii.

¹⁰ Donald Munro, *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China*, page 109.

¹¹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 228–230.

of philosophical and historical knowledge. As a result, there is substantial material written by each of the paramount leaders from which to mine examples of them employing historical memory for political ends.

Although this project focuses on national leaders, I am not arguing that only political speech by such figures is worth examining or constitutes the totality of Chinese political discourse. However, there are a few reasons why this project takes this approach. The first is purely practical in that the writings of the leaders studied are voluminous. They have been collected and published through official state organs as expressions of their governing philosophies in collections often referred to as *Selected Works*. Furthermore, the figures themselves have been the subject of substantial scholarship, providing insight into their motivations and the challenges they faced. As a result, connections between political objectives and historical references can be made more easily. However, the primary reason is that existing scholarship points to compelling reasons to focus on the writings of the paramount leaders based on the “core leadership” (领导核心) concept in Chinese political culture.

References to a national political leader as the “core leader” are common in the PRC. The core leader concept refers not only to political power but also to that leader’s role as the source of ideological direction for the entire state. Guo Xuezhi (2019) investigates the politics surrounding core leadership within the Chinese political structure. Guo observes that status as the core leader is not automatically granted, with national figures having to display and maintain sufficient power to achieve it. If they cannot do so, their power will be constrained by the broader ruling authority within the CPC power structure. In fact, Guo provides a hierarchy based on the historical performance by the PRC paramount leaders, with Mao and Deng as the strongest cores, followed by Xi, then Jiang, with Hu the lowest and never having achieved core leader status.¹² Furthermore, maintaining core status in perpetuity is also not guaranteed. If the core leader missteps, their status as the undisputed ideological leader can be challenged or even overturned. Guo further argues that the mixture of Chinese traditional approaches to political culture

¹² Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, page 11.

combined with Marxist imperatives on party internal structures further pushed CPC politics to the phenomenon of core leadership and its competition with the ruling Party elite, in the form of the collective leadership, for influence. As core leaders, the writings of national leaders are given monumental weight as they dictate the shape of political discourse and permissible ideological boundaries in mainland China.

Beyond the specific formulation of the core leader concept, several other scholars have observed a tendency within Chinese political culture to defer substantially to authority figures in defining the scope and form of political discourse. Richard Solomon (1972) argues that there is a suppression of individual inclinations within the Chinese familial structure which seeps into its political culture. Lucian Pye (1988) refined Solomon's concept and located deference to authority in sociological inclinations and Confucian philosophy. He observes that in Confucian conceptions, the metaphysical dominance of the Chinese Emperor (Huangdi) subsumed authority into a single individual.¹³ Pye points to the importance of proper relationships, both within the family and within the political establishment, as key tenets of Confucian conceptions of political order and legitimacy. Guo Xuezhong (2002) provides further depth to the Confucian roots and adds Taoist and Legalist traditions in shaping deference to central power as a component of modern Chinese political culture and its attending discourse.

However, Jack Dull (1994) presents an interesting counterpoint. He argues that Imperial dynasts did not have absolute authority over crafting political discourse. He found that leaders were constrained by their political environment and personal leadership style. These factors determined their level of influence over established political philosophy compared to the bureaucracy. Furthermore, David Strand (2011) shows the development of broader and more boisterous political participation by the public forged during the early years of the Chinese Republic. There are numerous historical examples of mass political participation in Chinese history, from the May Fourth Movement (1919) to the Tiananmen Square (1989) and even the more recent Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong (2017), to say nothing of the infamous

¹³ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, pages 136-138.

raucous tenor of the Taiwanese parliament. It would be incorrect to say that only a national leader's speech matters in Chinese political culture. However, it is still the case that the writings of paramount leaders carry substantial weight, specifically related to their capacity to establish the legitimacy of the Party-State structure and their individual right to rule, as well as bolstering the credibility of their governing philosophy and their policy preferences. While others may attempt to oppose their orientations, core leaders set the standards for the discourse within Party-State, if they can maintain sufficient influence.

Core leadership lies at the heart of PRC political culture, with paramount leaders striving to achieve and then maintain that status. Part of maintaining that authority is offering a distinct ideological roadmap for the nation referred to as their governing philosophy. That philosophy is built on an individualized articulation of historical memory justifying their vision, and one in which they have sole interpretative authority. The following are the shorthand titles for the respective governing philosophies for each paramount leader: Mao Zedong Thought (毛澤東思想), Deng Xiaoping Theory (鄧小平理論), Jiang's Three Represents (三個代表), Hu's Scientific Outlook on Development (科學發展觀), and Xi Jinping Thought (習近平思想). Guo Xuezhi argues, convincingly in my view:

The legitimacy and real power of the party chief, and the condition to become the “core” of party leadership, depend on not only his impressive experiences in party and army organizations but also on continual competence in carrying out the party's programs, **strengthening the solidarity and cohesion of the party leadership, skillfully containing the intra-party strife and conflict**, effectively controlling the military, and **successfully winning public support**.¹⁴

Although as Guo rightly points out methods for maintaining control entailed what can be described as Machiavellian maneuvers, they also include what can be described as crafting and propagating an image and a resonant narrative. To achieve core leader status, not only did paramount leaders need to offer a convincing policy program through their governing philosophy, but they also needed to show how that governing philosophy fit into a wider and compelling narrative construct. Even more importantly, core leaders needed to craft and propagate a convincing historical narrative that justified their assumption of

¹⁴ Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, page 6. **Bold** text my own emphasis.

core leadership in the first place. Often this required a redefining of historical memory, usurping the authority of the preceding leader and crowding out any competitors who might challenge the paramount leader's role as sole interpreter of essential historical memory. This new interpretation needed to achieve several objectives simultaneously, namely bolster the legitimacy of the Party-State system, display why the core leader should be vested with authority over the collective leadership, and explain how the paramount leader's governing philosophy redressed the injustices of the past and moved the nation toward a desired future. In addition, the instrumental use of historical memory could likewise build individual support for policy positions through their articulation targeting specific audiences, whose support the core leader needed to see their implementation.

I argue that as paramount leaders seek to increase their core leader status, there is a corresponding increase in their instrumental uses of historical memory. In other words, the quest for core leadership is the independent variable with a positive influence on the dependent variable of instrumental use. This relationship exists because core leaders need an elevated level of instrumental uses of historical memory as they establish and disseminate a redefined narrative of historical memory in their official discourse to legitimize their seizure of core leadership. However, instrumental use of historical memory is not a proxy for core leadership authority across different leaders, as each paramount leader has differing levels of usage as a base level within their discourse. Rather, only the variance within an individual paramount leader's discourse can be practically observed. Once an individual has achieved core leader status, they still need to sustain a certain level of instrumental usage to maintain their authority over established narratives. In addition, as they compete with the collective leadership for authority, the paramount leaders build support for their governing philosophy and specific policy proposals through the instrumental usage of historical memory. In this way, core leaders may see increases even after they have achieved core leadership status to pursue specific policy goals or push back against a resurgent collective leadership to retain their authority. However, the inverse is a bit trickier as I argue that there are two possible scenarios by which core leaders might decrease their level of instrumental use. The first is that, as Guo intimates, the paramount leader fails to maintain sufficient legitimacy to influence the collective leadership and that

group forces the core leader to shed authority back to them, decreasing the core's freedom to redefine historical memory and independently build support for their position and policy proposals. The second entails the core leader having secured sufficient authority that they no longer need to actively pursue support for their rule and policies and can slip into a lower level of instrumental usage sufficient to retain their current position. I hypothesize that an individual's relative security in core leadership corresponds to the level of instrumental uses of historical memory within the paramount leaders' discourse, although with differing potential rationales for those shifts.

The proposition that historical memory has been used as a political tool is not a novel concept. Margaret MacMillan (2009) surveys the uses history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by national political leaders. She employs a cross-national approach, categorizing the types of uses with numerous examples by such figures. Some of the types of uses that she explores are political leaders wielding history to provide solace in times of turbulence, underwriting nationalism, justifying revanchism, and suppressing troublesome identities and narratives. Neustadt and May (1986) also study history's usage by political leaders but do so from its positive applications as a learning tool. They note that history offers a guide to political leaders in the most efficient use of history in crafting national policy. Political use of history appears to remain present, whether for beneficial use or dangerous abuse.

In recent years, specific case studies of historical memory being used for political purposes in modern Chinese politics have also been conducted. Paul Cohen (2009) explores the power of the King Goujian (496 – 465 BCE) historical memory in contemporary Chinese politics and culture.¹⁵ He traces the shift in its employment and political purpose over time and its application on both sides of the Taiwan strait. Rana Mitter (2020) examines the evolution in Chinese perceptions of the nation's role in World War II and credits political objectives as a significant source for that transformation. He notes that previous interpretations in mainland China often framed it as a culmination of the Century of Humiliation

¹⁵ Oversimplified the story recalls a leader enduring, and deliberate remembering of, depredations patiently to pursue his ambitions of revenge against the party that wronged him. See Paul Cohen, *Speaking to History: The Story of King Goujian in Twentieth-Century China*, pages 1-36 for an examination of the narrative.

and foreign imperialism. However, Mitter notes that this interpretation has shifted in recent years to acknowledge the contributions of both the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Chiang Kai-Shek's National Revolutionary Army (NRA). He suggests the purpose appears to be to instill greater national and martial pride, stress the common heritage between the CPC and Guomindang (GMD), and recall their joint struggle against foreign powers ostensibly seeking to divide and conquer China.

The instrumental use of historical memory is more than the mere recollection of past events. It requires ordering those events in a coherent interpretation and imbuing them with meaning and relevance to the present. This organization places the instrumental uses in categorizable narrative frameworks. Although he doesn't use the same terminology as narrative frameworks, Alastair Johnston discerns what he terms two strategic cultures, which he labels the Confucian-Mencian paradigm and the parabellum paradigm, to categorize the strategic orientations for the Ming Dynasty's (1368 – 1644) security policy vis-à-vis the Mongols.¹⁶ Johnston argues this discourse did not exist in a vacuum but conformed to general categories with underlying philosophical assumptions and bodies of historical memory to interpret from as evidence for supporting policy positions.

Regarding what I term frameworks for CPC paramount leaders, they serve as overarching systems for the core leaders to engage with, interpret, and utilize relevant collective memories. Paramount leader discourse can and has been categorized into various narrative frameworks and systems, which will be discussed below in each individual leader's chapter. However, I argue that there are four broad narrative frameworks for instrumental use of historical memory which encompass a substantial majority of their rhetoric and remain relatively consistent across all five leaders. These four frameworks are,

¹⁶ Johnston also offers up instrumental use to build leader legitimacy and restrict policy choices. "Other literature suggests that this symbolic strategic language is used in more instrumental ways by those in hegemonic positions in the decision process to narrow the range of legitimate debate on strategy by defining a priori linguistic and conceptual categories of debate that participants must employ. This discourse can also be used to legitimate the decision-making authority of strategists. This hypothesis suggests that an idealized strategic culture can, but need not, have a discernible impact on behavior by narrowing the range of options available to decision makers. In the Ming period, however, none of the range of options was a priori excluded from the debate on Mongol policy." While Johnston does not find any subsequent policy options restrictions for the Ming, the question of how it impacted the legitimacy of the policy makers or the Emperor(s) appears outside the scope of his study. Johnston, Alastair Iain. *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, pages 251-252.

Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal. Instrumental uses are not necessarily restricted to a single category and may apply to varying degrees to multiple frameworks, or not fall into any of the above listed. However, there is a substantial amount of consistency, and it appears to be the case that building upon, or reinterpreting previous enunciations, of specific historical memory is a common practice for core leaders. Importantly, narrative frameworks offer more than merely a reference to a historical memory from a certain period or a certain type, but rather offer up a theory and/or narrative interpretation of history itself.

The Confucian/Traditional framework encompasses memory associated with China's ancient and dynastic past, especially as it relates to historical, political, philosophical, and to an extent literary works and figures. The title for this framework recognizes the substantial influence of Confucius and the subsequent philosophical and political schools stemming from that tradition, while also recognizing the enduring influence of other schools of thought and traditions that exist beyond the Confucian classification. To illustrate, Guo Xuezhi describes the Confucian conception of the sage king and the role of the ruler as progenitor of laws in the Legalist school as both having influences on the formation of the core leader conception in contemporary Chinese political culture.¹⁷

There are several themes and propositions within the Confucian/Traditional framework that are animated through core leader discourse. Central to this framework is the notion of morality and ethics as a determinant of regime stability, especially concerning the behavior of the ruler and ruling elite. That morality, especially from the Confucian influence, is partly defined by maintaining proper relationships through ritualized behavior and compassion in social interactions. This focus on morality ties into other aspects of the framework, including notions such as the Mandate of Heaven (in which the ruler's right to rule relied on maintaining the proper ethical behavior in their personage) and the Dynastic Cycle (which explains the rise and fall of dynasties as natural and often instigated by failures in the rulers' or ruling

¹⁷ "Confucian values and Legalist traditions have remained powerful influences on contemporary Chinese political leaders and the ruling elite mainly through not only official promotions (e.g., education systems, civil service examinations, and official ideology) but also folk culture and historical literature." Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, pages 7-8.

elites' ethical behavior and the insidious problem of corruption hollowing out the regime's stability). Pursuit of stability and fear of instability was the primary objective for rulers and the measure of their capability. This framework offered and encouraged the use of illustrations for both proper and deviant behavior, as well as to emphasize the dangers of the much-feared state of chaos should the advice provided through historical memory not be heeded. Arthur Wright (1960) provides an example to be avoided consistently used in Chinese political culture in the figure of Sui Yang Di, the second Sui Dynasty (581 – 618) Emperor. Wright shows how Yang Di has come to represent the moral deviancy motif as a ruler whose corruption directly caused his state's collapse. References to this framework could also be employed to invest policy proposals with an allure of ancient wisdom, adding prestige and thereby potentially building support for their implementation through association with celebrated historical memory. Finally, this framework offered the theory that history was a mirror, offering instruction and advice for rulers as they crafted their own policies and navigated the perils of paramount leadership.

The second narrative framework is Marxist, which centers on the understanding of historical events as illuminating class struggle and historical development as a process explained through historical materialism and material dialectics. In this tradition, all of history should be reframed as an evolution of the struggle between classes, with the ultimate culmination of this conflict ending in the overthrow of the exploitive classes. As the CPC, and subsequently the paramount leaders, rely on Marxism as the source for their leadership as the vanguard Party dominating PRC politics, instrumental use of this framework was essential to justifying their power. Any core leader must display a command of Marxist theory and even more than that, advance an independent ideology for its application to China's conditions as a prerequisite. Only by establishing a governing philosophy for China as a contribution to Marxism, in which the progenitor had absolute and unquestioned dominion to interpret, could the core leader maintain absolute and unquestionable ideological authority. Beyond supporting their journey towards core leadership, control of Party historical memory allowed for an elevation of the core leader's contributions while providing weapons to denigrate and attack opponents, both past and present. Equally important,

memory invoked using this framework solidified the essential notion that only the CPC implementing socialism with Chinese characteristics could save China and deliver progress for the nation.

The Nationalist framework is another interpretive lens that paramount leaders use. Historical memory is crucial for any polity that seeks to develop legitimacy through nationalism. This process involves crafting a grand narrative to bind a people together and often an envisioned destiny to be fulfilled. The PRC core leaders claim to be the stewards of the Chinese national destiny. In addition, they assert that the Party-State under their direct guidance was the sole political authority that could actually achieve a desirable future for the nation. Although Mao, and perhaps Xi in recent years, at times delve into attempts at wider global leadership, the general focus for core leaders is on the advancement of the Chinese nation as their primary objective. This framework deals specifically with the narrative for the emergence of the New China (新中国). This narrative contends that this New China came in response to the deprivations characterized by the Century of Humiliation, which were overcome only thanks to the CPC applying Marxism with Chinese characteristics under the guidance of Mao. Later paramount leaders highlighted their respective role in continuing to advance China's development through their respective governing philosophies. In addition, this framework allowed for the propagation of a unifying narrative for the nation through remembrance of shared collective experiences, both positive and negative, as well as justification for the reclamation of territory lost during the Century of Humiliation. It also served as a counter to separatism, often referring to longstanding relations between central Chinese authorities and the relevant region or cultural identity. Finally, this narrative framework served as a bulwark against any foreign influence over Chinese political institutions, ensuring no alternative sources of ideological authority emerged that could challenge the core leaders' supremacy.

The Liberal narrative framework borrows extensively from the Liberal International Relations theory and offers a view of a generally progressive nature to historical development. These forces are built on mutually reinforcing elements which propel the international community towards peace and stability and drive progress. Robert Keohane summarizes this viewpoint:

Liberalism makes the positive argument that an open international political economy, with rules and institutions based on state sovereignty, provides incentives for international cooperation and may even affect the internal constitutions of states in ways that promote peace.¹⁸

The Liberal narrative relies on several propositions regarding the nature of historical progress. First, science and technological development increases the need for cooperation as its rate of advancement constantly accelerates. This need for cooperation drives forces of peace and stability, which in turn are enhanced through globalization and the proliferation of international governing organizations.

International organizations, such as the United Nations, play a major role in this narrative framework and provide paramount leaders an avenue to foster better foreign relations while preserving PRC privileges. In addition, market reforms and deepening international cooperation leading to economic progress underwrites the historical memory associated with the 1978 Reform and Opening Up program. This progress has been used as an alternative source for legitimacy based on government performance in delivering steady gains in the population's living standards. However, paramount leaders are careful to preserve China's prerogatives with regards to determining issues of sovereignty and internal affairs, embodied by appeals to Zhou Enlai's Five Principles for Peaceful Coexistence as the roadmap. The Liberal Framework provides paramount leaders a useful tool for enhancing China's international relations and establishing an alternative source of legitimacy, so long as the CPC and paramount leaders can deliver sufficient levels of economic growth and quality of life improvements.

I utilize elements of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine instrumental uses of historical memory by paramount leaders. On the qualitative side, I examine the instrumental use of historical memory through each relevant narrative framework for each leader and how these frameworks tied into their pursuit of core leadership or advanced their political agenda. In addition, I review a selection of illustrative texts to display the interactions of instrumental uses in a single text. On the quantitative side, I catalog all instrumental uses of historical memory that I observe and then utilize various charts to display the data to better observe shifts over time. Other scholars have examined shifts in

¹⁸ Robert Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*, 2002, page 40.

political discourse by national leaders. For example, Keren Yarhi-Milo (2018) measured the level of military assertiveness by US Presidents using a statistical tool, *WordScore*.¹⁹ This method uses the statistical program *Stata* to analyze relevant speeches to identify the frequency of specific phrases and words. By doing so Yarhi-Milo was able to scale the relative hawkishness of political leaders.

Unfortunately, I could not replicate this same methodology for this study as the instrumental uses of historical memory did not conform to the use of keywords for detection. Instead, I recorded each incident into the program *Microsoft Excel* to organize and display the data and produce the relevant charts to visualize the results. The full listing for all instrumental uses detected across the official discourse of paramount leaders can be found in Appendices **A-E**, each corresponding to a core leader. Any errors or discrepancies in data input are my own.

To observe instrumentalization by each of the paramount leaders, this study will review their respective public addresses and bodies of work while they competed for or occupied the pinnacle of power within the Party-State. First, I identified any historical references within these works. Once identified, I determined if the historical reference is a viable candidate as an example of instrumental use of historical memory. If an example appears valid, then a further textual analysis will follow. This deeper analysis included probing both the immediate context in which the reference was made and the broader intent of the work as a whole. Furthermore, I attempted to identify the leader's likely target(s) for influence and their relationship to the leader. Finally, I determined the political situation at the time of writing, and I inferred the objectives they might reasonably be pursuing by their usage. At this point, the instrumental use of historical memory by the leader was identified and categorized within the database.

Although locating and understanding the instrumentalization of historical memory in discrete examples provides some insight, studying them in isolation is insufficient. Historical references are effective based on their resonance with a population. These references are impacted by their previous use and the resulting associations ingrained in a population's consciousness. Beyond the immediate context, it

¹⁹ Keren Yahri-Milo, *Who Fights for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflicts*, p. 80.

is necessary to determine how the anecdote has interacted with politics in previous instances. In addition, any previous use by the leader or other contemporaries can help determine its use as a motif. Identifying previous uses helps determine whether the leader is seeking to borrow from its previous use or alter its perception for a novel application. Common motifs can be discerned by tracing them across multiple leaders' textual footprints. Furthermore, the evolution of these motifs across the discourse of the paramount leaders can offer insight in how they echo or alter historical memory.

I use elements of political discourse analysis (PDA) to aid in interpreting the political intent within the core leaders' official discourse. PDA is a subset of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and has been applied by previous scholars to analyzing discourse from the PRC.²⁰ This technique treats political discourse as a method of political action and part of the political process.²¹ Teun A. van Dijk identifies several requirements for the political discourse analysis of a text. These requirements include a recognition of the power dynamics at play, specifically political power, as well as a delineation between normal and political speech. Dijk also notes the importance of identifying both the political leader articulating the rhetoric and the nature of their relationship to the receiving audience. Finally, Dijk argues that any application of PDA cannot merely stop at an examination of a discourse but must point to a wider question within political science.

This study's object is the official discourse of PRC paramount leaders: Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. That official discourse is gathered substantially from the *Selected Works* of each leader, although other texts, either from written or oral sources, are also included. I use English translations of these texts, relying by default on those official translations by various organs of the PRC, especially from the state released versions under the "Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," and published by the PRC's Foreign Language Press, as well as

²⁰ Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, "Meaning Behind the 2018 PRC Constitution Amendments – Application of Political Discourse Analysis to the 'New Era' Narratives of Xi Jinping," *Socrates* (Rīga) 3, no. 18 (2020): 155–66.

²¹ T. A. Van Dijk, "What is Political Discourse Analysis?," in: *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, Volume 11, Issue 1, Jan 1997, page 20.

translations by PRC government websites and official news organs, such as Xinhua. The texts may have been edited in certain cases from their original form, but these versions represent the endorsed versions by the CPC and therefore retain their character as politically purposed documents. Furthermore, a relatively consistent source for translation for the wide array of documents helps maintain consistency across the dataset. Only those periods in which the leaders can be reasonably assumed to be competing for core leadership are included. These periods are determined by a review of the existing literature regarding their political careers. Indications of competition for core leadership include occupying positions at the summit of the PRC political structure and crafting and disseminating a distinct governing philosophy that operates as the dominant ideology. If either condition is met, and relevant discourse is available, that material is examined as part of the dataset.

The instrumental use of historical memory refers to its subordination as a tool to serve a political purpose. The past can give order and meaning to the present and provide some tools for guiding action towards the future. As a result, many political cultures put substantial weight into history as such an instrument. Although its use is understandably widespread, it is important to note that not all political activity can be reduced to an exercise in using historical memory, nor are all its uses purely political, even by political actors and leaders. I argue that for an act to be considered an instrumentalization of historical memory three specific criteria must be satisfied: a consciousness of the action, an active engagement of its initiator within a political context, and a desired political end as the primary motivation.

The first test is active recognition and deals with the author fully understanding the reference as historical. References to historical memory can become so imbued within a language that their direct meaning becomes divorced from its original source. For example, certain computer hacking programs are referred to as “Trojans,” yet if referenced by an IT professional discussing the virus, they may be unconscious of its origination in Homer. An example in Chinese political discourse is the New Silk Road initiative. The title itself was chosen to invoke historical memory and at times that memory is dealt with specifically within the official discourse. However, over time it has simply come to exist as shorthand for

the policy itself, without any direct interaction with the historical memory. In the former case, those instances are considered as valid, while the latter are not.

Furthermore, to be valid there must be a space of twenty-five years between the reference and its usage by a leader. This self-imposed restriction by no means is meant to serve as any pronouncement on a required period of time to have passed to make an event available for historical study. The selection of 25 years is arbitrary on my part as I could have also gone with shorter periods such as ten or five years. In fact, results in the descriptive statistical graphs may shift based on the time frame used. I will endeavor to highlight relevant historical memory that is excluded because of the 25-year rule as it occurs. I have opted for the 25-year rule as it represents what can be considered a full generation of separation and well beyond mere recollection of contemporary events. It will also minimize the potential for oversaturation of instrumental usages of historical memory and errs on the side of a restrictive approach with fewer rather than more uses.

References to events that occur only partially prior to the twenty-five-year cut-off may be included if some portion occurs prior. For example, if in the 1950s Mao referred to Soviet history starting with the October Revolution up to the present, it may be included as a reference. However, if he referred to an event exclusively outside the parameter, say Soviet performance in World War II in a speech in the 1950s, it is excluded. Historical trends may be included, although the trend's initiation must occur prior to the twenty-five-year benchmark.

The second test covers purposeful engagement. There may be instances in which the author is quoting or referencing instances of instrumental usage by others without engaging with that memory itself. This may include quoting from certain individuals making such references themselves and further commenting on implications of their statements. However, if the paramount leader does not engage with the historical reference itself in any meaningful way, it is invalid. For example, in a 1952 discussion over Tibetan policy, Mao states the following:

Their petition is very tactful because it indicates not a wish for a break with us but only a wish for concessions from us. One of the terms gives the hint that the practice of the Ching Dynasty should be restored, in other words, that no Liberation Army units should be stationed in Tibet, but this is not what they are really after.²²

In this case Mao certainly shows he understands the reference to the Qing dynasty (1644 - 1912) and the previous arrangement of troop dispositions by the Tibetan petitioners. However, he does not engage with it in any meaningful way, merely referencing that it had been stated as such, and it is thereby considered invalid for the purposes of this study. However, if the leader is quoting an individual prior to the twenty-five-year benchmark then it is considered valid, as the quotation by the leader becomes the referenced object. For example, in 1978 Deng Xiaoping quoted Lenin regarding the need for education initiatives:

As early as 80 years ago, Lenin said: "... Neither training and education without productive labour, nor productive labour without parallel training and education [can] be raised to the degree required by the present level of technology and the state of scientific knowledge." In our own day, rapid economic and technological progress demands rapid improvement in the quality and efficiency of education.²³

In this case the quote itself from Lenin serves as the object of historical memory and Deng engages with it by drawing from it a justification for his policy proposal.

The third and final test is political application, or whether the leader shows clear intent for the reference to be considered within a political context for specific objectives. Often the references to historical memory are accompanied with clear statements of political intent, such as the above reference by Deng towards education policy. In these instances, the reference passes the third test. However, even in instances where direct application is not immediately apparent, references might still be valid. Inclusion within a *Selected Works* compendium, which serves to encompass a leader's governing philosophy, or venue such as a speech at a governing function or a diplomatic visit, may indicate political intent. However, even in such instances, there is a plausibility that such references are not made with a specific political goal in mind. Within the context of each speech, to be valid I must identify a political or ideological objective that the leader pursued at the time of the speech, a reasonable expectation that the intended audience could contribute to advancing that goal and ascertain how that reference could

²² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*: Volume V, page 75.

²³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 123.

reasonably contribute towards moving that audience towards aiding the intended objective. If these conditions are met, then the reference may be considered to have passed the third test.

Within each text I identify instrumental uses of historical memory in accordance with the relevant narrative framework if applicable. A reference is counted as one instance if it forms a single cohesive thought, rather than each individual mention of a historical episode or figure. For example, in one text Xi Jinping lists a number of items of historical memory related to diligence as an ethic, “You should keep the perseverance and diligence in reading as related in stories of Confucius, Sun Jing and Su Qin, Kuang Heng, and Che Yin and Sun Kang.”²⁴ He lists a number of historical figures but only offers a single observation applied to all, thus the reference only counts once as opposed to six times.

I treat each text as a discreet data point for analysis. Examining each text as an individual entry allows me to reasonably infer the core leader’s intention as well as the likely intended audience based on clues such as its timing, location, format, and the contents of the text itself. Each text is examined for references based on the criteria outlined above, and each instrumental use of historical memory is identified and tabulated. Next, I determined the word count for each text, or an estimation if a digital version was unavailable.²⁵ Only texts that were over 250 words are counted, as anything less appear as mere statements rather than deliberate texts that structure formal discourse. However, if those statements have been collected and are presented as a single text that exceeds 250 words, such as occurs on occasions in certain *Selected Works*, then they are available for examination. In the case of published books, I treat each chapter as an individual text.

After I established the total word count and the number of references for each text, I averaged the number of references against the word count to arrive at what I term the individual references per word

²⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*: Vol I, page 284.

²⁵ Regarding word counts, if a digital copy is available, I use the Microsoft Word program to determine the word count. I do apply selective edits to remove items not germane to the text (such as organizational headings and footnotes). I also remove interview questions from the word count in the cases where those interview questions are included. If I only have a hard copy and the text is too long (over ten pages) to word count by hand, I use the following method. I hand count the first and last pages which tend to be shorter. I establish an average count for the text by hand counting twenty full body pages with the text and apply the average word count to the number of pages that are not the first or last as an estimate.

count. However, there are certain texts in which there are no instrumental uses. To account for those texts, I apply a ceiling (4000) and subtract the references per word count from that value, resulting in what I refer to as the Reference Per Word Count Score (RPWCS). Texts without references receive a score of zero. This allows for an accounting of those negative examples and has the added benefit of having higher scores associated with denser uses of historical memory which can be displayed more clearly graphically. The downside is that the distribution is not even, with the higher scores having less variation than the lower ones. Fortunately, it does provide a uniform measure across the dataset to show variation the same way across all five leaders. However, this technique does preclude any application for a measurement against other variables or comparison of data values between different leaders.

I use two chart types to display the change over time for instrumental use by each leader. The first chart is the Yearly Average for the References Per Word Count Score (RPWCS), which displays the change year over year in instrumental usage for each leader. To calculate each year, I average the RPWC scores for all the texts during the relevant calendar year. This chart displays major trends over the course of a leader's full tenure but lacks details.

The second chart is the References Per Word Count (RPWC) Score by Text trend line. This chart provides far more detail than the previous method. With this chart all texts are displayed chronologically, although due to variances in the number of texts per year, it is not distributed evenly. However, it does allow for mapping key events related to core leadership over the trends to help correlate relevant political objectives. In addition, I have added a moving average trend line which depicts the average of the ten previous texts to better display those overall shifts.²⁶ The trend line graph allows for a more detailed view conducive to mapping shifts in levels of instrumental use for each leader.

In addition to organizing the texts by date I also identify their primary audience and whether they are associated with an anniversary. Texts associated with an anniversary can offer an opportunity to link the marked event with a specific political objective or associate the leader and his governing philosophy

²⁶ Due to a smaller dataset for Hu Jintao, I conducted a five-text moving average trendline to display the shifts more clearly.

with that memory. On the other hand, such events will likely have increased incidences of references by their nature and identifying them as such allows to control for these texts during trend analysis.

I divide the primary audience into three categories, Party, Domestic, and Foreign.²⁷ Leaders' discourse often has multiple audiences in mind, but I endeavor to identify the primary audience that the leader seeks to address. This designation is identified by a few factors including the location, the attendees (if there are any), and the format. In addition, I examined the context of the speech for any clues as to what audience they might be targeting and linked it to desired political outcomes that this audience may be able to influence. Party speeches are primarily aimed at members of the CPC, including leading governing bodies such as the Central Committee and the Central Military Commission, as well as individuals at the highest levels of the Party-State. Addresses aimed primarily at other governing bodies such as the Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection (CCDI) and cadres in general also fall within this category. The domestic category is aimed at the larger political body of the Chinese nation. Included within this category can be wider configurations of the Chinese nation to include Chinese residents in areas such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and even expatriates in other countries. Finally, the foreign category refers to texts aimed at elements outside of the Chinese national political landscape. It includes speeches made on foreign trips, speeches given on Chinese soil if the address appears aimed at a foreign audience, meetings with foreign leaders, interviews with foreign news media, and international conferences and events. Delineation of audiences allows for a more detailed examination of official discourse, especially when dissecting the use of the four major frameworks (Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, Liberal) of historical memory used by core leaders.

Literature involving the instrumental use of historical memory intersects with both history and political science. The most direct link comes from the study of history and memory. This technique traces

²⁷ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 648. Narayanan provides three levels of analysis for examining Hu Jintao's discourse discussing the 'peaceful rise' concept. Those levels are (1) party leadership, (2) domestic posturing and (3) international image.

the changes in how a population perceives historical events over time.²⁸ To be effective politically, a historical reference must be known and have some emotional or intellectual investment for the targeted audience. The sub-fields of political culture and political symbolism offer two other significant contributions. Political culture refers to the norms and practices that dictate acceptable behavior within a political system and the orientation of the population towards politics. On the other hand, political symbolism is the construct through which events are imbued with political meaning and transmitted to a wider audience. Finally, both history and political science can touch on the concept of nationalism, which relies heavily on a particular form of historical interpretation to generate political legitimacy.

Henry Rousso (1987) studies the role of the Vichy regime in French collective remembrance. His work traces not only the evolution of perceptions of the Vichy regime but pays careful attention to their utilization by various political entities to serve their ends. For example, in examining its role in shaping conceptions of the Algerian War, Rousso found three manifestations for the political use of history: heritage, nostalgia, and fantasy.²⁹ Rousso argues that heritage draws upon a real past while nostalgia merely romanticizes an imagined past. On the other hand, fantasy involves clear inventions bearing no real coherence with the past but propagandized for maximum effect. In addition, Rousso identifies what he calls vectors as the primary means by which memory is transmitted. Those vectors are used by four “carriers,” which he defines as “any source that proposes a deliberate reconstruction of an event for a social purpose.”³⁰ Those four types are official, organizational, cultural, and scholarly. These four sets offer relatively distinct entities in French culture. However, control by the CPC of all four “carriers” indicates the overwhelming, although not absolute, control the Party-State has in shaping Chinese collective memory.

²⁸ The journal *History and Memory*, published by Indiana University Press, defines its purpose, as stated in its title, as, “*History & Memory* explores the manifold ways in which the past shapes the present and is shaped by present perceptions. The journal focuses on a wide range of questions relating to the formation of historical consciousness and collective memory, the role of historical memory in modern and premodern cultures, and the relationship between historical research and images of the past in different societies and cultures.” <https://iupress.org/journals/historyandmemory/> Accessed 6/6/2024.

²⁹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, pages, 80-81.

³⁰ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, pages, 219-220.

Historical memory is a critical component in crafting a political identity. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (1994) is a collection of essays examining that very subject. John Gillis writes in the introduction, "We need to be reminded that memories and identities are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena."³¹ As those identities are subjective and malleable, they are open to manipulation by political actors. As part of that work, David Cressy investigates the entanglement of religious and historical symbols in English national memory. Memory of the victory over the Spanish Armada (1588) and the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot (1605) were poignant historical events ripe for exploitation in service of political agendas. He argues that these events became enshrined in English consciousness through various cultural vectors as a source of legitimacy for the monarchy and as a bulwark against foreign Catholic domination. Cressy displays how memory can be a primary means for establishing identity in national politics, although its construction and perpetuation is open to competition.

Polly Jones (2013) illuminates the shifts in memory in Soviet Russia towards the subject of Stalin. She argues that the outsized role that the Stalin myth played within Soviet politics made any post-Stalin political activity untenable and required at least some dismantling of that construction. However, the difficulty emerged as the Politburo sought to maintain some control over what precisely could be demystified in public memory. She details the problem for leaders who still needed to derive authority from Stalin but could not be beholden to his memory wholesale and still manage the nation's affairs. This friction and competing requirements created cognitive dissonance within the ruling elite and general population. She asserts that this dilemma between allowing certain critiques while restraining broader historical investigation contributed to the collapse of the political legitimacy of the Soviet regime.

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) provide foundations for the concept of political culture in their work *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. The authors assert that democracies developed unique standards and practices that define the acceptable forms of political

³¹ John Gillis (Ed), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, page 3.

discourse. These standards are drawn from the wider culture and socialization practices that define the population's interaction with the political system. They stress that varying value systems within political culture are based on the unique historical and social contexts from which they emerged.

Political symbolism allows a political actor to imbue their discourse with additional connotations to enhance communications with their desired audience to better advance their political objective. This type of symbolism often relies on the power of metaphors. Metaphors allow for the understanding of new concepts through association with already familiar ones. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) explain, "Thus, they (metaphors) can give new meaning to our pasts, to our daily activity, and to what we know and believe."³² As political persuasion relies on shifting perspectives of audience members towards desirable orientations, metaphors and symbolism offer a powerful tool for political actors.

Murray Edelman (1964) conceives political symbols as a method by which elites can influence the masses. In his estimation, these elites have domination over political symbolism as they can employ them with near impunity. However, others have questioned political leaders' ability to master total control over symbols. In fact, some argue that a leader's conceptualization is inherently limited by the language and symbols with which they, and their audience, are familiar. Yuen Foong Khong (1992) takes this stance with his analysis of the historical metaphors at play in the policy debates regarding the United States' intervention in Vietnam. Yuen finds that proponents framed their argument using historical memory of Munich and the Korean War as analogies, while opponents latched on to the memory of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu as a counterargument. In both cases, he argued the sides were restrained by a desire to portray their policy as an effort to avoid the perceived strategic mistakes of the previous generation.

Lowell Dittmer (1977) attempts to overcome some of the limits in both political culture and political symbolism by reconciling the two. He posited that political symbolism served as a manifestation of political culture, and in turn, its purpose within political culture grounded the symbols' usage. He

³² George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, page 159.

asserts that political culture and symbolism dealt with emotion instead of rationality. "The *connotative* property of the symbol refers to its capability to represent and convey emotion. This is significant in the light of our assumption that the quintessence of political culture concerns how people *feel* about politics."³³ Rebecca Klatch (1988) attempts a further synthesis between the integrative power of symbols for society and their cynical application by political elites. Rather than focusing on only one aspect, she proposes focusing on both the motivation for use and the wider contexts that give symbols their salience for the audience simultaneously. Political actors can alter a symbol's perception, which is often their goal, if the symbol already possesses some emotional resonance within the audience.

Even though political symbols can be useful for leaders, their use is not always successful. David Kertzer's (1996) study of the rupture in the Italian Communist Party found that the ensuing internal party struggle was fought not over material interests but the interpretation of party history and who had a legitimate claim to that legacy. However, neither side dominated the debate, and the party split into two separate entities. Michael Denison (2009) illustrated the limits of discourse alone as he investigated the attempts to use political symbolism in Turkmenistan and found that attempts at soft power without corresponding economic development were insufficient to build legitimacy for the regime. Furthermore, Graeme Gill and Luis Angosto-Ferrandez (2018) speculate that once a symbol enters the general political discourse, it is inherently no longer the sole purview of those who introduced it. Any symbol can be intentionally repurposed for contrary objectives or misinterpreted by the public. Although political symbolism can be a powerful tool, it possesses both dangers and limitations for leaders.

Benedict Anderson (1983) offers a succinct definition of the nation as an imagined community. He explains his definition, ". . . it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image

³³ Lowell Dittmer, "Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis." *World Politics* 29, no. 4 (1977), page 568. (Italics as displayed in the original)

of their communion.”³⁴ Ernest Gellner (1983) locates the advent of nationalism emerging from the requirements of the industrial revolution which necessitated a more literate population. Consequently, governing authorities perpetuated a common language and unifying heritage to their constituent publics. Gellner notes that as part of this education initiative, a common national heritage and identity must be constructed.³⁵ Eric Hobsbawm (1990) emphasizes the constructed nature of nations. "Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round."³⁶ Furthermore, he locates a shift in political culture, as previous state systems did not require identification nor loyalty from the common population but merely submission by groups to the ruling authority. Nationalism both required identification of the general population with the state and allowed them participation and joint ownership over its perceived history and destiny. Finally, Hobsbawm observes that the concept of nationalism that emerged in the Western world has become the dominant expression globally and has been adopted by most polities seeking participation in the international order.

Patrick Geary (2002) examines the foundations of nationalism in various European states. He finds that the national narratives underpinning contemporary nationalism were not based on unitary cultural-linguistics units existing consistently throughout history. Instead, he asserts that these groups often found their identity constructed based on legal and political distinctions in their relation to Roman authority that eventually became conflated with an ethnic identity. He argues that the history that nationalism references to generate its legitimacy is instead often a construction that is created, or at least

³⁴ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, page 6.

³⁵ “In general, each such state presides over, maintains, and is identified with, one kind of culture, one style of communication, which prevails within its borders and is dependent for its perpetuation on a centralized education system supervised by and often actually run by the state in question, which monopolizes legitimate culture almost as much as it does legitimate violence, or perhaps more so.” Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, page 134.

³⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*, page 15.

coopted, with political objectives in mind, instead of a genuine attempt to represent the past as it occurred.³⁷

With regards to Chinese nationalism specifically, *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases* (2001), provides a series of individual essays interrogating its origins. For example, Guoqi Xu identifies Chinese nationalism as emerging between 1895 and 1919. Xu argues that it was intimately involved with internationalism and sought to find legitimacy and recognition from within that system by searching for a new national identity. This dynamic created a contradiction, whereby China's history was simultaneously a source of pride and legitimacy as a state and a symbol of its shame by its exclusion from the community of nations. Zhijia Shen argues that although nationalism dominates narrative memory of the second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945), its interpretation took a far more varied form at the micro level. Shen examines nationalism at the local level in the Zouping region in northern China and finds, "Nationalism was constantly subject to different interpretations stemming from various survival strategies of local people. The nation was so ambiguous a concept that people did not hesitate to compromise it whenever necessary."³⁸ Xiaoqun Xu examines the role of Shanghai professors in engaging in a project of cultural revival to support Chinese nationalism during the 1930s. However, Xiaoqun Xu notes that this project ultimately led to a subjugation of the professors' work to the dictates of the GMD and a resulting decrease in their political autonomy.³⁹ Nationalism in China appears as not merely a

³⁷ "By constructing a continuous, linear story of the peoples of Europe, we (historians) validate the attempts of military commanders and political leaders to claim that they did indeed incorporate ancient traditions of peoples." Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, page 157.

³⁸ George Wei & Xiaoyuan Liu (Eds.), *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*, Zhijia Shen, "Nationalism in the Context of Survival: The Sino-Japanese War Fought in a Local Arena, Zouping, 1937-1945," (Kindle Location 1209).

³⁹ "While assigning culture an ultimate importance to the nation's well-being and thus confirming the relevance of professors to the national salvation, the GMD demanded cultural conformity and sacrifice of individual freedom. That is to say, professors should play a cultural-political role assigned and defined by the GMD. In other words, if social groups could use nationalism to criticize the state, the state could also use nationalism to co-opt and contain social groups that were critical of its policy." George Wei & Xiaoyuan Liu (Eds.), *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*, Xiaoqun Xu, "National Salvation and Cultural Reconstruction: Shanghai Professors' Responses to the National Crisis in the 1930s," (Kindle Locations 1117-1119).

recounting of a nation's history or even pride in historical memory, but as a field of competition with the stakes being the nation's identity and the contours of political power within it.

The instrumental use of historical memory continues into the present. For example, On July 12, 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin published an article titled, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians." He used historical memory to argue for the unity of the Russian and Ukrainian people and as justification for his policy seeking to reclaim these territories. Furthermore, he contends that the West has a history of perpetuating a false Ukrainian nationalism to weaken Russia. He points to the Polish Commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Nazi Germany as examples, with clear implications that current US-NATO policy in Ukraine can and should be understood in the same fashion. He doubled down on this focus on historical memory again during his interview with Tucker Carlson in 2024.⁴⁰ Vladimir Putin has vested substantial time and energy instrumentally using historical memory to advance his political agenda vis-à-vis Ukraine.

The same technique can be observed in the current paramount leader of the PRC, Xi Jinping. For example, H. R. McMaster recounted how President Xi instrumentalized historical memory during his interactions with President Trump and beyond. He writes, "Chairman Xi Jinping and his advisors used history to convey messages to President Trump, to the Chinese people, and the world. The selective use of history – both the history they invoked and the history they averted- revealed the emotions and worldview that drive Chinese Communist Party goals."⁴¹ Margaret MacMillan offers a differing view for interrogating history. She writes, “. . . history demands that we treat evidence seriously, especially when that evidence contradicts assumptions that we have already made . . . history does not produce definitive answers for all time. It is a process.”⁴² With instrumentalization, the political actor starts with the conclusion and seeks, or fabricates, evidence to fit it, contrary to what MacMillan describes as the historian's objective.

⁴⁰ <https://tuckercarlson.com/the-vladimir-putin-interview>, Accessed 6/6/2024.

⁴¹ H.R. McMaster, *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World*, page 92.

⁴² Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History*, Kindle Ed, (Location 2168 of 2305).

The instrumental use of historical memory pervades the discourse of China's core leaders. I posit that this usage plays a critical role in the political process for paramount leaders assuming core status in PRC political culture. Redefining historical memory is necessary to justify their assumption of authority and, if successful, retain control. Furthermore, this same technique is used to underwrite their governing philosophy and smooth the implementation of their policy preferences. In other words, without the instrumental use of historical memory, it would be unlikely that these leaders could either seize core leadership or once gained, effectively utilize that authority to enact their vision.

This study is divided into five chapters, each corresponding to a paramount leader in chronological order. Each chapter is organized in the same manner. The first section begins with a brief overview of the history of each core leader's ascension and a brief outline of their governing philosophy. It also includes a review of the scholarly literature regarding the leader's discourse and a brief overview of their role as paramount leader. The second section will detail the metrics for the instrumental uses of historical memory by the respective core leader. This section will include an analysis of the change over time in their instrumental use, associating these shifts with corresponding political objectives and significant events that might have impacted their core leadership status. It will also demonstrate the distribution of their instrumental uses across the four frameworks, both across time and by audience category. The third section delves into the core leader's instrumental use of historical memory through the respective narrative frameworks and the political implications for their usage. The fourth section reviews a series of illustrative texts displaying the instrumental uses of the various narrative frameworks as a cohesive unit within a single text. This not only allows for deeper exploration into not only the integration of political objectives with their discourse, but also displays the interaction between various frameworks. The final concluding section will discuss the impact, if any, that the paramount leader had on the institution of core leader, impacts on Chinese political culture, and how their approach to instrumental use of historical memory impacted their successor.

Core leadership did not emerge with the CPC's founding. Rather, it arose amidst a maelstrom of intense internal competition and a series of external forces impacting its formation. While simultaneously

struggling against internal forces for Party leadership, Mao Zedong also had to navigate competition and cooperation with Chiang Kai-Shek's (Jiang Jieshi's) GMD, and soon also contend with the active military campaign against the Imperial Japanese following the Marco Polo Bridge incident (July 1937). However, most crucial and dangerous of all, Mao had to calibrate relations with the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin. Mao walked the tightrope of having to create space for his political and ideological independence, denigrate his opponents, and remain in the good graces of Stalin. Mao Zedong would be the first CPC leader to achieve core leader status, but it would be a process that would take years to fully mature.

Although Mao was starting from a low point after having lost influence within the Party, the Long March (Oct 1934 – Oct 1935), and particularly the Zunyi Conference (Jan 1935), gave him an opportunity to regain lost ground and to position himself to eventually seize core leadership. Amidst the intense internal struggles that followed, Mao sharpened his theoretical skills, offering up a governing philosophy that would eventually become the guiding ideology for the CPC. As part of his efforts, Mao took great pains to redefine historical memory, especially Party history, to elevate himself and his governing philosophy. These struggles were not merely academic exercises, but potentially carried the weight of life and death and certainly the fate for the Party and eventually the PRC. As Mao reached for core leadership, he relied upon the instrumental use of historical memory to propel him towards that summit and force his opponents to tumble down the mountain behind him.

Chapter 2 - Mao Zedong:

It's Good to Be the Core

Introduction

Mao Zedong was the Communist Party of China's (CPC) first true core leader, possessing greater influence for far longer than any other CPC leader. However, Mao's journey to core leadership was certainly not smooth, and even when he achieved it, he faced challenges to his vision for the People's Republic of China (PRC). Mao's authority stemmed from the CPC, and it is within this organization that he jockeyed for influence. Core leadership stands upon two pillars, dominant political power and supreme authority over official ideology. Mao maneuvered to establish control over both and then wielded his newfound clout to direct the party and eventually the nation towards his desired vision. Essential to attaining ideological supremacy was absolute control over historical memory, and Mao took great pains to mold Party historical memory to justify his ascendancy and lend legitimacy to his governing philosophy. Throughout his tenure, he retained the instrumental use of historical memory to bolster his political position and justify his policy preferences. Both Mao as a historical figure and his governing philosophy, Mao Zedong Thought (毛泽东思想), continue to have a major influence on the form of political discourse and historical memory in China.

Although an attendee at the CPC founding, Mao was not initially a leading Party figure.⁴³ In fact, he found himself on the wrong side of the CPC leadership more than once and even at times faced severe admonishments, with an especially grave episode during the Jiangxi Soviet period (1931 - 1934).⁴⁴

⁴³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 106, Kindle Edition "Then they unanimously selected Chen Duxiu as secretary of the Central Bureau of the party. (In 1922 the position of secretary was changed to chairman of the Central Executive Committee, and in 1925 was renamed general secretary of the CEC; Chen Duxiu would occupy this position until July 1927.) Two more persons were chosen for the Central Bureau: Zhang Guotao in charge of organizational work, and Li Da in charge of propaganda. In Chen Duxiu's absence, the duties of secretary were assigned to Zhou Fohai."

⁴⁴ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 224-225 (for more details on his denunciation in 1929) & pages 254-255 (for more details on his refutation in 1931) & pages 97-98 (for 1932 criticism), Kindle Edition.

However, the severe crisis brought about by Jiang Jieshi's (Chiang Kai-Shek) encirclement campaigns and the forced expulsion of the CPC from their base areas opened the door for his return.⁴⁵ While on the Long March (1934 – 1935), Mao made his initial moves to lay the ground to eventually claim leadership as early as the Zunyi conference in January 1935. There he gained new authority over military and political matters, although far from the absolute power he would later enjoy.⁴⁶ To ascend to that level, he leveraged his Party positions to build his political and military clout, as well as developing his credentials as a Marxist theorist.⁴⁷ Numerous individuals aided him in this project, such as Chen Boda, Ai Siqi, and Hu Qiaomu, among others, who benefited from his patronage while he profited from their expertise.⁴⁸ The Yan'an Rectification Movement (1942 - 1944) saw Mao consolidate his power as core leader and decisively squash his competitors, including his main opponent, Wang Ming.⁴⁹ A key facet of the Rectification movement was the redefinition of Party history. This new narrative portrayed Mao as the font of success and blamed past failures on deviations from his proposed line by previous party leaders and contemporary opponents.⁵⁰ As Gao Hua summarized, "The CCP's (CPC's) Seventh Party Congress was the organizational embodiment and confirmation of Mao's victory after many years of effort and struggle."⁵¹ The Seventh National Party Congress in 1945 enshrined him as the paramount Party leader and his Mao Zedong Thought as its official ideology, his journey towards core leadership complete.

⁴⁵ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, pages 110-111.

⁴⁶ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 116, Kindle Edition: "Yet the Zunyi Conference and the changes in the CCP's (CPC's) core leadership that continued to occur thereafter gave Mao his first opportunity to express opinions and to make decisions in the CCP's (CPC's) paramount decision-making and command apparatus, but this was far from having "ultimate decision-making power" over the Party and army."

⁴⁷ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 228, Kindle Edition: "Four years of concerted efforts from 1935 to 1938, with many complications and temporary setbacks along the way, finally brought Mao on a triumphant march toward realizing his political ideals. By the end of 1938, Mao had control of the Party and the Communist armed forces firmly within his grasp, but one matter continued to rankle him—he had yet to seize the power of ideological interpretation."

⁴⁸ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 240, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 357, Kindle Edition.

⁵⁰ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 738-751, Kindle Edition, For a more detailed description of the process and intentions behind Mao's rewriting of party history during the Rectification Movement.

⁵¹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 757, Kindle Edition

The CPC victory in the Civil War (1946 - 1949) and the subsequent founding of the People's Republic of China elevated Mao to the leader of not just a party but of a nation. However, Mao remained the "junior partner" to Stalin as the leader of International Communism.⁵² Previously, Mao's opponents dwarfed Mao in Marxist credentials, and despite his efforts to improve his standing as a theoretician, he needed to offer a contrary interpretation, in which China was historically unique. As a result, Mao advanced the idea that Marxism had to be adapted to China's conditions to be effective.⁵³ This construction aided Mao in generating an official ideology which he had supreme authority over as its author. However, he still relied upon the Soviet Union, both as the senior partner ideologically and to support reconstruction in China after decades of war.⁵⁴ Furthermore, there remained the danger that Stalin could undermine Mao's authority within the CPC.⁵⁵ However, Stalin's death in 1953 allowed Mao to pursue his vision, irrespective of Moscow's preference, and removed Mao's only competitor for supreme ideological authority in China.⁵⁶ Consequently, Mao bristled at Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 Secret Speech targeting historical memory of Stalin. He certainly didn't have any love for Stalin by this point, but he was infuriated that Khrushchev asserted authority to redefine Stalin's legacy, regardless of Mao's wishes.⁵⁷ At the Eighth Party Congress in 1956, the CPC delegated greater authority to the collective leadership, resulting in a temporary decrease in the influence of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's cult of personality, a setback Mao soon sought to reverse.⁵⁸ Although ill feelings would fester for years until the

⁵² Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, page 63, Kindle Edition.

⁵³ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-49: Volume VI: New Stage (August 1937-1938)*: Locations 1083-1152 of 22622. Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pages 61-62, Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 395, Kindle Edition. "The leadership of the CCP (CPC) was not united on the question of New Democracy. Unlike Mao, who had abandoned the term "New Democracy," several other CCP (CPC) leaders continued to use the terminology of the New Democratic revolution. Zhou Enlai as well as Liu Shaoqi apparently took seriously Stalin's admonitions concerning a gradual transition to socialism in the PRC, and spoke of the New Democratic state, of the construction of New Democracy, of New Democratic trends in literature and art, and so on."

⁵⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, page 8, Kindle Edition & Pantsov, Alexander, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 3 & 7, Kindle Edition.

⁵⁷ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pages 64-66, Kindle Edition.

⁵⁸ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 433-434, Kindle Edition.

Sino-Soviet split fully ruptured relations, Mao had been freed from his last potential ideological competitor and was now poised to pursue his objectives unfettered.

Following a relative slackening of ideological control in 1957 during the “Hundred Flowers” Campaign (百花运动), Mao reversed course, clamping down hard on opposition in a severe anti-Rightist campaign aimed at intellectuals.⁵⁹ In the wake of this movement, Mao launched the Great Leap forward (大跃进), an economic program designed to spur rapid growth and enable the development of heavy industry through mass mobilization.⁶⁰ As the devastating failures of this campaign became apparent, Mao faced growing opposition from within the Party. Despite initial attempts to simultaneously course correct and stamp out opposition at the Lushan conference in 1959, Mao was forced to cede more authority to the collective leadership under Liu Shaoqi and, by 1961, Mao retreated to what was ostensibly more of a senior advisory role in what was referred to as the second line.⁶¹ However, this was merely a temporary withdrawal, as Mao rebuilt his political and ideological power, this time parallel to the Party-State apparatus. This final ascent differed as Mao attempted to directly harness the masses to discipline the Party and more firmly entrench his ultimate authority as core leader, beyond even the confines of the CPC institutional structures. His first volley in this renewed offensive came in endorsing criticism of the historical play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*.⁶² He used this method initially to criticize those in the cultural sphere, but then leveraged criticisms to launch targeted attacks against political opponents. By 1966, Mao had given support to student organizations aimed at toppling corrupt and ideologically suspect officials, leading to the Red Guards denouncing authority figures at all levels of the Party-State.⁶³

⁵⁹ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 441, Kindle Edition.

⁶⁰ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 449-450, Kindle Edition.

⁶¹ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 463 & 471, Kindle Edition. For a brief description of Mao’s retreat to the second line in the Spring of 1961 see page 478.

⁶² Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 492-493, Kindle Edition.

⁶³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 500-501, Kindle Edition.

However, as the state apparatus ceased to function, Mao relied upon the People's Liberation Army (PLA), under Lin Biao, to reassert control. Previously, Lin had overseen a campaign propagating an abridged version of Mao Zedong Thought in a collection of quotations, "Mao's Little Red Book," as the source of all ideological authority.⁶⁴ At the twilight of his life, Mao's authority appeared supreme, but his time at the summit was fleeting. By the end of 1971, following the Project 571 incident, his heir apparent, Lin Biao, had died while fleeing the country.⁶⁵ On top of this, Mao's health deteriorated rapidly.⁶⁶ Despite his deteriorating condition, Mao weighed in on the subsequent succession crisis repeatedly, but his capacity had been reduced merely to influencing the players; he could no longer define the rules of the game. In fact, his authority was so diminished that even his chosen successor, Hua Guofeng, was overthrown a few years after Mao's death, despite his absolute adherence to Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's legacy.

Several scholarly works have delved into Mao's political career and instrumental use of historical memory within his discourse. These works include biographies of Mao that provide essential insight into both his rise to power and his rule. For example, Jonathan Spence argues that Mao took steps to craft and then promulgate a tailored image of himself as a military and political leader as well as a theoretician, which enabled him to secure power.⁶⁷ He relates the process by which he directed the rewriting of historical memory for his political benefit, "In late 1943, an inner core of Mao's senior colleagues began to rewrite Chinese Party history so that Mao would be forever at the center. One by one the other rivals of the present and the past were denigrated, their 'incorrect lines' exposed, and Mao's own wisdom pushed ever further back in time."⁶⁸ Spence argues Mao secured his power through the purposeful reconstruction and invocation of Party history.

⁶⁴ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 487-488, Kindle Edition.

⁶⁵ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 550-554, Kindle Edition.

⁶⁶ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 542, Kindle Edition.

⁶⁷ Jonathan D. Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life*, page 93, Kindle Edition.

⁶⁸ Jonathan D. Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life*, page 101, Kindle Edition.

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday offer a contrasting viewpoint in *Mao: The Unknown Story*, in which they argue that Mao's rise to power and his rule was achieved primarily through unrelenting political violence. They submit:

This gut enjoyment, which verged on sadism, meshed with, but preceded, his affinity for Leninist violence. Mao did not come to violence via theory. The propensity sprang from his character, and was to have a profound impact on his future methods of rule.⁶⁹

Their work does not focus on CPC ideological contests, including those related to historical memory, but it does provide insight into the contours of the political battles and discrete objectives that Mao pursued. In these depictions, Mao appears as a ruthless cynic, willing to do anything necessary to win absolute power.

Alexander Pantsov's biography, *Mao: The Real Story*, makes substantial use of Russian archival information to flesh out Mao's interactions with Stalin and other Soviet leaders.⁷⁰ He depicts how deeply Mao's political struggles were tied to CPC-CPSU relations.⁷¹ This included careful, but not always faithful, deference by Mao to Stalin's dictates. However, he shows that adherence to Moscow's instructions wavered over time, and by the tenure of Khrushchev, Mao completely rejected any restraints on his authority as core leader in China. Eventually, this competition spilled into open contention over leadership of world communism.⁷² In addition, Pantsov argues that Mao crafted his ideology, specifically Marxism applied to China's conditions, as a combination of Marxism with the Chinese historical legacy, the exact application of which could only be dictated by Mao. "In all of this, Mao was an authentically Chinese leader and ideologist who was able to combine the principles of foreign Bolshevism not only with the practice of the Chinese revolution, but also with Chinese tradition."⁷³ Pantsov elucidates Mao's

⁶⁹ Jung Chang; Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Location 949 of 17130, Kindle Edition.

⁷⁰ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 1, Kindle Edition.

⁷¹ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 332, Kindle Edition. For example, Pantsov claims Mao only pursued his criticism against Wang Ming with the blessings of Stalin.

⁷² Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 472-474, Kindle Edition.

⁷³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 575, Kindle Edition.

struggles to achieve ideological independence from Moscow and further argues that Mao made use of what I term the Marxist and Confucian/Traditional narratives in crafting his ideology.

Other works beyond biographies have also examined aspects of Mao's instrumental use of historical memory and his rise to power. One example is Gao Hua's *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement*. Gao argues key features of PRC political culture, specifically mass struggle, emerged during the Yan'an Rectification movement at Mao's direction and aided in amplifying Mao's position as core leader.⁷⁴ Furthermore, he traces this development emerging from the combination of Marxism-Leninism and select Confucian conceptions. Gao observes on Mao's recruitment of Chen Boda:

Chen Boda's scholarship and self-cultivation in classical Chinese philosophy and his unique views on the nationalization of communism were eventually discovered by Mao . . . At this time, Mao had an urgent desire for theoretical and systematic reinforcement of his concept of the Sinification of Marxism, but he lacked the necessary help.⁷⁵

According to Gao, Mao adopted this method to subvert his political opponents, especially Wang Ming.⁷⁶

He argues that Mao's power coalesced as he directed the rewriting of Party history to his benefit. Finally, Gao examines the role of the Soviet Union shaping CPC power struggles and Mao's careful navigation of relations with Moscow and its agents to secure power without rupturing his relations with Stalin.⁷⁷

Stuart Schram's ten-volume *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949* supplied a wealth of primary source material for this study, as well as providing exceptionally helpful notations. In addition, Schram, alongside his fellow editors, provides additional analysis on the overall character of Mao's discourse, offering a periodization for his writings in each volume. They echo many of Gao's arguments on Mao's deliberate Sinification of Marxism, which facilitated his rise to core leadership.⁷⁸ In

⁷⁴ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 7, Kindle Edition.

⁷⁵ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 242, Kindle Edition.

⁷⁶ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 356, Kindle Edition.

⁷⁷ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 264-265, Kindle Edition.

⁷⁸ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-49: Volume VI: New Stage (August 1937-1938)*: Locations 419-467 of 22622. Kindle Edition.

addition, they argue that Mao had only a limited grasp of Marxism, but that he still latched onto and imbued certain Marxist concepts into his discourse. These aspects included practice as the source of knowledge, people's democratic dictatorship, and ". . . the struggle between oppressor and oppressed as the motive force in history."⁷⁹ Furthermore, they argue that central to Mao's rise to power was his absolute authority over history.⁸⁰ They posit that the purpose of this control over historical memory was to validate Mao, unequivocally, as the ultimate source of wisdom for state policy.⁸¹

Chen Jian's *Mao's China & the Cold War* examines Mao's rule of the PRC during the Cold War, focusing on international relations. Included within his work is an examination of Mao's evolving relations with Soviet leaders. Chen portrays Mao as increasingly frustrated with playing a subservient role to Moscow while still requiring aid and support from the Soviet Union to modernize China.⁸² However, according to Chen, that conflict reached a boiling point over the legacy of Stalin, both what that legacy was and who had the right to define it. He argues that this concern over Stalin was primarily oriented towards potential blowbacks that could undermine Mao's legitimacy. Both Mao's cult of personality, modelled on Stalin's, as well as PRC economic policies, modelled on Stalinization, could be denigrated if their inspiration was delegitimized.⁸³ Discussing the shift in Mao's approach to relations with Khrushchev, Chen stated:

When Mao spoke about Stalin's mistakes and achievements, he was asserting that he, not the Soviet leaders, now occupied the morally paramount position to dominate the cause of the world proletarian revolution.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume V: Toward the Second United Front, (January 1935-July 1937)*, Location 450 of 17599, Kindle Edition.

⁸⁰ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page Ivii, Kindle Edition.

⁸¹ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page Ivii, Kindle Edition, "Here the various claims of "line errors" committed by the internationalists, especially Wang Ming, were codified and lessons supporting Mao's policies and the charismatic nature of Mao's wisdom were set forth . . . At the center of this new history was Mao himself, the charismatic leader. This new role for Mao was reflected in the study materials for the ongoing Rectification Campaign . . ."

⁸² Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, page 63, Kindle Edition.

⁸³ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pages 65-66, Kindle Edition.

⁸⁴ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, page 68, Kindle Edition.

He observes that while Mao certainly voiced criticisms of Stalin, Mao was unwilling to yield the power to define that historical memory to Khrushchev at his own expense.

Frank Dikötter's trilogy, *The Tragedy of Liberation*, *Mao's Great Famine*, and *The Cultural Revolution*, scrutinizes Mao's rule of the PRC. He concurs with Chen on the centrality of the Sino-Soviet relationship and argues that this relationship drove Mao's motivations in his domestic agenda.⁸⁵ Dikötter observes Stalin's restraining effect on Mao's behavior while he was alive, and the radical shift after his death.⁸⁶ Furthermore, he posits that the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were, at least in part, efforts to supplant the Soviet Union as the animating force behind the world communist movement.⁸⁷ He further details Mao's efforts to curtail any ideological opposition from within the CPC.⁸⁸ However, according to Dikötter, the all-consuming nature of the Cultural Revolution, in the name of Maoism, laid the groundwork for its future invalidation.⁸⁹

The autobiography of Mao's personal physician, Dr. Li Zhisui, titled, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, provides additional insight, especially regarding Mao's health from the early 1950's until his death. Dr. Li describes the rapid deterioration of Mao's health starting in 1971, matching a sharp decline in his discourse during this period.⁹⁰ However, more intriguing for the purposes of this study is

⁸⁵ Frank Dikötter, *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945-1957*, Locations 2278-2291 of 7514, Kindle Edition.

⁸⁶ Frank Dikötter, *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945-1957*, Location 4135 of 7514, Kindle Edition. "Stalin's death was Mao's liberation. The Chairman was at last free from the restraining influence of Moscow. No longer were there any major constraints on his political vision. Of course, he continued to submit his views to the Kremlin, as telegraph wires continued to hum between the two red capitals, but no Soviet leader commanded as much respect as Mao, who had brought a second October Revolution to a quarter of the world, and fought the United States to a standstill during the Korean War. Soon the Chairman began to distance himself from the Soviet leadership."

⁸⁷ Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, page 6. Kindle Edition. & Dikötter, Frank. *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962—1976*, Location 88 of 9061 Kindle Edition. "The Cultural Revolution was Mao's second attempt to become the historical pivot around which the socialist universe revolved."

⁸⁸ Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, page 100. Kindle Edition.

⁸⁹ Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962—1976*, Location 164 of 9061 Kindle Edition. "The gradual undermining of the planned economy was one unintended outcome of the Cultural Revolution. Another was the destruction of the remnants of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. By the time Mao died, not only were people in the countryside pushing for much greater economic opportunities, but many had also broken free of the ideological shackles imposed by decades of Maoism. Endless campaigns of thought reform produced widespread skepticism even among the party members themselves."

⁹⁰ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, pages 524-624, Kindle Edition.

Dr. Li's description of Mao's relationship with historical memory. He recounts that Mao studied Chinese history voraciously and that he identified most with ancient Chinese dynasts.⁹¹ Li recounted the many discussions between himself and Mao on Chinese historical figures, further recounting that Mao consulted Chinese history often, using it as a guide to help him navigate political struggles.⁹² Although far from discounting Marxist-Leninist influences, which Li surmised provided the essential theoretical frameworks to transform China, it was memory associated with what I term China's Confucian/Traditional narrative framework which most animated Mao and informed the shape of his political discourse. Dr. Li recounts, "Not only were Mao's views of history astonishing, but they also revealed a great deal about him. He used the stories of China's past both to understand and to manipulate the present and saw himself in terms of his own contributions to the country's ongoing history."⁹³ Furthermore, Dr. Li notes that Mao also treated some historical novels, such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Dreams of the Red Chamber*, as informative historical texts representing, at the very least, an illustration of historical forces at work.⁹⁴

Lucian Pye's *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures* provides some insights into the origins and functioning of paramount leaders. He argues that PRC political culture is a blend of Confucian traditions and Marxist theory, in what he termed Confucianist Leninism. He writes:

The Confucian tradition of rule by men and not by law, and the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the preciousness of the Party (which opens the door to personality cults), when combined, as in China and also North Korea, have produced a heightened glorification of the concept of the infallible leader, the indispensable figure.⁹⁵

When combined with Leninist conceptions of the party as the vanguard, this culture centralized ideological and political authority in the paramount leader. However, successors were not required to adhere to past dictates from the departed leader, as ". . . in Chinese culture, authority tends to end at the

⁹¹ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 121, Kindle Edition. "But Mao's view of history was radically different from that of most Chinese. Morality had no place in Mao's politics. I was shocked to learn not only that Mao identified with China's emperors but that his greatest admiration was reserved for the most ruthless and cruel of our country's tyrants."

⁹² Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 440, Kindle Edition.

⁹³ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 124, Kindle Edition.

⁹⁴ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 83, Kindle Edition.

⁹⁵ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, page 135.

grave.”⁹⁶ On the other hand, Pye also observes that the upper echelons of the elite that formed the collective leadership enjoyed a high degree of autonomy not afforded to the masses.⁹⁷ This collective leadership offered an alternative power base in regard to which Mao consistently oscillated between reliance and suppression.

Xing Lu argues in her *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People* that Mao’s rhetorical acumen within his discourse was an essential asset facilitating his rise to power and sustaining his rule. She argues that Mao’s rhetoric contains four consistent themes, “1) the moral legitimacy of Marxism-Leninism; 2) the importance of serving the people; 3) the use of criticism and self-criticism; and 4) nationalism.”⁹⁸ The first theme aligns with my category of the Marxist framework, although, as she argues, this theme is moderated by a Sinification to preserve Mao’s, “. . . ideological legitimacy to lead the CCP (CPC) . . .”⁹⁹ She relates both the second and third themes to what I term Confucian/Traditional, with the second related to the “Mandate of Heaven,” and the third to the Confucian ethic of “self-cultivation.”¹⁰⁰ She argues that Mao’s fourth theme of Nationalism took on a narrative form defined by, “. . . a narrative of victimization, a denouncement of Chiang Kai-shek and American imperialism, and a desire to build a strong and prosperous China.”¹⁰¹ She recounts the chronicle of national victimization, related specifically to China’s historical experience in the Century of Humiliation (COH hereafter). She describes Mao’s depiction of the CoH as positing that all ills befalling China, starting in the mid-19th century, could be sourced to foreign exploitation, but with Mao offering the way to a brighter future. Xing Lu’s analysis provides a clear framework for the major themes of Mao’s discourse and his intentions behind their use in his political speech.

⁹⁶ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China’s Political Cultures*, page 152.

⁹⁷ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China’s Political Cultures*, pages 153-154.

⁹⁸ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People (Studies in Rhetoric & Communication)*, page 185, Kindle Edition.

⁹⁹ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People (Studies in Rhetoric & Communication)*, page 185, Kindle Edition.

¹⁰⁰ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People (Studies in Rhetoric & Communication)*, pages 186-187, Kindle Edition.

¹⁰¹ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People (Studies in Rhetoric & Communication)*, page 138, Kindle Edition.

Mao's ascent to core leadership, and his subsequent rule once he achieved paramount status, involved numerous twists and turns. Following the Zunyi Conference in January 1935, Mao undertook a course in which he accrued both political power and, by 1937, credentials as a theoretician. As such, I anticipate an elevated level of instrumental use of historical memory from 1937-1938. I assume that this usage will rise further during the 1942-1944 Yan'an Rectification Movement, culminating in 1945 with the Seventh Party Congress. I do expect a decline during the Civil War period, although I anticipate a rise with the founding of the PRC in 1949. I envisage another decline during the Korean War, to be replaced by a rise following key events in 1953, including Stalin's death and the armistice agreement with the United States. Furthermore, I expect a rise during the Anti-Rightist campaign in 1957 and initiation of the Great Leap Forward, followed by a decline as Mao retreated to the second line in 1961. However, I do anticipate another rebound throughout the 1960s, reaching a high point coinciding with the Cultural Revolution. Although Mao achieved a dominant position over the CPC as core leader as early as the Yan'an Rectification Movement, I anticipate a consistent ebb and flow in his instrumental use of historical memory.

Based on the above analysis of Mao's status as core leader, I have divided his discourse into seven periods. The first period (1935 - 1941) marked the establishment of his political and military leadership credentials and the initial formation of his governing philosophy. The second period (1942 - 1945) encompasses Mao's consolidation of control of the CPC, his rewriting of CPC history, and the enshrinement of his governing philosophy at the Seventh National Party Congress, marking his assumption of core leadership. The third period (1946 - 1949) recounts the resumption of Civil War against the Guomindang (GMD) and his assumption of national leadership with the founding of the PRC. The fourth period (1950 - 1956) reflects Mao's early rule of the PRC, ending in 1956 with Khrushchev's Secret Speech. The fifth period (1957 - 1961) encompasses major ideological and economic campaigns, including the "Hundred Flowers," the Anti-Rightist, and the Great Leap Forward, ending with Mao's temporary retreat to the second line in 1961. The sixth period (1962 - 1965) marks Mao's preparation for launching the Cultural Revolution. The final period (1966 - 1970) occurs during the Cultural Revolution

and the height of Mao's ideological primacy but concludes as Mao's capacity to disseminate his vision was restrained by his mortality. I expect Mao to use three of the four main narrative historical frameworks in his discourse, with the Liberal Framework absent. I do not foresee any major shift over time in the distribution of his instrumental usage of historical memory across the three frameworks, except for an increase in the Nationalist framework during periods of acute conflict such as the Anti-Japanese war, the Civil War against the GMD, and the Korean War.

Mao Zedong sought to bend the course of history to his desired vision. To accomplish this task, he seized absolute power, not only in the political arena but, more importantly, over the ideological and cultural space in which politics operate. In doing so, he positioned himself to direct the course of history by dictating how historical memory could be understood and making it subservient to the requirements of the present.¹⁰² However, this use of historical memory moved beyond a utilitarian approach to crafting policy, or even a Machiavellian guide to sustaining power, but served to propel and then maintain Mao as core leader. With historical memory redefined, Mao's rule was transformed into the culmination of an inevitable historical process, the evidence for which could be found in the curated and officially promulgated version of historical memory. Once established, Mao instrumentally invoked historical memory to justify his policies, and any opponents could be cowed by linking them to denounced figures in that same memory.

Metrics

The dataset consists of 1164 texts drawn from Mao's public discourse from 1935 - 1970. Despite political discourse existing prior, I selected 1935 as the start date as the Zunyi conference appears to have been the start of Mao's process towards consolidating power, eventually culminating in his becoming core

¹⁰² Tom Fisher, "The Players the Thing: Wu Han and Hai Rui Revisited," in Unger, Jonathan. *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China (Contemporary China Papers)*, page 29 Kindle Edition. "The theoretical cornerstone of post-1949 historiography has been Mao's famous dictum 'make the past serve the present' (gu wei jin yong), which bears some resemblance to the Confucian approach to history as a mirror for contemporary times."

leader.¹⁰³ Furthermore, I opted for an end date of 1970 due to the scarcity of texts after that date and Mao's deteriorating health. These texts are drawn from three main sources. The first is Mao's *Selected Works*, including Volumes I-V (1926 - 1957) translated and published by the CPC organ the Foreign Language Press Service, and Volumes VI-IX (1917 - 1971) published by Kranti Publications. The second source is Volumes V-X (1935 - 1949) of Stuart Schram's ten-volume *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949*. The third is the Wilson Center Digital Archive collection of Mao-related documents (1945 - 1976). Translated into English, the total word count for all documents combined is estimated at 1778000. Of the 1164 texts, a total of 337 possessed at least one instrumental use of historical memory. I discerned a total of 1292 references to historical memory in the dataset. A full listing of all texts and references is included in Appendix A.

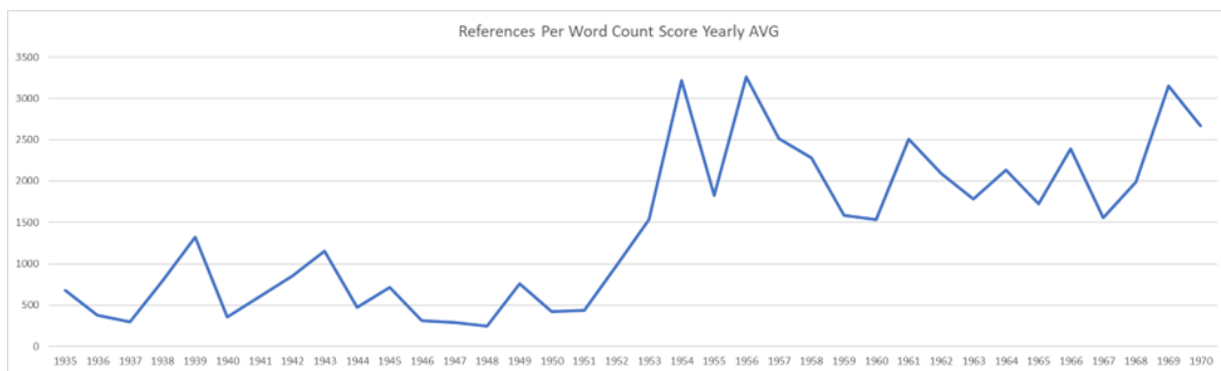


Figure 2.1 References per Word Count Score yearly average. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without historical references.

Mao's discourse basically follows the anticipated path of a series of peaks and valleys, centered on key events related to his core leader status. However, there appears to be a major shift in the level of his use after 1953. There are a few possible explanations for this bifurcation. The first is that, prior to 1953, Mao's career was characterized by near constant warfare, both for Mao and the CPC. This factor resulted in a greater focus on immediate problems of military and state policy and less room for Mao to

¹⁰³ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 116-117, Kindle Edition.

engage in wider ranging rhetoric. In fact, the dataset from 1935 - 1949 includes a total of 301 texts coded as aimed primarily at the PLA, including military orders, instructions, and other such documents.¹⁰⁴

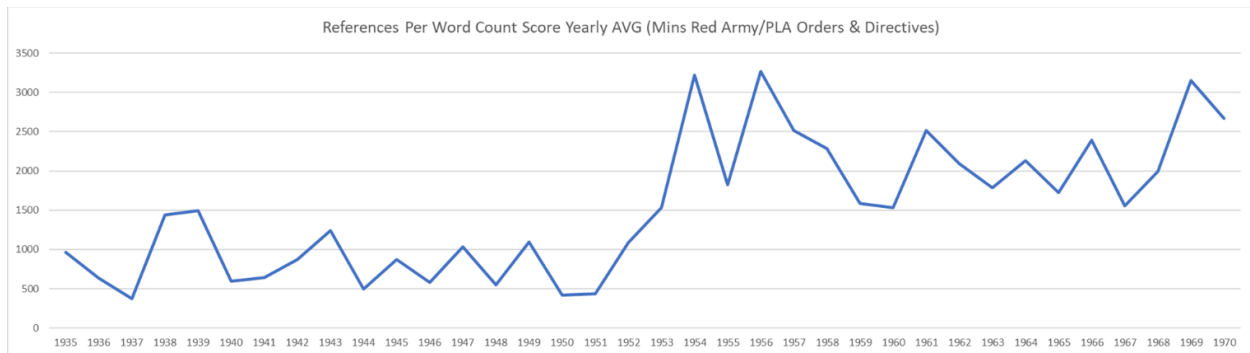


Figure 2.2 References per Word Count Score yearly average minus 301 texts aimed primarily at the PLA including military orders, discussions, reports, etc. between 1935-1949.

Excluding these PLA aimed texts decreases the difference between the levels of incidence before and after 1953, as indicated by Figure 2, but it does not completely remove the difference. Another explanation is that discussions regarding CPC history are not included within the dataset as they were largely unavailable due to my rule requiring a 25-year separation between the reference and its use. A major objective for Mao, especially during the Yan'an Rectification Movement, was redefining that recent historical memory but such discussions are not reflected in the data due to my 25-year rule. This exclusion carries the potential for increasing the observable instrumental uses of historical memory by Mao during this period where a different standard for inclusion of fewer than 25-years may impact the results displayed in the above graphs. However, as this historical memory aged beyond 25 years, it is included within the dataset, with many key events available for observation prior to 1953. While this may explain some of the depression, if this factor alone served as a clarification, I would expect to see a more gradual rise, as opposed to the sharp increase in 1953. For example, key events like the May 4th Movement (hereafter M4M) (1919/1944), founding of the CPC (1921/1946), First United Front (1924/1949), the Northern Expedition (1926/1951), and the Shanghai Incident (1927/1952), all became

¹⁰⁴ For ease of coding, I included communication to the Red Army / New Fourth Army / Eighth Route Army / People's Liberation Army all under the PLA label.

available prior to 1953.¹⁰⁵ However, the rise only appears to begin at earliest between 1951 and 1953, and is far sharper after 1953. The final explanation is that, following Stalin's death, the last remaining source of authority that could challenge Mao's capacity to redefine history as core leader had been removed. On the other hand, it is worth noting that actual redefinition over the memory towards Stalin himself would not occur until after Khrushchev's Secret Speech in 1956. It appears that it was the removal of Stalin himself as an alternative authority that could contradict Mao, rather than any lingering adherence to Stalin's theories, that restricted Mao's core leadership and his willingness to instrumentally use historical memory. Although the yearly average provides some sense on the overall course of instrumental uses, a more detailed look provides additional clarity on the potential connection between those shifts and major events impacting Mao's core leader status.

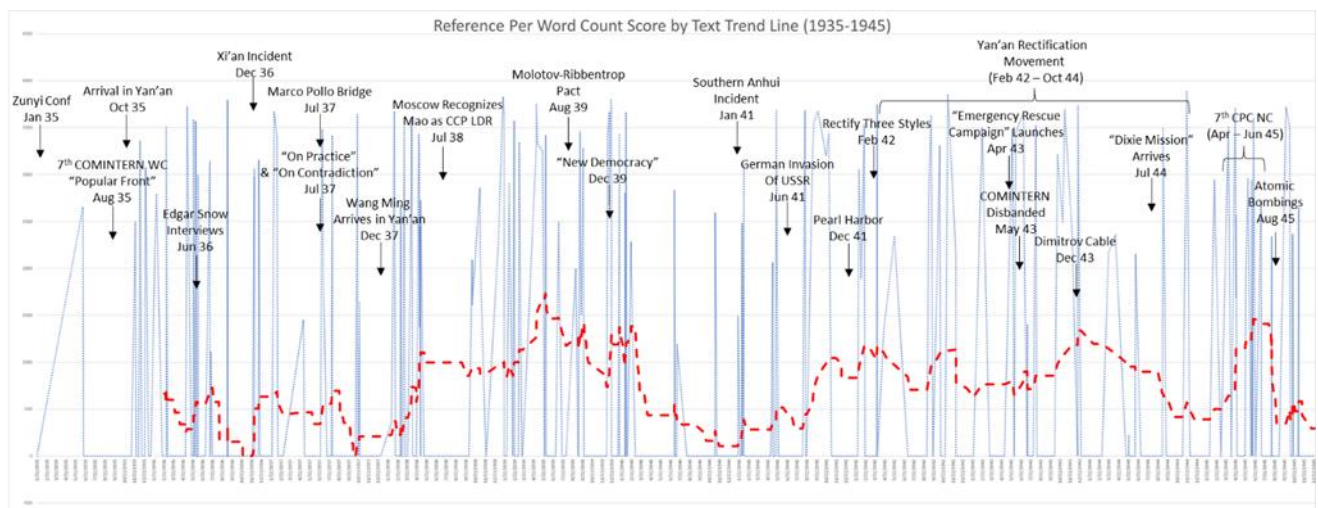


Figure 2.3 References per Word Count Score for each observation (1935 - 1945). The Blue Dash represents each individual Reference Per Word Count Score. The Red Dashes represent the ten-year moving average for the same data set. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without any historical references within.

As displayed in the above **figure**, there are several shifts in the level of instrumental uses between 1935 -

1945. The first small rise appears to coincide with the end of the Long March, initially lingering at

Bao'an, but eventually setting up more permanently at Yan'an. This respite certainly allowed Mao to

¹⁰⁵ The availability to include the above events within the dataset are as follows: May 4th Movement (1944), Founding of the CPC (1946), First United Front (1949), Northern Expedition (1951), Shanghai Incident (1952).

focus on theoretical and political works more easily.¹⁰⁶ The next rise appears to coincide with the Xi'an incident (Dec 1936) and the formation of the United Front with the GMD. His elevated use of historical memory remains relatively steady as Mao develops his credentials as a theoretician with works such as "On Practice" and "On Contradiction."¹⁰⁷ An element of that theoretical work endeavored to show Mao effectively engaging with history through a Marxist lens.¹⁰⁸ A reversal occurred with the return of Wang Ming and others from Moscow, but immediately following, there appears to be a flurry of activity as Mao jockeyed with the returnees for influence.¹⁰⁹ After Moscow's recognition of Mao as the leader of the CPC, his usage of historical memory levels off.¹¹⁰ This gesture by Stalin was certainly a boon for Mao; however, it showed that Mao was in a subservient position, reliant on Stalin for legitimacy.

Some spikes in usage did occur as Mao published additional works, which further engaged in historical memory, such as "New Democracy." Overall though, there is a decrease in Mao's usage of memory in 1940 as he struggled to establish himself as more than first among equals against strong willed

¹⁰⁶ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 116–117, Kindle Edition. "The eminently practical Mao knew very well that the only basis for achieving his Way in 1935 was the CCP (CPC) and the army that it led. Yet the Zunyi Conference and the changes in the CCP's (CPC's) core leadership that continued to occur thereafter gave Mao his first opportunity to express opinions and to make decisions in the CCP's (CPC's) paramount decision-making and command apparatus, but this was far from having "ultimate decision-making power" over the Party and army. Although Mao was dissatisfied with this state of affairs, he had to settle for it at the time. At a critical juncture when the CCP (CPC) faced danger and crisis, Mao chose to "stop while he was ahead" and he took the initiative to set aside differences within the Party and to devote his full energies against the enemy; this was Mao's wisdom, and it was what the situation required."

¹⁰⁷ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 155, Kindle Edition. For more on the Xian Incident see Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, pages 124–137.

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion on the formation and role of "On Practice" and "On Contradiction," see Stuart Schram (Ed). *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912–49: Volume VI: New Stage (August 1937–1938)*: Locations 521–624 of 22622. Kindle Edition. Interestingly, Schram identifies some tension in the various editions of Mao's use of Chinese history replaced with references to Stalin's writings. "It will be immediately apparent that many of the passages added in the Selected Works version summarize and pay homage to the latest Soviet contributions to Marxist theory, while many of those deleted from the original text contain references to Chinese history and Chinese literature. One particularly striking instance of this can be found toward the end of section 1, par. D, of Chapter 3 of "On Dialectical Materialism," where a citation from an essay by Su Dongpo seen by Mao as illustrating the relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction has been removed and a passage from Stalin's Foundations of Leninism inserted instead."

¹⁰⁹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 202, Kindle Edition

¹¹⁰ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 322–324, Kindle Edition.

comrades, who did not always bend to his wishes.¹¹¹ However, a major shift occurred in September 1941, as Mao firmly defeated Wang Ming and began setting the stage for the Rectification movement.¹¹² Throughout the Yan'an Rectification movement, Mao maintained an elevated level of usage as he carried out the task of reformulating Party history and solidifying himself as the core leader. However there appears to be a decline coinciding with the 1944 Dimitrov Cable, calling for an end to the movement.¹¹³ Once more Mao had to bend to Moscow's wishes, but he had managed to eliminate any immediate direct opposition from within the CPC to his authority. A final spike is clustered around the Seventh Party Congress where Mao celebrated his victory in achieving core leadership of the CPC and enshrined his governing philosophy, Mao Zedong Thought, into the CPC constitution.¹¹⁴

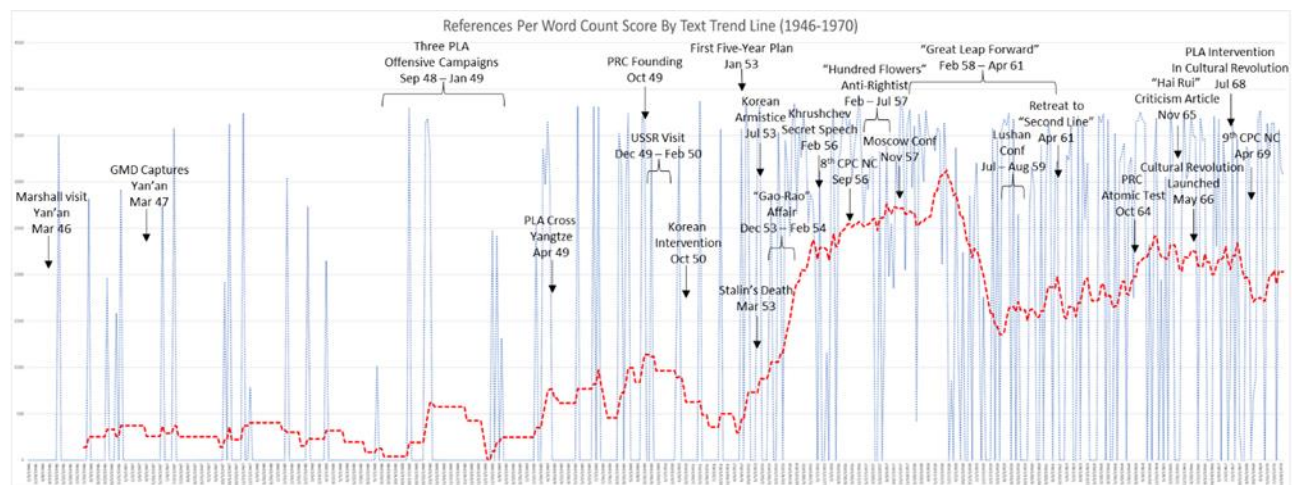


Figure 2.4 References per Word Count Score for each observation (1946-1970). The Blue Dash represents each individual Reference Per Word Count Score. The Red Dashes represent the ten-year moving average for the same data set. The Reference

¹¹¹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 41, Kindle Edition.

“Nevertheless, at this time, Mao had not yet reached the towering and unquestioned status, both ideological and organizational, that he would achieve in the years ahead. Mao had become somewhat more than primus inter pares, but he was surrounded by strong-willed and capable comrades, who did not feel dwarfed or intimidated by him. These were fellow revolutionaries who had fought alongside him—and sometimes contended with him—during the years when he was far from predominant.”

¹¹² Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 357, Kindle Edition.

¹¹³ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 696-698, Kindle Edition.

¹¹⁴ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 756-761, Kindle Edition.

Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without any historical references within.

Mao's discourse between 1946 and 1970 shows some additional shifts in direction, although there are fewer compared to the previous period. Throughout the GMD Civil War period (1946 - 1949), Mao's instrumental use remained relatively stable. However, there appears to be an increase starting around the Three Offensive Campaigns and the PLA crossing of the Yangzi River, culminating with the declaration of the PRC founding in 1949.¹¹⁵ A key objective for Mao at this time was to gain legitimacy as a national leader, and he appealed to historical memory in pursuit of that goal. However, there appears to be a decline coinciding with Mao's visit to Moscow and a further decline during the Korean conflict, indicating that Stalin still held sway over Mao.¹¹⁶

A steep rise in Mao's usage of historical memory coincided with Stalin's death and the Korean War Armistice.¹¹⁷ It continued to grow for a number of years, encompassing key events such as the Gao-Rao affair, Khrushchev's Secret Speech, and the "Hundred Flowers" and subsequent Anti-Rightist campaign.¹¹⁸ There does appear to be a temporary levelling coinciding with the Eighth Party Congress in September 1956, as the contest between the collective and core leadership came to a head, with a resulting deemphasis on Mao Zedong Thought.¹¹⁹ The upsurge reached its zenith during the initial months

¹¹⁵ For more on the Three Offensive Campaigns (Liaoshen / Huaihai / Pingjin) see Westad, Odd Arne, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*, pages 188-211 & 221-228.

¹¹⁶ For details on Mao's trip to Moscow see Pantsov, Alexander, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 363-373, Kindle Edition. For details on Mao and Stalin's interactions during the Korean War see Pantsov, Alexander, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 374-384, Kindle Edition.

¹¹⁷ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pages 8-9, Kindle Edition "After Stalin's death, Mao increasingly perceived the CCP (CPC), and himself in particular, as qualified to claim centrality in the international Communist movement. In its criticism of Moscow's "big-power chauvinism" and the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization effort, Maoist discourse was dominated by metaphors, myths, and symbols crucial to the promotion of Mao's continuous revolution, which also caused Beijing's deepening discord with Moscow. All of these developments served as the prelude to the great Sino-Soviet polemic debate in the 1960s, eventually leading to each of the Communist giants to regard the other as a "traitor" to true Marxism-Leninism."

¹¹⁸ For more on the Gao-Rao affair see Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 404-405, Kindle Edition. For more on the reaction of Mao to the Secret Speech see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pages 64-68, Kindle Edition. For a brief overview of the Hundred Flowers and 1957 anti-rightist campaign see Pantsov, Alexander, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 440-442, Kindle Edition.

¹¹⁹ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 431-433, Kindle Edition.

of the Great Leap Forward, as Mao sought to justify his policies aimed at rapid economic development.¹²⁰ However, it appears that soon after this high point there was a substantial drop, reaching a low level by the Lushan conference (1959), as Mao faced the monumental and deadly failure of the policy and the subsequent internal opposition.¹²¹ Although he managed to squash that opposition, Mao was forced to give ground as core leader. His use of historical memory remained at a lower rate as he retreated to the second line and temporarily devolved some of his authority to the collective leadership.¹²²

Mao did not accept this retreat as a permanent condition and, soon after, there appears to be a steady rise in his instrumental use. He maneuvered to level attacks against select individuals to weaken the collective leadership and set the stage for a wider assault on the Party as an institution.¹²³ These assaults against the CPC culminated in the Cultural Revolution, in which Mao used mass mobilization to direct attacks against Party cadres. Proponents of the Cultural Revolution accused Mao's opponents of errors, both past and present, as justification for their removal from power and other far more draconian forms of repression.¹²⁴ For the remainder of the Cultural Revolution, Mao maintained his use of historical

¹²⁰ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 457-458, Kindle Edition. Referring to Soviet assistance in carrying out the Great Leap Forward Pantsov argued, "Most of all, Mao did not want to ask help from Khrushchev. This would have been the most terrible 'loss of face.'"

¹²¹ For more on the Lushan conference see Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 462-466, Kindle Edition.

¹²² Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 477-478, Kindle Edition.

¹²³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 477-478, Kindle Edition. "In these eventful years Mao experienced ever-growing psychological agitation. Like a beast tirelessly tracking its prey, he burned with lethal desire. That Liu, Deng, and other apostates had done nothing 'wrong' for a long time only strengthened his fervor. He viewed their loyalty as a sign of weakness and therefore he did everything in his power to isolate his former friends. Each of their initiatives, even if it was in accord with his own views, he looked upon with a jaundiced eye as an attempt by his 'enemies' to strengthen their authority."

¹²⁴ Although Mao, and others such as Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng, targeted political opponents, the Cultural Revolution also swept up large numbers of bystanders in their wake. Recounting some of the episodes Pantsov writes, "The young people persecuted their teachers as their primary targets. In some schools individual classrooms were turned into prisons, where the students tormented teachers they had arrested on the charge of belonging to the 'black gang of bourgeois reactionary authorities.' These teachers were humiliated, beaten, and tortured, many to the point of death. One such jail was directly across the street from Zhongnanhai, in the music classroom of Beijing No. 6 Middle School. On the wall they wrote with the blood of their teachers: 'Long live the red terror.'" Pantsov, Alexander, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 510, Kindle Edition

memory to justify the continuation of the policy and to denounce, or rehabilitate, individuals as he desired.¹²⁵

There is a discrepancy between the Yearly AVG and trend line analysis for the years 1969 - 1970. The yearly AVG shows a higher level of instrumental use, although there are only a few texts to examine during this period, decreasing confidence in their representative value. On the other hand, the moving trend line analysis is weakest at the beginning and end of the dataset, lowering confidence in this instance as well. However, based on the literature regarding Mao's influence during this period as being at its height, I found the Yearly AVG as more indicative.¹²⁶ Regardless, Mao's instrumental use of historical memory appears to consistently reflect his relative prominence as core leader.

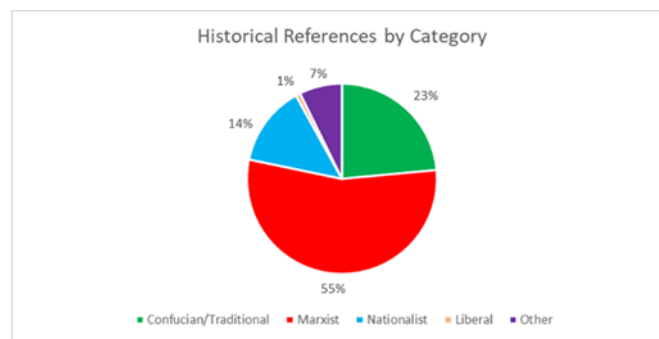


Figure 2.5 References by category percentage across the full dataset.

¹²⁵ For example, Deng Xiaoping had initially been denounced in the opening salvos in 1967, had been rehabilitated and returned to power in 1973, but was denounced again by 1975-1976. Pantsov, Alexander, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, pages 254-255, 269, and 294. In another example, Mao protected Zhou Enlai from persecution, Dikötter, Frank. *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962—1976*, page 233, Kindle Edition.

¹²⁶ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, Location 152 of 11635, Kindle Edition. “Millions of victims later, Mao stood victorious at the Ninth Party Congress of 1969, his rivals dead or in internal exile, the nation singing his praises and waving his red book before his ubiquitous poster. By his side stood the abject Lin Biao, the sole survivor from the old ruling group. Mao’s dream of development had failed, but his power was absolute in the country he had ruined.” Dikötter, Frank. *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962—1976*, Location 139 of 9061. Kindle Edition. “The first phase of the Cultural Revolution came to an end in the summer of 1968 as new, so-called ‘revolutionary party committees’ took over the party and the state. They were heavily dominated by military officers, concentrating real power in the hands of the army. They represented a simplified chain of command that the Chairman relished, one in which his orders could be carried out instantly and without question.” Jonathan D. Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life*, page 169, Kindle Edition. “Thus after only a few seconds of reading, people all around the country could gauge their chairman’s current thoughts. And probably these were his thoughts—there was no need to submit such brief and simple comments to Party scrutiny and to watch for possible deviations from the correct line. Mao was the line.”

Mao employed the three narrative frameworks, Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist, throughout his discourse, accounting for 92% of his total usages. He used the Marxist framework the most, accounting for a majority at 55%. Mao was fundamentally a Marxist-Leninist and his historical interpretations were informed by this orientation. Furthermore, his internal political struggles within the CPC, and later the PRC, were against fellow Marxists, and so his ideological battles were framed primarily in Marxist terms, referencing Marxist historical memory. A key component in Mao's ascension was the recontextualization of CPC history to elevate himself and denigrate his opponents. In addition, Mao's international discourse was largely aimed at fellow Communist states as well as national movements influenced by Marxism.

The second largest category is the Confucian/Traditional at 23%. This narrative framework played an essential role in the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism in Mao Zedong Thought. Furthermore, it provided a point of connection between Mao and his Chinese audience. Mao appeared engrossed in traditional Chinese historical memory and its inclusion appears, at least partially, motivated by his individual inclinations.

The third narrative is the Nationalist at 14%. Like the Confucian/Traditional, Mao used the framework in the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism and argued for the unique historical conditions of China. Those conditions required a distinct approach from rote application of Marxism-Leninism, independent of what he termed a dogmatist orientation, and beyond the absolute authority of the example of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the nationalist framework provided a unifying effect for the nation against foreign enemies, who were blamed for historical slights, often feeding into contemporary grievances.

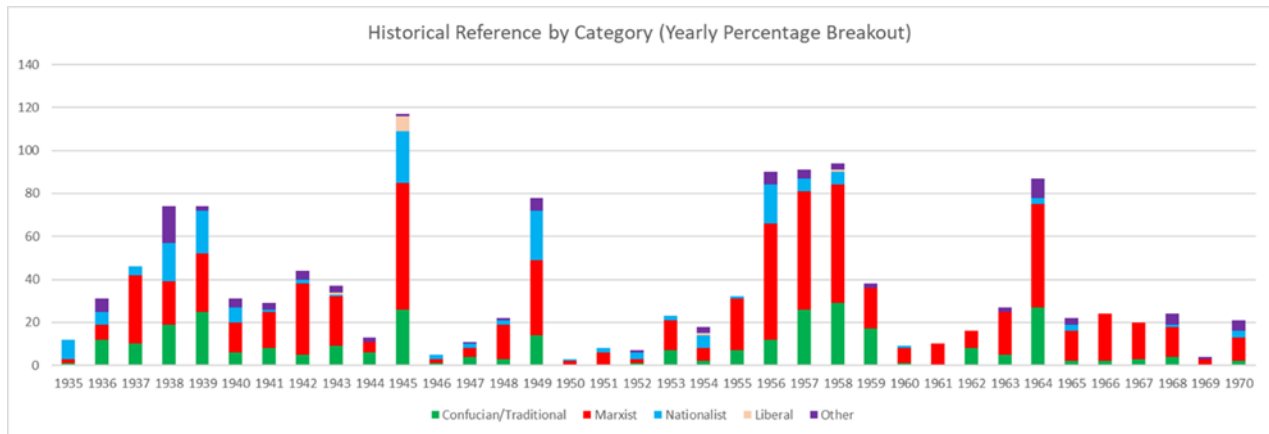


Figure 2.6 References by category for each year.



Figure 2.7 References by category divided by diachronic sections, 1) Crafting the Image (1935-1941), 2) Rectification Movement (1942-1945).

Following the Zunyi Conference, Mao engaged in a process of simultaneously jostling for political and military power while crafting his image as a leading Marxist theoretician. It was during this time that he crafted many of the key texts defining essential elements of his governing philosophy, Mao Zedong Thought. However, it is worth noting that Mao appears to have placed less value in his theories than some of his contemporaries.¹²⁷ On the other hand, such a governing philosophy was a prerequisite for acquiring core leadership. As such, Mao relied on the Marxist framework to display his acuity as a theoretician, especially as he competed with Wang Ming and his allies, who relied on Marxism more explicitly. In addition, he paid close attention to giving credence to Marxist figures, especially Marx,

¹²⁷ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 718, Kindle Edition. “From this time forward, Liu Shaoqi became the originator and copyright-holder of the concept of Mao Zedong Thought. More than twenty years later, when Liu was forsaken by Mao and came under ruthless criticism, he felt terribly wronged, protesting that he had been the one who had proposed “Mao Zedong Thought” and had appealed for it to be accepted as the guiding principle of the People.

Engels, Lenin, and Stalin (MEL(S) hereafter), as intellectual guides, as well as the importance of the October Revolution as the historical event that catalyzed the Chinese Revolution. Lenin and the October Revolution provided additional benefit as an example of an adaptation and evolution of Marxism to local conditions in the Soviet Union, an example Mao would make full use of in developing his model for China's revolution. Mao could never compete as a pure Marxist theorist against Wang Ming, even with the assistance of Chen Boda, and even if he did, he could only do so by ceding authority to Moscow. To combat this dilemma, Mao formulated applying Marxism to China's conditions, and turned to the Confucian/Traditional and Nationalist frameworks to justify this move. According to Mao, China was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial state, and he relied on the above two respective frameworks to illustrate these conditions. Additionally, Mao used both the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks in public discourse to galvanize Chinese national support against both the GMD and Japanese Imperialism. All three categories played a crucial role enabling Mao to successfully navigate competition within the CPC against more robust Marxist opponents while avoiding the ire of Moscow.

There appears to be only a minor shift in the distribution of Mao's usage by category during the Yan'an Rectification Movement. The Marxist framework increases at the expense of both the Nationalist and the Confucian/Traditional. By this point, Mao had succeeded in browbeating Wang Ming and his other opponents into submission and was free to extend his ideological supremacy throughout the Party structure. To aid in this effort, Mao recharacterized CPC history, placing himself at the center, with his opponents characterized as making line errors contrary to Mao's advice and subsequently blamed for all the disasters that befell the Party.¹²⁸ By 1944, as Mao sought to selectively rehabilitate individuals who

¹²⁸ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 248, Kindle Edition. "In order to demonstrate his consistent correctness, Mao was extremely attentive to the selection of his own writings to be included in Secret Party Documents, taking pains to edit out any words that might damage his image. He removed words showing his support for the Party's political line from 1931 to 1935, and he carefully edited some essays he had written in the early and mid-1930s. He selected only a small portion of the report he had delivered to the Second National Soviet Congress in January 1934 (on how only the soviets could save China) and he included it in Secret Party Documents under the new titles of "Our Economic Policy" and "Care about the Lives of the Masses, Pay Attention to

had been subjected to rectification, he found the Confucian/Traditional framework a useful tool to foster reconciliation. Mao also continued to rely on the nationalist framework, especially in his competition with Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-Shek) for national leadership. Mao often invoked the memory of Sun Yat-sen and the first United Front to delegitimize Jiang and criticize GMD conflict with CPC in the face of Japanese aggression. It was also during this period in which the Liberal framework fleetingly appeared, if only slightly at 4%. This framework is clustered mostly in 1945, coinciding with the conclusion of World War II. For a time, Mao appears to echo some of the sentiments of the Liberal framework that the war's aftermath ushered in a new period of international cooperation and democratic development.

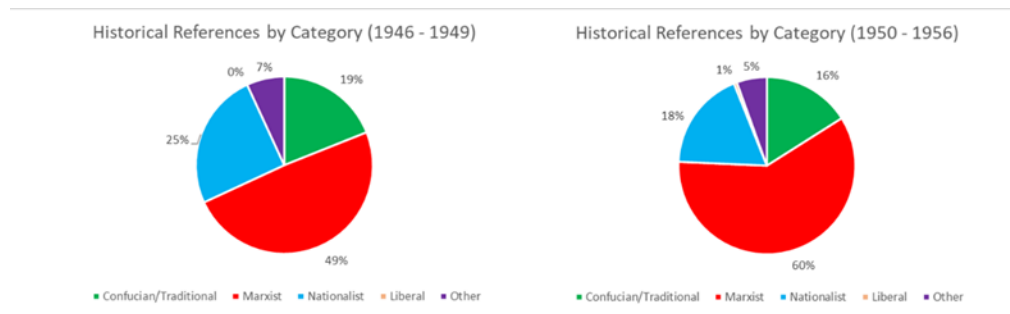


Figure 2.8 References by category divided by diachronic sections, 3) Civil War (1946-1949), 4) PRC Establishment (1950-1956).

The third period, encompassing the Civil War against the GMD, shows continued substantial usage by Mao of the Confucian/Traditional and Marxist frameworks and an elevated level for the Nationalist framework, rising to 25%. Mao transformed his use of the Nationalist framework, previously aimed at Chinese collaborators and the Japanese, reorienting it to target the GMD and the United States. In addition, as the CPC forces rapidly advanced during the Civil War, and Mao became the nation's leader, he used the unifying effect of the Nationalist framework to cement his rule over the New China.

The fourth period, the years immediately following the PRC founding, displayed a relative decrease in the Nationalist framework, although the anti-GMD and anti-American rhetoric was

Work Methods." Mao carried out even more heavy-handed editing of "On the New Phase," only retaining certain portions on the "Sinification of Marxism" and "independence and autonomy," which he included in the book under the title "The Chinese Communist Party's Position in the National War of Resistance."

maintained throughout the Korean War and the first Taiwan Strait crises.¹²⁹ The Marxist framework surged to 60%, supporting several political objectives. For example, this period saw the initiation for the PRC's first five-year plan, borrowing heavily from the Soviet experience, unsurprising as Soviet officials had substantial input on its drafting.¹³⁰ During the Gao-Rao affair, Mao used memory of CPC history to link Gao Gang and Rao Shushi to disgraced figures and enable their suppression. Finally, Stalin's death offered an opportunity to display Mao's goodwill to the Soviet Union, and thereby levy additional aid, recollecting the Soviet assistance under Stalin to the CPC and the valuable example he set for the PRC to follow.

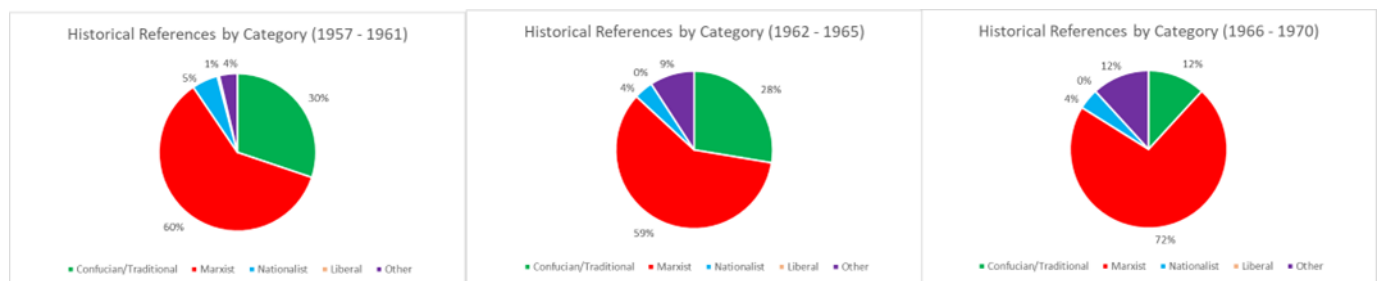


Figure 2.9 References by category divided by diachronic sections, 5) Great Leap Forward (1957-1961), 6) Interim (1962-1965), 7) Cultural Revolution (1966-1970).

Category distribution remained relatively stable between the fifth and sixth periods, covering the Great Leap Forward and the interim prior to the Cultural Revolution. This consistency may indicate that Mao maintained similar political objectives for both periods, despite a regression in his volume of usage in the sixth period. In both instances, the percentage of the Nationalist framework appears to have almost completely collapsed compared with previous periods, likely indicating Mao's security with his rule as national leader. However, at this time Mao competed with Khrushchev, and his successors, for leadership of the international communist movement. The Marxist framework proved essential as one of the main arenas of competition ideologically, especially related to the historical memory of Stalin. In addition, it

¹²⁹ For a brief summary of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis see Allen Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950-96, and Taiwan," *International Security*, Vol 26, No.2, Fall 2001, pages 108-111.

¹³⁰ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 411-412, Kindle Edition.

played a key role justifying the deviations of the Great Leap Forward from the proscribed Soviet course. Furthermore, that competition shifted from Mao seeking authority over the Communist bloc to open conflict with the Soviet Union. In this instance, Mao attempted to paint the Soviet Union as reactionary, with Mao and the PRC as the authentic Communists, and he did so by further use of the Marxist framework.¹³¹

The Confucian/Traditional framework also grew to approximately 30% for both periods. The “Hundred Flowers” Campaign itself took its name from this narrative framework, and Mao referred to it repeatedly to generate support for the campaign. As the “Hundred Flowers” transformed into the Anti-Rightist campaign, Mao turned to this narrative to undermine intellectuals. This focus on intellectuals and culture continued for Mao during the sixth phase and included substantial usage of the Confucian/Traditional framework. Perhaps the most consequential was his engagement in denouncing the historical work, *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, as an instrumental use of historical memory to condemn any criticisms of Mao’s denouncement of Peng Dehuai.¹³²

The seventh and final period encompasses the Cultural Revolution up until the point Mao’s discourse dissipates in 1970. The Confucian/Traditional framework shrinks to its lowest percentage but does not disappear totally. The “Smash the Four Olds” campaign stifled such usage by the general population, but Mao could exercise his privilege as core leader to violate this taboo as he pleased.¹³³ He continued to make extensive use of it in the continued “red vs expert” discourse, citing historical figures held in high regard despite little to no formal schooling. On the other hand, the Marxist framework surged to its highest level at 72%. This framework, centered on Mao’s personal history, served as a main

¹³¹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War (New Cold War History)*, page 82, Kindle Edition.

¹³² For a discussion of the political implications of the Hai Rui play see Tom Fisher’s chapter, “‘The Play’s the Thing’: Wu Han and Hai Rui,” in Unger, Jonathan. *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China (Contemporary China Papers)* pages 24-28, Kindle Edition.

¹³³ The Four Olds (四舊): Old Ideas, Old Culture, Old Customs, Old Habits. Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 510, Kindle Edition.

animating force for the Cultural Revolution, and previous historical memory of alleged deviations was dredged up to browbeat Mao's opponents, both real and imagined. These attacks came in the form of either direct recollection of perceived missteps or association with disgraced figures and concepts. From a foreign policy perspective, Mao claimed to the leaders of liberation movements that his version of Marxism was superior to that peddled by the Soviet leadership, pointing to the Marxist framework to make his case.

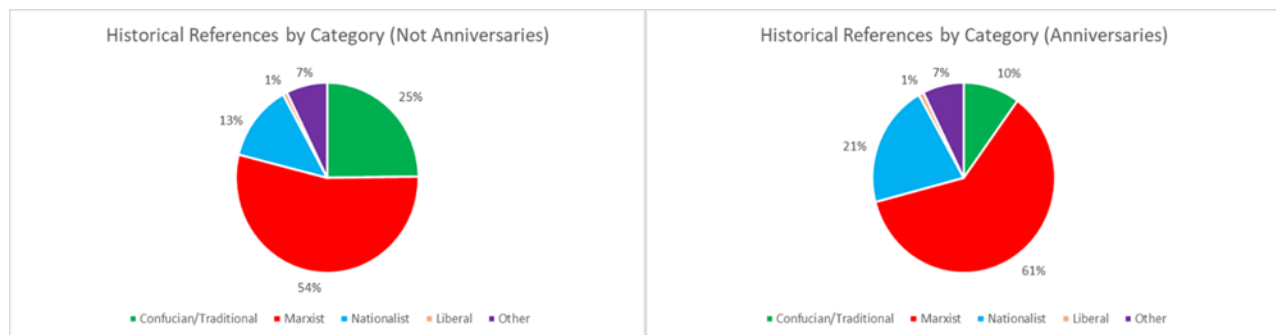


Figure 2.10 References by category between events marking anniversaries and those that did not.

Mao used anniversaries as opportunities to advance his political objectives and bolster his status. These anniversaries can largely be categorized in two sometimes overlapping categories, Chinese and Communist. As such, it comes as little surprise that there appears to be a slight elevation of Nationalist and Marxist frameworks used in discourse marking these events.

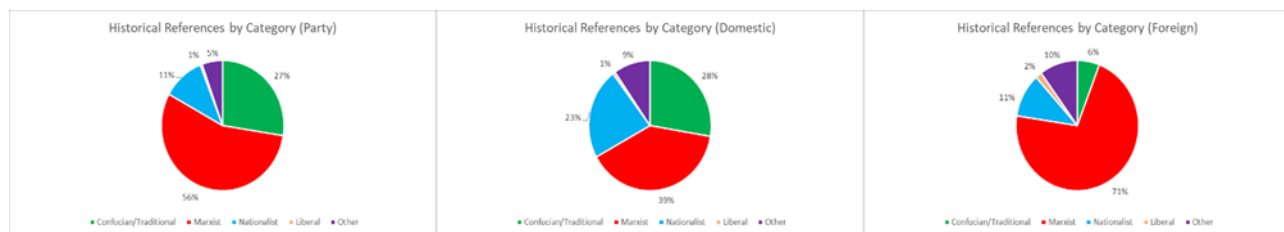


Figure 2.11 References by category by primary audiences: Party, Domestic, and Foreign.

The distribution of instrumental uses also differs based on Mao's intended audience. For texts aimed primarily at the CPC, Mao used all three major frameworks, with the majority conforming to the Marxist framework. Although this majority shows its importance in discourse aimed at the Party, the

combined 38% representing the Confucian/Traditional and Nationalist frameworks illustrate Mao's effort to implement a Sinification of Marxism. This breakdown reflects the contours of internal power struggles within the CPC, with a dominant position for its Marxist character but with Mao leveraging Chinese elements to enhance his position.

On the other hand, Mao's discourse aimed at a wider domestic audience shows an increase in the Nationalist framework. Mao sought to present himself as a national resistance figure, first fighting Japanese imperialism, and later against the GMD, which he presented as "running dogs" (鷹犬) serving American imperialism.¹³⁴ The Confucian/Traditional framework appears consistent as Mao continued to leverage it to form connections with his Chinese audience.

Mao's discourse aimed at foreign audiences shows a heavy reliance on the Marxist framework at 71% to the near exclusion of the Confucian/Traditional. This drop likely reflects Mao's understanding that the Confucian/Traditional narrative would have far less value to international audiences, who lacked the educational and cultural background to fully recognize and engage with it when used. The selective reining in of this framework indicates Mao's awareness of its relative utility and further displays his instrumental intent, both when using and when refraining from it. On the other hand, the Marxist framework was especially potent for this audience, in which Mao mostly, although not exclusively, dealt with foreigners who shared his Marxist disposition. When seeking vital support from the Soviet Union, Mao often used the collective memory that resonated best with his Soviet counterparts. As relations soured, Mao sought to present Beijing as an alternative power base rivaling Moscow in International Communism and national liberation. He continued to rely on the Marxist framework to argue that his theories were legitimately Marxist, while Khrushchev and his successors had fallen into a reactionary stance. The Nationalist framework remained present and aided the task in separating the PRC's

¹³⁴ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1919-1949)*: Volume X, page lxxix, Kindle Edition.

experience from that of the Soviets, specifically highlighting experiences of colonialism and imperialism when addressing national liberation.¹³⁵ Mao carefully calibrated his inclusion of frameworks based upon his audience, and the specific objectives he pursued by engaging with them within his discourse.

Throughout his career, Mao Zedong instrumentally used historical memory. In his struggle for supremacy, he cultivated both absolute political power and ideological primacy. As he pursued core leadership, Mao solidified his hold on power through the active reconstruction of CPC history, crafting a narrative with himself as the protagonist. Although Mao managed to achieve dominion over the Party by 1945, it was not until Stalin's death that the final alternative source of legitimating authority faded away. In the years that followed, he continued to selectively employ historical memory to justify his policy proposals and advance his vision for the PRC. His hold on core leadership would be far stronger and more lasting than any of his successors. However, at several junctions Mao did have to temporarily cede influence to the benefit of the collective leadership. Mapping Mao's invocation of historical memory reveals a series of rises and falls, generally coinciding with his relative authority as core leader. Furthermore, Mao made consistent use of the three narrative frameworks: Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist. However, that usage varied consistently across time and differed depending on his intended primary audience. Mao used each of these frameworks with the specific intent of cultivating core leadership or generating support for his preferred policies. The following section will examine instances of Mao's usage of each framework and illustrate the political benefit he attempted to derive from it.

Frameworks

Mao's instrumental use of historical memory conformed mostly to three of the narrative frameworks, each of which served distinctive functions to advance his core leadership. Mao made

¹³⁵ For Example see: "Mao Zedong, 'We Hope the Arab Countries Will Unite,'" March 23, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong on Diplomacy (Beijing : Foreign Languages Press, 1998), 429-431. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118557>, Accessed 12/13/2023. "Both our countries were subjected to colonial oppression. You were under French domination, while we were under the domination of several imperialist powers."

extensive use of the Confucian/Traditional framework throughout his career. It served an essential function as an illustrative tool and as a common set of reference points among Mao's Chinese audience. This framework allowed Mao to give expression to complex theories of historical development and international relations in more digestible bites. In addition, it played a crucial role to moderate the Marxist framework and contribute to the Sinification of Marxism within Mao Zedong Thought.

A primary function of the Confucian/Traditional framework for Mao lay in its capacity to conceptualize history as an instructive guide to resolve contemporary problems. Dr. Li, Mao's personal physician, noted the numerous occasions in which Mao discussed Chinese history and philosophy.¹³⁶ In Mao's use of the Confucian/Traditional framework, history, especially concerning China's ancient and dynastic past, served as a guide to navigate contemporary issues. Mao appeared to assume that many shared his historical approach and filled his discourse with references harvested from that memory. Mao not only sought to control what was remembered but to influence the method of remembering itself. For example, in September 1941, Mao consolidated his control over the Party and provided guidance on how cadres should conduct investigations and surveys. Within that discussion, he recalled the Song Dynasty figure Su Dongpo and his approach to historiography. Mao instructed:

In studying history, Su Dongpo used the method of "facing the enemy on eight sides," and he used the same method to study the Song dynasty, which is also correct. In our study of Chinese society today, we should also apply a method of "facing the enemy on four sides," dividing our studies into four parts—political, economic, cultural, and military—arriving at a conclusion on the Chinese revolution.¹³⁷

Mao used Su as an illustration to advance his preferred method of study, establishing himself as the authority on the proper method to conduct investigations for cadres. In a 1958 party speech, Mao proclaimed his view on what qualities were required to properly write history. He described:

According to Liu-Chih (sic) of the T'ang Dynasty, to write history, one must have talent, learning and understanding. Understanding does not indicate knowledge it indicates a knowledge of the wind direction. We

¹³⁶ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 85, Kindle Edition. "So Mao made me his conversation partner, encouraging me to read his favorite historical and philosophical texts, and spent hours every week talking to me."

¹³⁷ Stuart Schram(Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 945, Kindle Edition. For more on the development in historical texts during the Song period see Gernet, Jacques, trans J.R. Foster & Charles Hartman, *A History of Chinese Civilization: Vol I*, pages 342-344. "These moralizing tendencies, the emphasis on the problem of dynastic legitimacy, and the search for an ethical significance in history were typical of the Sung age and in harmony with the new directions being taken in Chinese philosophy." For more on Su Dongpo see Wills, John, *Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History*, pages 149-167.

must give special attention and be expert in determining the wind direction and possess the power to make distinctions. This is extremely important. Even though some people may be very talented and learned, they may be slow in distinguishing wind direction.¹³⁸

Mao extended his recommendation for studying history to the historical novel *Dreams of the Red*

Chamber. In fact, Mao advised:

Hung Lou Meng is worth reading. It is a good book. We should read it not for its story but as history. It is a historical novel. Its language is the best in classical fiction. The author, Ts'ao Hsueh-ch'in, had made a lively portrayal of Feng Tzu. The characterization of Feng Tzu is excellent. You won't be able to do the same. If you don't read Hung Lou Meng, how could you know about feudal society?¹³⁹

Mao's use of classical Chinese novels as artefacts of historical memory will be explored in further detail

below, but here he makes clear that historical memory can be effectively communicated in this form. Mao instrumentally used the Confucian/Traditional framework to advocate mining the past for guidance to navigate the present, including approaching formal investigations and the historical process itself.

Mao also used the Confucian/Traditional framework to better explain his military theories. His treatise, *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*, published December 1936, showcased his approach to military strategy. Since the Zunyi conference, Mao had competed with other members of the CPC, including official representatives from Moscow, on advocating the best military strategy.¹⁴⁰ Mao argued for reliance on a style of guerilla warfare that deemphasized positional warfare in favor of a more mobile defense.¹⁴¹ In his description, this strategy enabled a managed transformation in the power balance between the attacker and defender by exhausting the attacker and positioning the defender to strike at the most opportune moment. To build support for his strategy, Mao referred to ancient Chinese military

¹³⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speeches At The Second Session Of The Eighth Party Congress III," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_10.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023 For a brief description of Tang developments in historiography and contributions by Liu Chih see Gernet, Jacques, trans J.R. Foster & Charles Hartman, *A History of Chinese Civilization: Vol I*, pages 271-272.

¹³⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IX*, "Conversations With Wang Hai-jung," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_87.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁴⁰ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 123, Kindle Edition.

¹⁴¹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 120, Kindle Edition. "Within the triumvirate, Wang Jiaxiang's relations with Mao were relatively close, but he too had doubts regarding Mao's military strategies. Even before the triumvirate was established, Wang had frequently argued with Mao about battle command issues and he had repeatedly asked for a Central Committee meeting to discuss military operations.⁹ After the triumvirate was formed, Wang objected to Mao's mobile warfare strategies and he told Zhang Wentian that such running around in circles was not working."

history for examples supporting its plausibility. According to Mao, the best method to counter a strong opponent lay in the precepts, “The enemy advances, we retreat. The enemy camps, we harass. The enemy tires, we attack. The enemy retreats, we pursue.”¹⁴² In another example, he recalled an episode from the Spring and Autumn period of switching from the defensive to the offensive once the enemy tired or culminated:

During the Spring and Autumn Era, when the states of Lu and Chi were at war, Duke Chuang of Lu wanted to attack before the Chi troops had tired themselves out, but Tsao Kuei prevented him. When instead he adopted the tactic of “the enemy tires, we attack”, he defeated the Chi army. This is a classic example from China’s military history of a weak force defeating a strong force.¹⁴³

To reinforce his point on the plausibility of his method, Mao presented a series of other examples of a weaker force defeating a stronger foe in Chinese military history, if they followed his prescribed military strategy.

China’s military history contains numerous instances of victories won on these principles. In such famous battles as the Battle of Chengkao between the states of Chu and Han, the Battle of Kunyang between the states of Hsin and Han, the Battle of Kuantu between Yuan Shao and Tsao Tsao, the Battle of Chipi between the states of Wu and Wei, the Battle of Yiling between the states of Wu and Shu, and the Battle of Feishui between the states of Chin and Tsin, in each case the contending sides were unequal, and the weaker side, yielding some ground at first, gained mastery by striking only after the enemy had struck and so defeated the stronger side.¹⁴⁴

All the battles that Mao referenced are from China’s ancient past. Yet Mao felt comfortable citing these examples as instructive for the present. Furthermore, these battles were familiar to his desired Chinese audience as part of their collective historical memory. Mao sidestepped his competitors for authority over CPC military strategy by, at least in part, relying on China’s resident and long established martial historical memory.

¹⁴² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 124. This precept also bears a resemblance to a reference in the *Zuo zhuan*: “We should form three armies to carry out raids there. Then, when one army arrives there, the Chu forces are bound to march out all at once. But as their army marches out, ours will retreat, and when theirs returns home, ours will march out. Chu is certain to be worn down by all the traveling.” Plaks, Andrew., David. Schaberg, Wai-ye. Li, Stephen. Durrant, and Michael. Nylan. *Zuo Tradition / Zuo zhuan 左傳: Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*, University of Washington Press, 2016, page 1709.

¹⁴³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 212. For a brief overview of the Spring and Autumn period see Gernet, Jacques, trans J.R. Foster & Charles Hartman, *A History of Chinese Civilization: Vol I*, pages 47-56.

¹⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, pages 212-213. Three of the battles mentioned: Guandu, Chibi, and Yiling, are all recounted as pivotal events in *Romance of The Three Kingdoms*. The other battles were pivotal events in both the Han Dynasty and the Jin Dynasty, bracketing the Three Kingdoms period.

Mao recognized the value of cultivating historical memory and the usefulness of historical novels to facilitate that process. At the tenth plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in 1962, he declared:

Writing novels is popular these days, isn't it? The use of novels for anti-Party activity is a great invention. Anyone wanting to overthrow a political régime must create public opinion and do some preparatory ideological work. This applies to counter-revolutionary as well as to revolutionary classes.¹⁴⁵

One of the main avenues that Mao employed to shape public memory was through the essayist Guo Moruo. At the height of the Yan'an Rectification movement, Mao praised Guo's work portraying Li Zicheng, the leader of the peasant revolt that brought down the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), but soon thereafter lost to the Manchus:

Comrades throughout the Party should take warning from these instances of pride and error. Recently we have reprinted Kuo Mo-jo's essay on Li Tzu-cheng, so that comrades may also take warning from this story and not repeat the error of becoming conceited at the moment of success.¹⁴⁶

Mao would go on to directly compliment Guo's essay and declare it as an official document for the Rectification movement.¹⁴⁷ He went on to solicit Guo for additional historical works, with subjects chosen for their value in aiding Mao's political objectives. He requested a work on the Taiping rebellion, "If you can use your great pen to write about the experience of the Taiping army, it would be very beneficial."¹⁴⁸ Mao took steps to foster historical memory and commissioned works to that end for the explicit purpose of advancing his political objectives.

Perhaps one of the most consequential examples of Mao's engagements with the Confucian/Traditional framework was in reference to Yao Wenyan's work criticizing the play, *The Dismissal of Hai Rui from Office*, by Wu Han. According to Dr. Li, Mao originally enjoyed the play, and even thought it was useful as a political tool.¹⁴⁹ However, by 1965, Mao had switched his view, finding

¹⁴⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech At The Tenth Plenum Of The Eighth Central Committee," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_63.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁴⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume III*, page 174. For a brief description of Li Zicheng's rebellion see Gernet, Jacques, trans J.R. Foster & Charles Hartman, *A History of Chinese Civilization: Vol II*, pages 453-454.

¹⁴⁷ Schram, Stuart; Cheek, Timothy; MacFarquhar, Roderick, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 657, Kindle Edition

¹⁴⁸ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 657, Kindle Edition. For a brief discussion on the Taiping Rebellion and its origins see, Westad, Odd Arne, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*, pages 46-51.

¹⁴⁹ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 285, Kindle Edition.

condemning it as more valuable politically. As he set the stage for the Cultural Revolution, Mao amplified Yao's work, accusing the play of being a veiled political attack against him for his dismissal of Peng Dehuai.¹⁵⁰ He discussed the matter as part of a wider argument on the need to reform higher education to solicit politically beneficial works. He opined:

Today's philosophers can't turn out philosophy, writers can't write novels, and historians can't produce history. All they want to write about is emperors, kings, generals and ministers. Ch'i Pen-yu's article is excellent, I read it three times. Its defect is that it does not name names. Yao Wen-yuan's[8] article is also very good: it has had a great impact on theatrical, historical and philosophical circles. Its defect is that it did not hit the crux of the matter. The crux of Hai Jui Dismissed from Office was the question of dismissal from office. The Chia Ch'ing emperor dismissed Hai Jui from office. In 1959 we dismissed P'eng Te-huai from office. And P'eng Te-huai is Hai Jui too.¹⁵¹

Despite his earlier support, Mao reversed his opinion on Wu's play and injected a new meaning into it. That meaning envisioned an attack against Mao and gave license to read such assaults into other works touching on historical memory.

As the title implies, the Confucian/Traditional framework also included historical memory towards Confucius and other foundational philosophers from Chinese history. Mao, like many of his contemporaries, had received substantial training in the Confucian classics and they served as a convenient point of connection between himself and his Chinese audience. Furthermore, Mao used Confucius as he developed his credentials as a Marxist theoretician to differentiate his ideology from his more explicitly Marxist competitors. In February 1939, Mao discussed the concepts of unity and struggle and used the Confucian conception of proper relationships to explain his views. He stated:

Confucius said, "The gentleman agrees with others, without being an echo. The small man echoes without being in agreement." This is also the same as saying that there is struggle in unity. There are also both unification and struggle in the relationship between a father and a son, or between a ruler and his minister. On the one hand, the father loves his son, and his son is filial; the ruler is enlightened and his minister is worthy—this is loving and uniting, which is also unity. On the other hand, the son exhorts his father regarding his mistakes and the minister remonstrates with the king regarding his errors. This is struggle, or what today is called education by persuasion.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 440, Kindle Edition.

¹⁵¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IX*, "Speech At Hangchow," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_44.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁵² Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 122, Kindle Edition. The quote references The Confucian Analects XIII, para 23. (子曰：「君子和而不同，小人同而不和」), <https://ctext.org/analects/zi-lu>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

Mao quoted Confucius to elucidate his Marxist conception of unity-struggle-unity and grounded it within Confucian/Traditional historical memory. While he gives Confucius some credit, Mao presented the position of the CPC as advancing beyond it. In one example, Mao tethers the concept of the Doctrine of the Mean to rightist and leftist deviations.

In the article it is best to quote from the Doctrine of the Mean, . . . This annotation is basically correct, but "the two extremes" should not be explained simply as "the extremes of public opinion" but, rather, should be explained clearly to refer to "excess" and "falling short." "Excess" is a "leftist" thing, and "falling short" is a "rightist" thing. According to our present point of view, excess and falling short refer to the movements of a certain object in time and space.¹⁵³

Here Mao used Confucius to legitimize his conception of leftist and rightist deviations. Although avoiding full-throated support, Mao used Confucius as a method for Sinicizing Marxism in his theory building.

Using historical memory of Confucius as a negative was another prevalent aspect of Mao's discourse. Confucianism often was associated with what Mao described as China's feudal past and perceived failures in reform efforts during the Qing Dynasty, as well as association with Jiang Jieshi and the GMD. One avenue of attack against Confucius, and those contemporaries Mao associated with him, was on the value of practical knowledge of material reality over idealized theory. This critique pivoted smoothly into Mao's conception of seeking truth from facts. In a discussion on the youth movement in 1939, Mao used Confucius as a negative example. He explained:

You have been carrying out the campaign for production and have reclaimed thousands of mou of waste land. Confucius never reclaimed land or tilled the soil. When he ran his school, he had quite a number of students, "seventy worthies and three thousand disciples"--quite a flourishing school! But he had far fewer students than there are in Yen-an, and what is more, they would have disliked production campaigns. When a student asked him how to plough the fields, Confucius answered, "I don't know, I am not as good at that as a farmer." Confucius was next asked how to grow vegetables, and he answered, "I don't know, I am not as good at that as a vegetable gardener." In ancient times the youth of China who studied under a sage neither learned revolutionary theory nor took part in labour. Today, there is little revolutionary theory taught and there are no such things as production movements in the schools over vast regions of our country.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 128, Kindle Edition. For a further discussion on Confucian philosophical concept of government by the superior man exercising between law and benevolence see Hsiao, Kung-Chuan, *History of Chinese Political Thought: Volume I: From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century A.D.*, pages 116-123.

¹⁵⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, page 248. Confucius, *Analects*, XIII, para 4. (樊遲請學稼，子曰：「吾不如老農。」請學為圃。曰：「吾不如老圃。」樊遲出。子曰：「小人哉，樊須也！上好禮，則民莫敢不敬；上好義，則民莫敢不服；上好信，則民莫敢不用情。夫如是，則四方之民襁負其子而至矣，焉用稼？」) Legge Translation, "Fan Chi requested to be taught husbandry. The Master said, 'I am not so good for that as an old husbandman.'" He requested also to be taught gardening, and was answered, 'I am not so

Mao argued for the need to teach practical knowledge, such as agricultural production, in schools alongside revolutionary theory. Furthermore, in his estimation, Confucius' style of education was inferior to that proposed by Mao. In 1957, Mao launched the "Hundred Flowers" Campaign. Mao described his purpose for the campaign as allowing various schools of thoughts to engage in direct contention and foster development through struggle. In his construction, correct theories would improve through their interaction with faulty criticisms. He explained:

In short, fragrant flowers stand in contrast to poisonous weeds and develop in struggle with them. It is a dangerous policy to prohibit people from coming into contact with the false, the ugly and the hostile, with idealism and metaphysics and with the twaddle of Confucius, Lao Tzu and Chiang Kai-shek. It will lead to mental deterioration, one-track minds, and unpreparedness to face the world and meet challenges.¹⁵⁵

Mao clearly displayed a disdain for Confucius in this instance, even associating him with Jiang Jieshi.

However, he claimed value in allowing people to engage with Confucianism, presumably so long as it enabled the strengthening of support for his governing philosophy.

Mao reached beyond Confucius alone for philosophers to mine in his use of the Confucian/Traditional framework. Mencius also made several appearances throughout Mao's discourse. At his concluding speech of the Seventh Party Congress, Mao quoted and even praised Mencius. He argued:

The Brain is the "office of the mind," it is the organ of thought. This organ has only one duty, and that is "to think." Mencius once said, "the office of the mind is to think." He assigned this task to the brain as early as two thousand years ago. Our whole Party should encourage people to think.¹⁵⁶

good for that as an old gardener." Fan Chi having gone out, the Master said, "A small man, indeed, is Fan Xu! If a superior man love propriety, the people will not dare not to be reverent. If he love righteousness, the people will not dare not to submit to his example. If he love good faith, the people will not dare not to be sincere. Now, when these things obtain, the people from all quarters will come to him, bearing their children on their backs - what need has he of a knowledge of husbandry?" <https://ctext.org/analects/zi-lu>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

¹⁵⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 366.

¹⁵⁶ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 908, Kindle Edition. Mencius Gaozi, Part I, para 15, 「耳目之官不思，而蔽於物，物交物，則引之而已矣。心之官則思，思則得之，不思則不得也。此天之所與我者，先立乎其大者，則其小者弗能奪也。此為大人而已矣。」 Legge Translation: "Mencius answered, 'The senses of hearing and seeing do not think, and are obscured by external things. When one thing comes into contact with another, as a matter of course it leads it away. To the mind belongs the office of thinking. By thinking, it gets the right view of things; by neglecting to think, it fails to do this. These - the senses and the mind - are what Heaven has given to us. Let a man first stand fast in the supremacy of the nobler part of his constitution, and the inferior part will not be able to take it from him. It is simply this which makes the great man.'"

<https://ctext.org/mengzi/gaozi-i>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

He positively referred to Mencius again in 1953, “‘All men have a sense of shame,’ and if a man has no sense of shame, it's hopeless.”¹⁵⁷ In this case, Mao targeted an ideological opponent and critic of Marxist theory and accused him of shamelessness by invoking Mencius. Mao's use of Mencius appears to consist of selectively applying quotations to add an air of gravitas to his discourse.

In addition to Confucian philosophers, Mao also used the memory of thinkers from alternative schools in Chinese thought. Among those figures was the Daoist, Laozi. Similar to his usage of Mencius, Mao used selective quotes to illuminate his governing philosophy and facilitate transfiguring Marxist conceptions into a Chinese framework. For example, in 1949 the CPC began transitioning towards national leadership. Mao provided guidance for this transition through the Central Committee in a text titled, “Methods of Work of Party Committees.” Regarding sharing information, Mao instructed:

"Exchange information." This means that members of a Party committee should keep each other informed and exchange views on matters that have come to their attention. This is of great importance in achieving a common language. Some fail to do so and, like the people described by Lao Tzu, "do not visit each other all their lives, though the crowing of their cocks and the barking of their dogs are within hearing of each other". The result is that they lack a common language. In the past some of our high-ranking cadres did not have a common language even on basic theoretical problems of Marxism-Leninism, because they had not studied enough.¹⁵⁸

Mao directly quoted Laozi on the failure of individuals to communicate despite its relative ease.

Furthermore, he contextualized past failure as, in part, resulting from a failure to study Marxism-Leninism, thereby leading to a divergence in understanding and fracturing within the party. This impetus on enforcing a collective understanding of concepts across cadres served as a main objective of the

¹⁵⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 125. In this speech, Mao is criticizing Liang Shuming, an intellectual critical of Marxist theory. *Mencius*, Jin Xin, Part I, para 6, 孟子曰：「人不可以無恥。無恥之恥，無恥矣。」 Legge Translation, “Mencius said, 'A man may not be without shame. When one is ashamed of having been without shame, he will afterwards not have occasion to be ashamed.,’” <https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

¹⁵⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 378. Dao de Jing, Lao zi, para 80, 小國寡民。使有什伯之器而不用；使民重死而不遠徙。雖有舟輿，無所乘之，雖有甲兵，無所陳之。使民復結繩而用之，甘其食，美其服，安其居，樂其俗。鄰國相望，雞犬之聲相聞，民至老死，不相往來。 Legge Translation: In a little state with a small population, I would so order it, that, though there were individuals with the abilities of ten or a hundred men, there should be no employment of them; I would make the people, while looking on death as a grievous thing, yet not remove elsewhere (to avoid it). Though they had boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them; though they had buff coats and sharp weapons, they should have no occasion to don or use them. I would make the people return to the use of knotted cords (instead of the written characters). They should think their (coarse) food sweet; their (plain) clothes beautiful; their (poor) dwellings places of rest; and their common (simple) ways sources of enjoyment. There should be a neighbouring state within sight, and the voices of the fowls and dogs should be heard all the way from it to us, but I would make the people to old age, even to death, not have any intercourse with it. <https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

Rectification Movement. Mao extended his use of Laozi to the “Hundred Flowers” campaign. In a February 1957 address supporting that movement, he claimed:

In given conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results and a good thing to bad results. More than two thousand years ago Lao Tzu said: "Good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good." When the Japanese shot their way into China, they called this a victory. Huge parts of China's territory were seized, and the Chinese called this a defeat. But victory was conceived in China's defeat, while defeat was conceived in Japan's victory. Hasn't history proved this true?¹⁵⁹

Mao used Laozi to show that temporary setbacks may not necessarily be wholly negative and may indeed lead to eventually satisfactory results. According to Mao, just as Japan's invasion appeared devastating but spurred China towards victory, so too could the “Hundred Flowers” campaign provide the impetus to strengthen the CPC's guiding ideology. Although less common for the Confucian/Traditional framework, Mao did invoke Laozi in a meeting with a foreign representative in 1960. Praising his Cuban guest, Mao proclaimed:

Lao Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, observed, “How could one intimidate people with death while people fear no death?” Your past 30-year struggle steels you, two-and-half-year guerrilla warfare steels you, and the past year of the revolutionary regime steels you.¹⁶⁰

In this case, it is likely the Cuban representative, Blas Roca Calderio, lacked an intimate knowledge of Laozi, yet he relied on the quote as part of his flattery regardless.

Beyond philosophers, historians also featured within Mao's instrumental use of the Confucian/Traditional framework. Chief among those referenced was Han era (202 BCE – 220 CE) historian Sima Qian and his *Shiji*. Mao turned to Sima Qian, among others, to justify a break with the past during the Great Leap Forward. In a rather morbid case of gallows humor he joked:

I was happy to read a recent article by Comrade Fan Wen-lan. It was straight talk. Many facts cited in the article prove that respecting the modern and belittling the ancient is a Chinese tradition. He quoted Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Ssu-ma Kuang . . . but it is regrettable that he did not quote Ch'in-Shih-huang. He was an expert in respecting

¹⁵⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 416. Dao De Jing, Lao Zi, para 58, 其政悶悶，其民淳淳；其政察察，其民缺缺。禍兮福之所倚，福兮禍之所伏。孰知其極？其無正。正復為奇，善復為妖。人之迷，其日固久。是以聖人方而不割，廉而不劘，直而不肆，光而不耀。 Legge Translation: The government that seems the most unwise, Oft goodness to the people best supplies; That which is meddling, touching everything, Will work but ill, and disappointment bring. Misery! - happiness is to be found by its side! Happiness! - misery lurks beneath it! Who knows what either will come to in the end? Shall we then dispense with correction? The (method of) correction shall by a turn become distortion, and the good in it shall by a turn become evil. The delusion of the people (on this point) has indeed subsisted for a long time. Therefore the sage is (like) a square which cuts no one (with its angles); (like) a corner which injures no one (with its sharpness). He is straightforward, but allows himself no license; he is bright, but does not dazzle. <https://cext.org/dao-de-jing>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

¹⁶⁰ "Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong and Blas Roca Calderio, the Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba", April 28, 1960, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA. Translated by Zhang Qian. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115157>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

the modern and belittling the ancient . . . What did he amount to? He only buried alive 460 scholars, while we buried 46,000.¹⁶¹

Here Mao praised an article discussing Sima Qian disparaging the ancient in favor of modern developments, parallel to Mao's own efforts during the Great Leap Forward. Sima Qian was a valuable piece of historical memory to invoke. If one of China's most celebrated historians shared Mao's view, rejecting historical lessons in favor of modern advancement, then he had a ready counterpoint to anyone referencing history as a counterargument to his proposals. Another example of Mao using Sima Qian occurred as his power waned in 1962 in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward. Discussing the need for cadre rehabilitation he argued:

The things which Ssu-ma Ch'ien mentioned, apart from the example of Tso Ch'iu's going blind, all referred to the incorrect handling of the people concerned by the top leadership of the time. In the past we have also handled some cadres in an incorrect way. No matter whether we were completely mistaken in our handling of these people, or only partially mistaken, they should all be cleared and rehabilitated according to the actual circumstances.¹⁶²

In this case, Mao recontextualized errors suppressing cadres as a common and universal occurrence in Chinese history, diffusing potential blame directed at him.

Mao had a somewhat contentious relationship with Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. He would even go as far as to claim that he never even bothered to read it.¹⁶³ Despite these assertions, Mao does refer to Sun Tzu and his writings on occasion. One such incident was in his military text, *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*, a 1936 work aimed at advancing Mao's authority over military theory. Mao wrote:

Some people are good at knowing themselves and poor at knowing their enemy, and some are the other way round, neither can solve the problem of learning and applying the laws of war. There is a saying in the book of Sun Wu Tzu, the great military scientist of ancient China, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat", which refers both to the stage of learning and to the stage of application, both to knowing the laws of the development of objective reality and to deciding on our own action

¹⁶¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speeches At The Second Session Of The Eighth Party Congress I," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_10.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023 . Mao is referring to a suppression of opposition by first Qin dynast against intellectuals, including the burning of numerous texts and the execution of hundreds of scholars. See Gernet, Jacques, trans J.R. Foster & Charles Hartman, *A History of Chinese Civilization: Vol I*, page 104.

¹⁶² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Talk At An Enlarged Working Conference Convened By The Central Committee Of The Communist Party Of China," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_62.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁶³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 278-279.

in accordance with these laws in order to overcome the enemy facing us. We should not take this saying lightly.¹⁶⁴ Mao offered praise to Sun Tzu and used him to express an early enunciation of applying theory to material conditions, which would develop into Marxism applied to China's conditions. Later in the same text, Mao offered up another quotation from Sun Tzu on a different military subject. He observed, "When Sun Wu Tzu said, 'Avoid the enemy when he is full of vigour, strike when he is fatigued and withdraws,' he was referring to tiring and demoralizing the enemy so as to reduce his superiority."¹⁶⁵ In this case, Mao attempted to build legitimacy for his military theory of guerilla warfare. This strategy stood in direct contrast to some opponents who suggested a strategy focused on positional warfare tethered to urban centers.¹⁶⁶ Mao faced another struggle for authority over military strategy against advocates supported by the Soviet Union in the late 1950s. In an address to the Military Affairs Committee, Mao proffered ancient Chinese knowledge as an alternative source of guidance opposed to merely echoing Soviet advice. He argued:

Li Shih-min, Ts'ao Ts'ao etc., all knew how to fight wars. China's past has quite a lot to offer. Comrade K'ai Feng said that the Sun-tzu ping-fa contained no Marxism, but when we asked him whether he had read it he could not answer. Obviously it is quite wrong to make categorical statements without having read it.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 190. *Art of War*, Sun Tzu, Chapter 3, para 6, "故曰：知彼知己，百戰不殆；不知彼而知己，一勝一負；不知彼，不知己，每戰必敗。 Giles Translation, "Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle." <https://ctext.org/art-of-war/attack-by-stratagem>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

¹⁶⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 217. *Art of War*, Sun Tzu, Chapter 7, para 5, 故三軍可奪氣，將軍可奪心。是故朝氣銳，晝氣惰，暮氣歸；故善用兵者，避其銳氣，擊其惰歸，此治氣者也。以治待亂，以靜待譁，此治心者也。以近待遠，以佚待勞，以飽待飢，此治力者也。 Giles Translation: "A whole army may be robbed of its spirit; a commander-in-chief may be robbed of his presence of mind. Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning; by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen, but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the art of studying moods. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy - this is the art of retaining self-possession. To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the enemy is famished - this is the art of husbanding one's strength." <https://ctext.org/art-of-war/maneuvering>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁶⁶ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 355, Kindle Edition.

¹⁶⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech At The Group Leaders' Forum Of The Enlarged Meeting Of The Military Affairs Committee," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_12.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. Li Shimin aka Emperor Taizong, second emperor of Tang. Cao Cao was a key figure during the Three Kingdoms period and patriarch of the Wei Kingdom.

In Mao's estimation, Chinese had a vast store of knowledge in fighting wars, so there was no reason to rely on the Soviets for advice on building a military.

A feature of China's historical memory is its transmission through historical novels. As noted earlier, Mao viewed novels as a vital arena in which to wage political competition. Furthermore, these novels served as touchstones, reconfiguring historical memory into cultural forms, such as plays, operas, paintings, and poetry. Although the novels take artistic license, they provide a common picture which informs collective memory. Mao articulated his position that to treat the novels as items of history was correct. For example, in response to Jiang Jieshi's *China's Destiny*, Mao asserted:

The Guomintang recently published a book written by Chiang Kaishek titled *China's Destiny*, in which he claimed that there would be no China without the Guomintang. It is not clear where he got his evidence. Any of you who have read books on history and fiction will recall that there is no Guomintang in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin*, *Investiture of the Gods*, or *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and yet China has always existed.¹⁶⁸

Mao found value in the novels as windows into Chinese culture and he treated them as sources of historical memory and valid points of mutual reference.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms (三国演义) depicts events during the waning years of the Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE) and the chaos that followed its collapse. The text itself is based on the dynastic history, *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (三国志), but in Chinese collective memory the novel and history have become so intertwined as to be nearly indistinguishable. Mao consistently used this memory throughout his discourse. For example, in 1939 as Mao advocated for continuing the United Front with the GMD against the Japanese, he used the Confucian/Traditional framework to portray collaborators as traitors. He argued:

In sum, there are many people of Wang Jingwei's ilk. Who are they? They are the hidden Wang Jingweis. They want to perform a "Zhang Song presents the map." In the era of the Three Kingdoms, there was a man named Zhang Song, who presented a map of western Sichuan to Liu Bei. As a result, Liu Bei entered Sichuan and founded the kingdom of Shu. Today, when the Japanese imperialists are invading China, Wang Jingwei is the first to present them with the map . . .¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 410, Kindle Edition.

¹⁶⁹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, pages 243-244, Kindle Edition. This episode involving Zhang Song is recalled in Chapter 60 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Wang Jingwei was formerly a senior leader

Mao compares collaborators with the figure of Zhang Song, whose disloyal actions led to the destruction of his liege. In another incident during the war, Mao used the *Three Kingdoms* as an illustration regarding the handling of prisoners. He instructed:

That is, the method of repeated capturing and releasing is better than killing, and its impact is greater. In releasing captives, there should be absolutely no posting of bail, and they should not be made to vow that they will never be puppet soldiers in the future. But they can be required to swear that they will not really help the Japanese oppose the New Fourth Army in the future. And if they do actually violate their oath and help Japan fight us, then we should still patiently carry out the policy of "seven times capturing Meng Huo."¹⁷⁰

Mao attempted to soften a potentially unpopular policy of freeing Chinese prisoners who aided the Japanese by conjuring up the image of a policy used by the renowned strategist Zhuge Liang.

Mao turned to the Confucian/Traditional framework to raise the spirits of the CPC forces who, in 1946, were substantially outnumbered by the GMD. To give confidence to his beleaguered forces, he invoked the Battle of Red Cliff(赤壁) (208 CE) to illustrate how a vastly inferior force could defeat a greater one. He recalled:

At present, the Guomindang may still have the strength to attack Yan'an, Lianshui, Linyi, and Yantai, and to launch some attacks in Shanxi, Chahar, Hebei, and the Northeast, but the others are not in much danger. If we do not analyze the enemy's strategy, it will be like the time when Cao, during the period of the Three Kingdoms, claimed he had a force of 830,000, causing a heated debate in the Kingdom of Eastern Wu. Chiang Kaishek's attack can be smashed, eliminating seventy to eighty of his brigades in six to twelve months.¹⁷¹

By highlighting an event immediately familiar with his Chinese audience, Mao made the argument that ultimate victory was plausible despite the disparity in forces.

Another novel which Mao extensively used was *Water Margin* (水浒传), set during the Northern Song (circa 1120). Mao used *Water Margin* in a similar fashion to *Three Kingdoms*, mining it for illustrations that connected with his Chinese audience. For example, within *On Contradiction*, a foundational text in his early efforts at establishing himself as a Marxist theoretician, Mao referred to a character from the novel stating:

within the GMD but at this point he defected from the organization, eventually forming a collaborationist government with Japan in Nanjing in 1940. For more on Wang Jingwei's activities during this period see Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II 1937-1945*, pages 279 – 296 & 303 – 310.

¹⁷⁰ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 930, Kindle Edition. This episode involving Meng Huo is recalled in Chapter 87 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

¹⁷¹ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1912-1949): Volume IX*, page 435, Kindle Edition. The Battle of Red Cliff (Chibi), and Zhou Yu's role covers multiple chapters of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: 45-50.

In the novel *Shui Hu Chuan*, Sung Chiang thrice attacked Chu Village. Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu and Chu Villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait, using a stratagem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story. And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in *Shui Hu Chuan*, of which the episode of the three attacks on Chu Village is one of the best.¹⁷²

In this case, Mao advocated following Song Jiang's example of investigating a situation first to determine its conditions, supporting his view of applying Marxist theory to material conditions. Furthermore, he credited the novel as having materialist dialectics. Mao referenced another character from *Water Margin* in a 1949 text when he cautioned Party members to maintain vigilance as they pursued fleeing GMD forces across the nation:

Only if we draw a clear line between reactionaries and revolutionaries, expose the intrigues and plots of the reactionaries, arouse the vigilance and attention of the revolutionary ranks, heighten our will to fight and crush the enemy's arrogance can we isolate the reactionaries, vanquish them or supersede them. We must not show the slightest timidity before a wild beast. We must learn from Wu Sung on the Chingyang Ridge. As Wu Sung saw it, the tiger on Chingyang Ridge was a man-eater, whether irritated or not. Either kill the tiger or be eaten by him -- one or the other.¹⁷³

Mao used Wu Song as a model of behavior and warned against underestimating a dangerous opponent like the GMD, regardless of their apparent condition. *Water Margin* provided Mao with examples for people to model their behavior in accordance with his governing philosophy.

As mentioned earlier, Mao found considerable historical value in *Dreams of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦). Dr. Li claims that this was one of Mao's favorite novels.¹⁷⁴ Mao's instrumental use of the novel matched that of the other works, focused on illustrations to help legitimize policy positions in a manner that connected with his Chinese audience. For example, at a 1938 speech at the Lu Xun Academy of Arts, Mao exhorted the students to model their work exploring facets of Chinese life on characters from the novel. He instructed:

Although it is true that artists must have ideals, they also must study details like how to climb into a saddle. In the past a man who studied *The Dream of the Red Chamber* said that he did indeed tour and survey Prospect Garden. Now your "Prospect Garden" is all China. Every one of you young artistic workers here is a Jia Baoyu

¹⁷² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 324. The three attacks are retold in the *Water Margin* chapters 47, 48, and 50.

¹⁷³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 416. This episode occurs Chapter 23 of the *Water Margin*.

¹⁷⁴ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 358, Kindle Edition.

or Lin Daiyu; you need really to live in and study your Prospect Garden. In your work, the “big outline” is all China, and the “small outline” is the Wutaishan district.¹⁷⁵

Consistent with his emphasis on practical knowledge, as part of his seek truth from facts mantra, Mao exhorted cultural creators to include practice in their works. In this case, he mitigated his instruction through a digestible reference using the Confucian/Traditional framework. In another example, Mao brushed off a peace offer by the GMD in January 1949, dismissing the prospect for the GMD military’s preservation as part of the peace negotiations. He explained:

Just as the life of Chia Pao-yu of the Grand View Garden depended upon a piece of jade in his necklace, the life of the Kuomintang depends upon its army, so how can one say that its army should not be “preserved”, or should only be “preserved” but not “definitely” so?¹⁷⁶

Mao used a reference to the novel to help illustrate his assertion that the GMD relied upon its army for survival and that without this military force it could not endure as a political entity.

China’s vast stores of historical memory offered Mao ample opportunity for instrumental use from the Confucian/Traditional Framework. This use included numerous instances depicting Chinese ancient history. Mao appeared to use this memory as useful contextual illustrations for his policies and to aid in the Sinification of Marxism in his governing philosophy. In his 1938 military treatise, *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla Warfare Against Japan*, Mao alluded to a well-known strategy from China’s ancient past to help explain his position. He wrote:

In our plan of operations against a converging attack by the enemy, we generally place our main force on interior lines. But when we have the strength to spare, we should use our secondary forces (such as the county or the district guerrilla units, or even detachments of the main force) on exterior lines to disrupt the enemy's communications and pin down his reinforcements. Should the enemy stay put in our base area, we may reverse the tactics, namely, leave some of our forces in the base area to invest the enemy while employing the main force to attack the region whence he has come and to step up our activities there, in order to induce him to withdraw and attack our main force; this is the tactic of “relieving the state of Chao by besieging the state of Wei.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 299, Kindle Edition. Jia and Lin are two of the principal characters in the *Dreams of the Red Chamber* novel.

¹⁷⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 311. Mao is referring here to the Gem of “Spiritual Perception” that Jia Baoyu possessed.

¹⁷⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, page 104. Footnote 10: “In 353 BC the state of Wei laid siege to Hantan, capital of the state of Chao. The king of the state of Chi, an ally of Chao, ordered his generals Tien Chi and Sun Pin to aid Chao with their troops. Knowing that the crack forces of Wei had entered Chao and left their own territory weakly garrisoned, General Sun Pin attacked the state of Wei whose troops withdrew to defend their own country. Taking advantage of their exhaustion, the troops of Chi engaged and routed them at Kueiling (northeast of the present Horse County in Shantung). The siege of Hantan, capital of Chao, was thus lifted. Since then Chinese strategists have referred to similar tactics as ‘relieving the state of Chao by besieging the state of Wei.’” The campaign is covered in biography chapters 73, 76, and 77 of the *Shiji*, <https://ctext.org/shiji>. Accessed 12/12/2023.

This reference to a strategy from the Warring State era (475 – 221 BCE) showed Mao associating his military strategy with a Chinese heritage, independent from Soviet advisors' experience, but immediately present in Chinese historical memory. In another example, Mao advocated for the complete overthrow of Jiang Jieshi in 1947 also using an ancient illustration:

There is a saying: "Until Qing Fu is done away with, the crisis in the state of Lu will not be over." Similarly, until the traitor Chiang Kaishek is removed, there will be no peace in the country. Therefore, to dispel our miseries, every Chinese has the right and obligation to punish the chief culprit of the Civil War and the traitor of our country.¹⁷⁸

In this case, Mao borrowed an adage from ancient Chinese history to advocate for his policy of complete victory in the Civil War. Ancient Chinese history provided Mao ample anecdotes to season his discourse during times of military conflict to make it more digestible to his Chinese audiences.

In addition, Mao also used memory from this era in domestic affairs. One of the most enduring legacies adopted by Mao's successors was his use of the "Hundred Flowers Bloom and Hundred Schools Contend" motif. This motif referenced the cultural and philosophical flourishing of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period which was foundational for the Confucian/Traditional framework.¹⁷⁹ In its original conception, Mao proposed adopting this policy to strengthen Party spirit and allow for a greater development in the cultural sphere. Laying the groundwork for a loosening of restrictions at a meeting of the CPC Political Bureau in 1956, Mao asserted:

In the field of arts, "Let a hundred flowers bloom"; and in the literary field, "Let a hundred schools of thought contend" (as they contended during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period [722- 481 B.C.]) This should be our policy. This was the view of the people 2,000 years ago.¹⁸⁰

Mao plainly recommended adopting a similar policy in selective fields. He even used this memory to initially praise the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. In a meeting with an Albanian delegation in February 1967, Mao explained:

Emperor Qin Shi Huang reigned for 16 years and was overthrown. The first who rebelled were two people named Chen Sheng and Wu Guang. Those two were serfs at that time. Now, the Red Guards who write a

¹⁷⁸ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1912-1949): Volume X*, pages 16-17, Kindle Edition. This construction appears also in: Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 384. Qing Fu's exploits can be found in the *Shiji*, Chapter 33, para 33-35.

¹⁷⁹ For a brief discussion on the interaction of the various schools of thought during this period see Hsiao Kung-Chuan: *History of Chinese Political Thought: Volume 1: From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century, A.D.*, pages 65-69.

¹⁸⁰ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech at Expanded Meeting of CPC Political Bureau," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_468.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

dazibao in China, these people who were attacked last summer as counterrevolutionaries, are precisely Chen Shengs and Wu Gangs.¹⁸¹

Although this historical memory would likely have less resonance with this foreign audience, Mao still made clear, both to them as well as the Chinese state officials present, that he viewed the Red Guards' activity favorably.

The historical memory of the Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE) also made numerous appearances within Mao's discourse. This use included developing his individual military theory by harvesting examples of armed struggles from associated historical memory. Recalling a well-known stratagem from that period, Mao proposed:

On our part, we can deliberately make the enemy commit errors, that is, we can mislead him and manoeuvre him into the desired position by ingenious and effective moves with the help of a well-organized local population, for example, by "making a feint to the east but attacking in the west."¹⁸²

This quote refers to a deception by the Han Dynasty founder Liu Bang aimed at his opponent, Xiang Yu. Mao embraced the military concept of deception, often associated with a Chinese Way of War.

The struggle between Liu Bang and Xiang Yu appears repeatedly in Mao's discourse, particularly related to the ultimate defeat of Xiang Yu. Mao used this memory as a foil to his main opponent for national leadership, Jiang Jieshi. Creating such an association benefited Mao as, if successful, Jiang's failure became inevitable while Mao, by contrast, associated himself with the foundation of a new prestigious dynasty. In October 1948, Mao insulted Jiang for his retreat stating:

His task finished, he has nothing left to do in Beiping, so yesterday he slipped back to Nanjing. Chiang Kaishek is not Xiang Yu and is too lacking in shame to avoid "facing the people east of the Yangzi River." He wants to keep living, and he wants to play some tricks to incite his dispirited armies and people.¹⁸³

In this case, Mao labeled Jiang as less honorable than Xiang Yu, who, rather than retreat after defeat, faced Liu Bang in a fatal, but honorable, last stand. Of course, if Jiang had embraced this role, he would have failed and a dangerous opponent for Mao would have been removed permanently.

¹⁸¹ "Memorandum of Conversation between Chairman Mao Zedong and Comrades Hysni Kapo and Beqir Balluku", February 3, 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AQSH, F. 14/AP, M-PKK, V. 1967, Dos. 6, Fl. 12-32. Obtained and translated by Elidor Mëhilli. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117302>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁸² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, page 180. The rebellion by these two figures began in 209 BCE and was joined by Xiang Yu and Liu Bang. Jacques Gernet, J.R. Foster & Charles Hartman (Trans), *A History of Chinese Civilization: Vol I*, page 105. "Making a feint to the east but attacking in the west," (聲東擊西) is the sixth of the thirty-six stratagems.

¹⁸³ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1912-1949): Volume X*, page 434, Kindle Edition.

Beyond mere political control, Mao attempted to shape the conduct of cadres and even the general population through various campaigns.¹⁸⁴ To accomplish this task, to elevate and denigrate role models according to his political objectives, Mao relied on the Confucian/Traditional framework. One important historical memory which Mao invested in was the Daoist fable of the “Foolish Old Man Who Removes the Mountains.”¹⁸⁵ As he consolidated his core leadership at the Seventh National Party Congress, Mao used the story to summarize the political goals that he oriented the party towards. He declared:

There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains". It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. He called his sons, and hoe in hand they began to dig up these mountains with great determination. Another graybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up those two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?¹⁸⁶

Mao used this parable as a stand in for the current situation facing China, with the CPC as the old man, the mountains as the obstacles of Imperialism and Feudalism, and the Chinese masses as God(s). Furthermore, the task that Mao assigned to the CPC should be viewed as a generational process that would take monumental efforts. As such, Mao instructed Party members to take the Old Man as their standard and centered the task before the CPC as a national project.

As Mao aged, he increasingly cited the Chinese youth as the drivers of revolutionary progress. This group's elevation allowed Mao to pressure and even circumvent the Party leadership as his influence

¹⁸⁴ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People (Studies in Rhetoric & Communication)*, page 1, Kindle Edition. “Mao’s words represented what the CCP (CPC) felt to be the highest truth and still serve as the foundation of political discourse in contemporary China. His rhetoric has fundamentally transformed China—from a Confucian society characterized by hierarchy and harmony to a socialist state guided by Communist ideologies of class struggle and radicalization.”

¹⁸⁵ *Liezi*, Tang Wen, para 3, 汝心之固，固不可徹，曾不若孀妻弱子。雖我之死，有子存焉；子又生孫，孫又生子；子又有子，子又有孫；子子孫孫，無窮匱也，而山不加增，何苦而不平？」 <https://ctext.org/liezi/tang-wen>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

¹⁸⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume III*, page 322. Also appears in: Schram, Stuart; Cheek, Timothy; MacFarquhar, Roderick, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 842, Kindle Edition.

waned. However, placing the youth at the forefront of politics ran counter to deference to seniority, which is a major force within Chinese political culture.¹⁸⁷ Mao sought to trump seniority by selective use of the Confucian/Traditional framework, highlighting celebrated historical figures who instituted substantial societal changes in their youth. For example, in 1958 Mao posited that many great thinkers began their work at an early age and therefore it was nothing exceptional to invest the youth with responsibility:

From ancient times the people who have created new schools of thought have always been young people without great learning. Confucius started at the age of twenty-three; and how much learning did Jesus have? Sakyamuni founded Buddhism at the age of nineteen; his learning was only acquired gradually later on. What learning did Sun Yat-sen have in his youth? He only went through higher middle school.¹⁸⁸

Mao targeted the youth as a motivating force to overcome resistance to his Great Leap Forward program from certain party elites. He reinforced the point at the second session of the Eighth Party Congress in which he gave several more examples of youth being invested with authority throughout Chinese history. He argued:

Since ancient times, whenever the scholars or inventors created a new school of thought, they have always started young, possessed not much learning, and were scorned and oppressed. Not until later did they grow into adults and become learned . . . Confucius had no position in his youth. He worked as a bugler and drummer and served as the master of ceremony at funerals. Later on he taught. Although he became a government official and once served as the chief of the judicial department in the Kingdom of Lu, it was only for a short time . . . Both Chou Yu and K'ung Ming were young men. K'ung Ming served as the military chief of staff at age 27. Sun Wu's original commanding general Ch'eng P'u was an old man, but when Sun Wu attacked Ts'ao Ts'ao, he used Chou Yu as the commanding general, ranking him above Ch'eng P'u . . . My purpose in citing so many examples is to show that the young people must surpass the old and the less educated can excel the more educated.¹⁸⁹

Mao sought to provide overwhelming evidence for the viability of the youth leading at the expense of the entrenched cadres. This maneuver provided an alternative power base which Mao presumably could use to push forward his policy preferences by becoming the arbiter of the conflict between the Party and the youth as core leader.

Parallel to his elevation of the youth, Mao also took aim at the educated and academics. Mao chaffed from periodic resistance to his policies from elements of the intelligentsia. In addition, China relied heavily on the Soviet Union prior to the Sino-Soviet split for technical support. Seeking to cement

¹⁸⁷ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, pages 139-140.

¹⁸⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Talks At The Chengtu Conference II," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_06.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023 .

¹⁸⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speeches At The Second Session Of The Eighth Party Congress I," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_10.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

his core leadership against any competition from Moscow, or Chinese technocrats trained by the Soviets, Mao fostered a campaign that targeted academics as a means of securing his authority. Mao attempted to bypass the authority of those who recommended reliance on technical training and support from the Soviet Union. Such experts stood as an obstacle that might impede the implementation of his policies, executed by the less qualified but more enthusiastic and dedicated. A year prior to the start of the Cultural Revolution Mao denigrated what could be considered excessive deference to higher education:

A good many philosophers did not study in universities . . . Hegel also was not a specialist in philosophy and his learning was very profound. Kant was an astronomer, and his theory of heavenly bodies is still valuable today. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin also were not specialists in philosophy.¹⁹⁰ Medical education should be reformed. There's no need to read so many books. How many years did Hua T'o spend at college? How many years' education did Li Shih-chen of the Ming dynasty receive? In medical education there is no need to accept only higher middle school graduates or lower middle school graduates. It will be enough to give three years to graduates from higher primary schools.¹⁹¹

In the above instances, Mao pointed to famous figures who achieved great success despite their lack of formal schooling and credentials. By extension, he argued that the objections of academics to his policies could be ignored as historical memory illustrated that, in his construction, the best minds came from outside the intelligentsia.

Mao also used the Confucian/Traditional framework when discussing wider issues describing shifts in geopolitics. This instrumental usage often came in the form of applying well-known phrases from historical memory. However, Mao calibrated this specific usage to fit his immediate needs. For example, as he attempted to restart the United Front with the GMD, Mao pointed towards historical forces impelling the two sides together, using a famous line from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. He explained in 1936:

If this is the case, then there is actually no reason why the Guomindang and the Communist Party cannot cooperate with one another. It is said in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: "The trend of events in the empire

¹⁹⁰ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IX*, "SPEECH AT THE HANGCHOW CONFERENCE," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_03.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

¹⁹¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IX*, "Directive On Public Health," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_41.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. Hua Tuo was a renowned doctor from the Three Kingdoms period while Li Shizhen was the author of the extensive *Compendium of Materia Medica*.

is that when it has long been united, division must follow; when it has long been divided, unification must follow.¹⁹²

At the time, Mao claimed historical forces should facilitate the reconciliation between the quarreling sides and described the historical forces of attraction as inevitable. However, he reversed course merely two years later and claimed that these forces that impelled and repulsed relations over time were no longer in play governing GMD-CPC relations. He stated:

Relations between the two parties can be divided into three stages: first, cooperation between the two parties; second, a split between them; and third, cooperation once more. In accordance with the opening words of the classic Chinese novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, “It is said that historical trends were ever thus: when the empire has long been divided, it must unite; and when it has long been united, it must divide.” The Guomindang and the Communist Party were split for ten years, and now they have once more united. It is, however, incorrect to apply these words to the present situation, for the two parties will not necessarily split again after their present unity.¹⁹³

Mao switched his view on the inevitable push and pull between the two parties and claimed that they could transcend those historical forces illustrated by the famous line. This change in perspective appears solely due to a change in political circumstances, with Mao in the second instance requiring a maintenance of the GMD-CPC United Front. Mao adjusted his instrumental use of this famous line from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* based on his immediate requirements.

Dreams of the Red Chamber offered another famous line which Mao repeatedly instrumentally used within his discourse. He used it to describe a phenomenon in politics of constant struggle and of a continuous shift in momentum of one side prevailing over another. Identifying the direction of this “prevailing wind” became a key component for Mao in describing how to properly orient policy positions. For example, Mao invoked this passage to portray the Gao-Rao affair as a struggle for leadership of the CPC with one side having to dominate in the struggle. At a party speech in 1956 recalling the incident Mao stated:

On December 24, 1953, at an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee to unmask Kao Kang, I declared that there were two headquarters in the city of Peking, one comprised all of us present and it stirred up an open wind and lit an open fire, whereas the other was an underground headquarters, and it also stirred up a kind of wind and lit a kind of fire, a sinister wind and a sinister fire. Lin Tai-yu, a character in a classical Chinese novel, said: “Either the east wind prevails over the west wind, or the west wind prevails

¹⁹² Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume V: Toward the Second United Front, (January 1935-July 1937)*, page 344, Kindle Edition. 話說天下大勢，分久必合，合久必分 Moss Roberts translation, “The empire, long divided, must unite; long united, must divide.”

¹⁹³ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 306, Kindle Edition.

over the east wind." As for the present day, either the open wind and open fire prevail over the sinister wind and sinister fire, or the sinister wind and sinister fire prevail over the open wind and open fire. The purpose of the other headquarters in stirring up the sinister wind and lighting the sinister fire was to overpower the open wind and put out the open fire, that is, to overthrow a large number of people.¹⁹⁴

In Mao's estimation, there needed to be a harsh crackdown on dissent from within the party, and that policy needed to be maintained. If the party failed to overcome this opposition, then, by the laws expressed with the Wind analogy, Mao, and the Party, would be subsumed by it. Mao continued this motif at the outset of the Great Leap Forward, acknowledging the constancy of factional struggles for dominance in his view of history. He declared:

If it is not the east wind prevailing over the west wind, then it is the west wind prevailing over the east wind. These were the words of Lin Tai-yu of Soochow. There will always be parties and factions in the world and the people in society will always be divided into left, middle and right, some in an advanced position, others in the middle or backward positions.¹⁹⁵

Division along what he described as right, left, and middle appears as a set law of history, and these factions would remain perpetually in struggle. One side always occupied an ascendent position, although that ascendancy could shift. As with the other popularized lines, Mao made use of this line to better describe his historical viewpoint and lend credence to his perspective on managing party conflicts. Mao appears to have taken to heart the lesson of the prevailing winds as he waged merciless battles for ideological control of the CPC against any opponents that threatened his supreme authority.

Regardless of how much Mao used other frameworks, he remained the leader of a Marxist party, and that framework was the most dominant within his discourse. To even consider vying for core leadership, Mao not only needed to display his capacity as a Marxist theoretician but needed to compel absolute adherence by party cadres to his governing philosophy. Any policy proposals that Mao advanced required a demonstration of being consistent with Marxist theory. Furthermore, Mao competed both internally within the CPC and externally with Moscow for core leadership. This legitimacy building exercise required instrumental use of historical memory to show that Marxist leading figures and history endorsed both his leadership and the policies he advanced. This included the evocation of what were

¹⁹⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 340. *Dreams of a Red Chamber*, chapter 82, para 12. 不是東風壓了西風，就是西風壓了東風。 <https://ctext.org/honglouloumeng/ch82>, Accessed 12/11/2023.

¹⁹⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speeches At The Second Session Of The Eighth Party Congress III," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_10.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

considered by Mao and his contemporaries as the most significant Marxist thought leaders, including Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Furthermore, for a substantial period of Mao's core leadership, he relied upon the Soviet Union both as a legitimizing force and source of material sustenance. Mao labored to engender support by offering praise for the perceived debt to the Soviet Union, especially towards the legacy of the October Revolution.

Later, Mao transitioned this memory, professing the CPC as the true inheritors of that legacy after the Sino-Soviet split. Mao sought to craft an ideological independence from Moscow, arguing for a unique historical experience for China. This independence necessitated an adaptation of Marxist principles to those conditions, distinct from what was carried out in the Soviet Union. This construct enabled Mao to deviate, when necessary, from the Soviet line without necessitating a direct ideological battle that could rupture relations, if he chose to avoid one. Finally, Mao recognized the need to monopolize control over CPC history as a method to maintain absolute hegemony over Party members themselves. By doing so, he controlled the contours of discourse and maintained supreme authority over individual members. He maintained, and often wielded, the technique of dredging up past errors to invalidate opposition, or, just as dangerous, link current opposition to disgraced figures, to the same effect. The Marxist framework was the most prevalent type of instrumental use of historical memory within Mao's discourse and served as the bedrock to his governing philosophy.

For Mao to assume core leadership, he needed to advance his own governing philosophy, displaying his credentials as a Marxist theorist.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, he needed to assert his viewpoint's superiority in its development of Marxism-Leninism compared against competitors and alternative sources of legitimating authority, specifically Moscow. To invest his governing philosophy with these qualities, he turned to the instrumental use of the Marxist framework, specifically using the figures of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin. These three figures represented the highest authorities in

¹⁹⁶ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 228–229, Kindle Edition.

Marxism-Leninism for both the CPC and the CPSU. Stalin enjoyed pride of place for a time, although Mao eventually shunned appeals to Stalin's memory, especially after relations with Moscow soured. Mao's uses included references to not only their writings but also invoking historical memory of their actions in life. By selectively highlighting these figures in support of his proposals and theories, Mao sought to outflank his opponents, showing that while they claimed authority by following Marxism, it was Mao's ideas that conformed to Marx, Engels, and Lenin (MEL hereafter, MEL(S) adds Stalin).¹⁹⁷

One area of his governing philosophy in which Mao turned to MEL(S) to bolster his case was his theory for practice exceeding theory. Although Mao avoided rejecting theory wholesale, as that would have undermined his proposed theories as well, he did seek to mitigate its application and highlighted the need to engage in practical application to test and refine it. This ideological assertion supported Mao's bid for core leadership, as he could not compete with Wang Ming, let alone the Soviet advisors, in Marxist theory. However, he could plausibly claim better knowledge of China's conditions and application of theory through practice in carrying out revolution in China. To justify this approach, Mao turned to MEL(S). For example, in *On Practice*, Mao explained:

Leaving aside their genius, the reason why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories was mainly that they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time; lacking this condition, no genius could have succeeded.¹⁹⁸

Mao asserted that practice enabled MEL(S) to develop their theories in the first place, locating it above pure theory. He reiterated the point again on the need to elevate practice and understanding of China's conditions and avoid relying on theory alone. He argued:

For Marxism-Leninism is the theory created by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the basis of practice, their general conclusion drawn from historical and revolutionary reality. If we merely read their works but do not proceed to study the realities of China's history and revolution in the light of their theory or do not make any effort to think through China's revolutionary practice carefully in terms of theory, we should not be so presumptuous as to call ourselves Marxist theorists. Our achievements on the theoretical front will be very poor indeed if, as members of the Communist Party of China, we close our eyes to China's problems and can only memorize isolated conclusions or principles from Marxist writings.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Stalin is often included as well, and is even given pride of place often, although that shifts after 1956. When Stalin is included, it will be indicated as MEL(S).

¹⁹⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 299.

¹⁹⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume III*, page 37.

Mao asserted Marxism-Leninism itself was the product of practice, therefore any appeals to theory alone, or rather criticisms of his theories, which relied on practice, became invalidated. Mao used the historical memory of MEL(S) to subvert arguments against his governing philosophy and presented appeals to theory alone as invalid and contrary to Marxism-Leninism.

Intrinsically linked to Mao's focus on practice was the concept of seeking truth from facts. He asserted that any judgement on the value of a policy must be centered on observations of its efficacy. Furthermore, such observations, distilled through Marxist theory, provided the basis to formulate policy. This orientation allowed a substantial degree of latitude for Mao, and future leaders, to adjust policy as they deemed necessary, with shifts explained by evaluation of conditions and results warranting such shifts. As Mao solidified power during the Rectification movement, he employed memory of MEL(S) to bolster this portion of his governing philosophy. In 1941, he explained:

Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught us that we should proceed from objective realities and that we should derive laws from them to serve as our guide to action. For this purpose, we should, as Marx has said, appropriate the material in detail and subject it to scientific analysis and synthesis. Many of our people do not act in this way but do the opposite.²⁰⁰

As objective reality was identified as the source for MEL(S) analysis, any criticism using Marxist theory could be swatted aside by claims these illustrious figures advised deferring to objective reality, and that objective reality warranted the shift in policy.²⁰¹ Furthermore, this orientation allowed Mao to advance his status as core leader because the early challenges to his control of the CPC came from figures like Wang Ming, who were tied to Moscow and a more formal interpretation of Marxism-Leninism.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume III*, page 21. Footnote 3: See Karl Marx, "Afterword to the Second German Edition" of Capital in which he wrote: "The latter [the method of inquiry] has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse (sic) its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connexion (sic). Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described." (Capital, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, Vol. I, p. 19.)" See also Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 453, Kindle Edition, for an additional example from 1943. "A further example concerns the problem of finance, which could not have been solved if we had not performed an analysis. Even Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin took pains to collect the facts and to make detailed analyses. If they did so, how much more so must we?"

²⁰¹ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, page 152. Pye also locates this phenomenon in Chinese political culture. "A change can always be rationalized with the argument that grandfather himself would have changed his wishes under altered circumstances."

²⁰² Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, page 205, Kindle Edition

Another key component of Mao's governing philosophy was his idea of conflict, and by extension progress, being driven by contradictions. Within *On Contradiction*, Mao explained this theory as critical to the writings of MEL(S), but often misunderstood by what he termed dogmatists:

For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analysing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism--Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not dearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists.²⁰³

Furthermore, Mao clarified the necessity for identifying the elements of contradiction in a phenomenon as a means for developing policy:

On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels, and likewise Lenin and Stalin, always enjoin people not to be in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, to discover their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and the concrete interrelations of the contradictions. Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right. We must take warning from their failure and learn to acquire this attitude, which is the only correct one in study.²⁰⁴

In addition to providing a model for studying phenomena, Mao also used it as a method to attack his political opponents who he identified as dogmatists.²⁰⁵ Mao relied upon the memory of MEL(S) as he expounded his views on contradiction. He further used this memory as an attack upon his political competitors for core leadership as failing to properly orient themselves to Marxism according to MEL(S).

Another plank of Mao's governing philosophy was the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat. This called for subsuming all political authority to a central ruling entity which represented the interests of the proletariat and prevented any institution from subverting their rights. In this construction, in accordance with Leninism, the CPC served as the vanguard of the proletariat. Therefore, according to Mao, the actions of the CPC served, and were propelled by, the proletariat's needs. Mao discussed the contributions of Lenin to Marxism as including this revelation. He stated:

The doctrine of Leninism has developed Marxism. In what respects has it done so? First, in world outlook, that is, in materialism and dialectics; and second, in revolutionary theory and tactics, particularly on the questions of class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the political party of the proletariat. And then there are Lenin's teachings on socialist construction. Beginning from the October Revolution of 1917, construction went on in the midst of revolution, and thus Lenin had seven years of practical experience in construction, something

²⁰³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 315-316.

²⁰⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 330.

²⁰⁵ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, page 174, Kindle Edition

denied to Marx. It is precisely these fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism that we have been learning.²⁰⁶

According to Mao, Lenin's development of Marxism came from his practice of making revolution in Russia and included the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. During a discussion with foreign communist delegates in 1958, Mao situated the people's communes as emerging from Marxist historical memory and an expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He explained:

In 1871 the French created the Paris Commune. At first K. Marx did not recognize it, but then he gave a speech in its favor and even wrote his famous work about it. And who were the Paris Communards? Artisanal workers—only a portion of them were industrial workers and oppressed simple citizens. If at that time the French could create the commune, that is, the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then why can't we in the current circumstances create the people's communes? It wasn't us who thought of this name, it came from the masses themselves and above all the people in Henan. They were the first ones who thought up the name — the people's communes, and wrote it down.²⁰⁷

Mao attempted to legitimize the Great Leap Forward's practice of the people's communes to this foreign Marxist audience by recalling the memory of both the Paris Commune and Marx himself. Furthermore, by showing Marx adjusting his view on the Paris Commune, he attempted to permit space for these observers to likewise adjust their opinions towards Mao's policies. He classified both the Paris Commune and the communes in Henan as expressions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Mao emphasized the alliance between the peasants and industrial workers in China as part of his governing philosophy. This viewpoint served as a main point of contention in earlier struggles over CPC policy direction regarding the focus on revolutionary activity in urban centers versus rural areas. As Pantsov observed regarding an earlier criticism of Mao by Li Lisan, "Li had accused Mao, one of the oldest members of the party, of possessing a 'peasant mentality,' failing to understand the changing political situation, and being unable to follow the directives of the Central Committee."²⁰⁸ Mao stressed party focus on the peasantry and used historical memory tied to Lenin to do so. For example, as part of his efforts at building support for the Great Leap Forward, Mao discussed Lenin's views on the peasantry and the need to follow his example. He declared:

²⁰⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, pages 341-342.

²⁰⁷ "Memorandum of Conversation of Mao Zedong with Six Delegates of the Socialist Countries, China, 2 October 1958", October 2, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, GARF f. 9576, op. 18, 1958, d. 26, l. 312-322. Obtained and translated by Austin Jersild. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116826>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²⁰⁸ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 236, Kindle Edition.

The peasants are our allies. If they are not rallied, there will be no politics; if no attention is given to their problems, mistakes will occur. With them as our allies, we will win. Lenin also stressed the workers' and peasants' democratic dictatorship — arousing the consciousness of the rural semi-proletariat to take part in uninterrupted revolution. Some people felt that, since it took 80 years to develop capitalism, socialism could only be introduced when the workers became more numerous and the peasants conscious of themselves. But practice proved that it did not require several decades to advance from democratic revolution to socialism. The Soviet Union's February Revolution proved Lenin was correct.²⁰⁹

In addition to emphasizing Lenin's view on the peasantry as a revolutionary class, he also pointed to the achievements of the Soviet Union under Lenin accelerating development faster than theory might otherwise suggest, just as he advocated with the Great Leap Forward.

Mao celebrated Lenin's contribution to the 1917 October Revolution, and he made substantial instrumental use of its memory. However, it is important to note that despite substantial focus on individuals, including Lenin, Mao iterated repeatedly that, in his view, the masses served as the main movers of history. Specifically, he saw the rising social consciousness of the masses as enabling the possibility of historical change. As such, according to Mao the October Revolution was only possible due to changes in consciousness brought about by World War I. He discussed the Great War as an imperialist venture, revealing genuine and phony communists by their support for the war. He explained:

Because that war was an imperialist war and a reactionary war, the Russian Bolshevik party led by Lenin opposed it. Nonetheless, some workers' parties under the leadership of the Second International supported the capitalist governments which participated in this war.²¹⁰

Mao divided conflict into two types, imperialist/reactionary and revolutionary, with only the latter as legitimate. However, the imperialist wars could serve to galvanize a population towards revolution, as it had done in World War I, leading directly to the October Revolution. Mao voiced anticipation for a similar outcome to result from World War II. Discussing the importance of the October Revolution at the Seventh National Party Congress, Mao explained:

Nonetheless, it also had positive aspects, which included the outbreak of the October Revolution in Russia, the founding of communist parties in many countries, and the creation of vanguard teams by the proletariat itself in many countries, including China. The world war was followed by a period of world revolution. First, the October Revolution broke out in Russia. It was followed by revolutions in Germany, Hungary, and Italy, but they were all defeated because the proletariat in these countries was still divided into communist parties and social democratic parties. Moreover, the proletariat had not sufficiently awakened. Only the October

²⁰⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech At The Conference Of Heads Of Delegations To The Second Session Of The 8th Party Congress," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_11.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²¹⁰ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 701, Kindle Edition.

Revolution in Russia succeeded. The face of the world and the direction of history were changed after World War I and the victory of the October Revolution.²¹¹ Just as World War I enabled a substantial, albeit incomplete, increase in the fortunes of the global Communist movement, Mao anticipated a similar outcome emerging after World War II. He posited that the CPSU succeeded in carrying out the Russian Revolution because of the shifts in perceptions among the masses following World War I, and he hoped to inspire a replication in China.

Mao also used the role of World War I and the October Revolution to brush aside any fears of a potential World War III and atomic war against the United States. In his estimation, such a war would herald a third and final revolution that ultimately would result in the final collapse of global capitalism. In the wake of the Korean War, Mao discussed with visiting foreign delegations his interpretation of the October Revolution and World War I and its implication for any renewed global conflict. In his meeting with India's Nehru in 1954, he stated:

The people's revolutionary forces emerge only when the time is opportune. If an opportunity had not been provided for the Bolsheviks by World War I, the Russian October Revolution would have encountered difficulties. In China, we had fought for twenty-two years, yet not until the final few years did we achieve victory. Not until the end of World War II did we have the opportunity to stand up. These cases involve countries led by communist parties.²¹²

He made the point more explicitly a few months later in a meeting with the Finnish ambassador:

However, if the United States with its planes plus the A-bomb is to launch a war of aggression against China, then China with its millet plus rifles is sure to emerge the victor. The people of the whole world will support us. As a result of World War I, the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists in Russia were wiped out; as a result of World War II, Chiang Kai-shek and the landlords were overthrown in China and the East European countries and a number of countries in Asia were liberated. Should the United States launch a third world war and supposing it lasted eight or ten years, the result would be the elimination of the ruling classes in the United States, Britain and the other accomplice countries and the transformation of most of the world into countries led by Communist Parties.²¹³

Mao portrayed any conflict with the United States as ultimately working in the favor of China and World Communism. This assertion aimed at producing a deterrent effect in the United States by portraying the Chinese as unafraid of mass destruction, since they claimed it would only result in their final victory.

²¹¹ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 745, Kindle Edition.

²¹² "Minutes of Chairman Mao Zedong's Second Meeting with Nehru", October 23, 1954, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 204-00007-15, 113-129. Obtained by Chen Jian and translated by Chen Zhihong, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117815>, Accessed 12/6/2023. See also Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 153.

²¹³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 153.

In analyzing China's historical process, Mao located the October Revolution as key to awakening China's masses and enabling the founding of the CPC. This served the dual purpose of explaining past failures at reform and delegitimizing policy proposals tied to those efforts. It further laid the groundwork for the conception that only the CPC could save China, with the October Revolution as inspiration being a key component portrayed by that narrative. On the eve of the PRC founding, Mao exclaimed:

The Russians made the October Revolution and created the world's first socialist state. Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, the revolutionary energy of the great proletariat and labouring people of Russia, hitherto latent and unseen by foreigners, suddenly erupted like a volcano, and the Chinese and all mankind began to see the Russians in a new light. Then, and only then, did the Chinese enter an entirely new era in their thinking and their life. They found Marxism-Leninism, the universally applicable truth, and the face of China began to change.²¹⁴

Mao traced a direct line from the October Revolution to the awakening to Marxism-Leninism in China, positioning the CPC as its inheritors and students. The recollection of this historical memory served to tether the CPC to the CPSU, both to improve relations with the Soviets and to draw legitimacy from the October Revolution to add luster to the Chinese Revolution.

In addition to linking the October Revolution and the Soviet Union's historical memory to the CPC, Mao also used its memory to justify various policy proposals. He did so by claiming that such prescriptions followed the examples of the Soviet experience. As part of a wider text formulating state policy towards agriculture in 1955, Mao made the following statement:

Although, as the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course records, some local Party organizations in the Soviet Union became "dizzy with success" during this period, the error was quickly corrected. Eventually, by a great effort the Soviet Union successfully accomplished the socialist transformation of the whole of its agriculture and at the same time achieved a massive technical reconstruction of agriculture. This road traversed by the Soviet Union is our model.²¹⁵

Mao pointed to the Soviet experience as a model for China to push forward its agricultural reforms. As part of his address on the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution, he praised the Soviet Union as a model, not only for China, but the whole world. He declared:

²¹⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 413, see also Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 33 and Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VII*, "No Power on Earth Can Separate Us," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_478.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²¹⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 199.

Throughout the world the people have begun to see their own future ever more clearly in the successes gained by the Soviet people. Essentially, the path of the Soviet Union, the path of the October Revolution, is the bright common way for the progress of all mankind.²¹⁶

Prior to the Sino-Soviet split, Mao mined the historical memory associated with the perceived progress of the Soviet Union since the October Revolution to build support for his policies.

The Marxist figure that featured most prominently within Mao's discourse was Joseph Stalin. Mao modelled large portions of his rule, including cultivating a cult of personality, after Stalin's example. Mao borrowed heavily from writings attributed to Stalin, imitating his position as leader and chief theoretician, as well as nesting his theories within Stalin's work.²¹⁷ However, as Stalin remained contemporary for much of Mao's tenure, a large portion remains unavailable for inclusion in this study as it violates my twenty-five-year separation rule. However, those invocations which meet the criteria still show a substantial instrumental use of memory towards Stalin in Mao's discourse.

A key element of Mao's instrumental use of Stalin was elevating him as the successor of MEL. This method served the dual purpose of raising the instrumental value of Stalin, especially for Marxist audiences, as well as garnering his support through flattery, as Mao relied substantially on Stalin's good graces for his political survival. For example, at a speech in Yan'an commemorating Stalin's sixtieth birthday, Mao exclaimed:

Among the whole human race, this man, Stalin, has appeared, and this is a very great event. Because he is there, it is easier to get things done. As you know, Marx is dead, and Engels and Lenin too are dead. If there were no Stalin, who would give the orders? This is indeed a fortunate circumstance. Because there is now in the world a Soviet Union, a Communist Party, and a Stalin, the affairs of this world can be dealt with more easily.²¹⁸

Mao continued, stating that Stalin had achieved even what MEL could not, "The practical aspect consists in turning doctrine into reality. Neither Marx, Engels, nor Lenin carried to completion the cause of the establishment of socialism, but Stalin did so."²¹⁹ Mao alluded to Stalin's theoretical work, specifically the *Short Course*, to provide the basis for rectification:

²¹⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VII*, "Speech at Moscow Celebration Meeting," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_479.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²¹⁷ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 231–234, Kindle Edition.

²¹⁸ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912–1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 408, Kindle Edition.

²¹⁹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912–1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, pages 408–409, Kindle Edition.

Moreover, in studying Marxism-Leninism, we should use the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course as the principal material. It is the best synthesis and summing-up of the world communist movement of the past hundred years, a model of the integration of theory and practice, and so far the only comprehensive model in the whole world. When we see how Lenin and Stalin integrated the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Soviet revolution and thereby developed Marxism, we shall know how we should work in China.²²⁰

By elevating Stalin and his writings, Mao sought to outmaneuver any opponents to his consolidation of core leadership in the CPC who relied on adherence to Moscow as their main claim to legitimacy, usurping that prize for himself and exploiting it to its fullest value.

Mao continued his celebration of Stalin after he consolidated core leadership. Despite his dominance over the CPC, he still relied on the Soviet Union, and Stalin's largesse, during the war against the GMD and the PRC's early years. In an article celebrating the thirty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution Mao extolled Stalin, both for his leadership and in his prescience. He wrote:

History has developed according to the direction pointed out by Stalin: the October Revolution has opened up extensive possibilities and a realistic path for the cause of liberating the people of the world; the October Revolution has constructed a new battlefield opposing world imperialism from the Western proletariat, passing through the Russian Revolution to the oppressed peoples of the East, and this revolutionary battlefield was constructed and developed under the brilliant guidance of Lenin and Stalin, and under the brilliant guidance of Stalin after the death of Lenin.²²¹

Mao proclaimed Stalin's guidance as key to the Soviet success and propelling forward world revolution.

At the height of the Civil War, Mao hoped to coax Stalin to provide additional support and not restrain the PLA from pursuing an overly aggressive posture against the GMD.²²² Mao continued this line even in the immediate aftermath of Khrushchev's Secret Speech in February 1956. That April, in a *People's Daily* article, Mao declared:

After Lenin's death Stalin as the chief leader of the Party and the state creatively applied and developed Marxism-Leninism. In the struggle to defend the legacy of Leninism against its enemies . . . Stalin expressed the will and wishes of the people and proved himself to be an outstanding Marxist-Leninist fighter. The reason Stalin won the support of the Soviet people and played an important role in history was primarily that he, together with the other leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, brought about the triumph of socialism in the Soviet Union and created the conditions for the victory of the Soviet Union in the war against Hitler; these victories of the Soviet people conformed to the interests of the working class of the world and all progressive mankind.²²³

²²⁰ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume III*, page 24.

²²¹ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1912-1949): Volume X*, page 408, Kindle Edition.

²²² Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*, page 234.

²²³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VII*, "Stalin's Place in History,"

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_467.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

Even as Khrushchev labored to demystify Stalin, Mao still saw value in elevating him to bolster his own position. That rule had been modelled largely on his example, and Mao relied upon Stalin's theories to underwrite his governing philosophy.²²⁴ A complete refutation of Stalin would undermine Mao's position as core leader and had to be rejected.

A major source of friction contributing to the Sino-Soviet split emerged over defining the legacy of Stalin in the wake of Khrushchev's Secret Speech. Mao did not necessarily oppose a redefinition; indeed, he had often privately chafed under Stalin's influence. In fact, Mao confessed that he did not even personally like Stalin, claiming to a Yugoslav delegation in the summer of 1956:

Before I met with Stalin, I did not have much good feeling about him. I disliked reading his works, and I have read only "On the Basis of Leninism," a long article criticizing Trotsky, and "Be Carried Away by Success," etc. I disliked even more his articles on the Chinese revolution. He was very different from Lenin: Lenin shared his heart with others and treated others as equals whereas Stalin liked to stand above every one else and order others around. This style can be detected from his works. After I met with him, I became even more disgusted: I quarreled a lot with him in Moscow. Stalin was excitable by temperament. When he became agitated, he would spell out nasty things.²²⁵

Mao's opposition to Stalin's recontextualization centered on his not being consulted, leading to the CPC being caught flat footed in its propaganda work. Furthermore, he complained over the Soviets' lack of attention to Stalin's perceived slights towards the CPC and Mao.²²⁶ At the heart of both issues though was a subordination of Mao to Khrushchev over a matter as ideologically important as defining Stalin in historical memory. In Mao's estimation, the errors that Stalin did make were due to subjective errors on his part, and not a result of any institutional issues within the Soviet system. In August 1956 Mao explained Stalin's errors in a speech aimed at the CPC:

By making mistakes, we mean making subjectivist mistakes, following a wrong way of thinking. The many articles we've come across criticizing Stalin's mistakes say little or nothing on this score. Why did Stalin make mistakes? Because on a number of issues his subjective thinking failed to correspond with objective reality. Such cases still happen frequently in our work today.²²⁷

²²⁴ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War (New Cold War History)*, page 66, Kindle Edition. "Therefore, for Mao and his comrades to negate Stalin completely would mean to repudiate Mao's grand enterprise of continuous revolution."

²²⁵ "Minutes, Mao's Conversation with a Yugoslavian Communist Union Delegation, Beijing, [undated]", September 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan [Selected Diplomatic Papers of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: The Central Press of Historical Documents, 1993), 251-262. Translated and Annotated by Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117035>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²²⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War (New Cold War History)*, page 67, Kindle Edition.

²²⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 315.

Personal errors can be explained away as human failings, while any discussion on structural issues opened the system to potential destabilization. He expanded on the differences over the historical interpretation of Stalin in 1957:

A word in passing about our differences with the Soviet Union. First of all, there is a contradiction between us and Khrushchev on the question of Stalin. He has drawn such a black picture of Stalin, and we do not agree with him. He has made Stalin so terribly ugly! This then is no longer a matter that concerns his country alone, it concerns all countries. We have put Stalin's portrait up in Tien An Men Square. This accords with the wishes of the working people the world over and indicates our fundamental differences with Khrushchev. As for Stalin himself, you should at least give him a 70-30 evaluation, 70 for his achievements and 30 for his mistakes. This may not be entirely accurate, for his mistakes may be only 20 or even 10, or perhaps somewhat more than 30. All things considered, Stalin's achievements are primary and his shortcomings and mistakes are secondary. On this point we take a view different from Khrushchev's.²²⁸

Mao appeared unconcerned with an exact determination on Stalin's legacy but focused instead on the impacts that Khrushchev's depiction of Stalin had on CPC ideology, and more specifically, his own standing as a core leader. Mao's main concern seemed concentrated on potential danger to his rule that a redefinition of Stalin's historical memory might signal, especially if he allowed Moscow to define it beyond his influence.

However, while Mao publicly maintained his 70-30 evaluation of Stalin's legacy, he did privately take the opportunity opened by Khrushchev's Secret Speech to redefine CPC history and Stalin's role in it. Mao had previously navigated a careful balancing act of fealty to Stalin, while at the same time seizing power from those more aligned with Moscow's interests within the CPC. With the dam broken, Mao cursed Stalin's previous interference in CPC affairs to a visiting Yugoslav delegation and extended earlier critiques against Wang Ming to Stalin as the source of past failures. He lamented, "The Wang Ming line was in fact Stalin's line. It ended up destroying ninety percent of our strength in our bases, and one hundred percent of [our strength] in the white areas."²²⁹ He continued explaining the difficult position he asserted Moscow had put the CPC in with their total rejection of Stalin's legacy. He lamented that

²²⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, pages 494-495.

²²⁹ "Minutes, Mao's Conversation with a Yugoslavian Communist Union Delegation, Beijing, [undated]", September 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan [Selected Diplomatic Papers of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: The Central Press of Historical Documents, 1993), 251-262. Translated and Annotated by Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117035>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

although people were familiar with the errors of Wang Ming, they did not have a complete picture of Stalin's involvement:

The four mistakes committed by Stalin are yet to be made known to the Chinese people as well as to our whole party. Our situation is quite different from yours: your [suffering inflicted by Stalin] is known to the people and to the whole world. Within our party, the mistakes of the two Wang Ming lines are well known; but our people do not know that these mistakes originated in Stalin. Only our Central Committee was aware that Stalin blocked our revolution and regarded me as a half-hearted Tito.²³⁰

Mao portrayed Wang Ming as a tool of the Soviet Union to the detriment of China. Furthermore, Mao appeared concerned that, after his death, there would emerge a Chinese Khrushchev that would launch their own Secret Speech and undue his legacy and his vision for China.²³¹

Although early on, Mao relied extensively on the Soviet Union to generate legitimacy, he also labored to show an independence for his vision for China. However, he needed to avoid an outright breach with the Soviet Union and their model of Marxism. To thread this needle, Mao claimed that, in accordance with a Marxist reading of history, China had a unique historical experience that created differing conditions from those which existed in the Soviet Union. Mao defined the two major conditions unique to China as its semi-colonial and semi-feudal status. By this construction, Mao presented China as dealing simultaneously with revolution against lingering feudal structures and late-stage capitalist imperialism imposed by foreign powers. To illuminate this unique historical condition for China, Mao resorted to instrumental use of historical memory, thereby warranting his prescription for Chinese policy independent, where he deemed necessary, from Moscow. In his first series of interviews with Edgar Snow in 1936, Mao made the distinction between Russia's and China's historical experience. He explained:

It must be remembered that there are fundamental differences between the condition of China today and that of Russia before the revolution. Our revolution is primarily democratic and bourgeois in character, because China is still a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society.²³²

²³⁰ "Minutes, Mao's Conversation with a Yugoslavian Communist Union Delegation, Beijing, [undated]", September 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan [Selected Diplomatic Papers of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: The Central Press of Historical Documents, 1993), 251-262. Translated and Annotated by Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117035>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²³¹ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 499, Kindle Edition.

²³² Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-49: Volume V: Toward the Second United Front, (January 1935-July 1937)*, page 279, Kindle Edition.

In this instance, Mao sought to create a perception of CPC separation from Moscow as such a perception might aid in generating Western support. Perhaps more importantly, Mao hoped to have the Americans and British place pressure on Jiang Jieshi to refrain from renewing his campaigns aimed at eradicating the CPC.

Mao seized control over defining party historical memory as part of his consolidation of power as core leader. He crafted an image of the party which portrayed its rise simultaneously as miraculous and inevitable. Unfortunately, as with material related to Stalin's memory, much of Mao's recontextualization of CPC history during the crucial Rectification movement does not conform to my twenty-five-year separation rule. Fortunately, Mao continued many of those same themes within his discourse years later, achieving the required distance for use in this study. For example, he purported other revolutionary actions in China's past, such as the Xinhai Revolution (1911 - 1912), failed because they did not represent the needs of the masses and did not overthrow the feudal and capitalist structures plaguing China. In a 1949 Xinhua article, he explained:

Why did the Revolution of 1911 not succeed and why did it not solve the problem of feeding the population? Because it overthrew only the Ching Dynasty but did not overthrow imperialist and feudal oppression and exploitation.²³³

In Mao's presentation, past efforts such as the Xinhai Revolution failed to solve China's problems of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism, tasks only the CPC managed to accomplish. This achievement appeared even greater given the CPC's small size and short history. Recalling this historical memory in a Party speech in 1955, Mao stated:

We know that the imperialists, the domestic counter-revolutionaries, their agents in our Party, and so on, are mere moribund forces, while we ourselves constitute the new-born forces with truth on our side. Against them we are always invincible. A review of our history will enable us to see the point. When our Party was first founded in 1921, it was very small and had only a few score members, yet later it grew in strength and succeeded in overthrowing its powerful domestic enemy.²³⁴

Here Mao used the memory of the CPC's humble beginnings and eventual triumphs as evidence that it could defeat any opponents, foreign or domestic. Mao shaped the historical memory surrounding the CPC's founding and wielded it as a source of inspiration to overcome later hardships.

²³³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 453.

²³⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 157.

Although Mao celebrated the rise of the CPC from humble beginnings to master of all China, he acknowledged that the road to triumph was far from smooth. In fact, Mao made use of CPC historical memory of the trials, adversity, and near eradication of the party within his discourse. However, through that adversity, according to Mao, the CPC and its subsidiary organs only grew stronger, implying this improvement occurred as Mao's grip on core leadership grew tighter. Reflecting on CPC history on its 28th anniversary, just prior to the declaration of the PRC, Mao observed:

Our twenty-eight years have been quite different. We have had much valuable experience . . . We have travelled a tortuous road. We have struggled against opportunist deviations in our Party, both Right and "Left". Whenever we made serious mistakes on these three matters, the revolution suffered setbacks. Taught by mistakes and setbacks, we have become wiser and handle our affairs better.²³⁵

Mao acknowledged and even attempted to redeem past difficulties as part of a learning process that improved the CPC, implying his elevation to core leadership as the correction.

Mao classified past mistakes as emerging from left and right deviation. He assigned responsibility for such errors to clearly identifiable individuals. Those figures associated with deviations often served as previous leaders of the CPC as well as competitors for Mao as he began striving for core leadership. The personification of political deviation allowed for a useful shorthand, especially to discredit specific strains of criticisms. Party leaders ran the risk of being labelled as embodying the besmirched political stances of a previously disgraced figure if they ran afoul of Mao. Although the figures for denouncement shifted over time, Chen Duxiu, Li Lisan, and Wang Ming persisted as representing deviant lines. For example, in a party speech recalling past mistakes by the CPC in 1956 titled, "Strengthen Party Unity And Carry Forward Party Traditions," he stated:

We too have things that are not good, and far from letting other countries pick them up, we should dump them. In a way, bad things are also some kind of experience and can serve a useful purpose. We have had people like Chen Tu-hsiu, Li Li-san, Wang Ming, Chang Kuo-tao, Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih, who have served as our teachers.²³⁶

In this instance, Mao recalled past leaders as examples to avoid. Chen Duxiu became synonymous with opportunist right deviations, especially for his failure to ally with the peasantry. He explained:

During the first period, we didn't have clear ideas about the countryside. Under the Right opportunist line of Chen Tu-hsiu, the peasants, our chief ally, were abandoned. Many of our comrades looked on the countryside as a plane rather than a solid, that is to say, they did not know how to look at the countryside from the class

²³⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 422.

²³⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 309-310.

viewpoint. It was only after they had some grasp of Marxism that they began to adopt the class viewpoint in looking at the countryside.²³⁷

On the opposite side, Mao labeled Li Lisan as endorsing a leftist deviation line and highlighted his own opposition to Li's policies. He stated:

During the time of the central soviet-controlled areas, Li Li-san's line emerged. They were so "left"! They wanted to strike against the large cities, against Chiu-chiang, Wuhan, and Changsha. I said it would not work; they said we had to strike.²³⁸

Wang Ming rounded out the third deviant line as endorsing a faulty dogmatist stance and overreliance on Soviet support. Describing Wang's first line error, Mao explained:

We, too, made mistakes between 1930 and 1934. Wang Ming was then working in the Comintern. It is no good to draft a program for foreign communist parties. The Comintern imposed their program upon us which made us lose base-areas in the south [of China], caused us to run for 12.5 thousand kilometers, and cost nine-tenths of [our] revolutionary force with only one tenth left.²³⁹

The second erroneous line occurred as a period of competition with Mao, in which Mao claimed Wang viewed himself as the true Bolshevik as he battled with Mao for party control:

It was the same with the Wang Ming line. They all considered themselves 100 percent Bolshevik and others inveterate right opportunists and narrow empiricists . . . Wang Ming appealed to the foreign countries and brought three criminal charges against Mao: resisting the international line; forcing 80 percent of the people to examine themselves in the rectification movement; promoting sectarianism.²⁴⁰

In each case, the various previous line deviations by Chen, Li, and Wang offered Mao substantial opportunities to label opponents as making analogous errors through direct linkage to these past leaders.

Mao instrumentally used historical memory of past deviant leaders to attack his contemporary opponents. As part of establishing himself as core leader, Mao marshalled full authority over defining Party history. He thus accrued to himself the power to tie opponents to past deviations as a means to excommunicate them. One such example was the denunciation of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi, who originally served as allies to discipline Party members, but had earned Mao's ire by taking on too much

²³⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 325.

²³⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IX*, "Remarks At A Briefing," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_16.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²³⁹ "Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong and Blas Roca Calderio, the Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba", April 28, 1960, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA. Translated by Zhang Qian. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115157>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²⁴⁰ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech At Conference Of Provincial And Municipal Committee Secretaries," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_25.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

authority unto themselves.²⁴¹ To denigrate both figures, Mao linked them to past deviations and associated leaders. In one example, he compared them to Chen Duxiu and Zhang Guotao,

There are individuals who don't want to go on making revolution themselves, for example, Chen Tu-hsiu did not want to, nor did Chang Kuo-tao, nor Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih, but such individuals are a mere handful. Most people want to go on making revolution.²⁴²

Mao sought to delegitimize Gao and Rao by associating them with disgraced figures in the party's collective memory, both in their beliefs and in their styles. If party history decreed such previous actions by figures like Chen and Wang as illegitimate, then by extension anyone who advocated similar policies, or even conducted themselves in a similar manner, was equally repugnant.

Mao targeted Peng Dehuai in a similar manner after the Lushun conference in 1959.²⁴³ A few months after the conference, Mao pronounced Peng's errors to the leadership of the PLA. He declared:

As for P'eng and Huang they were attacked at the time of the Li-san Line. This is no coincidence. Regarding the serious nature of the five erroneous lines, on the last two occasions — that is during the Kao-Jao and P'eng-Huang Lines plots were hatched to split the Party. This contravenes Party discipline. A Marxist party must have discipline.²⁴⁴

Mao recalled a previous instance of Peng adopting the erroneous Li line, claiming that this error had predisposed him to split the Party by his criticisms of Mao's policies during the Great Leap Forward.

Mao also assailed Liu Shaoqi in this manner. He explained Liu's sins to a visiting Albanian delegation in 1967:

In the ranks of the party there have been some people who for a long time have not been communists, but agents in the service of the enemy and we did know about them. For example, Liu Shaoqi since 1929 committed treason by signing a declaration in front of the enemy. This has been uncovered recently by the Red Guardians. Later he, along with Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, An Ziwen, and others, betrayed [us] once again.²⁴⁵

In this instance, Mao seized upon revelations by the Red Guards to discredit Liu Shaoqi and portray him as a wolf in sheep's clothing hidden amidst the CPC. Liu Shaoqi, like other figures such as Peng Dehuai,

²⁴¹ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 404-406.

²⁴² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 223.

²⁴³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 464-465.

²⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech At The Enlarged Session Of The Military Affairs Committee And The External Affairs Conference," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_45.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. Huang Kecheng was a senior PLA leader and Army Chief of Staff at the time. For a brief summary see Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Famine, 1958 – 1962*, pages 93 – 94 & 97 – 98.

²⁴⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation between Albanian Council of Ministers Chairman Mehmet Shehu and Mao Zedong", September 30, 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Central State Archive, Tirana, AQPPSH-MPKK-V. 1967, L. 19, D. 20. Obtained by Ana Lalaj and translated by Enkel Daljani. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117693>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

Gao Gang, and Rao Shushi, had their activities from the past revisited to paint them as consistent villains. Furthermore, Mao associated their opposition to him as consonant with line deviations by disgraced figures, which he had enshrined in party historical memory and maintained absolute authority over as core leader.

The Nationalist was Mao's third narrative framework for his instrumental use of historical memory. Although at times intersecting with both the Confucian/Traditional and Marxist frameworks, Mao's use served distinct functions separate from the others. This framework allowed Mao to speak to a broad general Chinese population and motivate them towards his preferred policies. Mao facilitated a common Chinese identity, highlighting national characteristics he sought to foster among the population. His discourse featured the Century of Humiliation (COH) prominently as a shared experience for all Chinese and central to China's historical conditions. This shared experience presented China as a wronged and shamed nation. Mao cultivated these sentiments, morphing them into support for his prescribed policy positions through calls for national action. Alongside the COH, Mao took steps to seize ownership over the May Fourth Movement (M4M) as transformative, resulting in the rise of the CPC and enabling the success of the Chinese Revolution. Mao also competed with the GMD over defining the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, seeking to coopt him as source of legitimacy. Finally, Mao nurtured a sense of national pride to sustain the Chinese population, recalling national achievements both ancient and contemporary. The instrumental use of historical memory of the Nationalist framework provided Mao with essential tools to communicate with and motivate the Chinese nation towards his desired aims.

The first step for Mao to utilize the Nationalist framework was to ensure that the maximum number of Chinese identified with this nationality. To begin, Mao fostered a collective identity for all Chinese. For this purpose, Mao relied on the motif of the Yellow Emperor as the progenitor for all

Chinese, Han as well as ethnic minorities.²⁴⁶ For example, in 1936 Mao hoped to galvanize support for unified opposition to Japan when he stated:

China has not the strength to fight Japan is the slogan with which Chinese traitors and betrayers of their country such as Chiang Kaishek deceive the Chinese people and capitulate to the Japanese imperialist bandits; it is not the slogan of us descendants of the Yellow Emperor who boast a history of several thousand years. We are Chinese, and we will fight to the end for the independence and liberation of China!²⁴⁷

In this instance, Mao contrasted his position towards Japan against that held by Jiang Jieshi, claiming the CPC represented the righteous aspirations of the Chinese nation. A few months later, Mao returned to this motif following the Xi'an incident, using it to draw in the GMD, and wider domestic support, towards making common cause against the Japanese.²⁴⁸ He stated:

We are all descendants of the Yellow Emperor, sons and daughters of the Chinese nation. Faced with national crisis, there is no alternative save to discard all our prejudices, cooperate closely with one another, and dedicate ourselves to the great common prospect of the final emancipation of the Chinese nation.²⁴⁹

Based on a change in circumstances, Mao called for putting aside any previous disagreements and uniting as common members of the Chinese nation, symbolized by the Yellow Emperor, to resist Japan. As Jiang shifted his policy, Mao attempted to use this memory, highlighting common identity to foster closer relations and orient the GMD's aggression towards the Japanese and away from the CPC. Invoking the Yellow Emperor served as a unifying talisman to address the whole Chinese nation, especially to orientate it towards hostile foreign powers.

In addition to solidifying the general concept of a unified Chinese national identity, Mao also took steps to define its characteristics. To do so, he claimed certain qualities being present throughout history which defined the Chinese people. Mao sought to highlight these positive qualities to cultivate them within the population as a source of pride and endurance, as well as presenting the nation to foreign powers as a worthy ally due to its affable, hardworking, and courageous character. For example, in an address in 1938, he expounded on Chinese capacity for hard work when he stated, "This War of

²⁴⁶ For a brief description of the Yellow Emperor (黄帝/Huangdi) and the other sage emperors see John Wills, *Mountain of Fame, Portraits in Chinese History*, pages 4-5.

²⁴⁷ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-49: Volume V: Toward the Second United Front, (January 1935-July 1937)*, page 113, Kindle Edition.

²⁴⁸ For more on the Xi'an incident see, Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, pages 125-137.

²⁴⁹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-49: Volume V: Toward the Second United Front, (January 1935-July 1937)*, page 607, Kindle Edition.

Resistance demonstrates that our nation has such a work-style; that is, not fearing difficult hardships, fearing no sacrifice, and persevering. This ensures our victory.”²⁵⁰ However, despite this willingness to endure hardship, Mao argued that there existed a deep-seated revolutionary potential within the Chinese people. To illustrate his position, he recollected the numerous peasant rebellions from Chinese history.

The Chinese nation is known throughout the world not only for its industriousness and stamina, but also for its ardent love of freedom and its rich revolutionary traditions. The history of the Han people, for instance, demonstrates that the Chinese never submit to tyrannical rule but invariably use revolutionary means to overthrow or change it. In the thousands of years of Han history, there have been hundreds of peasant uprisings, great and small, against the dark rule of the landlords and the nobility. And most dynastic changes came about as a result of such peasant uprisings. All the nationalities of China have resisted foreign oppression and have invariably resorted to rebellion to shake it off.²⁵¹

Mao attempted to frame resistance to Japanese occupation and oppression in general as a natural outgrowth of Chinese national characteristics based on historical memory. Therefore, according to Mao, collaboration with the Japanese was contrary to the very nature of being Chinese.

Mao portrayed the COH as incredibly impactful on the course of Chinese history.²⁵² This approximately hundred-year period ushered in China’s semi-colonial status, according to Mao. Furthermore, he portrayed this period as one of bitterness for the people of China, as they tried in vain to resist foreign exploitation and suffered repeated indignities. Mao made clear that the initiating event for the COH was the Opium Wars and the subsequent diplomatic concessions known as the unequal treaties. He explained, “It has been a hundred years now since the Chinese people began to fight against

²⁵⁰ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 279, Kindle Edition. See also Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, pages 369-370, “China has inherited a backward economy. But the Chinese people are brave and industrious.”

²⁵¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, page 306. Graff, David, “State Making and State Breaking,” in Graff, David A.; Higham, Robin ed, *A Military History of China*, page 42. Kindle Edition. “The vast majority of the people of imperial China were farmers, and the rise and fall of the major dynasties was in most cases accompanied by agrarian unrest and rebellion. These peasant uprisings had various causes and contributing factors, including drought, floods, famine, pestilence, government exactions, and exploitation by corrupt officials and wealthy landowners.”

²⁵² James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History, 1912-1949 (Transformation of Modern China Series)*, page 3 Kindle Edition. “IN THE MIDDLE of the nineteenth century, Western trading nations discovered that the ancient Chinese monarchy was virtually impotent in terms of modern international power. Through the decades that followed, and into the early twentieth century, these nations and Japan forced a host of territorial, economic, and political concessions from China, and ultimately threatened the nation’s very existence. China’s desperate efforts to meet that threat, combined with the effects of dissident movements and foreign cultural influences, produced a fundamental breakdown in a social system that had existed for centuries. The old order finally disintegrated in the twentieth century in a welter of internal violence, war, and general confusion of personal, social, and cultural values.”

imperialism and the dark forces in the Opium War.”²⁵³ Mao used this evocation of the Opium Wars to contextualize anti-Japanese efforts as part of a larger and more consequential endeavor. Furthermore, Mao observed that the Opium Wars initiated a search for new models of government from the West within Chinese society. In June 1949 Mao explained:

From the time of China's defeat in the Opium War of 1840, Chinese progressives went through untold hardships in their quest for truth from the Western countries. Hung Hsiu-chuan, Kang Yu-wei, Yen Fu and Sun Yat-sen were representative of those who had looked to the West for truth before the Communist Party of China was born. Chinese who then sought progress would read any book containing the new knowledge from the West. The number of students sent to Japan, Britain, the United States, France and Germany was amazing. At home, the imperial examinations were abolished and modern schools sprang up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain; every effort was made to learn from the West.²⁵⁴

In his description, the shock of the defeats and the resultant humiliating treaties shook the confidence of Chinese progressives and propelled a search for new systems to combat China's exploitation. Despite these efforts, Mao argued that until the adoption of Marxism applied to China's conditions, all such efforts could never truly resolve the two obstacles of semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism.

Although Mao contended that while Chinese progressives sought solutions in the West, that search did not diminish the general population's revolutionary spirit. According to Mao, that spirit manifested through a series of conflicts and rebellions, especially the Taiping Rebellion (1850 – 1864). He classified it as aimed ultimately towards repelling foreign imperialism and the corrupt rulers who enabled it.²⁵⁵ In his usage, these events reflected a noble spirit of defiance but also illustrated the doomed nature of resistance against imperialism absent the proper tools and guidance. In his 1936 text detailing military strategy against Japan, Mao distinguished between just and unjust wars in recent Chinese history:

In China, the Anti-Opium War, the War of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Yi He Tuan War, the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Northern Expedition of 1926-27, the Agrarian Revolutionary War from 1927 to the present, and the present resistance to Japan and punitive actions against traitors--these are all just wars.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 367, Kindle Edition. For a brief summary of the Opium Wars and their impact on China see Westad, Odd Arne, *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*, pages 37-51.

²⁵⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 411.

²⁵⁵ For more on the Taiping Rebellion see, William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing (History of Imperial China Book 6)*, pages 185-190. Kindle Edition. For more on the Boxer Rebellion see William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing (History of Imperial China Book 6)*, pages 243-246. Kindle Edition.

²⁵⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 173.

Mao labelled these conflicts as just wars, struggles worthy of inspiration and celebration, raising their instrumental value for subsequent use. In February 1945, Mao discussed the importance of maintaining activity in the Southern regions of China, locating in these regions a source of revolutionary fervor, in part evidenced by the historical memory of the Taiping Rebellion. He declared:

The Chinese Revolution long developed in the South and did not move to the North until the War of Resistance. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the 1911 Revolution, the Northern Expedition, and the Land Revolution mostly took place in the South. Therefore, the South is a honorable place. However, comrades, these revolutions all failed. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom failed, the 1911 Revolution failed, the Northern Expedition failed, the Land Revolution failed—all failed. There were both glory and difficulties—which is, once again, to talk about the two aspects.²⁵⁷

In his estimation, although southern China had provided fertile ground for revolutions in the past, without the proper application of Marxism to China's conditions, no efforts could lead to success.

The COH was important for Mao not only to mine for useful anecdotes, but also as a signal for the transformation from the old to the new China. Mao presented the depredations as providing the impetus for the Chinese people, under the guidance of the CPC and Mao, to throw off imperialism's yoke. Furthermore, Mao contextualized the victory of the CPC, with the founding of the PRC, as marking the end of the COH, signaling a New China which had finally stood up in the modern era. By implication, any backsliding, against either his rule or the PRC in general, invited regressing to the chaos and shame of the previous era. Reflecting on what a CPC victory would mean in 1948, and rejecting any truce with the GMD short of victory, Mao declared:

In this way, the Chinese nation will completely throw off the oppressor; the country will be transformed from a semi-colony into a genuinely independent state; the Chinese people will be fully emancipated, overthrowing once and for all both feudal oppression and oppression by bureaucrat-capital (Chinese monopoly capital) and will thus achieve unity, democracy and peace, create the prerequisites for transforming China from an agricultural into an industrial country and make it possible for her to develop from a society with exploitation of man by man into a socialist society. If the revolution is abandoned half-way, it will mean going against the will of the people, bowing to the will of the foreign aggressors and Chinese reactionaries and giving the Kuomintang a chance to heal its wounds, so that one day it may pounce suddenly to strangle the revolution and again plunge the whole country into darkness.²⁵⁸

In the same speech, Mao expanded on the historical significance of a CPC victory when he stated:

²⁵⁷ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, pages 717-718, Kindle Edition. For more on the Xinhai Revolution see William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing (History of Imperial China Book 6)*, pages 273-283. Kindle Edition. For more on the Northern Expedition see Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, pages 49-86. For more on the agrarian revolution and Mao's role in it see, Jonathan D. Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life*, pages 73-86, Kindle Edition.

²⁵⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 302.

In our struggle we shall overthrow once and for all the feudal oppression of thousands of years and the imperialist oppression of a hundred years. The year 1949 will be a year of tremendous importance. We should redouble our efforts.²⁵⁹

Mao presented CPC victory as the termination of the COH and completing the work of all the reformers and revolutionaries of the past, investing the CPC with the fruits of their legacy.

Mao also used historical memory of China as a victim of colonialism while conducting foreign relations. For example, Mao made the following statements to a visiting Syrian delegation in 1965:

Both our countries were subjected to colonial oppression. You were under French domination, while we were under the domination of several imperialist powers. They divided China into spheres of influence, one for France, one for Britain and another for Japan. They were all expelled by us afterward. We fought against Japanese imperialism in the northeast for 14 years and in other places for eight years. Japanese imperialism helped us by causing China to unite against it, thus promoting the Chinese revolution. American troops are now occupying our Taiwan, South Korea and many places in Japan, as well as waging war in Vietnam. In fact, such behavior by the U.S. is teaching the Asian people they must unite and carry on a resolute struggle.²⁶⁰

He maintained the line that Imperial occupation generated the very conditions needed to resist it, while drawing a common line between Chinese and Syrian historical experience as a point to foster better relations. In addition, Mao extended his analysis to contemporary American deployments in East Asia, forecasting a similar doomed fate for US efforts in the region as those that transpired in China. This historical memory also served to advance Mao's foreign policy efforts, both as a point of empathy with third world states, and to attack US foreign policy.

Mao's recontextualization of the COH extended to his recollection of the Xinhai Revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty. In his view, although the revolution reflected legitimate aspirations for the Chinese people, and even though it succeeded in removing the Qing dynasty, it ultimately failed as it lacked the proper guidance, such as that offered by Mao and the CPC. For example, Mao explained the failure of the Xinhai Revolution in a 1939 speech:

Was not the Revolution of 1911 a success? Didn't it send the emperor packing? Yet it was a failure in the sense that while it sent the emperor packing, it left China under imperialist and feudal oppression, so that the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary task remained unaccomplished.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 306.

²⁶⁰ "Mao Zedong, 'We Hope the Arab Countries Will Unite'", March 23, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong on Diplomacy (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998), 429-431. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118557>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

²⁶¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, page 243, see also Schram, Stuart; Cheek, Timothy; MacFarquhar, Roderick, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, pages 744-745, Kindle Edition, "... after which came the Xinhai Revolution [1911]. The revolution opposed two things. The first is called oppression by foreign countries, while the other is called oppression by the feudal system. The Chinese people are always dissatisfied with these two things and always want to rise up and resist them."

Mao claimed that, despite removing the regime, the revolution failed, as it did not deal with the underlying issues of imperialism and feudalism that served as the sources of oppression in China. By implication, any contemporary action, against Japan or any other power, must not stop at mere regime change but needed to address these underlying factors. Despite the failures of the Xinhai Revolution, according to Mao, it did spring from a legitimate source of opposition within the Chinese people that had long been building during the COH. In this construction, as was the case for the rest of the COH, the Xinhai Revolution existed merely as a prelude to the CPC, an untenable, if noble, effort, absent the guiding hand of Mao.

Although Mao argued that the Xinhai Revolution fell short, he portrayed the M4M as both properly motivated and effectively constituted towards advancing the Chinese Revolution. This protest movement in 1919 was launched in response to outcomes emerging from the Versailles Peace Conference that were perceived as slights to Chinese sovereignty to the benefit of Japan.²⁶² In Mao's estimation, the M4M - unlike the Xinhai Revolution, now armed with Marxism thanks to the October Revolution - provided the first effective means of tackling the two interlinked problems of semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism. Mao described the shift between the M4M and previous iterations of resistance in *On Contradiction* when he wrote:

Similarly with the Chinese people's knowledge of imperialism . . . It was only in the second stage that the Chinese people reached the stage of rational knowledge, saw the internal and external contradictions of imperialism and saw the essential truth that imperialism had allied itself with China's comprador and feudal classes to oppress and exploit the great masses of the Chinese people. This knowledge began about the time of the May 4th Movement of 1919.²⁶³

According to Mao, a shift in perception among the population enabled more effective revolutionary activity and an additional shift was needed to carry the transformation of China forward. Furthermore, he posited that the aim of the M4M was against a corrupt regime as much as against imperialism itself. In a 1939 speech regarding the youth movement in China, he observed:

The May 4th Movement was directed against a government of national betrayal, a government which conspired with imperialism and sold out the interests of the nation, a government which oppressed the people . . . It is

²⁶² For more on the May 4th Movement see James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History, 1912-1949* (*Transformation of Modern China Series*), pages 117 - 141. Kindle Edition.

²⁶³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume I*, page 301.

obvious that such a government must be opposed, that a government of national betrayal must be overthrown . . . The May 4th Movement was a revolutionary movement precisely because it opposed a government of national betrayal. The youth of China should see the May 4th Movement in this light.²⁶⁴ Mao linked the Wang Jingwei government, which had been termed as one of national betrayal, to the previous Republican government which had negotiated at Versailles, seeking to delegitimize Wang and other collaborationist elements through this comparison.²⁶⁵

Mao also made extensive instrumental use of the historical memory of Sun Yat-sen through the Nationalist framework. He consistently competed with the GMD for ownership of his legacy, presenting the CPC as fulfilling the intentions of Dr. Sun while portraying the GMD as corrupting his vision. This competition included highlighting Sun's alliance with the Soviet Union and his cooperation with the CPC. However, Mao also used Sun as a unifying figure when necessary, emphasizing him as a nationalist. For example, in 1938 Mao argued:

The nationalism put forward by Mr. Sun Yatsen sought to make our nation independent. Given the semifeudal nature of Chinese society, there must be a revolution of People's Rights, or a democratic revolution. For Mr. Sun Yatsen saw that China was infected with two diseases— national oppression and feudal oppression— and to cure these two diseases, it was necessary to apply a remedy appropriate to the illness.²⁶⁶ Mao presented Dr. Sun's aim as independence, and he specified that this concept encompassed freedom from imperialism and feudalism, consistent with Mao's construction. In addition, he used Sun's memory to motivate the GMD to continue resistance against Japan as a means of fulfilling Sun's nationalist ambitions. In May 1939, as support for continued fighting waned, Mao declared:

Only those who wage the War of Resistance to the end, until we reach the Yalu River and recover all our lost territories, never surrendering, and never betraying the country, can be called true believers in Nationalism and faithful disciples of Mr. Sun Yatsen's Nationalism.²⁶⁷ Mao's intent in appealing to Sun's memory appeared to be to prevent the GMD from departing from the United Front and reaching an accommodation with Japan, which would leave the CPC isolated and vulnerable.

²⁶⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, pages 241-242.

²⁶⁵ For more on Wang Jingwei's defection from the GMD see Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945*, pages 279-295, Kindle Edition.

²⁶⁶ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 281, Kindle Edition.

²⁶⁷ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 153, Kindle Edition.

In addition to his personal example, Mao also made use of Dr. Sun's ideology, particularly the Three People's Principles(三民主義).²⁶⁸ This usage matched his other uses of Dr. Sun through the nationalist framework, galvanizing the GMD to continued commitment to the United Front, and as a means of fostering national unity. Mao described Sun's Three People's Principles as the ideological structure binding the United Front together:

The Three People's Principles are the political foundation of the Anti-Japanese National United Front, and they should be completely carried out in the course of the struggle to resist Japan and build the country. Nationalism means that we must overthrow Japanese imperialism; People's Rights means that the people of the whole country will enjoy freedom; and People's Livelihood requires that the people of the whole country have clothes to wear, food to eat, and work to do. These are all very good and indispensable, and we must resolutely carry them out.²⁶⁹

By implication, Mao argued that any movement against the United Front towards accommodation with Japan betrayed the Three People's Principles and Dr. Sun's legacy. Mao used memory of the Three People's Principles to cultivate unity, especially with regards to the GMD, who also relied upon it for their ideological basis.²⁷⁰

Mao also used more general pronouncements regarding the nature and character of the Chinese people and history through the Nationalist framework. These celebrations were meant to be a source of pride to connect disparate groups in a shared identity. Furthermore, these invocations served as a point to elevate China's diplomatic position by portraying the CPC, and later the PRC, as representative of not merely a nation, but of a prestigious civilization. For example, in 1939 Mao argued that China possessed a long history as an independent nation, and therefore could not submit to Japanese imperialism. He explained, "For several thousand years, our nation has been an independent and self-respecting nation. It is a nation which cannot coexist with Japanese imperialism."²⁷¹ In addition, he pointed to the vast size of the Chinese population, implying that as its government represented an outsized portion of humanity

²⁶⁸ For more on Sun Yat-sen's political philosophy see David J. Lorenzo, *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Chiang Ching-Kuo*, pages 30-83, Kindle Edition.

²⁶⁹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 152, Kindle Edition

²⁷⁰ David J. Lorenzo, *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Chiang Ching-Kuo*, page 91, Kindle Edition.

²⁷¹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VII, New Democracy*, page 150, Kindle Edition.

events in China had a more profound impact on global history. As the civil war against the GMD raged in December 1947, he remarked:

In this land of China, the People's Liberation Army has turned back the wheel of counterrevolution -- of U.S. imperialism and its lackey, the Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang -- and sent it down the road to destruction and has pushed the wheel of revolution forward along the road to victory. This is a turning point in history. It is the turning point from growth to extinction for Chiang Kai-shek's twenty-year counter-revolutionary rule. It is the turning point from growth to extinction for imperialist rule in China, now over a hundred years old. This is a momentous event. It is momentous because it is occurring in a country with a population of 475 million and, having occurred, it will certainly culminate in victory throughout the country.²⁷²

In this case, Mao asserted that a CPC victory in China would be a momentous event, not only for China, but for world history, due to its massive population.

In his usage of the Nationalist narrative, Mao sought to avoid any limitations on its scope, especially with regards to minority populations. What he termed Han chauvinism could alienate the substantial minority populations, some of whom were concentrated in strategic regions throughout China. The danger existed that these minorities might cultivate their own nationalist narratives to support an independent state, weakening the position of Mao by potentially sundering off large portions of China's claimed territory. To prevent this outcome, Mao argued that China had a long history of including many ethnicities and cultures within the confines of its state and that these minorities also formed an indispensable portion of the nation. In 1956 Mao recalled:

The minority nationalities have all contributed to the making of China's history. The huge Han population is the result of the intermingling of many nationalities over a long time. All through the ages, the reactionary rulers, chiefly from the Han nationality, sowed feelings of estrangement among our various nationalities and bullied the minority peoples.²⁷³

Mao argued that the Han nationality itself was the product of many nationalities, and although he acknowledged ill treatment to other groups in the past, any contemporary separation would be a betrayal of the historical relationships that built Chinese national identity.

Although Mao never fully employed the Liberal framework, first introduced substantially by Deng Xiaoping, as will be explored in the next chapter, a small cluster of instrumental uses by Mao do fit within this category. Those uses he did make were closely associated with the Marxist framework. In this formulation, Mao suggested that the spread of Communism, as opposed to liberal values, would lead to

²⁷² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume IV*, page 157.

²⁷³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume V*, page 295.

more peace and democracy across the globe. However, there appears in 1945 a cluster of instrumental uses of the Liberal framework which, while avoiding contradiction of the Marxist narrative, appear as independent and aimed at garnering support from the United States. For example, at the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945, he explained his vision for a democratic system in China as follows:

We Communists propose two steps for the termination of the Kuomintang one-party dictatorship. First, at the present stage, to establish a provisional coalition government through common agreement among representatives of all parties and people with no party affiliation. Second, in the next stage, to convene a national assembly after free and unrestricted elections and form a regular coalition government . . . This is the only course China can take, whatever the intentions of the Kuomintang or other parties, groups or individuals, whether they like it or not, and whether or not they are conscious of it. This is a historical law, an inexorable trend which no force can reverse.²⁷⁴

Mao described this movement towards a democratic system as not merely desirable, but as following an irresistible trend of world history. In another speech at the Congress, he deemed this trend towards democracy as irreversible.²⁷⁵ After hostilities with Japan ceased, Mao continued engaging with this Liberal narrative, especially when it was aimed at an American audience. For example, in an interview with the Reuters News Service that September, he declared:

A free and democratic China will have the following characteristics: Its governments at all levels, including the central government, will all be chosen through universal, equal, and secret voting, and they will be responsible to their electors. They will carry out Mr. Sun Yatsen's Three People's Principles, Lincoln's principle "of the people, by the people, and for the people," and Roosevelt's Atlantic Charter. They will guarantee the independence, solidarity, and unity of the country and its cooperation with other democratic powers.²⁷⁶

Mao invoked the memory of Lincoln and the recently deceased Roosevelt here, alongside Dr. Sun, as a means to soften the CPC's image and present it as a potentially amenable partner for the United States, especially as the US began its role as mediator between CPC and the GMD. A few weeks later at Chongqing, Mao made the following remarks on the legacy of the World Wars and, consistent with the Liberal framework, how the collective experiences of these wars moved the world towards peace and cooperation. He stated:

During the past thirty years, the world has experienced two world wars. The nature of the Second World War is different from that of the First World War. During this war, both the world and China made rapid progress.

²⁷⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume III*, page 292.

²⁷⁵ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 892, Kindle Edition.

²⁷⁶ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1912-1949): Volume IX*, page 91, Kindle Edition. Lincoln's Gettysburg address had also been used by Sun Yatsen in his evocations of the Three People's Principles. David J. Lorenzo, *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Chiang Ching-Kuo*, page 91, Kindle Edition.

The goal of the present talks is to carry out peaceful reconstruction. There is only one road for China today and that is peace . . . Peace, democracy, and unity, and achieving unification based on peace, democracy, and unity—this orientation conforms to the demands of all China's people and to the demands of people all over the world and of the governments of the Allied countries. Peace and cooperation should be lasting.²⁷⁷

Invocations of the Liberal framework would vanish from his discourse soon thereafter, as prospects for decoupling US support from the GMD ebbed away. However, their emergence, regardless of how brief, displayed a willingness on the part of Mao to instrumentally use this framework should the opportunity and need arise.

As Mao competed for core leadership and then wielded his influence to advance his policies, he consistently made substantial instrumental use of historical memory in the form of the three narrative frameworks. Each served distinct purposes, with some evolving over time while others remained relatively consistent. Mao employed the Confucian/Traditional framework as a means of connecting with his Chinese audience and differentiating his governing philosophy based on Marxism applied to China's conditions from his competitors. The Marxist framework proved the most prolific. Mao wielded this framework in the interparty battles within the CPC, as well as a tool for interstate relations, especially with the Soviet Union. A key feature in Mao's rise to core leadership was his redefinition of CPC historical memory, and he continued to use that memory to manipulate internal struggles and strike down any opponents emerging within the party. The Nationalist framework provided a method to unify the nation, especially against foreign opponents such as the Japanese and later the United States. Mao also used memory over the COH and Dr. Sun as tools to calibrate relations with the GMD, at times appeasing, other times condemning, as required. Mao's instrumental use of historical memory through the Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist frameworks provided a model for future core leaders of the CPC to emulate in their discourse and in their governing philosophies.

Illustrative Texts

Although each of the three frameworks of instrumental uses of historical memory examined above provided invaluable assistance in Mao's political advancement, so far, they have only been

²⁷⁷ Nancy Hearst; Joseph Fewsmith (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings (1912-1949): Volume IX*, page 94, Kindle Edition.

discussed in isolation. Often Mao linked elements from the various frameworks for added effect within his discourse. For illustration, I have selected four texts to examine in greater depth to display the interaction of the narrative frameworks and associate them with Mao's likely intended political objectives. The texts were selected to provide a sampling across time and to show a variety of audiences, political objectives, as well as mixtures of frameworks.

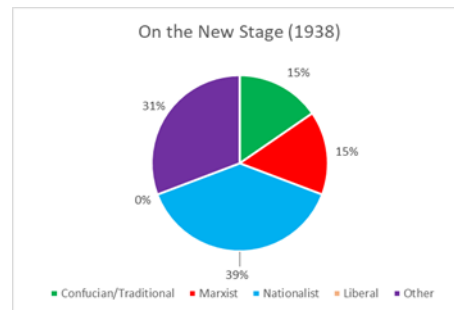


Figure 2.12 References by category for text titled, “On the New Stage” (1938)

The first text I examined is titled, *On the New Stage*, which was a report issued by Mao to the Enlarged Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee on October 12 - 14, 1938. As such, the primary audience was the senior leadership of the party, although it was disseminated to a wider party audience with its publication in *Jiefang* (解放/*Liberation*) magazine six weeks later.²⁷⁸ At this stage, Mao had gathered significant political and military power to himself, as well as having begun the process of establishing himself as a theoretician. However, he had not yet quashed the opposition by figures such as Wang Ming.²⁷⁹ The text itself reviews recent events and the immediate course of action for the CPC to follow, namely pursuing a strategy to halt Japan's advance and facilitate the eventual military expulsion of the Japanese from China. In addition, he iterated a desire to ultimately establish a democratic

²⁷⁸ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 541, Kindle Edition.

²⁷⁹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, page 215, Kindle Edition. “With Wang Ming still highly influential in autumn 1938, Mao could not be assured of winning unanimous support to become the Party's paramount leader once and for all if he were to convene the Seventh Party Congress at that time. It was with this consideration in mind that Mao instead decided to convene the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee.”

government over all China, with CPC participation. I discerned a total of thirteen instrumental uses of historical memory, with instances of the Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist all present.

Mao appears to have developed two parallel goals within this text, namely, to elevate his voice and authority, while simultaneously advocating for policies to deal with the crisis of the Japanese invasion. Despite a few bright spots, the Japanese incursions by the fall of 1938 had captured several major Chinese cities, pushing back the GMD aligned forces.²⁸⁰ This text offered the CPC's plan, as articulated by Mao, to deal with these circumstances. Mao instrumentally used historical memory in four ways to pursue both of his goals. First, Mao framed the conflict as part of the historical process that had been initiated by the COH to galvanize national support, ennoble the enterprise, and counter looming pessimism over China's prospects. Second, to bolster his own standing, Mao presented a military strategy grounded in his military theories. Third, he discussed the importance of maintaining relations with the GMD, leaning on historical memory to justify this cooperation. Fourth, Mao used the memory of Dr. Sun to argue for a reform of the national government. These subsidiary goals assisted Mao to present a case for continued resistance against Japan within the United Front, while simultaneously advancing his credentials towards core leadership.

Mao sought to build support for continued resistance against Japan by framing the conflict as an enterprise aimed not just against a single foreign aggressor but as part of larger historical project to rejuvenate the nation. Within this construction, any surrender or accommodation meant a retreat, not just from the current conflict, but moving China further away from shaking off its ill fortunes, characterized by the COH. Using the Nationalist framework, he summarized:

Now the people of all China and of the whole world have all understood that the Chinese nation has stood up! After being trodden upon, humiliated, invaded, and oppressed for the past hundred years, and especially after being in such an intolerable position of slavery since the September Eighteenth Incident, things have indeed

²⁸⁰ Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945*, page 227, Kindle Edition. “In the dark days of October 1938, fifteen months after war had broken out, one fact remained constant. Repeatedly, observers (Chinese businessmen, British diplomats, Japanese generals) had predicted that each new disaster must surely see the end of Chinese resistance and a swift surrender, or at least a negotiated solution in which the government would have to accept yet harsher conditions from Tokyo. But even after the defenders had been forced from Shanghai, from Nanjing, and from Wuhan, despite the terrifying might that Japan had brought to bear on the Chinese resistance, and despite the invader's manpower, technology, and economic resources, China was still fighting. Yet it was fighting alone.”

changed. The people of all China, holding weapons in their hands, have marched to the battleground of the war of self-defense. The final victory of all China, namely, the dawn of freedom and emancipation for the Chinese nation, is already in sight.²⁸¹

Mao went even further, claiming that the war against Japan was for the very survival of the Chinese nation itself. Continuing his use of the Nationalist framework, he declared:

We know that this current great national war of ours differs from all wars in the past history of China, because this war is a war that frees the Chinese nation from the status of semicolony and from the destruction of the state and the extinction of the race.²⁸²

By placing the stakes so high, both positive and negative, Mao sought to head off any backsliding towards a settlement with the Japanese, as any such settlement would leave the CPC isolated and likely vulnerable to renewed attacks by the GMD. In addition, Mao sought to distinguish this conflict from China's past wars because of its progressive nature and the opportunities this afforded to the CPC. He explained:

In the second place, our Resistance War against Japan today is unlike the wars in all the periods of Chinese history. Our war is a national revolutionary war and a progressive war. Not only is the character of the war itself progressive, but this war is being waged on a progressive foundation without parallel in China's past. China in the fourth decade of the twentieth century is different from China in any other historical period. We have progressive people, progressive political parties, and a progressive army unlike those in any other historic periods.²⁸³

The progressive nature of the war, and particularly the way it was being waged, offered an opportunity, according to Mao, for the CPC to advance its position as a leading power within China simultaneously to engaging in the conflict to resist Japan. Through this argument, Mao justified continued CPC participation in the war to the senior Party members as it advanced their goals of national revolution.

The second objective for Mao related to determining the best strategy for conducting the war. Struggles over military strategy had propelled him into serious contention for core leadership and he invested substantial space within his discourse discussing military theory, including the best manner to resist Japan's incursions. However, the tide of military conflict had been going against the United Front and pessimism emerged regarding the plausibility of success. Mao described his strategy as founded upon

²⁸¹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 461, Kindle Edition. For more on the Sept 18th (Mukden incident) see Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945*, page 77-88, Kindle Edition.

²⁸² Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 461, Kindle Edition.

²⁸³ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 469, Kindle Edition.

maintaining the United Front, engaging in a protracted warfare strategy, and relying upon the masses.²⁸⁴

To maintain this strategy, Mao turned to the instrumental use of historical memory of past conflicts, categorizing warfare as having three potential stages. Those stages involved shifts in the balance of power, with the first stage favoring the attacker, the second stage a stalemate, and the third stage favoring the defender, offering the potential for a successful counterattack. Mao portrayed China as currently within the first stage but argued that his strategy would best facilitate movement towards the second and later to the third stage. To illustrate these stages, Mao relied upon the instrumental use of historical memory of past conflicts. Describing wars ending after one stage, he explained:

Some wars in history have ended after a single stage. For example, the war between Japan and Russia in 1905 was over after the attack of the Japanese armies and the defeat and retreat of the Russian armies. Another example was the war between Italy and Abyssinia, which came to an end after the attack by Italy and the defeat of Abyssinia. The same was true of the Chinese war against the northern warlords, which began in 1926.²⁸⁵

In these illustrations, the attacker had the advantage, although Mao proceeded to provide evidence that China could avoid such a fate, both due to the nature of its terrain and to implementation of his protracted warfare strategies.²⁸⁶ Next, Mao used both an anecdote from the Confucian/Traditional framework, as well as a reference to Napoleon, which is outside the scope of the three frameworks, to discuss the value of retreating to enable a counterattack. He stated:

Wars of the second category end after two stages. Take the war between France and Russia, for instance. Napoleon went from attack to retreat; Russia went from retreat to attack. There were two stages for both sides. In ancient China, the famous battle of the Red Cliff between [the states of] Wu and Wei, and the battle at Feishui between [the states of] Qin and Jin were like this. Although the two sides were different in strength and weakness, the weak side was good at using other good and favorable conditions and provided correct leadership. Thus they followed the retreat with counteroffensives and defeated the enemy.²⁸⁷

Finally, he referred again to European history for examples of the three-stage war model that he suggested applied to China's current conflict:

But there is still the third category of war, for instance, the Seven Years' War, the Eight Years' War, the Thirty Years' War, and the Hundred Years' War in foreign countries or even the great European war of twenty years ago, lasting four years (especially as manifested on the Western front). All of these had three stages. Side A

²⁸⁴ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, pages 463-464, Kindle Edition.

²⁸⁵ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 473, Kindle Edition.

²⁸⁶ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 473-474, Kindle Edition.

²⁸⁷ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 473, Kindle Edition.

attacks, and side B retreats; this is the first period. Both sides are locked in stalemate, which lasts for quite a long time; this is the second period. Side B launches a counteroffensive, and side A retreats; this is the third period. There have been many such wars in Chinese history, too. The characteristic of this kind of war is that there is a relatively long or very long period of stalemate; this is also the consequence of the specific historical conditions and of the characteristics of the cliques leading the war.²⁸⁸

Although Mao did include references to China's ancient military history, most of his references were taken from European history and suggest he aimed this discourse not merely at the Chinese cadres, but also towards Moscow and its representatives. At this phase, Mao still needed to mollify any potential interference from the Soviet Union and tailored his selection of historical anecdotes to be more readily digestible to that audience, indicating the limits of his authority. Mao presented himself as having the best vision for military strategy and he instrumentally used historical memory of past conflicts, especially European, to justify of his formula, propelling forward his pursuit of core leadership by securing his military credentials.

Key to Mao's strategy was maintaining the United Front, with Jiang Jieshi and the GMD as the indispensable partner for this objective. By this point in the war, Wang Jingwei had argued for a political settlement with Japan. In fact, a few months later Wang would resign his post and defect from Chongqing to pursue a settlement with Japan.²⁸⁹ Therefore, the threat of GMD cessation of hostilities at this point, and by implication the resumption of GMD efforts against the CPC, was a tangible and immediate threat. As part of his attempts to forestall such an occurrence, Mao relied on the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks to influence the GMD. He recalled the positive history of the GMD, including its points of cooperation with the CPC, and framed that legacy as being upheld by its current policy of unified resistance:

The Guomindang has its own glorious history, of which the main achievements are the overthrow of the Qing; the establishment of the Republic; opposition to Yuan Shikai; the establishment of the Three Policies of uniting with Russia, with the Communist Party, and with the workers and peasants; and carrying out the great revolution of 1926–1927. Today it is once more leading the great War of Resistance against Japan. It enjoys the historic heritage of the Three People's Principles; it has had two great leaders in succession— Mr. Sun Yatsen and Mr. Chiang Kaishek; and it has a great number of loyal and patriotic party members. All this should not be underestimated by our compatriots and constitutes the result of China's historical development.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 473, Kindle Edition.

²⁸⁹ Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945*, pages 279-281, Kindle Edition.

²⁹⁰ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 487, Kindle Edition.

At the same time, Mao maintained an open line for detractors to recant and be welcomed back into the United Front through the Confucian/Traditional framework. Quoting from the *Analects*, he stated, “We hope these people will change. ‘The faults of the superior man are like the eclipses of the sun and the moon;’ when they have changed back, all will be well.”²⁹¹ By using this reference, Mao sought to ease the path for reconciliation with those that had taken a more pessimistic outlook, by presenting such a shift as noble and ethical.

Although Mao presented the GMD as the leader for the United Front, he also engaged in actions to coopt their legitimacy and present the CPC as the most genuine organization working for China’s future. However, Mao had to navigate this objective in such a way as to avoid an open conflict with the GMD. Therefore, he suggested a reform towards a democratic government with CPC participation, thereby guaranteeing CPC legitimacy as a political entity and protecting it from any future suppression campaigns. To accomplish these tasks, Mao relied upon memory of Sun Yat-sen, interpreted through the Marxist and Nationalist lenses. First, Mao presented the realization of communism in China not only as the dream of Dr. Sun, but as a common goal for the GMD and CPC, as well as the people of China. He argued:

The so-called great future ideals refer to communism, which is the perfect social system for mankind. Mr. Sun Yatsen once believed that only when it was realized could the social problems of the future be resolved. “Present practical tasks” refers to the Three People’s Principles. This is the basic task in the current stage of “seeking equal international status, equal political status, and equal economic status.” It is the common demand of the Guomindang, the Communist Party, and the people of the whole country.²⁹²

Here Mao sought to apply the memory of Dr. Sun and place his vision for China into line with the CPC.

To achieve this end, Mao leaned into the Nationalist lens, presenting his calls for a democratic government including the CPC as consistent with Dr. Sun’s aspirations. He explained:

What we call a democratic republic is actually a republic of the Three People’s Principles; its nature is that of the Three People’s Principles. According to Mr. Sun Yatsen’s formulation, it is a country “that seeks equal international status, equal political status, and equal economic status.” First, this country is a nationalist country.

²⁹¹ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 490, Kindle Edition. *Analects*, Chapter 19, para 11, 子貢曰：「君子之過也，如日月之食焉：過也，人皆見之；更也，人皆仰之。」 Legge translation: “Zi Gong said, “The faults of the superior man are like the eclipses of the sun and moon. He has his faults, and all men see them; he changes again, and all men look up to him.” <https://ctext.org/analects/zi-zhang>, Accessed 12/12/2023.

²⁹² Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 513, Kindle Edition.

It is an independent country, which will not tolerate any foreign interference and, at the same time, will not interfere in any foreign countries.²⁹³

Mao attempted to advance his proposal for political reform, at the expense of Jiang and the GMD, by arguing that it fulfilled Dr. Sun's intentions, perhaps the greatest source of ideological legitimacy for Jiang. Throughout this text, Mao carefully maneuvered to present the new orientation of CPC policy to the party elite and simultaneously instrumentally used historical memory to build support for not only the policy but his political clout as well.

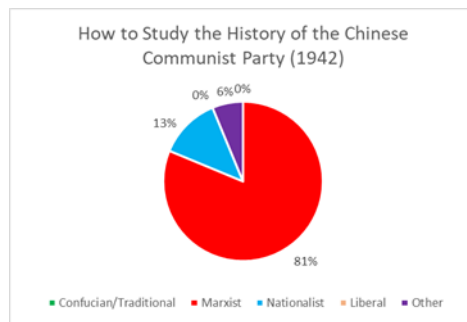


Figure 2.13 References by category for text titled, “How to Study the History of the Chinese Communist Party” (1942)

The second text I examine is titled, “How to Study the History of the Chinese Communist Party,” and is taken from a speech to the Central Committee at a study session in March 1942. As such, this speech appears aimed primarily at the Party leadership. Although efforts had begun as early as 1941, this speech offers a clear enunciation by Mao of how to engage in the Rectification campaign, which ultimately consolidated his control as core leader.²⁹⁴ The speech prescribed not only the subjects for proper study, but also assigned the only valid interpretations for those events. I discerned sixteen instances of instrumental uses of historical memory. The speech is dominated by the Marxist framework, although there are some instances of the Nationalist.

²⁹³ Stuart Schram (Ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VI, The New Stage, (August 1937-1938)*, page 517, Kindle Edition.

²⁹⁴ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, page 462, Kindle Edition. “At its outset in the spring of 1942, the Rectification Movement mainly called on Party cadres to study a series of documents assigned by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (CPC) Central Committee. Beginning the Rectification Movement with the study of documents reflected the originality of Mao's methods in launching inner-Party struggle.”

Mao's main objective for this speech was to assume all authority over defining CPC history and determining how it would be interpreted. By doing so, Mao elevated his own position within that history, improving his political capital, while simultaneously assigning all blame for past errors to his opponents, who had deviated from his policy positions. However, much of the discussion on Party history falls within my 25-year limit and so is excluded. Fortunately, there is still a wide array of instrumental uses that are available for exploration. Mao used this memory to justify not only the need to study this history broadly but the proper methods to do so. In addition, Mao explored the importance of the Xinhai Revolution and M4M to CPC history and his reasoning for the differences between the two episodes. Along a similar line, he specified other tools for properly studying Party history, such as maintaining the objective over the subjective, keeping it grounded in China's conditions, and using the Soviet Union, and particularly Stalin, as a spiritual guide.

Mao began his speech making clear the necessity for studying Party history and the need to be clear on the conclusions to draw from any such study. He began by declaring, "Now we are all studying Party history. This study is essential. If we do not make Party history clear, if we do not make the road that the Party has followed in history clear, then we will not be able to improve our work."²⁹⁵ Mao argued that reviews of Party history were necessary as a means to progressing and overcoming past errors but stressed that such a review had to lead to a clear and uniform understanding across the party. He continued to prescribe the proper method for such a study, relying on the example of MEL(S) to validate the practice.

How should we study Party history? The basic method, which Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin have already discussed, is the comprehensive historical method. Naturally, when we study the history of the Chinese Communist Party we should also follow this method.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 61, Kindle Edition.

²⁹⁶ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 61, Kindle Edition.

Mao grounded his efforts for consolidating control over party history by borrowing the authority of Marx and others to add legitimacy to the project. Once Mao had established the general purpose and manner for studying Party history, he pivoted to discussing its point of origin.

Mao further argued that Party history must begin with a study of the Xinhai Revolution and the M4M as their starting point. Specifically, he pointed to both events having major impacts on the formation of the CPC, which a study simply beginning in 1921 would inevitably miss. He explained:

As for the preparations for revolution, the first stage, starting in 1921, was in fact prepared by the 1911 Revolution and the May Fourth movement. The May Fourth movement in particular began to prepare the ideas, cadres, masses, and young intellectuals for the Great Revolution. So, strictly speaking, if we study Party history only starting in 1921, we will still not get the whole picture.²⁹⁷

Although the Xinhai Revolution was important in overthrowing the Qing, Mao judged it as ultimately a failure to reverse the semi-colonial and semi-feudal status of China.²⁹⁸ However, he contended that the October Revolution in Russia awakened the Chinese people and made possible the successes of the M4M and the founding of the CPC. Mao contended:

However, the May Fourth movement took place after the Great War in Europe [World War I] and after the October Revolution. The colonial and semicolonial revolutionary movements of that time were no longer the reserves for the world bourgeois revolution but those for the world proletarian revolution. The May Fourth movement was a response to the Russian October Revolution and therefore was more profound than the 1911 Revolution.²⁹⁹

Mao not only sought to enshrine the M4M as a precursor to the CPC's formation but gave credit to the Soviet Union and the October Revolution as the inspiration for China's awakening. However, it is worth noting that this inspiration, as opposed to claiming direct causation, provided Mao sufficient space to avoid outright subservience and maintain an independence for the CPC to dictate policy in China.

In addition, Mao provided additional guidance for the proper methods of studying Party history. One key facet of his directed approach dealt with taking what he termed as an objective view of history

²⁹⁷ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 64, Kindle Edition.

²⁹⁸ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 64, Kindle Edition, "The 1911 Revolution took place at a time when the Chinese proletariat was not yet awakened and the Chinese Communist Party was not yet formed, when the proletariat of the whole world, after the failure of the Paris Commune, had no actual revolutionary operations and was only preparing for revolution, and when colonial and semicolonial revolutionary movements still served as reserves for the world bourgeois revolution."

²⁹⁹ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 64, Kindle Edition.

and avoiding subjective judgements. In his pronouncements, he claimed a need to avoid merely assigning individual blame but rather to look for the underlying causes of deviations:

Our study of Party history must be scientific and not subjectivist. In analyzing the mistakes we see in Party history, we should not merely hate some individuals. If we merely hate some individuals, then we will see history as created by just a few people. The Marxist view of history is not subjectivism, and it seeks to identify the nature and objective causes of historical events. Is it enough to look at the objective causes alone? No. We must also recognize the role of leaders, for they have a big impact. But leaders themselves are an objective reality, and there are objective causes for their Left or Right actions or their mistakes. They can only be explained by finding their objective causes.³⁰⁰

Mao certainly did not shy away from assigning individual blame, as examined in the previous section.

However, this formulation allowed Mao to offer clemency to individuals who committed such errors and reintegrate them into his good graces, so long as they confessed such errors to Mao's satisfaction. This system allowed Mao to discipline, but still retain, Party cadres, as well as hold over them their previous faults should they wander from his good graces.

In another maneuver against his opponents, Mao proclaimed that China must be the center for any study of history, and called out specifically those who, in his calculation, merely regurgitated talking points from the Soviet Union:

In studying the history of the Chinese Communist Party, we must regard China as the center, we must plant our backsides on the body of China. We must study world capitalism and socialism, too, but if we want to be clear about their relations to the history of the Chinese Party, it all depends on where you sit with your backside. If you sit entirely on the side of the foreign countries, then you are not studying Chinese Communist Party history. When we study China, we must view China as the center; we must plant ourselves on the body of China to study the affairs of the world. Some of our comrades have a defect, which consists of looking at everything by regarding foreign countries as the center. They act like phonographs, mechanically swallowing foreign things whole and importing them into China in an uncritical manner, without taking account of China's characteristics.³⁰¹

Wang Ming and others, who relied on what Mao termed a dogmatic approach, failed to study Chinese history correctly and invalidated their conclusions. By extension, this curtailed their right to challenge him as core leader. He further assailed those who merely espoused theory without giving due consideration to its application to China's conditions. Addressing the value of the example of Stalin's *Short Course* and Lenin's application of Marxism to Russia, Mao explained:

With this theory and these tactics, Lenin launched the February Revolution and the October Revolution and Stalin, after him, drew up three five-year plans and created the socialist Soviet Union. We should follow the

³⁰⁰ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 68, Kindle Edition.

³⁰¹ Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, page 68, Kindle Edition.

same spirit. We should apply the methods of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin to China and create some new things in China. General theories, divorced from Chinese realities, cannot defeat the enemy. But if we combine theory with practice, use the standpoint and methods of Marxism to solve Chinese problems, and create a few new things, that will work.³⁰²

Mao relied upon the memory of MEL(S), claiming to act in accordance with their spirit in constructing his governing philosophy of applying Marxism to China's conditions. This method stood opposed to what Mao framed as the more shallow and ill-conceived rote repetition by his competitors. In this construction, Mao's study of history, and its application for policy, was in line with MEL(S), while Wang Ming and others, who appealed to Marxist theory directly, were characterized as actually betraying that spirit. The Marxist framework, and to a lesser extent the Nationalist, aided Mao as he consolidated control over CPC historical memory, centering himself as supreme arbiter of all questions of ideology and historical interpretation.

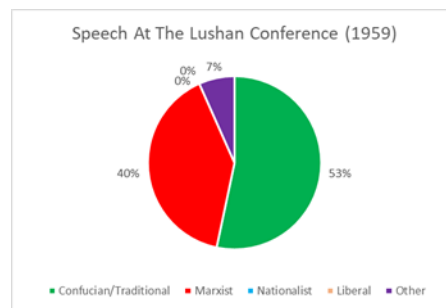


Figure 2.14 References by category for text titled, "Speech at the Lushan Conference" (1959)

The third text I examine is Mao's response at the 1959 Lushan Conference when he faced a challenge to his Great Leap Forward Program. Specifically, Mao opted to castigate Peng Dehuai, who had offered private, but pointed, criticisms of the programs, and by extension Mao's leadership.³⁰³ Presumably, in Mao's perception, Peng's letter marked a major onslaught against his core leadership. Mao's influence had waned in 1956, but he had reasserted that authority through both the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Great Leap Forward.³⁰⁴ However, he faced a major crisis, both through a deepening

³⁰² Stuart Schram; Timothy Cheek; Roderick MacFarquhar (Eds), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949: Volume VIII*, pages 68-69, Kindle Edition.

³⁰³ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 463, Kindle Edition. "On July 14, he received a letter from his minister of defense, Peng Dehuai, containing criticism of the Great Leap. Peng expressed himself very cautiously, did not deny the 'great achievements,' and naturally did not directly attack the Chairman himself, but his obvious dissatisfaction with Mao Zedong's voluntarism showed through his entire argument."

³⁰⁴ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 441 & 448, Kindle Edition.

divide with the Soviet Union, as well as internal opposition from the disastrous impacts of his domestic policies.³⁰⁵ Mao's primary audience for this speech was senior Party cadres. I discerned fifteen instrumental uses of historical memory, mostly conforming to the Confucian/Traditional and Marxist frameworks.

Mao's objective appeared to be both to shore up his position as core leader and to maintain the general validity of the Great Leap Forward program. While he was willing to give way, in some small measure, any errors had to be minimized and characterized as faults in implementation or overzealousness. On the other hand, he sought to cow any opposition to his core leadership. Those who would not be sufficiently humbled had to be exorcized from any influence within the party. To carry out these overarching goals, Mao instrumentally used historical memory in several subsidiary lines of effort. First, he sought to excuse any adverse impacts and dismiss what he termed as excessive criticism of the program. Next, as part of the red vs expert debate, Mao minimized the importance of formal education and technical skill in favor of a revolutionary spirit to overcome challenges. Third, he opined on the proper balance between zeal and caution in implementing any policy. Finally, he argued that mistakes are natural and can be redeemed, so long as proper lessons are learned from them. In each of these subsidiary goals, Mao instrumentally used historical memory to advance his position and tear down any potential threat to his core leadership.

Mao engaged directly with criticism for the Great Leap Forward at the Lushan conference and characterized such critiques as emerging from a right deviation. Furthermore, he engaged directly with

³⁰⁵ Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, page 460, Kindle Edition. To illustrate these tensions, Pantsov describes an episode between Mao and Khrushchev during the latter's visit to Beijing in July 1958, "Mao was displeased by Khrushchev's skeptical attitude toward the people's communes. Popular enthusiasm for the Great Leap was at its height, but his distinguished Soviet guest allowed himself to express doubts. Mao told Khrushchev that for the first time since the establishment of the PRC he felt happy, and proudly informed him of the unprecedented harvest of grain that was waiting to be gathered. Not bothering to restrain himself he even 'taunted' Khrushchev. Knowing there was not enough grain in the USSR, he asked him, as if in passing, 'We have accumulated a solid surplus of wheat, and we are now puzzled as to what to do with it. Can you give us some helpful advice?'"

those who had used the Confucian/Traditional framework to denigrate CPC spending priorities. To counter these accusations Mao declared:

The rightists say: Why was Ch'in Shih Huang overthrown? Because he built the Great Wall. Now that we have built the T'ien An Men we shall collapse; this is what the rightists say. I have not entirely finished reading the criticisms from within the Party. They were expressed in their most concentrated form by the Kiangsi Party School, but they are to be found everywhere. All the speeches of the rightists have been published, and the Kiangsi Party School is their representative within the Party. Some of them are rightists and wavering elements. They do not see the whole picture. But if we do some work on them, they will come round. Some of them have had problems in the past and have been criticized.³⁰⁶

Mao himself maintained an affinity for Qin Shi Huang as a great unifier and dynastic founder, but dismissed the accusation that his spending projects would lead to revolts as it did for the Qin (221 – 206 BCE).³⁰⁷ However, he also made clear in this statement that these opponents came from the ideological right, and although some might be redeemed, this had not been the first error for many. Here he signaled he would revisit past ideological missteps should such contrary viewpoints be maintained. Next, he located an error of recent policy by lower ranked cadres for mismanagement and wrongly extorting assets from production teams. He compared the practice to that of Shanghai's notorious gangs:

The things must be given back. You cannot say that what is yours is mine and just pick things up and walk off. No such rule has ever existed since ancient times. In another 10,000 years' time people will still not be able to pick things up and walk off. The Red and Green Gang behaved like this, stealing and robbing away in broad daylight, expropriating the fruits of others' labour without recompense, and violating the principle of the exchange of equal values.³⁰⁸

By locating blame at the lowest levels of the party apparatus, he attempted to inoculate both his leadership and the policy broadly speaking from potential blowback. However, Mao distinguished between a positive and negative aspect to seizing property, differentiated by both the intentions and targets of those who seized this property. Using an anecdote from *Water Margin* he stated:

³⁰⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"*

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

³⁰⁷ Li Zhisui, Hung-Chao Tai (Trans), *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, page 326, Kindle Edition. "Every citizen of Beijing had participated in the work—a new form of corvée labor at the behest of China's twentieth-century emperor. Just as Qin Shihuangdi had built the Great Wall and every emperor thereafter had had his own massive construction project, so Mao had decreed ten great buildings to commemorate the tenth year of his reign. Tiananmen was expanded to the huge square it is today, capable of holding half a million people, with the massive Great Hall of the People and the Museum of Revolutionary History flanking either side of the square. The parade of military might and the fireworks display would be the most extravagant in the history of new China."

³⁰⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"*

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. *The Green Gang played a vital role in the execution of the 1927 Shanghai Communist purge. Taylor, Jay, The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China, pages 66-68.*

Sung Chiang's government was called the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness. He robbed the rich to help the poor and could take what he wanted since he had justice on his side. What they took belonged to the local despots and evil gentry, and so his code of behaviour was acceptable. What Sung Chiang took was 'a birthday tribute'. His action was like our attacks on the local despots. He took their ill-gotten property. 'Ill-gotten gains can be taken with impunity.' What has been extorted from the peasants should be returned to the peasants. It is a long time since we attacked the local despots. When we attacked them, it was quite all right to divide their fields and return them to the people because they too were ill-gotten property.³⁰⁹

Mao used the memory of character Song Jiang to illustrate that taking property from what he termed local despots was justified and should be celebrated. Mao engaged with historical memory, including that of the Confucian/Traditional variant, to shift blame for any shortcoming of the Great Leap Forward away from himself.

To address the issue he raised, Mao advocated a greater educational focus for lower-level cadres to ensure proper execution of his policies. However, he stressed that this instruction should be kept simple and even went a step further that these materials should be tailored for those commune cadres who may be illiterate. Illiteracy was not to be seen as an impediment, and Mao used historical memory to show that in China's tradition, great things could be accomplished even by those who could not read. He recalled:

If people can't read, you can explain it to them and they will understand a certain amount. They do not have to read books; they can be educated by facts. Emperor Wu-ti of Liang had a prime minister called Ch'en Fa-chih. He could not read a single word. When he had to write poems, he recited them and got others to write them down, saying: 'You scholars are not as good as me, who learnt by ear.'³¹⁰

Although Mao would expand his denigration of intellectuals and formal education in the lead up to the Cultural Revolution in a similar manner, at this point he appeared concerned more narrowly with readjusting cadre implementation of the Great Leap Forward.

Mao opined on the issues of an overly cautious approach to implementing the Great Leap Forward versus an overly enthusiastic approach. Mao accused some cadres, including Peng Dehuai, of being guilty of this sin and connected it to past behavior, both by Peng and by other deviant CPC leaders. Before he moved against Peng, he attempted to separate some support from him by offering an olive branch to those on the fence who had merely wavered in their support for Mao. He observed:

³⁰⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech at Lushan Conference," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. Song Chiang is a central character romanticized in the novel *Water Margin*.

³¹⁰ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII*, "Speech at Lushan Conference," https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

I have observed that a proportion of comrades are wavering. They too say the Great Leap Forward, the General Line and the people's communes are correct. But when they speak we must note on whose side they stand as regards their ideological tendency, and what is the thrust of their words. This group is in the second category: those who are fundamentally correct, but partly incorrect and a bit unstable. Some people will waver in times of crisis and show a lack of resolution in the great storms of history. There were four lines in our history: the Li Li-san Line, the Wang Ming Line, the Kao-Jao Line, and now the General Line . . . They are terribly anxious in their desire to make things better for their country. This is good.³¹¹

He branded these individuals who wavered in their support of having a history of being unsteady in their convictions and further threatened them by invoking past line errors as conflated with the current opposition. However, Mao offered an olive branch, claiming those who repented were still fundamentally good, should they refrain from joining Peng in opposition.

To calibrate behavior, Mao advocated a balance in zeal, using another anecdote from the *Water Margin* novel:

If someone is not worried and they have no energy or enthusiasm, they will not do anything properly. Some people in criticizing Comrade Li Fu-ch'un, head of the Planning Commission, say: 'His foot wants to move, but he hesitates; his mouth wants to speak, but he stammers.' But don't be like Li K'uei; impetuosity is no good either.³¹²

In this articulation, some criticism and concern showed care on the part of the individual, but one should also be careful of overdoing it by acting like Li Kui.³¹³ In addition to the Confucian/Traditional framework, Mao also invoked the memory of Lenin.

Lenin was full of enthusiasm, which the masses liked. If people want to speak but can only stammer, it is because they have a lot of worries. During the first half of the month people had a lot of worries. Now these worries have all come out into the open. If you have anything to say, say it and it will all be written down in the minutes.³¹⁴

Mao appeared to advocate a Seinfeld-style Festivus airing of grievances. However, it was, in reality, an invitation to indicate their general support for Mao, or have their opposition preserved in Party historical memory, ready to be recalled whenever necessary to discipline them.

³¹¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"*

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

³¹² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"*

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. Li Kui is a figure from the novel *Water Margin*, known for his temper.

³¹³ In one illustrative episode from Chapter 40 of *The Water Margin*, Li Kui, (Black Whirlwind), saves Song Jiang from execution, but in the process goes on a rage fueled killing spree, attacking enemies and civilians alike, to the horror of his compatriot Chao Gai.

³¹⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"*

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

On the other hand, Mao's criticism of Peng appeared set in stone, accusing the military leader of lacking discretion. He engaged in a comparison of both himself and Peng to the *Three Kingdoms* figure of Zhang Fei, when he stated:

You must be more cautious. Your strength is that you are energetic and willing to take responsibility; much better than those who are sad and dismal. But when you fire big guns on important questions, you should take care. I have also fired three big shots: the people's communes, the steel smelting, and the General Line. P'eng Te-huai said that he was a coarse fellow with no refinement. I am like Chang Fei who, though rough, had a certain delicacy.³¹⁵

In this instance, Mao made a direct assault on Peng and his criticisms, arguing that Peng's comparison to Zhang, essentially a coarse but loyal soldier, was faulty and that even Zhang Fei had some discretion, which Mao correctly embodied. He signaled a difference between Peng and the more muted opposition, which he sought to separate from him, but this distinction merely painted Peng as a larger target.

A final subordinate objective that Mao pursued involved mitigating blowback from mistakes. Offering reconciliation allowed Mao to simultaneously redeem past offenders, should they appear sufficiently contrite and adjusted their position accordingly, while also excusing any culpability that could be attached to Mao. He especially used the Marxist framework to show that mistakes are natural and that they can lead, eventually, to better outcomes, if used as a learning opportunity. For example, regarding Karl Marx he explained:

If you want to talk about haste, Marx also made many mistakes. Every day he hoped that a European revolution would arrive, but it did not arrive. There were many ups and downs and it had still not arrived when he died. It only arrived in Lenin's time.³¹⁶

Mao observed that in addition to Marx, Lenin also made errors as part of the learning process:

Everybody has faults. Even Confucius made mistakes. I have also seen Lenin's handwritten manuscripts which had been altered so much that they looked a real mess. If he had not made mistakes why did he have to correct them? We can have more canteens: after we have experimented with them for one or two years, I reckon that we can make a go of them.³¹⁷

In addition to mentioning Confucius, Mao highlighted that Lenin had to draft and redraft his writings before arriving at the final product and that it did not emerge fully formed from out of the ether. In this

³¹⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"* https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. Zhang Fei is a popularized in the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as one of Liu Bei's sworn brothers.

³¹⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"* https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

³¹⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, "Speech at Lushan Conference,"* https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023.

specific case, Mao made allowance for some errors in the formation of the canteens for communal dining but argued that those errors could be corrected, and the general policy was sound. Finally, Mao characterized the shortcomings of the Great Leap Forward as minimal compared to past party mistakes.

We also had our Canton Commune, but the Great Revolution failed. Will our present work also fail, like what happened in 1927? Or will it be like the 25,000 li Long March, when most of our bases were lost and the Soviet areas were reduced to one tenth of their former size? No, it will not be like these. Have we failed this time? All the comrades present say there have been gains; it is not a complete failure. Is it mainly a failure? No, it's only a partial failure. We have paid a high price. A lot of 'communist wind' has blown past, but the people of the whole country have learned a lesson.³¹⁸

In his construction, the recent failures of the Great Leap Forward should not be judged as a total failure, but merely as needing course correction, and its deficiencies paled in comparison to past missteps by the party, events of course prior to his core leadership. Mao used the Marxist framework to normalize errors in implementation and attempted to mitigate criticism by contrasting past disasters to the present crisis.

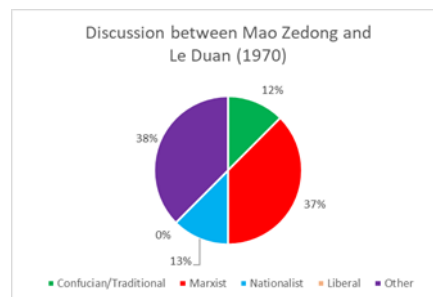


Figure 2.15 References by category for text titled, “Discussion between Mao Zedong and Le Duan” (1970)

The final text I examined involves minutes of an official meeting of Mao and other senior CPC leaders with Le Duan and representatives of North Vietnam. The primary audience of the meeting was foreign, although the Vietnamese delegation had common ground with the Chinese in their Marxist ideology and cultural heritage. This meeting occurred in May 1970 at the height of the Vietnam War. In addition, although Mao’s authority remained at perhaps its highest point as core leader, his health and advanced age would in short order rapidly erode his capacity to wield that power. I detected a total of

³¹⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume VIII, “Speech at Lushan Conference,”* https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_34.htm, Accessed 12/6/2023. For more on the Long March see Pantsov, Alexander, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 275-288, Kindle Edition.

eight instrumental uses of historical memory, including uses of the Marxist, Confucian/Traditional, and Nationalist.

Mao's objectives for this discussion appeared aimed at maintaining and expanding influence over Le Duan and the National Liberation Front.³¹⁹ The conversation generally focused on the conduct of the war against South Vietnam and the United States, as well as discussing the wider geopolitical picture in Southeast Asia and its ripeness for revolutionary activity. At this point, the Sino-Soviet Split had fully ruptured relations and Mao was engaged in a contest for influence throughout the Communist world, with a special focus in China's near abroad.³²⁰ As this text reflects a conversation, the discourse is not as deliberate, yet Mao instrumentally used historical memory to foster relations and influence Vietnamese policy. First, Mao argued that he remained confident in ultimate victory for the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Vietcong and that they should stay the course. Next, he noted the value of errors if used as a learning opportunity. Third, Mao advised on the benefits, and potential dangers, of forming a United Front. Throughout his conversation, Mao made several and diverse instrumental uses of historical memory as he sought to garner influence over Le Duan and attempted to advance his own position as the leader of the World Communist movement.

Mao offered substantial praise for the efforts of the NVA in the ongoing conflict and advocated for a continuation of their operations. As part of those efforts, he discussed the combat capabilities of the Laotian people, which Zhou Enlai compared to the Zhuang in China. In response Mao observed:

When the fighting has entered a decisive stage in Laos in the future, we may recruit some Zhuang people in Guangxi and some Dai people in Yunnan. The Zhuang people have a great fighting capacity. In the past the warlords Bai Chongxi and Li Zongren were dependent upon the Zhuang people . . . Some of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's troops were from Guangxi.³²¹

³¹⁹ For more on Chinese support to North Vietnam up to this point see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War (New Cold War History)*, pages 221-229, Kindle Edition.

³²⁰ Chen, Jian *Mao's China and the Cold War (New Cold War History)*, pages 230-31, Kindle Edition. "The deteriorating relationship between Beijing and Moscow, together with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in China, triggered more tension and conflict between Beijing and Hanoi. Until the mid-1960s, Beijing assumed that the VWP was on China's side in the struggle against the 'Soviet revisionists.' But Hanoi and Moscow established closer ties as the Vietnam War progressed."

³²¹ "Discussion between Mao Zedong and Le Duan", May 11, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations." Translated by Anna Beth Keim. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113033>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

Mao highlighted the historical participation of the Zhuang in major conflicts during the COH and their good service in those armies. Le responded that indeed the Zhuang and Vietnamese shared a national heritage. Next, the issue of Buddhism came up with regards to the Laotians engaging in combat. Mao dismissed this concern, pointing to China's historical experience:

You cannot say that they are not fond of fighting because they believe in Buddhism. The Chinese are also believers in Buddhism, but the 1911 Revolution was followed by seventeen years of fighting. Later it became the fighting between two factions [among the revolutionaries], and thus the people had been educated. Then the Northern Expedition War began, and then the Red Army emerged.³²²

As Buddhists had not shied from fighting in China, Mao concluded that they would behave similarly in Laos. Finally, the conversation turned to the subject of casualties, with Mao observing that the United States was casualty averse. Le Duan took issue with a claim by Nixon, in an instrumental use of historical memory by the US President, that America had never been defeated in any war since its founding, a claim which both Mao and Le dismissed. However, Mao pivoted the conversation to the subject of the American Revolution:

190 years ago, when the Americans were opposing the British, America's population was only three million, while the British population was perhaps 20 million or more; there were British colonies all over the world. In fact, the main body of Americans, the main portion [of America] was British people.³²³

In this case, he implied that even though the British were more powerful and more populous, the Americans still defeated them, just as the Vietnamese could defeat the United States. Mao hoped that his instrumental use of historical memory would coax Le to endorse continued resistance and further expansion of the conflict into neighboring states.

In addition, Mao discussed the importance of learning from mistakes, and pointed to the CPC's history and the Confucian/Traditional framework as evidence that setbacks should not be discouraging. He explained:

During China's Tang Dynasty there was an author, Liu Zongyuan, who wrote a fable called "The Guizhou Donkey Has Exhausted His Tricks." [We] can translate it and read it to you. It's always the big who fear the small, then the small gradually test [the situation] and [realize] the big ones aren't scary at all. In the beginning,

³²² "Discussion between Mao Zedong and Le Duan", May 11, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations." Translated by Anna Beth Keim. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113033>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

³²³ "Discussion between Mao Zedong and Le Duan", May 11, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations." Translated by Anna Beth Keim. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113033>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

this Party of ours had only 70 people, everyone looked down on us; it was only after many setbacks that [we] started to gradually learn a thing or two. You are all probably more or less clear on this.³²⁴

The allegory continued Mao's theme of the smaller power defeating the seemingly greater. In addition, Mao recalled the history of the CPC, not only coming from humble beginnings, but learning after many setbacks before it ultimately achieved victory. Not only was Mao advocating perseverance, but he also positioned himself and the CPC as senior advisors offering wisdom to Le Duan.

Another area of guidance Mao provided to Le was about forming a United Front in its activities, and he offered advice based on the CPC's historical experience in this regard. For example, Mao recalled the support the CPC provided the GMD during the first United Front but cautioned against the danger of betrayal:

Even the party branches of the Guomintang were all organized with our help. Without the help from the Communist Party, it would have been impossible for the Guomintang to conduct the Northern Expedition . . . For the first year of the Northern Expedition it made use of [our organizing], and the second year it massacred us. 1926 was the Northern Expedition, and in 1927 [they] massacred us. Now this Cambodian prince remains on our side; this, too, is very rare. It's been sixteen years, and to look at him it seems he is still not afraid of the Communist Party.³²⁵

Mao advised working with Prince Sihanouk, although he also offered a word of warning to Le on placing the North Vietnamese in a vulnerable position based on China's own experience with the GMD.

Mao's instrumental use of historical memory largely conformed to the three main frameworks of Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist. At times, he emphasized a particular narrative framework to advance his position as core leader or serve some other political purpose. On the other hand, he did not use them solely in isolation, but often combined them to better serve his objectives. Mao's party report in 1938 mixed all three major narratives to tether the GMD to the United Front, while simultaneously elevating Mao's credentials as a military theoretician. Later in his 1942 "How to Study the History of the Chinese Communist Party," Mao reverted mainly to the Marxist framework as he seized authority over defining party history as part of his ascension as core leader. As he faced a major challenge to his leadership and his flagship policy at Lushan in 1959, Mao wielded both the Confucian/Traditional

³²⁴ "Discussion between Mao Zedong and Le Duan", May 11, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations." Translated by Anna Beth Keim. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113033>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

³²⁵ "Discussion between Mao Zedong and Le Duan", May 11, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations." Translated by Anna Beth Keim. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113033>, Accessed 12/6/2023.

and Marxist frameworks to outmaneuver and berate his opponents into either submission or destruction. Finally, in his twilight years, Mao once more used a mixture of all three narrative frameworks as he sought to tempt Le Duan and the North Vietnamese into the Chinese camp in his competition for leadership of World Communism with the Soviet Union, while encouraging continuation and expansion of the war with the United States in South Vietnam. Mao mixed and matched his instrumental use of historical memory through the three narrative frameworks to suit his immediate needs as he pursued and maintained his core leadership and advanced implementation of his governing philosophy.

Conclusion

It would be difficult to overstate the level of power and influence Mao possessed as core leader. This position allowed him to not only dominate the political sphere within the PRC, but also enabled him to define and propagate its official ideology. However, Mao did not simply accrue these powers by divine mandate. Rather, he struggled for nearly a decade to achieve core leadership over the CPC, and he repeatedly had to reassert his power and authority to compel the implementation of his governing philosophy. A crucial facet in his pursuit of core leadership was his monopolization of authority over historical memory, including what should be remembered, how it should be interpreted, and with what contemporary implications. This power enabled Mao to grant to himself supreme authority as the main guiding force that had led the CPC to victory, with detractors and competitors leading the party and nation only to dead ends. Furthermore, Mao instrumentally used that memory throughout his discourse to bolster the legitimacy of both his leadership and his governing philosophy and the attendant policy proposals. Mao's unassailable privilege to define and then wield historical memory facilitated his rise to core leadership and sustained that leadership through numerous challenges to his governing vision.

Mao's instrumental use of historical memory does not remain static over the course of his discourse, but rather ebbs and flows, corresponding to his relative proximity to and then security in the position of core leader. As Mao sought to strengthen his core leadership, he relied more on instrumental use of historical memory, conversely curbing that usage when he gave ground as core leader in favor of the collective leadership. With the Zunyi Conference as a start point, Mao labored to establish his

credentials as a military and political leader, as well as the proponent of his own ideology. Mao imbued these works with historical memory to add luster and legitimacy to them but had to calibrate his usage in his competition with rivals to avoid offending Moscow, and particularly Stalin, who remained an alternative source of legitimacy. However, after gaining Moscow's blessing, Mao was able to not only seize power over all internal challengers, but also to solidify his hold on the Party through the Rectification Movement, including rewriting and codifying CPC history in a light favorable to himself.

Even as the CPC witnessed the end of World War II and eventually founded the PRC, Mao still had to mitigate his instrumental usage and avoid challenging Stalin outright. However, after Stalin's death in 1953, Mao's instrumental use exploded, as he worked to further his authority not only in China, but also as he attempted to seize the leadership mantle over World Communism. A major field of competition in this endeavor was with Nikita Khrushchev over the memory of Stalin, and their competition over that legacy formed a major facet of the Sino-Soviet Split. In addition, Mao faced numerous challenges from within the party to his policy proposals, especially the Great Leap Forward as its failures and unimaginable costs became increasingly undeniable. To buttress his authority, Mao relied on his instrumental use of historical memory to denigrate his opponents and attempt to raise confidence in the soundness of his proposals. However, Mao took another temporary retreat, curtailing his usage once again, although he quickly pivoted to set the groundwork for an attack against the Party apparatus itself. As the Cultural Revolution ravaged the Party and the nation, attacks were levied not only against those who had committed past sins, according to the history Mao had constructed, but also those who came to be associated with those who had erred against Mao. By the height of the Cultural Revolution, Mao's position as core leader was more secure than ever before. However, while Mao could shape perceptions of the past, he could not stop time's onward march, and his age and ill health took its toll. Mao instrumentally used historical memory to advance his position as core leader yet curbed that usage and tactically retreated when politically necessary.

The categories that Mao relied upon in his instrumental use were not random but fell largely within three general buckets. Each of these types, Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist, were

used by Mao to accomplish specific political goals and to influence specific audiences. As such, Mao calibrated the type of historical memory he invoked depending on the situation and his objectives. The Confucian/Traditional framework served as a method to form a better connection with his Chinese audience, given the shared familiarity of Mao and this audience with that material. In addition, it provided Mao a tool to aid in the Sinification of Marxism and its application to China's conditions. This theory was a key feature of both Mao's initial battles for core leadership in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as well as later contests with Party members who advocated reliance on technical support from the Soviet Union contrary to Mao's proposals. In addition, it provided a device to model proper ethical behavior for cadres and the general population. The Marxist framework was the most substantial in Mao's discourse. To be considered even a candidate for core leadership, Mao had to display a governing philosophy consistent with Marxism-Leninism which could serve as the ideological basis for the Party. Furthermore, he relied upon the Marxist framework to present his policy alterations as justified given historical practice, especially by key figures such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and to denigrate those who Mao portrayed as advocating mere rote repetition of theory. After Mao achieved core leadership and possessed a monopoly over Party history, he could reach back to this memory to assail any potential opponent to his leadership or his policies. The Nationalist framework proved a useful implement for achieving national unity, presenting the COH as a shared experience of indignation, but one which only the CPC managed to resolve, pointing to a brighter national future. In addition, Mao relied on the Nationalist narrative to manage relations with the GMD and attract support from those who were mutually invested in symbols such as the M4M and Dr. Sun. Furthermore, Mao did not simply use these frameworks in isolation, but would use combinations to better serve his immediate political requirements. Mao's instrumental use of historical memory conformed largely to the Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist frameworks, and his successors would borrow substantially from this model in their discourse.

Despite Mao's nearly insurmountable power as core leader that dominion was ultimately fleeting. After 1971, Mao's ill health minimized his capacity to engage in any meaningful discourse. However, while he lived, no one could offer a new ideology or challenge his interpretation of historical memory,

which Mao could simply dismiss and open its proponent to denunciation and, potentially, elimination. At best, Mao could tilt the scales between factions to try and retain his ultimate authority as core leader, but even that capacity was fleeting. Mao selected Hua Guofeng as his successor and he claimed power after Mao's death in 1976, after a brief struggle with Mao's widow Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four. To solidify his reign, Hua presented his governing philosophy as following Mao, characterized as the "Two Whatevers," whatever Mao said, whatever Mao did. However, Hua appeared to be a poor student of Mao's, having failed to understand the methods by which Mao secured and retained authority. Deng proved far more apt and, by 1978, had effectively supplanted Hua. Like Mao, Deng did not merely offer a regurgitation of previously established theory but offered his own governing philosophy to guide the Party-State forward as core leader. In fact, Deng Xiaoping would instrumentally use memory of Mao to sideline Hua's governing philosophy and bolster his own, just as Mao had used MEL(S) against Wang Ming and other challengers. In life, Mao could command astounding authority as core leader, in which he borrowed authority from the past to advance his agenda. After his death, he was reduced to merely an artefact to be wielded in the service of someone else's vision for China.

Chapter 3 - Deng Xiaoping:

The Once and Future Core

Introduction

Following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping appeared as the next leader to reshape the PRC's political and ideological orientation. Mao Zedong had dominated the CPC as core leader since at least the Seventh Party Congress in 1945. On the other hand, although Deng played a pivotal role at certain times during Mao's tenure, he had also famously been denounced and eventually rehabilitated three times.³²⁶ Yet it was Deng that emerged from the power struggles following Mao's death to become paramount leader of the CPC and, as he himself recollected at the end of his career, the core of the second generation of collective leadership.³²⁷ Deng overcame Mao's chosen successor, Hua Guofeng, through deliberate political and ideological maneuvering. He reformulated the PRC's policy orientation as revealed by the outcome of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee in 1978. In the decade that followed Deng guided state and Party policy, although he refrained from consolidating absolute political power or crafting a cult of personality around himself. However, following a series of crises, especially the Tiananmen Square incident in the Spring of 1989, Deng found it necessary to reassert his prerogatives as core leader and reaffirm his vision for China.³²⁸ Deng's guiding

³²⁶ Deng's three exiles began in 1933 (See Pantsov pages 90-92), 1966 (See Pantsov pages 246-252), and 1976 (See Pantsov pages 298-300).

³²⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/urgent-tasks-of-chinas-third-generation-of-collective-leadership/>, Accessed 8/22/2023, "A collective leadership must have a core; without a core, no leadership can be strong enough. The core of our first generation of collective leadership was Chairman Mao. Because of that core, the 'cultural revolution' did not bring the Communist Party down. Actually, I am the core of the second generation. Because of this core, even though we changed two of our leaders, the Party's exercise of leadership was not affected but always remained stable."

³²⁸ I use the term Tiananmen Square Incident to refer to not only the PRC's violent suppression of protests in June 1989 throughout the country but to the entire episode starting with demonstrations sparked by Hu Yaobang's death on April 15th, 1989. Describing the violence at Tiananmen, Alexander Pantsov writes, "On June 2, Deng gave a direct order to clear the square despite 'the consequences' and the troops forced their way into the city despite the barricades. On the evening of June 3, bloody clashes took place on the approaches to Tiananmen. Tanks opened the way,

ideology, Deng Xiaoping Theory (邓小平理论), appeared after his retirement as a force that substantially shaped the governing philosophies of his successors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.

Although a long-term ally, Deng was not Mao Zedong's chosen successor. Rather, Deng cultivated both political connections and acumen that enabled him to strive towards core leadership.³²⁹ He garnered foreign policy clout by his enduring association with Zhou Enlai and experience gained through many years as a crucial representative of the PRC internationally.³³⁰ That partnership with Zhou, and with other figures such as Liu Shaoqi, laid the foundations for Deng's network of support, and more importantly connected Deng with the popular Zhou.³³¹ After Zhou's death in 1976, this association positioned Deng as a stabilizing alternative to the chaotic rule that had categorized the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, Deng's extensive military service, especially his role as the chief political officer of the Second Field Army during the Chinese Civil War (1946-49), elevated his standing in military affairs.³³² Deng participated in pivotal events in party history, such as the 1935 Zunyi Conference which saw Mao seize authority over military affairs amid the Long March.³³³ This front row seat enabled

driving straight into the crowds followed by soldiers firing directly at the people . . . According to various estimates, between 220 and 3,000 people died in Beijing from June 3 to June 6. The exact number is in dispute and may never be known. Among the victims was a nine-year-old child." Pantsov, Alexander V. Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, page 416. Violence was not restricted to Beijing. For example, Louisa Lim outlines the suppression in the city of Chengdu, ". . . in addition to the deaths Beijing, people died in Chengdu too, and in numbers greater than the government acknowledges. Exactly how many is not clear: In Chengdu, the government said there were eight deaths; U.S. diplomats put the figure between 10 and 30; those watching from their hotel windows believed that dozens, up to a hundred by some accounts, were beaten to death before their eyes. This is just one of the many untold stories of 1989." Louisa Lim, *The People's Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen Revisited*, page 205.

³²⁹ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, page 155, Kindle Edition. Pantsov points out that although Deng kept up good relations with several key leaders, it never became overt opposition to Mao. "Deng could not attach himself to any leader other than Mao among the contending chieftains—not to Gao Gang, or Liu Shaoqi, or Zhou Enlai—but he had to maintain good relations with them all. He had to sniff which way the wind was blowing and tack in the direction that the Great Helmsman indicated."

³³⁰ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, page 282, Kindle Edition.

³³¹ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, pages 295 and 297, Kindle Edition.

³³² Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, pages 255-256, Kindle Edition. Referring to Deng's second fall in 1967 at the outset of the Cultural Revolution Pantsov speculated, "Perhaps he (Mao) simply feared Deng's enormous popularity among the troops. Almost all of the marshals and generals viewed the former political commissar of the Second Field Army as one of their own. He was also greatly respected among much of the officer corps, none of whom could forget the years of martial brotherhood."

³³³ Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong*, pages 83-84, Kindle Edition

Deng to speak with greater authority to interpret, and later reinterpret, Mao Zedong Thought (毛泽东思想) and Party historical memory. Deng Xiaoping clearly possessed many advantages which aided his ascent to core leadership.

Deng avoided formalizing his governing philosophy along the lines of Mao Zedong Thought. In fact, he stressed that the governing philosophy of the CPC under his rule adhered to it.³³⁴ However, Deng actively reinterpreted Mao Zedong Thought along new lines that enabled him to pursue his policy goals while securing legitimacy both for himself and the CPC. First, Deng separated Mao Zedong Thought from Mao personally, enabling criticisms of Mao as a leader, especially for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, he emphasized the key tenet for Mao Zedong Thought as “seek truth from facts (实事求是).” This reconceptualization coalesced under Deng’s articulation of Socialism with Chinese characteristics (中国特色社会主义), which selectively applied Marxist concepts to China’s historical conditions. Within that selective use was a recognition of the need to advance productive forces and improve living standards to realize socialism, as opposed to focusing on class struggle. This outlook was in direct opposition to the Cultural Revolution policy endorsing communism even in poverty.³³⁵

To raise productive forces, Deng embraced the Maoist era concept of Four Modernizations (四个现代化) but placed special emphasis on scientific and technological development.³³⁶ Deng’s policy of Reform and Opening Up (改革开放) was defined both by reforming economic systems through market liberalization and broader interaction with the global community. Deng identified the need for the policy as a response to the rapidly accelerating speed of global scientific development. He surmised that failure

³³⁴ For example, Deng told Mike Wallace in a 1986 interview, “Mao Zedong Thought is still our guiding ideology.” Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, page 176.

³³⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 227, Kindle Edition.

³³⁶ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), page 288. The other three modernizations were agriculture, industry, and defense and were first articulated by Zhou Enlai.

to engage with these developments would leave China woefully behind and vulnerable to exploitation. He advocated borrowing certain techniques and market reforms from nearby Asian states, especially using Special Economic Zones (SEZs), to spur growth while controlling the reach of these reforms.³³⁷ Furthermore, Deng identified the threat of global war as receding and offering an opportunity not only to invest in development but to engage more widely with the international market to grow the PRC's economy. However, despite these efforts, he did apply ideological guardrails to ensure reform did not spin beyond his control. That control mechanism was the Four Cardinal Principles (四项基本原则), which enshrined the inviolability of the Party-State system and its Marxist foundations.³³⁸ After Deng's retirement, particularly after his Southern Tour in 1992 and the publication of the Third Volume of his *Selected Works* the following year, his governing philosophy then labelled Deng Xiaoping Theory became formally enshrined.³³⁹

Various elements of Deng Xiaoping's instrumental use of historical memory and his role as core leader have been examined by several scholars. Ezra Vogel's biography, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, presents Deng as a pragmatic general manager. His book focuses extensively on Deng during his time as paramount leader and provides details on Deng's interactions with several key figures. He portrays Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang as executive officers operating within the general guidelines established by Deng.³⁴⁰ Furthermore, Vogel argues that Chen Yun acted as a break on Deng's

³³⁷ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 394-398, Kindle Edition.

³³⁸ Deng Xiaoping, "Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II," page 172. The Four cardinal principles are "1. We must keep to the socialist road. 2. We must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat. 3. We must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party. 4. We must uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought."

³³⁹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 684, Kindle Edition.

³⁴⁰ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 354, Kindle Edition. "In the Deng administration from 1980 until 1987 when Hu was removed, to use Western terms, Deng was the chairman of the board and chief executive officer and under Deng, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang were the active presidents of the two separate divisions, the party and the government."

ambitious economic program. In addition, although always avoiding direct conflict, the tug and pull between Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping regarding the pace of economic reform proved a consequential dynamic during Deng's tenure.³⁴¹ Vogel makes clear that Deng's ideology was not a product of his mind alone and stresses the theoretical contributions of figures such as Yu Guangyuan, Deng Liqun, and especially Hu Qiaomu in crafting his discourse and ensuring compliance with Marxist ideology.³⁴² Vogel recounts instructions by Deng to his speech writers to insert historical references to Mao's past writings as Deng struggled to reestablish his political base in 1975.³⁴³ Throughout Vogel's text there are examples of Deng's instrumental use of historical memory towards both domestic and foreign audiences. Vogel's descriptions of the political dynamics during Deng's tenure flesh out the contours of his pursuit of core leadership.

Alexander Pantsov's biography, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, offers a more critical view of Deng's political career. Pantsov includes far more on Deng's earlier career and highlights Deng's shift in political orientation based on the prevailing political currents of the time. As part of this more ruthless pragmatism, Pantsov describes Deng instrumentally using individuals to advance his interests and then discarding them. One example he offers is the evolution of Deng's relationship with Marshal Ye Jianying in the aftermath of his third and final rehabilitation. Pantsov describes Marshal Ye's role in stabilizing Deng as the ideological leader of the CPC after Mao's death while supporting Hua Guofeng as the titular leader.³⁴⁴ However, by the early 1980s Deng had solidified power, having removed Hua's supporters, replacing them with his own acolytes in key positions. He no longer needed the aging Ye's support to

³⁴¹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 450-451, 563, and 468-471, Kindle Edition.

³⁴² Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 123, Kindle Edition.

³⁴³ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 130-131, Kindle Edition.

³⁴⁴ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 338-339, Kindle Edition. Pantsov also argues that Marshal Ye was playing a similar game of political maneuvering, attempting to set himself up as a final arbiter between Deng and Hua.

bolster his legitimacy and abandoned his association with him.³⁴⁵ Pantsov describes how Deng purposefully avoided visiting Ye in his retirement up until his death in 1986, which he attributes to Deng having no further use for him.³⁴⁶ Pantsov's characterization of Deng is of a man who accomplished much to reform China. However, Pantsov also paints him as a "bloody dictator" who enforced the CPC's authoritarian hold over the country.³⁴⁷ He finds in Deng a man unrestrained in pursuit of his vision and willing to instrumentally use ideas and people as needed to accomplish his goals.

Kalpana Misra examines the ideological shift under Deng away from Maoism in her book, *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*. She finds that ultimately the effort to move away from Maoism failed because those who sought to replace it were unable to provide a sufficient alternative. This failure led to an estrangement between policy makers and key constituencies, especially the intellectual elite.³⁴⁸ According to Misra, the Maoist and Marxist influence continued to impact official discourse for both the regime and their critics.³⁴⁹ Beyond Marxism and Maoism, Misra also found other narratives competing within the intellectual space of Deng's China. She finds a continuation of economic and technological determinism prevalent within what I term the Marxist and Liberal frameworks.³⁵⁰ Furthermore, she detects a rise in a new ideological framework

³⁴⁵ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 351, Kindle Edition. "But it (Sino-Vietnamese War) was a great domestic victory for Deng. During the war Deng asserted himself as the authentic, authoritative leader of the party and the country. Marshal Ye was weakened, and Hua Guofeng had long since ceased to be a threat."

³⁴⁶ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 375, Kindle Edition. "As for Ye Jianying, the elderly marshal who had done so much for Deng, the new ruler of China no longer maintained close connections with him. He never visited him even once, right up to Ye Jianying's death on October 22, 1986, although he knew that in April 1984, the marshal had become very ill. He was diagnosed with cerebral thrombosis and chronic pneumonia. Deng no longer needed him. Now only great deeds stirred the charismatic leader."

³⁴⁷ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 432-433, Kindle Edition.

³⁴⁸ Kalpana Misra, *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*, New York: Routledge, 1998, pages 2-5.

³⁴⁹ Kalpana Misra, *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*, New York: Routledge, 1998, pages 214-215.

³⁵⁰ Kalpana Misra, *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*, New York: Routledge, 1998, page 197.

drawing from nationalism, traditional Chinese culture, and Confucian ethics - which she describes as neo-conservative - animating Chinese political culture.³⁵¹ These different strands competed with the former Maoist ideology, leading to a tangled mess with no strand fully triumphant. Kalpana Misra discerns tangible shifts in ideological composition during Deng's tenure and argues that their relative utility has decreased since the Mao era.

Nicholas Dynon argues in his article, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology," that Deng built his governing philosophy on the ideological currents which Dynon describes as two civilizations, Material and Spiritual.³⁵² He asserts that the objective for advancing these civilizations was to combat political criticisms, particularly from the ideological left.³⁵³ He goes on to explain that what he labels material civilization is driven by economic progress and increases in living standards.³⁵⁴ However, serving as a sort of control mechanism, the spiritual civilization sought to foster morality and a sense of patriotism, to moderate behavior.³⁵⁵ In addition, Maoist slogans had been repurposed to amplify calls for morality.³⁵⁶ Dynon finds that this combination proved a sufficient ideological foundation to buttress Deng's reform programs while maintaining his political legitimacy.

³⁵¹ Kalpana Misra, *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*, New York: Routledge, 1998, pages 208-215.

³⁵² Nicholas Dynon, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology." *The China journal* (Canberra, A.C.T.) 60, no. 60 (2008): 83-109, pages 84-85. "For much of the post-Mao era, the promotion of a positive relationship between China's economic development and moral health has been effected through the binary framework of the 'two civilizations' --- material civilization and spiritual civilization."

³⁵³ Nicholas Dynon, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology." *The China journal* (Canberra, A.C.T.) 60, no. 60 (2008): 83-109, page 88.

³⁵⁴ Nicholas Dynon, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology." *The China journal* (Canberra, A.C.T.) 60, no. 60 (2008): 83-109, pages 88-89, "Deng's material civilization was an assertive, even aggressive notion, fueled by globalization, imbued with Western scientism and reminiscent of the German Civilization."

³⁵⁵ Nicholas Dynon, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology." *The China journal* (Canberra, A.C.T.) 60, no. 60 (2008): 83-109, page 88.

³⁵⁶ Nicholas Dynon, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology." *The China journal* (Canberra, A.C.T.) 60, no. 60 (2008): 83-109, page 91.

Written during Deng's rule, Lucian Pye's *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures* charts a shift in the source of legitimization between Mao and Deng. Pye argues that while Mao relied on ideology for legitimacy, Deng's rule shifted to include performance as an additional source.³⁵⁷ Pye notes an inherent weakness with relying on economic gains as any setbacks economically could erode Deng's authority to rule.³⁵⁸ He further notes a challenge for Deng and his successors in building alternative sources of legitimacy as hampered by a desire to emulate other Asian nations while not wishing to admit inferiority as a civilization.³⁵⁹ Although he doesn't articulate it explicitly, historical memory plays an essential role in enrolling pride in Chinese national identity as a legitimizing force.³⁶⁰ Shiping Hua offers further examination of this shift in his article, "The Deng Reforms (1978–1992) and the Gorbachev Reforms (1985–1991) Revisited: A Political Discourse Analysis." Hua stresses the importance of discourse in furthering reform efforts in a combination of what I identify as both Marxist and Confucian narrative frameworks. Of particular importance for Hua is the application of the traditional conception of *datong* (大同), or Great Peace/Unity.³⁶¹ This conception emphasizing stability functioned as the prerequisite necessary to achieve economic and social progress. Pye discerns a shift in the source of

³⁵⁷ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1988, page 75.

³⁵⁸ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1988, page 164. "In much Western analysis of Chinese developments there has been a tendency to see the 'success' of Deng's 'reforms' as critical in upholding the legitimacy of his regime and that of his preferred successors. Deng himself, however, is not so politically naïve as to risk such a weighty matter as legitimacy upon popular readings of the successes and failures of concrete policies."

³⁵⁹ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1988, page 167. "That problem is that China quite naturally wants to emulate the successes of its neighbors . . . but the Chinese can never admit to looking up to countries they have so long despised."

³⁶⁰ Lucian Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1988, pages 169–170. Rather than discussing historical memory he describes the problem for Deng as a rearticulation of the 19th Century concept of Ti-yong. "As we have noted, Chinese reformers at the turn of the century argued that it should be possible to cling to Confucian values, which they saw as basic and profound, while accepting some Western ideas that could be treated as secondary since they were merely utilitarian."

³⁶¹ Hua Shiping, "The Deng Reforms (1978–1992) and the Gorbachev Reforms (1985–1991) Revisited: A Political Discourse Analysis." *Problems of post-communism* 53, no. 3 (2006): 3–16, page 5.

legitimacy between Mao and Deng, with Hua offering important context on the role of what I term the Marxist and Confucian frameworks in Deng's discourse.

Xing Lu interrogates Deng's discourse, particularly the utility of political slogans, in her article, "An ideological/cultural analysis of political slogans in Communist China." She observes that for Deng ideology serves political needs as its primary purpose: "First, ideological and conceptual change is called forth by changing political needs and social conditions. In order to understand the process of ideological transformation, one must examine the political context and power dynamics . . ."³⁶² Furthermore, unlike in Western political culture, Chinese audiences appear largely unconcerned with contradictions in ideology.³⁶³ During Deng's rule, she traces the reemergence of classical Chinese value systems reflected in political slogans. These value systems included various schools such as the Legalist, Daoist, Mohist, and especially Confucian traditions.³⁶⁴ Furthermore, she locates additional influences from Western sources appearing to impact the shape of these slogans.³⁶⁵ She emphasizes that these slogans, and the underlying ideological frameworks, have a penetrating influence upon not only the official discourse, but also on the conceptualization of political thought within Chinese political culture.³⁶⁶

³⁶² Xing Lu. "An Ideological/cultural Analysis of Political Slogans in Communist China." *Discourse & society* 10, no. 4 (1999): 487–508, page 502.

³⁶³ Xing Lu. "An Ideological/cultural Analysis of Political Slogans in Communist China." *Discourse & society* 10, no. 4 (1999): 487–508, page 501, "From the western perspective, the recent trend toward economic pragmatism caught the CCP (CPC) in a contradiction regarding its ideological orientation. Interestingly enough, the Chinese themselves did not seem to be bothered by this apparent inconsistency."

³⁶⁴ Xing Lu. "An Ideological/cultural Analysis of Political Slogans in Communist China." *Discourse & society* 10, no. 4 (1999): 487–508, page 494.

³⁶⁵ Xing Lu. "An Ideological/cultural Analysis of Political Slogans in Communist China." *Discourse & society* 10, no. 4 (1999): 487–508, page 503.

³⁶⁶ Xing Lu. "An Ideological/cultural Analysis of Political Slogans in Communist China." *Discourse & society* 10, no. 4 (1999): 487–508, pages 504–505. Lu offers a damning conclusion comparing this manipulation of discourse to both Soviet and Nazi regimes, "Finally, through an analysis of the ideographs/slogans used by the CCP (CPC) in its most authoritative, official and representative journal, Red Flag, it becomes clear that rhetorical strategies and techniques employed and practiced in Communist China were similar to those employed by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in their rectification of thoughts and promotion of political ideology as discussed by Arendt (1973). Like the USSR and Nazi Germany, Communist China employed slogans as a powerful rhetorical form of persuasion."

Qing Zhang's article, "The Discursive Construction of The Social Stratification Order In Reforming China," offers a helpful periodization of Deng's discourse into two distinct periods. The first is between 1975-1981, which Zhang labels "bringing order out of chaos."³⁶⁷ It consists of ideological attacks primarily against the Gang of Four, but also including other targets such as Lin Biao and eventually Hua Guofeng. The second period occurs between 1982-1992 and is described as "building socialism with Chinese characteristics."³⁶⁸ This discourse, a sequel to the previous meta discourse, describes Deng's reform efforts and, according to Zhang, saw Deng seeking and achieving ideological hegemony.³⁶⁹ Qing Zhang argues that this prominence is illustrated by the fact that both Jiang Zemin's and Hu Jintao's meta discourses are derivatives of Deng's.³⁷⁰ Arif Dirlik examines the subjugation of Mao's memory in Chinese discourse under Deng in his article, "Mao Zedong in Contemporary Chinese Official Discourse and History." Dirlik illustrates how Deng used Mao's own texts and selective evocation of his memory to subvert his ideology and turn it to Deng's own purposes.³⁷¹ This use included galvanizing support for his policy positions as well as undermining the ideological positions of opponents. Both Dirlik and Zhang offer explorations of Deng's politically oriented use of historical memory in his discourse.

³⁶⁷ Zhang Qing. "The Discursive Construction of the Social Stratification Order in Reforming China." *Journal of language and politics* 9, no. 4 (2010): 508–527, pages 514-516.

³⁶⁸ Zhang Qing. "The Discursive Construction of the Social Stratification Order in Reforming China." *Journal of language and politics* 9, no. 4 (2010): 508–527, pages 516-517.

³⁶⁹ Zhang Qing. "The Discursive Construction of the Social Stratification Order in Reforming China." *Journal of language and politics* 9, no. 4 (2010): 508–527, page 518. "His success in the struggle for metadiscursive hegemony is borne out by the later adoption of the "Decision on Reform of the Economic Structure" at The Third Plenary Session of the 12th Central Committee of the CPC held on October 20, 1984."

³⁷⁰ Zhang Qing. "The Discursive Construction of the Social Stratification Order in Reforming China." *Journal of language and politics* 9, no. 4 (2010): 508–527, page 514.

³⁷¹ Arif Dirlik. "Mao Zedong in Contemporary Chinese Official Discourse and History." *China perspectives* 2012, no. 2 (2012): 17–27, page 24, "Rather than repudiate Mao, the current interpretation seeks to appropriate his image for its own 'socialism with Chinese characteristics.' This is apparent in two important ways. One is the historical linkage between New Democracy and 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' that was foregrounded with the bracketing of the Cultural Revolution as an episode in socialist development. The other is the institutionalization of Mao Zedong Thought. In official ideology Mao Zedong Thought occupies a crucial role as the fountainhead of 'Chinese Marxism.'"

Deng's pursuit of core leadership took a distinct course for a variety of reasons. For one, Deng did not achieve his position as paramount leader until well into his seventies and he was keenly aware of his advanced age.³⁷² Furthermore, he had experienced the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and the bitter struggles over Mao's succession.³⁷³ Finally, he witnessed Mao's singular reliance on ideology and attempted to avoid such a limiting position. With these factors in mind, Deng initially grasped paramount status but did so within the confines of the CPC institutional apparatus. Furthermore, he relied on a coterie of allies to enact his policy program, although the exact roster shifted over the years.³⁷⁴ Hua Guofeng emerged as Mao's immediate successor, occupying the three key positions of Party Chairman, CMC Chairman, and Premier of the PRC, while Deng maintained ideological leadership.³⁷⁵ However, in the late 1970s and into the 1980s Deng pushed aside Hua and his supporters and installed his own allies in key positions. That isn't to say he shied away from all positions, maintaining key roles in all party organs, as well as chief leadership within the CMC and the newly created Central Advisory Commission.³⁷⁶ As such, Deng was able to influence policy according to his desires, but he did not maintain an iron grip on all levers of political power. Deng voluntarily ceded some authority and avoided fully embracing core leadership in the middle of his rule, opting for a looser authority than that exemplified during Mao's reign. However, towards the conclusion of his career the CPC faced a series of crises, especially during the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. As a result, Deng reasserted his influence, approaching core

³⁷² Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 382, Kindle Edition.

³⁷³ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 262-263, Kindle Edition. For example, his son Pufong became paralyzed after leaping from a building following an interrogation by the Red Guards in Aug 1968.

³⁷⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 354-355, Kindle Edition.

³⁷⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 240, Kindle Edition.

³⁷⁶ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 382-383, Kindle Edition.

leadership status far more than he had throughout the 1980s, despite his even more advanced age.³⁷⁷ The formal articulation of Deng Xiaoping Theory and its influence on Jiang Zemin's early tenure indicate this renewed core leadership at the twilight of his career. Thus, I anticipate that Deng's instrumental use of historical memory will be most apparent at the beginning and the end of his tenure, while the middle period only maintained sufficient levels to sustain his historical interpretation and support for his policies. As such, his instrumental use of historical memory should be quite high during the period of competition with Hua Guofeng for leadership. After his leadership was secure, I anticipate his usage to decline and level out to a relative baseline throughout the 1980s. However, I expect a sudden rise to occur towards the end of his career. The instrumental use of historical memory was essential for Deng to recontextualize China's pivotal historical narratives and thereby garner legitimacy for his governing philosophy as core leader.

Deng's use of historical memory can be separated into four sections. The first is 1975 - 1978, excluding the period when he was denounced for the third and final time. This period reflects competition with the Gang of Four and Hua Guofeng for national leadership under Mao's shadow. The second is 1979 - 1981 and reflects Deng's consolidation of control at the expense of Hua Guofeng. The third is 1982 - 1988 and reflects Deng's execution of his reform policy. The final period is 1989 - 1992 and reflects Deng reasserting his authority as core leader. I expect that Deng will use all four historical narratives employed by PRC core leaders. However, I anticipate the Marxist framework to be weighed far more heavily during the first two periods and do not expect significant articulation of the Liberal framework until the third period starting in 1982 as he introduced this framework into his discourse. Deng presented

³⁷⁷ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 411-412, Kindle Edition. Pantsov describes the power dynamics and Deng's reclamation of absolute authority in the midst of the crisis and his overriding of Zhao Ziyang. "But Deng would have none of it: 'We can't be led around by the nose. This movement's dragged on too long, almost a month now. The senior comrades are getting worried. . . . We have to be decisive. I've said over and over that we need stability if we're going to develop. . . . These people want to overthrow our Party and state.' The conversation ended abruptly. Even though he was general secretary of the Party, nominally the highest position, Zhao had made a serious political miscalculation. He failed to understand that in totalitarian China, even thirteen years after the death of Mao, only one opinion could be correct, that of the Leader. Although Deng himself had previously battled against unquestioning adherence to the thoughts and policies of Mao Zedong—the Two Whatevers—he considered his own point of view beyond dispute."

himself as a leader seeking to break with the tradition of all consuming Maoist ideology. To do so he presented a novel interpretation of historical memory. Once this new interpretation became accepted within the political culture, he was positioned to provide a path forward based on this new interpretation through his governing philosophy. As Deng implemented his new vision, he found it necessary to instrumentally use historical memory to push for his preferred policies, just as Mao had done. Perhaps most crucially, he turned extensively to its usage when his vision for the PRC, and his very hold on power, was under direct threat.

Metrics

The dataset includes a total of one hundred and eighty unique texts, drawn from Deng's public discourse from 1975 - 1992. These texts were mostly from volumes II and III of his *Selected Works*. I did consult other published collections of his public discourse, including *Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics* (1985) and *Fundamental Issues in Present Day China* (1987), but the texts found in these collections generally matched those within the *Selected Works* and offered no additional material for analysis. The first volume of Deng's *Selected Works* covering 1938 - 1965 was not included as Deng had not competed for core leadership during this period.³⁷⁸ When translated into English, the total word count for all texts combined is over 286,000. I found six hundred and eight references to historical memory or use of historical narratives in the dataset. Within Deng's discourse, a total of over forty texts did not have any discernable references. A listing of all texts and associated historical references can be found in Appendix B.

³⁷⁸ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 5, Kindle Edition. "Contrary to the conventional view that characterized Deng as a 'moderate' who opposed Mao's leftist policies since the early 1950s, we show that until the early months of 1976 Deng was a true disciple of Mao Zedong, extremely loyal to the Great Helmsman notwithstanding the persecution he himself suffered during the Cultural Revolution at the hands of Mao. Deng had wholeheartedly supported Mao since the early 1930s, when they first began to collaborate. He enthusiastically backed Mao's 1950-53 land reform, Stalinization of the PRC, socialization of the economy, and the Great Leap Forward. Deng did begin to make some critical remarks regarding leftist policies starting in late May 1961, but only shortly before Mao's death in 1976 did he manifest disobedience." I diverge slightly from Pantsov and Levine in that I include Deng's works in 1975 as they appear as early attempts to position himself as the next core leader but within the ideological confines under Mao. I explore this dynamic in the Illustrative Texts section in my examination of Deng's, "The Task of Consolidating the Army" (1975), page 209.

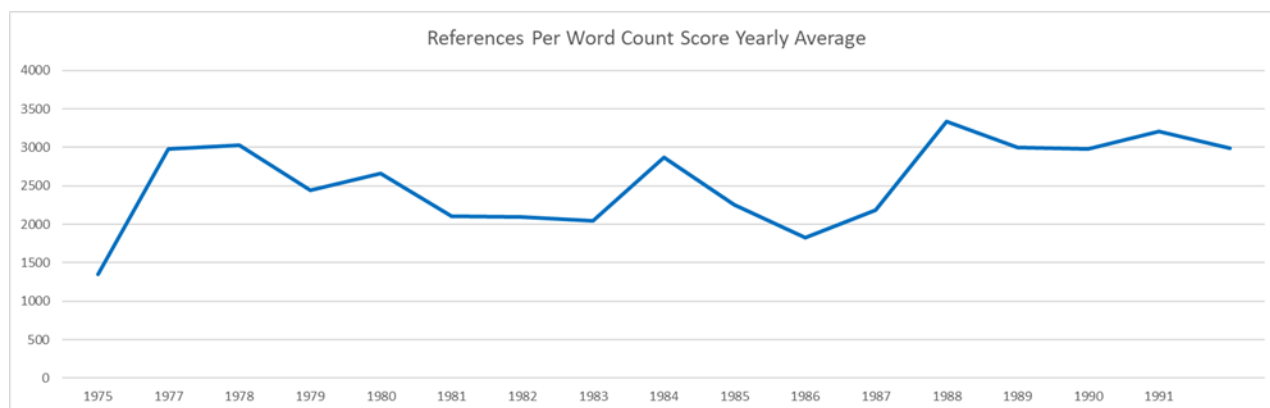


Figure 3.1 References per Word Count Score yearly average. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without historical references.

Deng's discourse unfolds as I generally anticipated, although the exact timing for the shifts appears slightly different than I anticipated. Despite a fierce battle in 1975 - 1976 against the Gang of Four, Deng's instrumental use of historical memory was at approximately the same level as during the stabilized middle period in the 1980s when his political position was secure.³⁷⁹ However, as several key figures were still alive, especially Mao and Zhou, Deng likely exercised restraint, foregoing competing for core leadership while these giants remained. As expected, there is a rise as Deng competed with Hua Guofeng prior to the Third Plenum in December 1978. However, I had anticipated a continuous elevated level of instrumental use as he sidelined Hua and his supporters in 1979 - 1981.³⁸⁰ Instead, his instrumental use appears to decline starting in 1980 and remained relatively consistent until 1988. There is an unanticipated increase in 1984 which may indicate a need by Deng to reassert his authority over the ideological direction of the Party-State correlated with the anti-spiritual pollution campaign.³⁸¹ Although I was expecting a rise in 1989 amid the Tiananmen Square incident, it appears the rise began much sooner

³⁷⁹ For more on the interparty struggles between Deng and the Gang of Four see: Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 288-302, Kindle Edition.

³⁸⁰ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 358-372, Kindle Edition.

³⁸¹ Nicholas Dynon, "'Four Civilizations' and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology." *The China journal* (Canberra, A.C.T.) 60, no. 60 (2008): 83-109, pages 89-90.

in 1988, and possibly as early as 1987. The results after 1989 remain consistently high, although it is important to note that there are fewer texts from this period, diminishing confidence in their representative value. These unexpected variations in specific timing for shifts in instrumental use of historical memory warrant further exploration.

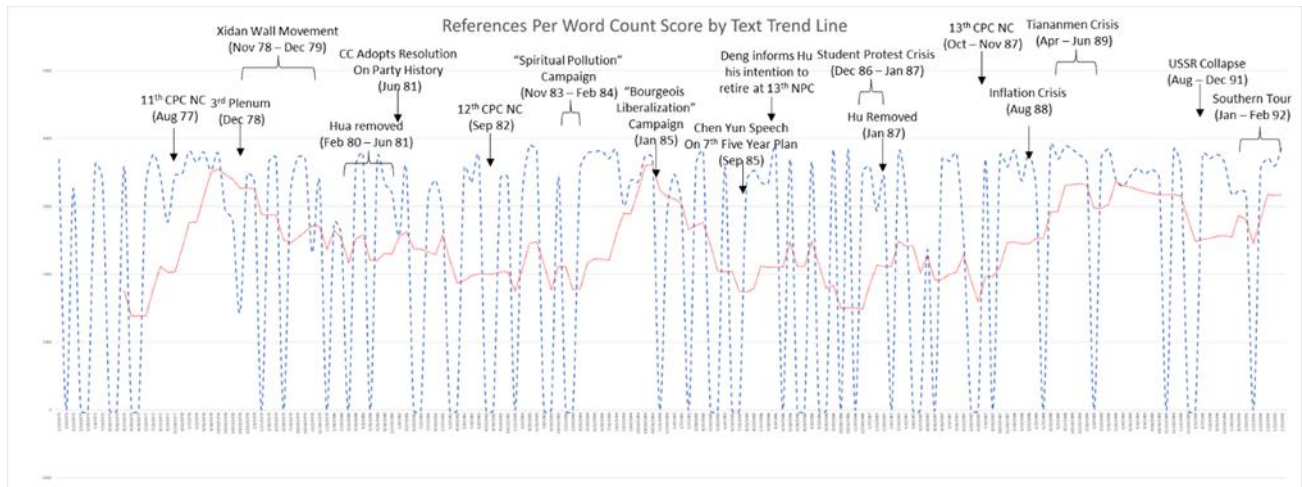


Figure 3.2 References per Word Count Score for each observation. The Blue Dash represents each individual Reference Per Word Count Score. The Red Dots represent a ten data-point moving average for the same data set. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without any historical references within.

The first rise coincides with Deng's competition with Hua Guofeng and his supporters starting in 1977. Although this competition was a political struggle, one of the main avenues of attack by Deng was over historical memory, specifically regarding Mao's legacy and the interpretation of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution.³⁸² Vogel claims that Hua also sought to initiate some reform efforts in the wake of the ouster of the Gang of Four.³⁸³ However, Hua's ideological position of the "Two Whatevers" (两个凡是) regarding memory towards Mao left him vulnerable to assault by Deng.³⁸⁴ Deng

³⁸² Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 329-331, Kindle Edition.

³⁸³ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 184-185, Kindle Edition.

³⁸⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 184-185, Kindle Edition. Regarding the Two Whatevers: "The editorial declared that whatever policies Mao supported, and whatever instructions Mao gave, should still be followed. The editorial became known as the 'two whatevers,' Hua's banner for showing that he was fully committed to

effectively recontextualized both Mao personally and Mao Zedong Thought to better position himself as chief exponent of historical memory and by extension official CPC ideology. He succeeded in these efforts, although at the time he had to temporarily share influence with Hua for a few years as part of a power sharing agreement ushered in by Marshal Ye Jianying.³⁸⁵ This period contained several important moments for Deng including his final overseas tour, the Sino-Vietnamese War, and most importantly the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee. In addition, it is worth noting that the Xidan Wall Movement also occurred at this time, representing a threat from his ideological right.³⁸⁶ It is likely that just as Deng was asserting his ideological dominance over the Party, it was also necessary to set up guardrails to curb the ambitions of those who sought reform wider than Deng was comfortable implementing. By 1980 it appears that Deng's use of historical memory declined and then settled as he had succeeded in reshaping official historical memory to secure his core leadership. On the other hand, Deng took further political actions to protect his power, such as removing Hua and his loyalists from positions of influence and replacing them with Deng loyalists. Furthermore, he solidified his gains with important ideological works such as his Four Cardinal Principles speech.³⁸⁷ Most importantly, regarding shaping historical memory, Deng labored intensely in the drafting of the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," published in

Mao's legacy. Hua apparently had not anticipated that it would become a target for those who believed that China needed to distance itself from the policies that Mao had pursued during the last two decades of his life." See also Hua's defense of the Two Whatever concept at the closing of the CPC Central work conference Dec 13, 1978. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/hua-guofengs-speech-closing-session-cpc-central-work-conference>, Accessed 8/11/2023.

³⁸⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 240, Kindle Edition.

³⁸⁶ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 250, Kindle Edition. Describing Deng's stance towards political expression at this juncture Vogel explained, "In principle, Deng supported the expansion of freedom and he was prepared to be pragmatic. Yet because he bore ultimate responsibility for maintaining public order, when he had serious doubts about whether order could be maintained, he moved swiftly to tighten control."

³⁸⁷ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 262, Kindle Edition.

1982.³⁸⁸ The inclusion of several letters of instruction to the resolution's authors by Deng in his *Selected Works* illustrates a strong desire on his part to not only be associated with the revision, but to make clear that he was the author of crucial reinterpretations of Party history.

Following his consolidation, Deng's instrumental use of historical memory levelled off at a reduced rate compared to early highs. It appears that he maintained sufficient levels to continue broadcasting his governing philosophy and adapt to slight changes in the political situation. However, there was an increase that coincided with the launch of the Anti-Spiritual Pollution campaign. This movement sought to arrest a perceived rise in what the literary theorist Zhou Yang described as alienation within the PRC's socialist society.³⁸⁹ Deng reacted negatively to this line of thinking and launched a mass campaign against it.³⁹⁰ However, he also sought to maintain his reform policy aimed at advancing the PRC's economic growth and improving living standards. To meet this challenge, Deng deployed the instrumental use of historical memory to reestablish his sole authority as core leader and keep intellectual discourse confined to his desired parameters. It appears that by 1985 Deng was satisfied with his scope of control and his instrumental use dropped to previous levels as he prepared to turn over increased authority to his chosen successors.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 368, Kindle Edition.

³⁸⁹ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 386-387, Kindle Edition.

³⁹⁰ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 3887, Kindle Edition. Pantsov argues that figures such as Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun played a substantial role in instigating this reaction from Deng, albeit he seemed to have no qualms in its execution. "The liberals in attendance warmly greeted this idea. Many of the old conservatives, such as Deng's friend Wang Zhen, simply did not understand and therefore pretended that they also liked the report. But Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun, who understood everything very well, tried unsuccessfully to block publication of the report. Then they came to see Deng. He also understood nothing but asked, 'Just what is alienation?' Without delving into details, Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun simply said, 'It is against socialism.' Deng was indignant. In his old age he had become irritable and very authoritarian. 'The literature, art, and theoretical circles should not produce spiritual pollution,' he growled and ordered Hu Qiaomu to draft a speech for him on this subject."

³⁹¹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 468, Kindle Edition.

The third and final increase in instrumental use of historical memory appears associated with a series of escalating challenges for Deng and the CPC. By 1986 Deng appeared ready to retire with Hu Yaobang well positioned to succeed him.³⁹² However, a student protest movement in December 1986 led to Hu's dismissal for his perceived poor handling of the situation.³⁹³ As a result, Deng had to reassert his authority to bolster his new successor Zhao Ziyang and secure his policy program.³⁹⁴ The next challenge came as Deng sparred with Chen Yun over the speed and breadth of market liberalization reforms. While such internal struggles had occurred in the past, this time Deng got his way and was able to accelerate the pace of economic reforms. However, by August 1988 the Chinese economy faced an inflation crisis, threatening a key plank of Deng's governing philosophy.³⁹⁵ Deng had portrayed his reform policies as designed to increase the Chinese population's living standards, but as the inflation crisis deepened, confidence in the capacity of the CPC to enact this goal faltered. However, the greatest challenge to Deng came with the Tiananmen Square incident which witnessed not only the ouster of his second chosen successor but a direct challenge in the capital to the CPC itself by a robust protest movement spearheaded by the youth.³⁹⁶ The entire process from Hu's removal up through the Tiananmen Square incident displayed a continuous rise in his instrumental use of historical memory. Although Deng managed to quell this movement, the fate of his reforms remained in doubt. To ensure the maintenance of his policy reforms, Deng reclaimed authority to cement his governing philosophy as the guiding ideology even after his retirement. In this task, he relied on using historical memory, culminating in his Southern Tour in

³⁹² Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 569, Kindle Edition.

³⁹³ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 575-585, Kindle Edition.

³⁹⁴ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 401-403, Kindle Edition.

³⁹⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 469-473, Kindle Edition.

³⁹⁶ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 411-416, Kindle Edition. The protest coincided with the 70th anniversary of the May 4th Movement (1919), a powerful episode in Chinese historical memory which had often been used by the CPC, including Deng.

1992.³⁹⁷ Throughout this period, despite his advanced age and upcoming retirement, Deng's use of historical memory rose substantially.

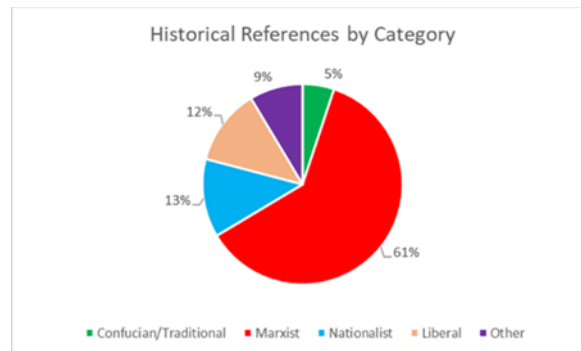


Figure 3.3 References by category percentage across the full dataset.

Deng Xiaoping instrumentally used all four major narrative categories of historical memory employed by PRC core leaders. In fact, over 90% of his uses conform to the four categories. By far the largest percentage is the Marxist framework, accounting for over 60%. This framework was the main avenue by which Deng could wrest authority from his ideological competitors as he moved towards core leadership. Furthermore, it remained the main battleground in which he legitimized his governing philosophy with the party and fended off criticisms from the political left. Additionally, Deng's discourse towards foreign audiences often included representatives from Communist states as well as similarly aligned individuals and groups. These factors likely contributed to the substantial use of the Marxist framework by Deng. On the other hand, both the Nationalist and Liberal frameworks were also present, at 13% and 12% respectively. Deng used the Nationalist narrative selectively to shore up domestic support, especially during times of crisis. It also proved a valuable tool to counter foreign criticisms. Meanwhile, the Liberal framework enabled Deng to articulate a new vision for garnering Chinese legitimacy through prosperity for the populace. Furthermore, he used the framework to soften China's image internationally and present its increase in strength as non-threatening. Finally, Deng only made selective use of the Confucian/Traditional framework, although it still played a role in forging connections with both his

³⁹⁷ Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, pages 59 & 199 Kindle Edition.

domestic and foreign audiences. In addition, Deng used it occasionally to combat corruption and immorality within the CPC structure. Although Deng relied mostly on the Marxist narrative framework, he also used the other three for specific political purposes to advance his position as core leader.

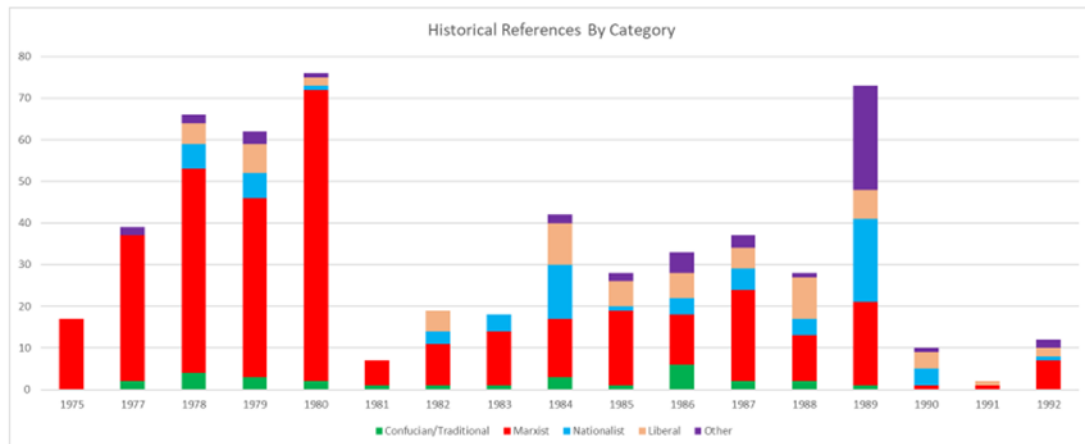


Figure 3.4 References by category for each year.

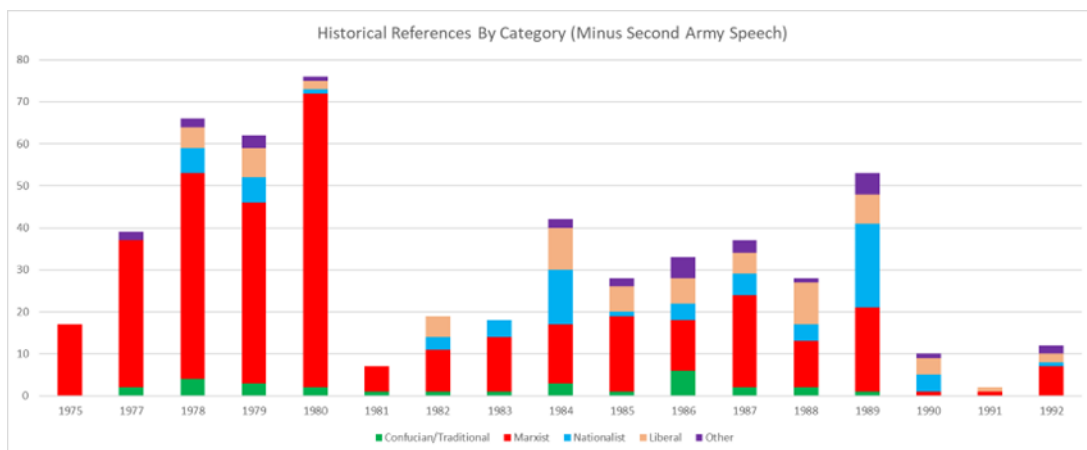


Figure 3.5 References by category for each year, excluding Deng's 1989 speech on the Second Field Army

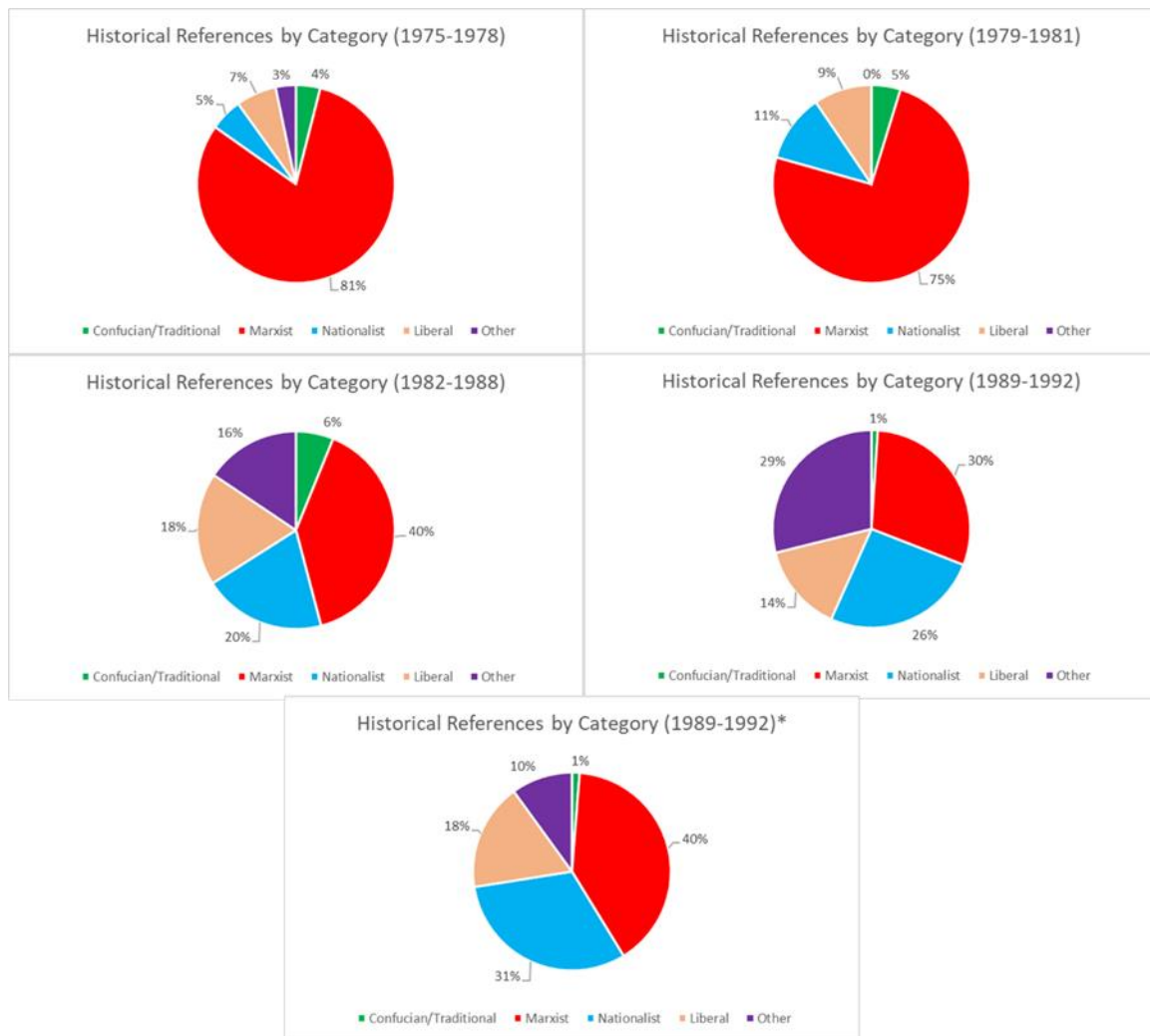


Figure 3.6 References by category divided into four sections, Competition with Hua (1975-1978), consolidation (1979-1981), Reform and Opening Up (1982-1988), and crisis to southern tour (1989-1992). The second 1989-1992* reflects the breakdown by category excluding Deng's speech regarding the Second Field Army in 1989.

Deng's initial competition for core leadership saw an overwhelming use of the Marxist framework. That usage accounted for over 80% of his uses of historical memory at the time, although there was variation in what specific memory was invoked and for what purpose. In 1975, Deng relied most heavily on memory associated with Mao and the revolutionary period. Mao remained the core leader even as his health failed, and any interpretation of historical memory had to conform to his orientations. As Deng fell from grace in 1976 there are no instances of public discourse to examine. However, once he had been rehabilitated in 1977 in the wake of the removal of the Gang of Four, he soon thereafter launched an aggressive campaign to supplant Hua Guofeng. To counteract Hua's "Two Whatever's," Deng presented a reinterpretation of Marxist historical memory, elevating the earlier period of Mao's

career prior to 1957, while denigrating state policy afterwards.³⁹⁸ Furthermore, he articulated Mao Zedong Thought as an ideological system which had as its foundation the concept of “seeking truth from facts.”³⁹⁹ This outlook placed results ahead of ideological purity and enabled Deng to construct a governing philosophy that emphasized progress and adaptability. The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in December of 1978 heralded Deng as the new ideological center of the CPC, with Hua remaining merely as its titular head of government. Deng relied upon the Marxist framework to battle first unsuccessfully against the Gang of Four but later triumphantly against Hua Guofeng.

The consolidation period saw a generally similar reliance on the Marxist framework. Although Deng had won a victory against Hua by early 1979, he still had to share power with him, along with other figures such as Marshal Ye Jianying. During this phase, Deng published important works articulating his governing philosophy such as his speech outlining his Four Cardinal Principles. At the same time, Deng further developed his interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought and renewed focus on the concepts of “seeking truth from facts” and “adapting Socialism to China’s conditions” as central pillars of his governing philosophy.⁴⁰⁰ In addition, Deng crafted important elements of his Reform and Opening Up (R&OU hereafter) policy through Marxist rhetoric, including his arguments for the need to develop productive forces and raise living standards. For Deng, science and technology were essential ingredients to develop China.⁴⁰¹ He used the Liberal framework to argue that the acceleration of scientific and technological development globally required China to engage with the wider world and borrow from advancements achieved in other nations to drive economic progress. Deng layered his discourse with

³⁹⁸ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 355-357, Kindle Edition.

³⁹⁹ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 334-335, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁰⁰ Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, page 168, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁰¹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 200-204, Kindle Edition.

Nationalist rhetoric during both his international tour in 1978 - 1979 and the Sino-Vietnamese War to bolster China's international prestige. Most importantly, throughout 1980 - 1981, Deng extensively directed key aspects of the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China."⁴⁰² This text represented the official narrative interpretation of Party history endorsed by the CPC. Mao's "Resolution on Party History" adopted in Yan'an in 1945 acted as a signpost that the PRC had entered a new era, and Deng's curated resolution echoed this intention.⁴⁰³ While he had achieved ideological primacy, Deng did not consolidate political power solely within his hands, instead opting for placing his allies in critical positions within the CPC power structure as Hua lost influence. Deng appeared unwilling to take on all formal vestiges of power as Mao had done. Instead, he created some distance in his direct responsibility in certain areas while retaining the capacity to assert influence as needed. Areas where he did maintain direct influence included Foreign and Military Affairs as well as policy directed towards education, science, and technology.⁴⁰⁴ However, while he left the day-to-day management to others, he maintained oversight by promulgating his governing philosophy, underscored by his instrumental uses of historical memory.

The third period 1982 - 1988 witnessed Deng radically shift the proportion of historical narratives within his discourse. Although Deng continued to use the Marxist framework, it dropped precipitously to only 40%. This framework remained essential for Deng in discussions within the Party and to justify his reform policies to various Marxist inclined audiences, both foreign and domestic. However, as he had achieved primacy after 1982 as interpreter of Party history, his uses of historical memory declined as it was only necessary to maintain his interpretation, rather than the more expansive requirements needed for

⁴⁰² Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 374, Kindle Edition. "The Sixth Plenum also adopted the 'Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China,' which it had taken a year and a half to prepare. Deng personally supervised the working group, meeting with it sixteen times, attentively reading all of its drafts, repeatedly making corrections, and consulting with other veterans."

⁴⁰³ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 357, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁰⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 524, Kindle Edition.

reinvention. However, Deng did face some significant challenges as well. He became increasingly concerned over corruption among cadres and the dilution of an animating revolutionary ethic.⁴⁰⁵ Another major concern for Deng was the advanced age of senior cadres and the perceived need to foster a younger generation of leadership to take the lead and avoid stagnation within the Party-State.⁴⁰⁶ The Marxist framework, especially memory of the travails of the revolutionary period and the youth of its leaders when they faced these trials, proved an important lever for Deng to push for allowing more authority to flow to younger cadres. In addition, although using them sparingly, Deng did employ the Confucian/Traditional framework and its focus of ethical behavior in government by highlighting exemplars to emulate. At this time, Deng also hoped to achieve a reunification with Taiwan and Hong Kong, while heading off any separatist elements in restive regions, especially Tibet.⁴⁰⁷ He relied heavily on the Nationalist framework to push for the unification of the Chinese nation as a historical imperative. Finally, he increasingly relied upon the Liberal framework to push forward his economic reforms, especially in the SEZs. Furthermore, in his internationally oriented discourse, Deng employed the Liberal framework to lobby for greater Chinese participation in the global community.⁴⁰⁸

Despite his advanced age, the final period 1989 - 1992 witnessed Deng reasserting his prerogatives as core leader. After Hu had been removed for failing to effectively quell the 1986 - 87 student protest movement, Deng pinned his hopes on his new heir apparent, Zhao Ziyang. However, a series of crises fundamentally challenged Deng's governing philosophy on several fronts. The inflation crisis in the summer of 1988 and the collapse of China's GDP growth rate called into question the

⁴⁰⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 469, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁰⁶ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 354, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁰⁷ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 477-478, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁰⁸ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 696-698, Kindle Edition.

efficacy of Deng's economic reforms. He had forced through the acceleration of market reforms over the objections of Chen Yun and more conservative elements within the PRC, exposing Deng to greater culpability for their failure.⁴⁰⁹ Furthermore, although Deng's governing philosophy called for market reforms, it maintained an ironclad adherence to the existing political structure. This scheme worked so long as living standards improved, in accordance with Deng's suggestion that Socialism possessed greater productive capacity compared to capitalist systems.⁴¹⁰ However, as Deng appeared to be unable to continue to deliver on his promises of growth, faith in his governing philosophy, and by extension his core leadership, waned. The Tiananmen Square incident saw the collapse of Deng's second chosen heir and brought into question the Party-State's legitimacy as it faced a highly visible and intransigent protest movement. The third and final crisis inaugurated the general collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR. After successfully weathering these issues, and seeing Jiang Zemin emerge as the new successor, Deng feared a retrenchment from the conservative elements within the PRC against his reforms. To counter this prospect, he engaged in several attempts to prevent this reversal in the early 1990s.⁴¹¹ This enterprise culminated in a speaking tour of several sites in southern China in 1992, which proved successful in reorienting Jiang Zemin towards Deng's preferred ideology. All these problems amounted to Deng's substantial reengagement in ideological work and required substantial instrumental use of historical memory to reestablish his status as core leader.

I have included two charts for the percentage of narrative categories for the 1989 - 1992 period. The difference between the two is the inclusion of a speech by Deng in November 1989 to veterans of the Second Field Army. This speech did not include any of the four main narratives, but recounted the history of the Second Field Army, of which Deng was a leading member, during the Chinese Civil War (1946 -

⁴⁰⁹ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 405-406, Kindle Edition

⁴¹⁰ Deng Xiaoping, "Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II," page 175.

⁴¹¹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 666-669, Kindle Edition.

1949).⁴¹² I debated whether to include this piece within the analysis as the density of references substantially influences the dataset as shown in Figure 6. The recollection by Deng appears, on the surface, mostly apolitical and doesn't engage with the four narrative frameworks. However, two issues warrant at least an acknowledgement of this speech. The first is its inclusion in Deng's Third Volume of *Selected Works*, which served as the foundation for Deng Xiaoping Theory and was subject to several study campaigns under Jiang Zemin in the early 1990s.⁴¹³ The second reason is the substantial number of veterans of the Second Field Army occupying senior levels of the PLA at the time of the speech. For example, Deng's promotions to full general in 1988 included a substantial majority of Second Field Army veterans.⁴¹⁴ This cohort dominated the PLA leadership structure and represented a bloc through which Deng maintained substantial influence. A celebration of his old unit increased the prestige of these figures and solidified their standing, as well as reminding them, and others, of their connection to Deng. On the other hand, it may have merely been an opportunity for Deng to reminisce with his old comrades in his twilight years as he exited the political stage. Given these competing factors, I have chosen to display charts that show its inclusion and exclusion, although the following analysis will err on the side of caution and exclude it from the percentage evaluation.

Deng's use of the Marxist framework remained present even at this late stage of his career and when international communism appeared in retreat. Although still essential in making his case to the Party justifying his governing philosophy, the Marxist framework alone appeared insufficient to meet the challenges he faced. He needed to rely on other narrative frameworks, especially the Nationalist and Liberal, to close the gap. The Nationalist usage of historical memory grew substantially to 30%. Deng

⁴¹² For more on the Second Army's role during the Civil War see Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pages 45-48 (initial disposition), pages 168-172 (Dabie mountains), pages 199-211 (Huai-Hai Campaign).

⁴¹³ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), (Kindle Locations 4381-4391), Kindle Edition.

⁴¹⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 542, Kindle Edition.

never abstained from this framework in his discourse, especially the memory of overcoming hardships and national humiliation to bolster national confidence. However, especially during this phase, he amplified nationalist themes to highlight fears of instability, giving weight to apocalyptic visions of a disintegrating China, ushering in an era of chaos and suffering. Fear of instability, and the desire for unity, cuts across all frameworks, but Deng turned to the Nationalist framework the most when addressing this conception, invoking the specters of the past to convince his audience that it was better to stay with the devil they knew in the CPC rather than risk the perils of the unknown. The Liberal framework remained at relatively stable levels. Despite economic downturns, Deng retained faith in his reform policies. As China's stability improved in the 1990s, Deng referred to this framework to guard his programs against rollback by conservative forces. His Southern Tour in 1992 reenergized support for his governing philosophy, with Jiang Zemin adopting it wholeheartedly at the Fourteenth Party Congress that October. It continued to dominate Jiang's discourse and subsequent policies throughout the first half of the 1990s.⁴¹⁵ Contrary to the previous instance when Deng initially seized core leadership, Deng relied more heavily on the Nationalist and Liberal frameworks, as opposed to relying solely on the Marxist framework, to secure his position on this occasion.

⁴¹⁵ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pages 424-426, Kindle Edition.

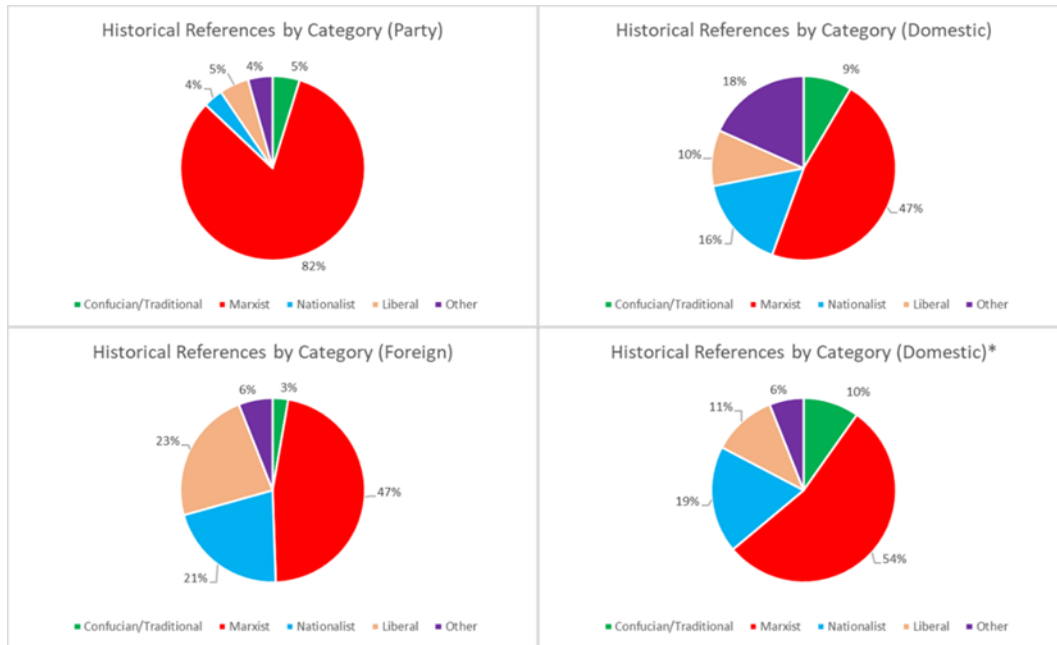


Figure 3.7 References by category by primary audiences: Party, Domestic, Domestic*(Second Field Army Removed), and Foreign.

Deng's use of historical memory differs substantially based on the audience addressed, indicating its instrumental character. To the Party, Deng relied almost exclusively on the Marxist framework. This reliance is unsurprising, as according to Deng's Four Cardinal Principles, the CPC was a Marxist-Leninist Party and needed to remain as such. The other frameworks do appear in limited capacities, but Deng found that to convince the CPC, both of his position as core leader and the validity of his policy preferences, he had to interpret historical memory through the Marxist lens.

On the other hand, Deng's discourse to a domestic audience was far more varied in its character. Excluding the Second Field Army speech, the Marxist framework remains high at approximately 50%. This high figure shows that Deng perceived utility in shaping memory associated with the CPC and Marxism for a wider domestic audience. The Confucian/Traditional framework remained relatively low but displayed its highest level in this audience at 10%. Deng mostly used it to form connections with his domestic audiences with familiar references, as well as on occasion to promote desired standards of morality. The Nationalist framework focused on concepts associated with unity and civilizational pride within the Chinese nation. This angle was also used to push for unification with Hong Kong and Taiwan

as an aspiration of the Chinese nation. Although not substantial, the Liberal framework occupied 10% of his discourse aimed at a domestic audience. Deng portrayed his new policies as promoting higher living standards among the Chinese population as part of a general historical and global trend. Furthermore, he advocated for greater focus on educational initiatives to develop science and technology as necessary to take full advantage of this trend.

There is also significant variation within Deng's discourse aimed at foreign audiences. The Marxist framework remains relatively consistent with that aimed at the domestic audience. This is likely a result of the substantial number of speeches by Deng aimed at representatives of Communist countries and addressed to groups amenable to this rhetoric. The Confucian/Traditional framework drops substantially, although there are some selective instances by Deng that indicate he was willing to employ it with foreigners. The Nationalist framework also remains relatively consistent, with a large portion of it aimed at shoring up Chinese confidence during periods of international conflict and criticism. This usage was especially clear in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident in combating perceived slights by the international community, especially Western states. Deng condemned such criticism and accused those nations who, in his historical interpretation, had previously exploited China during the Century of Humiliation (CoH hereafter). As such, they had no moral right to criticize the PRC's policies on humanitarian grounds. The Liberal framework rose to its highest level at 23% with this audience. Deng used this framework to garner support from the international community. Presumably, his objectives included diplomatic normalization, scientific and technological exchange, financial investment, and trade access, among other policies designed to increase China's access to the global community.

Deng Xiaoping used historical memory instrumentally throughout his tenure as paramount leader. During periods when he needed to exert greater control as core leader, the incidence increased. To achieve core leader status, Deng needed to dominate interpretations of historical memory and use it to justify his political objectives, especially his dominance over ideological interpretations. Deng recontextualized that historical memory to match his governing philosophy and reemphasized specific portions to meet immediate political needs. Unlike his predecessor, Deng did not accrue absolute titular

power in addition to his ideological dominance. This allowed him to maintain some distance from policy making, and dismiss any hint of a cult of personality, with Deng intervening usually only to preserve his vision for China's future. However, as a result, he had to reassert his core leadership through instrumental usage whenever his governing philosophy was challenged. This interference was especially apparent when his chosen successors appeared unable or unwilling to enact Deng's vision. His use of the four frameworks was not evenly distributed. There was substantial variation depending on the occasion and intended audience. Deng employed each framework to reshape historical memory and then sustain this new vision to legitimize his governing philosophy and justify his position as core leader. The following section will show each framework in operation throughout Deng's discourse.

Frameworks

To be core leader, Deng required absolute ideological primacy in setting the direction for Chinese political discourse and interpreting memory of the past. Deng used the Confucian/Traditional framework only minimally. However, he did find a use for it as an illustrative tool, especially to connect with fellow Chinese. Historical memory of China's ancient and dynastic history ran deep and pervaded political speech. Mao's discourse included numerous references of this type even during the height of the Cultural Revolution.⁴¹⁶ In one example, Deng faced a potentially deadly dilemma at a meeting of politburo members in November 1975. At this meeting, Deng was challenged by those who wished to see him endorse the Cultural Revolution according to Mao's wishes. Deng sought to avoid making such an admission while simultaneously evading Mao's wrath. He attempted to skirt the issue with an allusion to China's ancient past. He stated, "During the Cultural Revolution.... I was in the Peach Blossom Grove. I didn't even know what happened in the Han dynasty, to say nothing of what followed later during the Wei

⁴¹⁶ For example, Mao maintained an exchange of letters with Guo Moruo in a classical poetic style even in the 1970s. Pu Wang, *The Translatability of Revolution: Guo Moruo and Twentieth-Century Chinese Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018, pages 272-281.

and Jin dynasties.”⁴¹⁷ As described by Ezra Vogel, this same reference was employed by Mao only a week prior and was a well-known story referencing people ignorant of political events due to their isolation. As Deng had been forced out of politics since 1966, he claimed ignorance on the topic as reason to abstain from answering. However, this reference appears to have failed in its intention of mollifying Mao, and Deng soon faced his third and final denunciation.

Despite its failure to move Mao, Deng did not abandon his use of the Confucian/Traditional framework as an illustrative tactic. Facing criticism of his Opening Up strategy, Deng relied upon Chinese dynastic history to offer positive and negative examples in support of his case. Deng chose the early Ming (1368 – 1644) as an example, showing how China could benefit from an open-door policy declaring:

A closed-door policy prevents any country from developing. We suffered from isolation, and so did our forefathers. You might say it was an open policy of a sort when Zheng He was sent on voyages to the western oceans by Emperor Cheng Zu of the Ming Dynasty. But the Ming Dynasty began to decline with the death of Emperor Cheng Zu.⁴¹⁸

The image of a robust Ming Dynasty capable of sending Zheng He’s treasure fleets was a powerful symbol for China’s latent potential. However, he continued by offering a negative example stating:

In the Qing Dynasty, during the reigns of Kang Xi and Qian Long, there was no open policy to speak of. China remained isolated for more than 300 years from the middle of the Ming Dynasty to the Opium War, or for nearly 200 years counting from the reign of Kang Xi. As a consequence, the country declined into poverty and ignorance.⁴¹⁹

In Deng’s formulation, the failure of the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1912) and the onset of the CoH was primarily due to a closed-door policy. He implied, with these two illustrations, that for China to succeed it

⁴¹⁷ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 148-149, Kindle Edition. For the original text of the poem see <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2090/pg2090.html>, Accessed 8/12/2023. The poem follows a similar structure as the story of *Rip Van Winkle*. In this iteration a visiting fisherman coming upon an isolated village that had missed major historical changes. The villagers originally hid from the chaos of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE) but missed the tribulations of the later Han (202 BCE – 220 CE) and Jin (266 – 420 CE) dynasties centuries later as well.

⁴¹⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/speech-at-the-third-plenary-session-of-the-central-advisory-commission-of-the-communist-party-of-china/>, Accessed 8/7/2023. For a brief overview of Zheng He’s voyages and the reversal of outward orientation after Emperor Cheng Zu (Yongle) see John King Fairbank & Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Enlarged Edition, 1992, pages 137-140.

⁴¹⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/speech-at-the-third-plenary-session-of-the-central-advisory-commission-of-the-communist-party-of-china/>, Accessed 8/7/2023. For a brief overview of Kangxi and Qianlong and the shape of their foreign policy see Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), pages 6-14.

must maintain a policy of engagement. For Deng, the transfer of scientific knowledge and technology, which were the key drivers for development, was impossible if China did not interact robustly with the international community. If it failed to do so, it would be left behind just like the Qing Dynasty.

Deng extended his illustrative use of the Confucian/Traditional framework to foreign audiences. During his trip to Japan in 1978 he repeatedly used historical memory to generate goodwill. He pointed to the millennia of good relations between the two civilizations, minimizing the recent decades of animosity as ephemeral.⁴²⁰ Going a step further, he noted that, in the past, Japan had learned from China, but now China had come to Japan to learn from them. At one function, Deng joked that he had come to Japan seeking three things, the final of which was, like Xu Fu, to acquire a “secret magic drug.”⁴²¹ This reference to a Qin era (221 – 201 BCE) figure was familiar to his Japanese hosts who laughed at the jest.⁴²² Deng explained that what he really meant was that he came in search of the secrets to modernization, with the Japanese official Hori Shigeru replying nimbly that the best drug would be good Sino-Japanese relations. In this case, Deng’s instrumental use of historical memory worked well, facilitating warmer relations with Japan. Normalization served Deng’s goal to spur on scientific and economic exchanges to fuel China’s modernization.⁴²³

In addition, Deng used the Confucian/Traditional framework when meeting with President Ford in 1975. He voiced concerns regarding rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union and advised Ford that, in his opinion, the United States should avoid getting too close with the USSR. Vogel recounted the story:

⁴²⁰ For more on Deng’s trip in 1978 and the reactions of his Japanese hosts see Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 299-308.

⁴²¹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 299-301, Kindle Edition. The account of Xu Fu can be found in Sima Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian*. <https://ctext.org/shiji/huai-nan-heng-shan-lie-zhuan>, para 19.

⁴²² Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 301, Kindle Edition.

⁴²³ “During Deng’s years at the helm, no country played a greater role in assisting China build its industry and infrastructure than Japan.” Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 309.

During his first meeting with Ford in early December, Deng used a story from the popular novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi*) to describe the danger that the United States might concede too much to the Soviet Union. He said that after Cao Cao, emperor of the Wei Kingdom, won the war, the losing general Liu Bei offered to work for him. Cao Cao, suspicious of Liu Bei's loyalty, said, "Liu Bei is like an eagle, which when it is hungry will work for you, but when it is well fed, will fly away." In other words, giving the Soviet Union what it wanted would not work, for once it had what it wanted, it would pursue its own interests.⁴²⁴

The use of a *Three Kingdoms* reference is unexpected, as while it would have salience with a Chinese, or even East Asian, audience, it would have no immediate resonance with Ford and the American delegation. Yet it seems that Deng found it useful when expressing Cold War geopolitics. Deng did not shy away from using historical references more familiar to his American counterparts, particularly making use of World War II memory. For example, in discussions with President Ford and Henry Kissinger at the same conference on US policy, he recalled the experiences of British and French leaders Chamberlain and Daladier engaging with Adolf Hitler. In Deng's estimation, their appeasement was interpreted as weakness and would invite further attacks. In this analogy, the US was in danger of walking a similar path, this time with the Soviet Union.⁴²⁵ Two years later, in a discussion with Ambassador Cyrus Vance, Deng again warned against what he termed appeasing the Soviet Union, warning the Americans that, "You will end up with a Dunkirk."⁴²⁶ Deng relied on both traditional Chinese and modern American historical memory to convey his viewpoints in his diplomatic interactions.

Deng used the Confucian/Traditional framework to stress the need for good governance based on ethical behavior. He focused more on curtailing negative habits within the CPC ranks as reform efforts

⁴²⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 150, Kindle Edition. There seems to be some confusion regarding this translation here. Vogel cites Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China; An investigative History* (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), p.226, which offers the translation as Liu Pu, but who Vogel interprets as Liu Bei. However, the reference seems to be from Chapter 16 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The Moss Roberts translation (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991), reads: "Cao answered me, smiling, 'We'll provide for Lǔ Bu as if he were a hunting hawk that must be kept hungry when hares and foxes are running about. Well fed, he'll just soar off contented,'" page 133. The China text project offers the English and Chinese together and it appears to refer to Lǔ Bu (吕布), <https://ctext.org/sanguo-yanyi/ch16>, para 41.

⁴²⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 153, Kindle Edition. For a brief overview on the power of the Munich/Appeasement analogy on US Cold War foreign policy development see Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992.

⁴²⁶ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 314, Kindle Edition.

advanced. In a speech regarding Party leadership in 1980, Deng spelled out those qualities that he deemed harmful:

Its harmful manifestations include the following: standing high above the masses; abusing power; divorcing oneself from reality and the masses; spending a lot of time and effort to put up an impressive front; indulging in empty talk; sticking to a rigid way of thinking; being hidebound by convention; overstaffing administrative organs; being dilatory, inefficient and irresponsible; failing to keep one's word; circulating documents endlessly without solving problems; shifting responsibility to others; and even assuming the airs of a mandarin . . . Such things have reached intolerable dimensions both in our domestic affairs and in our contacts with other countries.⁴²⁷

To combat these failings, Deng highlighted historical figures that should be emulated. He tended to use examples from recent CPC history, mitigating any attacks from critics, who by implication, would be denigrating those celebrated figures. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai presented two of the best candidates. At the height of his competition with Hua Guofeng in the summer of 1978, Deng addressed the PLA on this subject. He opined:

Our Comrades Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai set an example by their conduct. Placing strict demands upon themselves, they worked hard and lived a simple life for decades. They personified the fine traditions and work style of our Party and our army. What an immense and far-reaching impact their inspiring deeds have had on the Party, the army and the entire people! Not only have they influenced our own generation but they will influence generations to come. Our cadres, veteran cadres in particular, should take Comrades Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai as their models and pass on their experience and help and guide the young and middle-aged.⁴²⁸

Not only did Deng call on the PLA to model Mao and Zhou's behavior of hard work and living frugally, but more importantly he called for current PLA leaders to serve as examples for future generations. This commandment served the dual purpose of instilling what Deng referred to as a revolutionary spirit to curb corruption, while simultaneously casting elder cadres in mentor roles.⁴²⁹ This maneuver facilitated these elderly cadres' departure from the political scene and allowed for the next generation, especially those aligned with Deng's outlook, to fill the vacated billets. Throughout his political discourse, Deng used the Confucian/Traditional framework selectively, and even then, only with mixed results. On the other hand, he relied substantially on the Marxist framework to secure his position as core leader against any challenges from within the CPC.

⁴²⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 310.

⁴²⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, pages 139-140.

⁴²⁹ For examples of Deng's use of the "revolutionary spirit" theme see, Deng Xiaoping, "*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II," pages 348-350.

Critical for Deng was the Marxist framework of historical memory, as this narrative structure was the main battleground to justify his governing philosophy and personal rule within the CPC. Although Mao had attempted to circumvent the Party structure in the latter half of his rule, Deng remained firmly entrenched within the institution as the sole arena for political competition. While he was willing to reform certain elements, his Four Cardinal Principles enshrined the Party and Marxist ideology as sacrosanct within PRC political culture. In 1975 Deng remained restrained by Mao as the core leader and his political discourse was restricted mainly to interpreting the revolutionary period consistent with Mao's view. However, by 1977 Deng shifted to competition with Hua Guofeng over the memory of Mao, both as an individual and regarding Mao Zedong Thought. Deng reinterpreted Mao as a foundational yet flawed figure, especially criticizing his actions after 1957. This allowed Deng to repudiate some of these actions and place Hua in the unenviable position of defending Mao's support for the Cultural Revolution and other unpopular aspects of his career. From an ideological position, not only did Deng redefine Mao's role as only a primary, but not sole, author of Mao Zedong Thought, but recast its most fundamental pillar as "seeking truth from facts." This reinterpretation allowed Deng to propose new policies to adapt to the changing times as consistent with Mao Zedong Thought and mitigate criticisms as erroneously dogmatic. After Deng emerged victorious, he used the consolidation period to fully articulate his new political program, based on his reinterpretation of CPC historical memory and Marxist theory. Deng argued that Marxism had to be applied to China's historical conditions and adjusted as those conditions shifted. In his evaluation of history, China remained in a primary stage of socialism and had to focus on developing its productive forces to exhaustion before advancing to the next stage of communism. In turn, those productive forces would be evident in the rising living standards for the Chinese population. Furthermore, Deng presented science and technology as the primary drivers for developing productive forces. With his reinterpretation of historical memory dominant by 1982, Deng transitioned to sustaining his interpretation through a consistent, although subdued, level of instrumental uses. However, during times of perceived crisis, Deng refocused on promulgating his interpretation of Marxist historical memory to solidify control within the Party.

Although Deng needed to compete with the Gang of Four at the ideological level, any misstep in the instrumental use of historical memory could be turned against him with devastating effect. However, he could not abandon this field of competition either. Traversing this minefield, he opted to leverage memory of the revolutionary period. For example, to reestablish the authority of the Central Committee, Deng invoked what he described as the “mountain stronghold” (山寨) mentality, to claw back centralized Party control. In a speech to the PLA in 1975 Deng explained:

In the past, during the protracted and scattered guerrilla wars our army fought in the countryside, many separate “mountain strongholds” came into being. After the Red Army’s arrival in northern Shaanxi in the Long March and during the subsequent War of Resistance Against Japan [1937-45], Comrade Mao Zedong set before the whole Party and army the task of overcoming the tendency towards the “mountain-stronghold” mentality. After the Yan’an rectification movement, which among other things, opposed sectarianism, the whole Party achieved a new level of unity, and this provided the basic guarantee for our victories in the War of Resistance and the War of Liberation [1946-49]. Recently, factionalism has been reasserting itself; this is something to which we must certainly pay attention.⁴³⁰

Deng linked the dangerous “mountain stronghold” mentality to recent factionalism by the PLA and elements beyond that rejected the authority of the Central Committee. Furthermore, Deng associated its elimination by Mao during the Yan’an rectification movement as a great achievement. Of course, Deng stood to benefit by a centralization of authority to the Central Committee.⁴³¹ Yet he remained constrained in the historical memory available to discuss such issues, so long as Mao was still on the scene and capable of contradicting his view.

Deng invoked the historical memory of the Yan’an period, specifically the Rectification Movement (1942 – 1945), to advocate for greater consolidation of authority to the detriment of the Gang of Four. In 1975 Yan’an was a safe reference as it figured prominently within Mao’s approved interpretation of historical memory and featured Mao as its driving force. In Deng’s retelling, Mao had

⁴³⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 12. Gao Hua’s, trans Stacy Mosher & Guo Jian, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan’an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2018), Kindle Edition, covers Mao’s consolidation of power in detail. For an overview of his conclusions on the leadership and ideological struggle see pages 756-760.

⁴³¹ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 75, Kindle Edition.

defeated sectarian divides and united the Party beneath his leadership through the Central Committee, both politically and ideologically. Deng declared:

You comrades have all read many books. Nevertheless, you should make a careful study of the documents issued during the Yan'an rectification movement and the political report to the Seventh National Congress of the Party. In that report, Comrade Mao Zedong set forth the three major features of the Party's style of work, namely, integrating theory with practice, maintaining close ties with the masses and practicing self-criticism . . . These principles were put forward by Comrade Mao Zedong after he had summed up the Party's historical experience. Among them, combating sectarianism — that is, combating factionalism and enhancing Party spirit — is very important. The admonition contained in the "three dos and three don'ts" to promote unity and oppose splits is in the same spirit as the call for combating sectarianism during the Yan'an rectification movement.⁴³²

Deng pointed to an early period involving Mao to contradict the Gang of Four, who relied on more recent rhetoric to justify their assaults on the Party elite. There was no question that Mao was the ultimate authority, but Deng attempted to contest interpretations from the later Mao with an earlier version. In the same speech Deng expanded:

The Yan'an rectification movement was aimed at solving these problems in order to forge Party-wide unity on the basis of ideological agreement. Without that movement, it would have been impossible to defeat the Japanese aggressors and Chiang Kai-shek. The present attempts to solve problems in different regions and units should all begin with combating factionalism and enhancing Party spirit.⁴³³

According to Deng, not only was erasing factionalism in line with Mao's philosophy, but ideological unity was the primary attribute that enabled the CPC's success against both Japan and the GMD. Deng pointed to the historical memory of Yan'an and its focus on ideological unity, centered on the Party leadership, as instructive to resolve the contemporary fractures within the CPC.

Despite his efforts, Deng failed to avoid Mao's ire and faced a third denunciation. However, the Gang of Four had also failed to earn Chairman Mao's support, as he instead turned to Hua Guofeng to succeed him.⁴³⁴ After Mao's death, Hua took the opportunity to remove the Gang of Four and by 1977 rehabilitated Deng. However, Deng took issue with Hua's governing philosophy of the "Two Whatevers," or "Whatever Mao Said, Whatever Mao Did should be continued." Deng had already begun the process of delineating a good from bad Mao in 1975. He realized that Hua's position was vulnerable, as it

⁴³² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, pages 24-25. For more on Mao's role in consolidating authority through his revisions on "The Resolution on Party History," see Gao Hua's, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, trans Stacy Mosher & Guo Jian, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2018, pages 738-750.

⁴³³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 25.

⁴³⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 169-171 & 175-179, Kindle Edition.

necessitated maintaining support for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution as part of the “Two Whatevers.”⁴³⁵ To resist Hua and assert his ideological supremacy, Deng needed to offer a reinterpretation of historical memory that elevated only selected portions of Maoist ideology. However, he also sought to avoid a full renunciation, as had occurred two decades earlier in the Soviet Union with Khrushchev shunning Stalin’s memory.⁴³⁶ Deng feared such a denunciation would destabilize the CPC’s rule. As such, Deng’s opening moves harkened back once more to Yan’an, as he sought to elevate this episode as a purer version of Mao, uncorrupted by elements like Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. In a speech titled, “Mao Zedong Thought Must Be Correctly Understood as an Integral Whole,” he referred to Mao’s work during the Yan’an period:

His comprehensive theory on the subject took shape, on the basis of practice, in the Yan’an rectification movement. He developed an integral theory on the type of party to be built and its guiding ideology and style of work. By creating a comprehensive theory of Party building in the Yan’an rectification movement — and by educating the whole Party, army and people in this theory — he made it possible for us to build a fine party; that was why we were able to win complete victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan [1937-45] and in the War of Liberation [1946-49].⁴³⁷

Deng once more credited Mao’s ideological centralization as key to the Party’s victories. Later in the speech, Deng stressed the importance of the Party for Mao and his role in unifying it at Yan’an. Deng stated:

Let us recall that it is precisely according to Comrade Mao Zedong’s theory of Party building that this fine party of ours has been built. After the rectification movement in Yan’an, people in both the front and rear areas were active and buoyant, their minds were at ease and they were united as one.⁴³⁸

Deng argued that the Party itself, as conceived at Yan’an, was an accurate reflection of Mao Zedong Thought. Therefore, Deng implied that simply taking anything Mao said without discerning the good from the bad, as Hua had done, was invalid.

Building on his early focus on the Yan’an period, Deng claimed that the key element of Mao Zedong Thought was the concept of “seeking truth from facts.” Deng stated:

⁴³⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 188, Kindle Edition.

⁴³⁶ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 342, Kindle Edition. Pantsov also describes the fear of the Khrushchev label on Hua’s part as well, page 307.

⁴³⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 57.

⁴³⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, pages 57-58.

We should have a correct and comprehensive understanding of Mao Zedong Thought as a system. Apparently, there are people who object to my posing this issue. It is common knowledge that Marxism-Leninism as a system should be understood correctly and comprehensively. Shouldn't the same thing apply to Mao Zedong Thought? Of course it should, otherwise mistakes will be inevitable. Comrade Mao Zedong wrote the four-word motto "Seek truth from facts" for the Central Party School in Yan'an, and these words are the quintessence of his philosophical thinking.⁴³⁹

This concept for Mao was crucial in his ideological contention with figures such as Wang Ming.⁴⁴⁰ Mao argued against a more dogmatic approach following the Soviet model of Marxism-Leninism, instead advocating for allowing conditions on the ground (rather than adherence to theory) to determine the validity of policy. This construction allowed Mao to depart from formal theory, when he deemed it necessary, without invalidating his Marxist credentials. Deng used this same construction, although this time to invalidate portions of Maoism. He explained:

That we must never go against the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought is beyond doubt. We must, however, integrate them with reality, analyze and study actual conditions and solve practical problems. Guidelines for our work must be set in conformity with actual conditions. This is a most fundamental approach and method of work, which every Communist must cleave to. The principle of seeking truth from facts is the point of departure, the fundamental point, in Mao Zedong Thought. This is materialism. If we fail to seek truth from facts, all our meetings will be nothing but empty talk, and we will never be able to solve any problems.⁴⁴¹

Deng iterates that the principle of "seeking truth from facts" was the essential element of Mao Zedong Thought and needed to be taken as its primary injunction. By extension, this seeking truth from facts enabled any future development of the ideology based on the rationale that it adjusted praxis to new conditions based on objective observations. Furthermore, Deng had positioned himself as emulating Mao, while Hua filled the role of the disgraced Wang Ming.

Deng directly assailed Hua's governing philosophy in his speech, "The 'Two Whatevers' Do Not Accord With Marxism." To undermine Hua's position, Deng pointed to the fallibility of Mao in certain

⁴³⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 81.

⁴⁴⁰ Politics and ideology intermingled repeatedly in the competition between Wang and Mao over party leadership. For example, Gao Hua argues, "The 'Sinification of Marxism' was something that had been brewing in Mao's mind for a long time. Its purpose was to completely overthrow Wang Ming and the rest of the Party's Soviet faction, to root out entrenched Stalin worship within the CCP (CPC), and ultimately to establish Mao as both leader and 'guru' of the Party and to give the Sixth Plenum a slogan with major strategic significance. Through the slogan on the 'Sinification of Marxism,' Mao found an interpretive basis for his 'heterodox' views that pulled together his fundamental positions and attitudes toward the Chinese Communist Movement to form the theoretical core of Maoism." Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, trans Stacy Mosher & Guo Jian, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2018, page 222, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁴¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 128.

instances, using Mao's own statements in the process. For example, Deng explained that Maoism couldn't be applied to all situations, but instead could only serve as guidance based on an accurate reading of a situation.

We cannot mechanically apply what Comrade Mao Zedong said about a particular question to another question, what he said in a particular place to another place, what he said at a particular time to another time, or what he said under particular circumstances to other circumstances. Comrade Mao Zedong himself said repeatedly that some of his own statements were wrong. He said that no one can avoid making mistakes in his work unless he does none at all.⁴⁴²

According to Deng, even Mao admitted not everything he had ever said was correct. In addition, he emphasized that Mao argued that this fallibility applied also to other key figures in Marxism-Leninism. He explained, "He (Mao) also said that Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin had all made mistakes — otherwise why did they correct their own manuscripts time and time again?"⁴⁴³ Next, Deng, citing Mao himself, noted a 70-30 split measuring Mao's achievements against his failures:

Comrade Mao Zedong said that he too had made mistakes and that there had never been a person whose statements were all correct or who was always absolutely right. He said that if one's work was rated as consisting 70 per cent of achievements and 30 per cent of mistakes, that would be quite all right, and that he himself would be very happy and satisfied if future generations could give him this "70-30" rating after his death.⁴⁴⁴

Putting the final nail in the coffin, Deng explicitly rejected the "Two Whatevers" as a viable governing philosophy, "Neither Marx nor Engels put forward any 'whatever' doctrine, nor did Lenin or Stalin, nor did Comrade Mao Zedong himself."⁴⁴⁵ Deng had placed Hua into a trap, for if everything Mao said is right, what can be done if Mao himself says that not everything he said is right? Deng managed to outmaneuver Hua and seize the ideological high ground. However, he would need to develop a replacement system that maintained the legitimacy of CPC rule while allowing him to shape it to enact his policy preferences.

⁴⁴² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 51.

⁴⁴³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 51.

⁴⁴⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 51, Mao had used the exact formula in estimating Stalin's achievements in 1956 in response to Khrushchev's secret speech. Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 171, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁴⁵ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 52.

It is true that Deng had supplanted Hua by the Third Plenum, but he still had a long way to go in solidifying his power. To do so as core leader Deng had to present his own governing philosophy, born from a new interpretation of historical memory. To build a new governing philosophy that retained the legitimizing influence of Mao Zedong Thought, Deng had to reinterpret it as one of continual evolution. As Deng had posited “seeking truth from facts” as the key component of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao’s personal fallibility, he positioned himself to express his theory as one of self-correction, a process rather than a dogma. To justify this viewpoint, Deng used the Marxist framework to cast CPC historical memory as supportive of this analysis. Deng presented this reinterpretation in his 1979 speech, “Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles.” He recalled the revolutionary period to reinforce the need for a flexible approach to policy development:

In our democratic revolution, we had to act in accordance with China’s specific situation and follow the path discovered by Comrade Mao Zedong of encircling the cities from the rural areas. Now, in our national construction, we must likewise act in accordance with our own situation and find a Chinese path to modernization.⁴⁴⁶

Having established the need to chart an independent path based on China’s conditions, Deng continued by expressing Mao Zedong Thought as a scientific process:

We have always tried to understand Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought correctly and as an integral, scientific system, and have always proceeded from reality and sought truth from facts. In other words, we have restored the original features of Mao Zedong Thought and defended the eminence of Comrade Mao Zedong as a great figure in the history of the Chinese revolution and of world revolution.⁴⁴⁷

Just as science must continue to evolve based on new information and understandings, so too should Mao Zedong Thought as the governing philosophy shift with the times as new information is absorbed. Having created space by casting Mao Zedong Thought as evolutionary, Deng could offer a new governing philosophy, but one which must walk the line between results-based reform and maintaining the CPC’s grip on power.

⁴⁴⁶ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 171. Gao Hua finds a similar role for Mao in reading of Mao’s advancement of Sinification of Marxism. “The slogan on the ‘Sinification of Marxism’ poured the vitality of nationalism into the Chinese Communist Movement, not only providing a legitimizing interpretation for Mao’s viewpoints but also creating vast space for Mao to move freely. Even more, it was conducive to changing the prevalent view of the CCP (CPC) as the product of a foreign concept and to helping the Party take root in Chinese society.” Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan’an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, trans Stacy Mosher & Guo Jian, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2018, page 223, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁴⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 172.

Although the Deng Xiaoping Theory name appeared in the 1990s, several key tenets defining Deng's philosophy emerged during what I term as his consolidation phase.⁴⁴⁸ Crucial among those new tenets was a need to develop what Deng termed productive forces. This new focus stood in direct contrast to the previous line of taking class struggle as the primary objective, even to the exclusion of immediate economic progress. Deng rejected any view of poverty as positive, declaring in 1979:

The aim of our revolution is to liberate and expand the productive forces. Without expanding the productive forces, making our country prosperous and powerful, and improving the living standards of the people, our revolution is just empty talk. We oppose the old society and the old system because they oppressed the people and fettered the productive forces. We are clear about this problem now. The Gang of Four said it was better to be poor under socialism than to be rich under capitalism. This is absurd.⁴⁴⁹

Deng interpreted the objective for revolution as improving the lives of the people, reflected in their living standards. According to Deng, key to raising the productive forces was the development of science and technology.

Throughout history, the means of production have always been linked with a given type of science and technology, and, likewise, labor power has always meant labor power armed with a certain degree of knowledge of science and technology . . . There were vast differences between the instruments of production man used, his mastery of scientific knowledge, and his production experience and skills in the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages and in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Today, the rapid progress of science and technology is speeding up the introduction of new production equipment and new technological processes.⁴⁵⁰

This reliance on science and technology was related to the increasing speed of advancements, but that aspect, while connected to the Marxist framework, was more closely related to the Liberal framework, and will be discussed in more detail below. Productive forces referred to the capacity to produce all economic activity and served as the basis for development. Deng related their expansion first with the Four Modernizations concept from the 1960s, but later increasingly associated it with various centenary goals, with increasing GNP as the measure for success.

Deng further argued that, as a socialist country, the PRC held a great advantage over previous Chinese governments in its ability to generate productive forces. According to Deng, as China was now unfettered by capitalist exploitation, the potential ability to reinvest the fruits of production for further

⁴⁴⁸ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 684, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁴⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/we-can-develop-a-market-economy-under-socialism/>, Accessed 8/7/2023.

⁴⁵⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 104.

advances was greater than under the previous governing systems of the Qing and the GMD. In a 1978 speech titled “Hold High the Banner of Mao Zedong Thought and Adhere to the Principle of Seeking Truth From Facts,” Deng explained the advantage of the socialist system for China:

We are a socialist country. The basic expression of the superiority of our socialist system is that it allows the productive forces of our society to grow at a rapid rate unknown in old China, and that it permits us gradually to satisfy our people’s constantly growing material and cultural needs. After all, from the historical materialist point of view correct political leadership should result in the growth of the productive forces and the improvement of the material and cultural life of the people. If the rate of growth of the productive forces in a socialist country lags behind that in capitalist countries over an extended historical period, how can we talk about the superiority of the socialist system?⁴⁵¹

According to Deng, not only did the PRC have an advantage over previous systems, but it was only through advancements in productive forces that socialism could display superiority over capitalist societies and thereby win support both domestically and internationally.

Deng posited that the best evidence of growing productive forces would be seen through the rising living standards for the Chinese people. In an address to a visiting Indian delegation in 1983, Deng stressed historical examples of success by socialist states, which he attributed to their capacity to adapt to their unique circumstances. He highlighted Lenin’s success in the October Revolution as integrating Marxism with “Russian revolutionary practices.” Later he claimed that China succeeded at times by ignoring advice from Stalin, proposing that the best course was to learn and adapt but never to slavishly apply another system to China’s conditions.⁴⁵² Based on lessons gleaned from that historical memory; after establishing the principle of adapting ideology to conditions, Deng justified the course of raising productive forces for the purpose of improving the population’s living standards. He explained:

In a socialist country, a genuinely Marxist ruling party must devote itself to developing the productive forces and, on that basis, gradually raise the people’s living standards. This means building a society with high material standards. For a long time we neglected to develop the productive forces, so now we are paying special attention to attaining high material standards. At the same time, we are building a socialist society with high cultural and ethical standards, which essentially means that our people should have communist ideals, moral integrity, a good education and a strong sense of discipline. Internationalism and patriotism also belong to this realm.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 143.

⁴⁵² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/we-are-building-a-socialist-society-with-both-high-material-standards-and-high-cultural-and-ethical-standards/>, Accessed 8/7/2023.

⁴⁵³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/we-are-building-a-socialist-society-with-both-high-material-standards-and-high-cultural-and-ethical-standards/>, Accessed 8/7/2023.

Deng tied the objective of productive forces to raising people's living standards and that it served as the primary aim for his policies. He continued by explaining the need for "high cultural and ethical standards," including concepts such as "internationalism and patriotism," concepts which would be bolstered by the Marxist framework, but also by the Confucian/Traditional, Liberal, and Nationalist. The desire for raising productive forces alongside the stabilizing effect of cultural and ethical standards formed the foundation of Deng's governing philosophy.

Even after Deng succeeded in solidifying his authority as paramount leader, his focus on productive forces faced resistance on occasion, mostly from his ideological left. That opposition called into question whether his policies' focus on market liberalization diluted the socialist character of the PRC. In defending his policy, Deng denigrated the 1957 – 1978 timeframe as a wasted opportunity for China to advance, instead categorized by purposeless suffering. However, Deng began placing greater blame on Mao, and those from the ideological left, for failures in this regard, especially after 1982. For example, when reviewing the history of the PRC's progress in 1985, Deng observed:

However, from 1957 on, China was plagued by "Left" ideology, which gradually became dominant. During the Great Leap Forward in 1958, people rushed headlong into mass action to establish people's communes. They placed lopsided emphasis on making the communes large and collective, urging everyone to "eat from the same big pot", and by so doing they brought disaster upon the nation. We won't even mention the "cultural revolution".⁴⁵⁴

Deng crystalized his criticisms for these errors in more direct terms, sharpening his blame on Mao for this mistake. Later in the same speech Deng explained:

Comrade Mao Zedong was a great leader, and it was under his leadership that the Chinese revolution triumphed. Unfortunately, however, he made the grave mistake of neglecting the development of the productive forces. I do not mean he didn't want to develop them. The point is, not all of the methods he used were correct. For instance, neither the initiation of the Great Leap Forward nor the establishment of the people's communes conformed to the laws governing socio-economic development.⁴⁵⁵

It is worth noting that even though Mao is labelled as having erred with regards to developing productive forces, that mistake is one of method rather than intent. Deng retained Mao's memory as a sacred figure

⁴⁵⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-shall-expand-political-democracy-and-carry-out-economic-reform/>, Accessed 8/7/2023. For a brief overview of the Great Leap Forward and its impact see Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010, Kindle Locations 72-186. Kindle Edition.

⁴⁵⁵ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-shall-expand-political-democracy-and-carry-out-economic-reform/>, Accessed 8/7/2023.

for his role in the revolution. However, his failure to fully build productive forces led to a great loss in opportunity for China that needed correction by Deng. He identified that need by having a corrected view of historical memory to guide his new policy proposal.

In December of that year, when the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party convened its Third Plenary Session, we made a sober analysis of conditions in China and summed up our experience. We reaffirmed the great achievements scored in the 30 years from the founding of new China in 1949 through 1978, but that didn't mean that everything we had done was successful.⁴⁵⁶

The lack of focus on raising productive forces was the primary mistake that Deng found in Mao's misreading of the process of historical development, a mistake corrected after the Third Plenary session via a reevaluation of historical memory.

To enable a focus on developing productive forces, Deng located the PRC as in the primary stage of socialism. This phrase would permeate his discourse and continued to be used by his successors, specifically as a justification for implementing market liberalization. Deng contradicted Mao's assumption underpinning the Great Leap Forward that labor could be substituted for capital to drive economic development.⁴⁵⁷ Deng labeled the current efforts to develop productive forces as the primary stage of socialism. Deng reinforced this concept multiple times throughout his discourse. For example, when meeting with a Tanzanian delegation in 1985 he stated:

The fundamental principle of Marxism is that the productive forces must be developed. The ultimate goal for Marxists is to realize communism, which must be built on the basis of highly developed productive forces. Socialism constitutes the first stage of communism and will last for a long historical period. The primary task in the socialist period is to develop the productive forces and gradually improve people's material and cultural life. Our experience in the 20 years from 1958 to 1978 teaches us that poverty is not socialism, that socialism means eliminating poverty. Unless you are developing the productive forces and raising people's living standards, you cannot say that you are building socialism.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-shall-expand-political-democracy-and-carry-out-economic-reform/>, Accessed 8/7/2023.

⁴⁵⁷ Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010, Kindle Location 72 of 8753. Kindle Edition, "By unleashing China's greatest asset, a labour force that was counted in the hundreds of millions, Mao thought that he could catapult his country past its competitors. Instead of following the Soviet model of development, which leaned heavily towards industry alone, China would 'walk on two legs': the peasant masses were mobilised to transform both agriculture and industry at the same time, converting a backward economy into a modern communist society of plenty for all."

⁴⁵⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-shall-expand-political-democracy-and-carry-out-economic-reform/>, Accessed 8/7/2023. See also Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 333.

Deng interpreted the period between 1958 - 1978 as a failure by the Party-State to properly understand how to develop socialism, which should have been oriented towards raising living standards through advances in productive forces. Furthermore, he asserted that the only viable course of action for China in its current stage was to pursue a policy of developing those forces.

By 1988 Deng began to face a series of escalating crises that challenged the foundations of his governing philosophy from multiple directions. Although he had maintained his view that China was firmly within the primary stage of socialism, to answer his critics he found it necessary to forcibly reaffirm this proposition, requiring more uses of historical memory. For example, as Deng's arguments with Chen Yun and the conservative (Left) elements of the PRC over the speed of reform intensified, he used historical memory to enhance his position:

China suffered greatly from the ten-year disaster, the "cultural revolution". In fact, not just from that: as early as the second half of 1957 we began to make "Left" mistakes. To put it briefly, we pursued a closed-door policy in foreign affairs and took class struggle as the central task at home. No attempt was made to expand the productive forces, and the policies we formulated were too ambitious for the primary stage of socialism.⁴⁵⁹

He targeted those conservative "Leftist" elements which sought to further slow progress of the PRC by hindering Deng's reforms. According to Deng, just as it was a grave error to curb reform after 1957, so too was it an error to slow reform in 1988. Although he won the immediate contest, his victory would be short lived. The speed of change proved unsustainable as the market reforms led to a major inflation crisis that resulted in the collapse of GDP growth.⁴⁶⁰ However, Deng did not give up the fight, advocating for a continuation of his preferred policies under Jiang Zemin. During his Southern Tour, Deng argued that China remained in the primary stage of socialism and the Party-State needed to keep to his reform path:

We have been building socialism for only a few decades and are still in the primary stage. It will take a very long historical period to consolidate and develop the socialist system, and it will require persistent struggle by many generations, a dozen or even several dozens. We can never rest on our oars.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/circumstances-oblige-us-to-deepen-the-reform-and-open-wider-to-the-outside-world/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁶⁰ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 473, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁶¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/excerpts-from-talks-given-in-wuchang-shenzhen-zhuhai-and-shanghai/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

Deng stressed that the primary stage would continue for a long time and policies, specifically R&OU, needed to continue for several generations. His pleas proved successful, and the Fourteenth Party Congress adopted Deng's views.⁴⁶² However, while acknowledging the need for continuous reform of the economic system, Deng steadfastly held to notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the continuation of the PRC political system.

Maintaining the PRC political system was a prerequisite for Deng as core leader, as only under such a system could core leadership even exist. Thus, while he saw a need to reform a great deal in his governing philosophy, political stability and supremacy of the CPC remained sacrosanct. During what I classify as the consolidation phase, he laid out the specific pillars to ensure political stability in his 1979 speech titled, "We Must Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles." These four principles are: "1. We must keep to the socialist road. 2. We must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat. 3. We must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party. 4. We must uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought."⁴⁶³ Deng offered numerous defenses for his Four Cardinal Principles, including through the instrumental use of historical memory. For example, Deng highlighted Chinese history since the May 4th Movement as evidence for the need to keep to the socialist road. He argued:

First, we must keep to the socialist road. Some people are now openly saying that socialism is inferior to capitalism. We must demolish this contention. In the first place, socialism and socialism alone can save China — this is the unshakable historical conclusion that the Chinese people have drawn from their own experience in the 60 years since the May 4th Movement [1919]. Deviate from socialism and China will inevitably retrogress to semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism. The overwhelming majority of the Chinese people will never allow such a retrogression.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 199-200.

⁴⁶³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 172.

⁴⁶⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 174. Kalpana Misra observes that the May 4th held special resonance during the Deng era as it dealt with similar ideological currents. She writes, "The critical reappraisal of China's experience with Marxism and the renewed interaction with the West made it possible, perhaps even necessary, to address once again issues that had been raised decades earlier during the May Fourth Movement – tradition and modernity, indigenous values and Western culture (symbolized by science and democracy), a national search for identity, and the full emancipation of the individual." Kalpana Misra, *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*, New York: Routledge, 1998, page 15. See also Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 324, "Without such a Party, our country would split up and accomplish nothing. The people of all our nationalities have come to a deep understanding of this truth through long years of struggle. The unity of the people, social stability, the promotion of democracy and the reunification of our country all depend on Party leadership. The core of the Four Cardinal Principles is to uphold leadership by the Party."

According to Deng, any retreat from the socialist path, or the removal of the CPC as the dominant governing party, would result in China reverting to its miserable state during the CoH, and likely lead to the fracturing of the nation.

Deng returned often to the Four Cardinal principles in his discourse, referring to historical experience as evidence for the need for their continuation. In one example, in 1987 following the student protest movement and the subsequent removal of Hu Yaobang, Deng found these principles under assault. These groups called for greater political liberalization to match economic reforms.⁴⁶⁵ In addition, political reforms in Taiwan, which culminated in the end of Martial Law in July 1987 and the emergence of the DPP as a legal opposition party, acted as additional sources of pressure.⁴⁶⁶ If the GMD, another Leninist Chinese political party, could stomach a legal opposition, then it was at least plausible that similar reforms might be successful in the mainland.⁴⁶⁷ To counter these arguments, Deng offered examples from historical memory to enhance his case for the cardinal principles' continuation. In a text entitled, "We Must Tell Our Young People About China's History," issued in February 1987, Deng recalled:

For almost a century after that war, high-minded persons, including Dr. Sun Yat-sen, tried to find ways to save China. At first Dr. Sun Yat-sen looked to the West — that is, to capitalism. But later, when he found that what he learned from the capitalist West did not work in China, he put forward the idea of learning from Russia, which had been through the October Revolution. He initiated cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, which brought about the success of the Northern Expedition [in 1926 against the northern warlords].⁴⁶⁸

By the late-twentieth century, Dr. Sun and his ideas appealed to audience in both the mainland and Taiwan.⁴⁶⁹ Furthermore, Deng highlighted Sun's association with Soviet and socialist systems and

⁴⁶⁵ For more on the protest movement and its impact on Hu Yaobang see Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, pages 575-584, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁶⁶ Murray Rubinstein, "Political Taiwanization and Pragmatic Diplomacy: The Eras of Chiang Ching-Kuo and Lee Teng-Hui, 1971-1994," in Murray Rubinstein (ed), *Taiwan: A New History*, extended edition, New York: Routledge, 2015, page 222.

⁴⁶⁷ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011, page 571, Kindle Edition. Vogel also mentions the removal of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in 1986 as an additional stressor alongside reforms in Taiwan.

⁴⁶⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-must-tell-our-young-people-about-chinas-history/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. For a brief summary of cooperation between the GMD and CPC during this period see, James Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese history, 1912-1949*, New York: The Free Press, 1975, pages 140-149.

⁴⁶⁹ David Lorenzo, *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and Chiang Ching-kuo*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013, pages 80-84.

credited that arrangement with leading to the success of the Northern Expedition (1926 - 1927). He contrasted this victory with earlier failures when Dr. Sun, in Deng's estimation, oriented himself more towards the West for inspiration. Deng continued this contrast in the same text, summarizing GMD rule as follows:

After Dr. Sun Yat-sen died, China under the rule of the Kuomintang remained a miserable semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, and when the Japanese invaded, a large part of its territory was turned into a Japanese colony. Under the oppression of imperialism, feudalism and the bureaucrat-capitalism that developed later, the country became poorer and poorer.⁴⁷⁰

Deng classified rule absent the CPC as an abysmal failure that led to the impoverishment of China and invited invasion from imperialist powers. As pressure mounted on Deng, he consistently refused to budge from his Four Cardinal Principles and justified his intransigence by highlighting lessons from his interpretation of historical memory.

That pressure on the CPC and Deng boiled over with the Tiananmen Square incident in the Spring of 1989. Simultaneous to the domestic crisis was the escalating collapse of world socialism in the Soviet sphere. In the immediate aftermath of Tiananmen, Deng blamed the West for incitement of the incident with the goal of ending socialism in China, part of a larger strategy aimed ultimately at exploiting those formerly communist states. He declared:

This incident has shown that the crucial question is whether we should keep to the socialist road and uphold leadership by the Party. The Western imperialists are trying to make all socialist countries abandon the socialist road, to bring them in the end under the rule of international monopoly capital and set them on the road to capitalism. We have to take a clear-cut stand against this adverse current. Because if we did not uphold socialism, we would eventually become, at best, a dependency of other countries, and it would be even more difficult for us to develop. The international market has already been fully occupied, and it will be very hard for us to get in. Only socialism can save China, and only socialism can develop China.⁴⁷¹

The motif of the exploitive Imperialist West in historical memory features prominently in the Nationalist framework of Deng's discourse and will be explored further below.

⁴⁷⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-must-tell-our-young-people-about-chinas-history/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁷¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/urgent-tasks-of-chinas-third-generation-of-collective-leadership/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

The fear of instability leading to exploitation as reason to maintain CPC rule permeated Deng's discourse. In 1990, he referenced Marx directly regarding the importance of keeping the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the form of the CPC, as the sole governing institution of the PRC. He stated:

I have said more than once that stability is of overriding importance and that we cannot abandon the people's democratic dictatorship. If some people practice bourgeois liberalization and create turmoil by demanding bourgeois human rights and democracy, we have to stop them. Marx once said that the theory of class struggle was not his discovery. The heart of his theories was the dictatorship of the proletariat. For a fairly long period of time the proletariat, as a new, rising class, is necessarily weaker than the bourgeoisie. If it is to seize political power and build socialism, it must therefore impose a dictatorship to resist capitalist attack. To keep to the socialist road, we must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat, which we call the people's democratic dictatorship.⁴⁷²

Without this rule by the dictatorship of the proletariat, in Deng's estimation, China would collapse because of capitalist forces resisting socialist reform. Perhaps more importantly for Deng, the only pillars which could sustain core leadership and allow him to enact his vision were those outlined within the Four Cardinal Principles. Deng relied upon the Marxist framework to keep these pillars firmly entrenched in Chinese political cultural, just as he relied upon the Nationalist framework to aid in unifying the nation under his core leadership.

Although the Marxist framework appeared essential for Deng in reinterpreting historical memory, the Nationalist framework also proved to be valuable. To be clear, Deng's use of this framework did not engage in the type of reinterpretation of historical memory as occurred with the Marxist framework. Rather, it retreads familiar threads used by Mao in his discourse, including themes of the CoH, military resistance to foreign invasion, civilizational accomplishments, and national character. These themes permeate the full breadth of Deng's discourse, often serving as a source of unifying pride, especially for Deng's domestic audiences. However, during times when China's stability appeared under threat, especially from perceived, or manufactured, foreign foes, this framework roused itself in highly visceral descriptors to maximize emotional reactions in his target audiences. Deng's use of the Nationalist framework reminds me of a scene from the Akira Kurosawa film *Seven Samurai* (1954). Early in the film, as the peasant farmers seek the titular samurai to defend them, they are resting in a guest house with a

⁴⁷² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/seize-the-opportunity-to-develop-the-economy/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

cowardly swordsman and some rogues. When it appears that a fight is about to break out between the parties, the rogues wake up their large sleeping companion to fight for them, and he immediately confronts the frightened swordsman who meekly backs down. His task complete, the giant returns to his slumber, waiting to be unleashed again if his boss calls. So too do the most impactful uses of the Nationalist framework occur when Deng perceives a threat which only the Nationalist framework can tackle. Once that threat has been dealt with, it diminishes, but never completely disappears.

One area where the Nationalist framework came to the fore was reunification with Taiwan and Hong Kong. Deng styled his scheme for reunification as “One Country, Two Systems” (一國兩制) which suggested allowing for substantial latitude in political and economic autonomy for the wayward territories, in exchange for acquiescence in matters of sovereignty. In an address to individuals from Hong Kong in 1984, Deng relied on the Nationalist framework to make his case. First, when describing the policy in the context of international politics, Deng praised his plan as unique in world history:

Has any government in the history of the world ever pursued a policy as generous as China's? Is there anything recorded in the history of capitalism about any Western country doing something similar? When we adopt the policy of “one country, two systems” to resolve the Hong Kong question, we are not acting on impulse or playing tricks but are proceeding from reality and taking into full account the past and present circumstances of Hong Kong.⁴⁷³

Deng presented his policy in contrast to interactions with the West, which he implied operated from a duplicitous stance. Later in the speech, he attempted to refute the argument that the PRC lacked the capacity to effectively govern Hong Kong as a residual of imperialist chauvinism. He declared, “The notion that Chinese cannot manage Hong Kong affairs satisfactorily is a leftover from the old colonial mentality. For more than a century after the Opium War, the Chinese people were looked down upon and humiliated by foreigners.”⁴⁷⁴ By invoking the CoH, Deng sought to position those who lobbied for continued British governance as analogous to the old imperialists who should, in Deng's construction, be

⁴⁷³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/one-country-two-systems/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁷⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/one-country-two-systems/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. Tensions over Hong Kong initiated the First Opium War and set off China's Century of Humiliation, increasing the symbolic power of its retrocession to signify its end thanks to the efforts of the CPC.

reviled by all patriotic Chinese.⁴⁷⁵ In addition, he aimed to extend this framing device to encompass Hong Kong residents. He stated:

The Chinese in Hong Kong share this sense of national pride. They have the ability to run the affairs of Hong Kong well and they should be confident of that. The prosperity of Hong Kong has been achieved mainly by Hong Kong residents, most of whom are Chinese. Chinese are no less intelligent than foreigners and are by no means less talented. It is not true that only foreigners can be good administrators. We Chinese are just as capable. The view that the people of Hong Kong lack self-confidence is not really shared by the people of Hong Kong themselves.⁴⁷⁶

Deng sought to inject Hong Kong residents with a sense of pride in their accomplishments, crediting their Chinese identity for those achievements, while minimizing the role of the British in building Hong Kong's prosperity. As he attempted to garner support for Hong Kong's retrocession to the PRC, Deng employed the memory of China's semi-colonial status during the CoH to generate a unifying nationalist sentiment with Chinese residing in Hong Kong.

Deng did not hesitate to forcefully invoke CoH memory when faced with major challenges to the regime. During the Tiananmen Square incident, Deng attempted to shift the primary blame away from the protestors at large and transfer culpability to hostile foreign actors. During the height of the crisis in May 1989, Deng rehashed this historical memory, explaining the causes of the CoH:

Starting from the Opium War, because of the corruption of the Qing Dynasty, China was subjected to aggression and enslavement by foreign powers and reduced to a semi-colonial, semi-feudal status. Altogether, about a dozen powers bullied China, chief among them being Britain. And before Britain, Portugal had compelled China to lease its territory of Macao. The countries that took greatest advantage of China were Japan and czarist Russia — and at certain times and concerning certain questions, the Soviet Union.⁴⁷⁷

According to Deng, imperialist states salivated at the prospect of a return to a weak China, vulnerable to national looting. By December, although the immediate domestic instability had been quelled, the PRC faced substantial international backlash for its perceived violations of human rights. Pushing back against this outcry, Deng turned once again to the memory of the CoH:

Some Western countries, on the pretext that China has an unsatisfactory human rights record and an irrational and illegitimate socialist system, attempt to jeopardize our national sovereignty. Countries that play power

⁴⁷⁵ Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), page 53. Commenting on the impact of the Opium War, Westad observed, "For three generations following the Qing's defeat by Britain in the war of 1839-1842, imperialism and incursions by other states defined the framework for China's relations with the rest of the world."

⁴⁷⁶ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/one-country-two-systems/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁷⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/let-us-put-the-past-behind-us-and-open-up-a-new-era/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

politics are not qualified to talk about human rights. How many people's human rights have they violated throughout the world! Since the Opium War, when they began to invade China, how many Chinese people's human rights have they violated!⁴⁷⁸

Deng attempted to invalidate criticisms of China's record by those in the West by highlighting past grievances since the Opium War. A few months later, Deng took issue with the G7 countries complaints of China's actions, making specific mention of the Western intervention in the Boxer Rebellion.⁴⁷⁹ He declared:

I am a Chinese, and I am familiar with the history of foreign aggression against China. When I heard that the seven Western countries, at their summit meeting, had decided to impose sanctions on China, my immediate association was to 1900, when the allied forces of the eight powers invaded China. Six of these same seven countries, excluding Canada, together with czarist Russia and Austria, constituted the eight powers that formed the allied forces in those days. Our people should study Chinese history; it will inspire us to develop the country.

Deng centered himself as a nationalist by declaring himself not only Chinese but one familiar with the history of perceived aggression against China. Furthermore, he recommended a study of history to raise political awareness and apply it to contemporary issues, just as he had done. Rather than directly justify the actions of the PRC, Deng attempted to invalidate admonishments by casting the Western critics from the moral high ground through the select instrumental use of CoH historical memory.

Although the CoH often returned to the fore during times of crisis, that is not to say that Deng shunned its use during more tranquil periods. It was also a useful framing device as a starting point to describe China's relative progress. For example, in his 1987 text titled, "We Must Tell Our Young People About China's History," Deng explained, "After the Opium War of 1840 China was reduced to the status of a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, and the Chinese nation was known as 'the sick man of Asia.'"⁴⁸⁰ Launching off from this point, he discussed the role of socialism and the CPC in redeeming China's place in the world. A year later in a meeting with an Ethiopian delegation he stated:

The development of China has an important bearing on the development of the rest of the world, because one fifth of the total population lives in China. To be frank, for a long time after 1840 China did not make its due contribution to the world. That was mainly because of a century of imperialist aggression and of corrupt

⁴⁷⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/first-priority-should-always-be-given-to-national-sovereignty-and-security/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁷⁹ For a brief overview of the Boxer Rebellion see Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), pages 126-130.

⁴⁸⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-must-tell-our-young-people-about-chinas-history/>, Accessed 8/31/2023.

reactionary governments. In 1949 China put an end to its history of humiliation, and the Chinese nation stood up.⁴⁸¹ Deng framed China's emergence into world affairs as correcting a historical aberration. China's low status was brought about by its exploitation during the CoH, an error Deng now sought to correct with international engagement, including with Africa. The fault for this situation lay equally with imperialist powers and corrupt reactionaries in China. He reinforced the theme of the CPC as the national force that reinvigorated China as a sovereign state where others had failed.

Parallel to the CoH, Deng also used the historical memory of China's military adventures. The various conflicts against the GMD, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and the Korean conflict all served as fertile ground in which to harvest for the Nationalist framework. During his meeting with Gorbachev in May 1989, Deng brought up several references related to China's wartime experience. First, he recounted the longstanding and bitter struggle against the Imperial Japanese:

At various times Japan occupied many parts of our country; for 50 years it occupied Taiwan. It carved spheres of influence out of China. In the North in particular, there were Japanese concessions in many big cities. In 1931 Japan started a war of aggression against China, and in 1932 it set up the Manchukuo regime in the Northeast. In 1937 it launched a full-scale war that lasted for eight years. Thanks to China's resistance, to the joint struggle waged by the antifascist Allies and to the dispatch of Soviet troops to the Northeast, in the end Japan was totally defeated. Japan had inflicted untold damage upon China. Tens of millions of Chinese had died in the war, not to mention other losses.⁴⁸²

Deng reiterated the substantial contribution of China's resistance to Japanese aggression. With this historical memory brought to the forefront, he next argued that China was short shifted by the other Allied powers, including the Soviet Union.

When victory in the Second World War was in sight the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union signed in Yalta a secret agreement dividing up spheres of influence among them, greatly to the detriment of China's interests. That was the period under Stalin.⁴⁸³

Deng attempted to improve his negotiating position by placing Gorbachev on the back foot by recalling what Deng argued was imperialist treatment of China after World War II, even by the Soviet Union,

⁴⁸¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/circumstances-oblige-us-to-deepen-the-reform-and-open-wider-to-the-outside-world/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁸² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/let-us-put-the-past-behind-us-and-open-up-a-new-era/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁸³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/let-us-put-the-past-behind-us-and-open-up-a-new-era/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

despite China's contributions.⁴⁸⁴ After positioning China as betrayed by the allied powers, Deng articulated his view that despite these poor circumstances, the PRC displayed its integrity in fulfilling its diplomatic obligations.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the Chinese revolution triumphed, and the People's Republic was founded. China did not invade other countries and posed no threat to them, but other countries threatened China. Our country was poor and weak but independent. Where did the major threats come from? As soon as it was founded, the PRC was confronted with this question. At that time, the threat came from the United States. Glaring examples were the Korean War and then the Vietnam War. In the first, China sent volunteers to fight the United States. The Soviet Union supplied us with arms but asked us to pay for them, albeit at half price. In the following years Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, and China was beset with economic difficulties. But no matter how serious our difficulties were, we were determined to pay that bill, and we paid it two years ahead of time.⁴⁸⁵

Using the example of the Korean War, Deng argued that despite China's past exploitation and meager resources, it remained committed to paying back the Soviet Union for its support during the conflict.

From a negotiating standpoint, Deng used historical memory to shape the perceptions of his opposite. He purported that the PRC possessed integrity, in stark contrast to the Soviet Union, and thereby hoped to improve his position as the talks proceeded.

As criticism from the United States regarding the PRC's handling of the Tiananmen Square incident amplified, so too did Deng's use of war memory to undermine such criticism.⁴⁸⁶ For example, he ridiculed the United States and other Western countries for questioning China's human rights record.

Western countries criticize us for violating human rights. As a matter of fact, they are the ones who have violated human rights. How many Chinese people were killed or wounded when the United States helped Chiang Kai-shek fight the civil war? And how many Chinese volunteers were killed or wounded when it supported South Korea in the Korean War? And that's not counting the immeasurable losses inflicted on our people during a century of aggression by colonialists and imperialists, including the United States! So they have no right to talk about human rights.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ For an overview of the discussions between Deng and Gorbachev on May 16th see Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), page 413, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁸⁵ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/let-us-put-the-past-behind-us-and-open-up-a-new-era/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁸⁶ Deng's efforts may possibly have had some impact influencing US policy makers. Recalling the episode George Bush explained his thinking, "For this understandably proud, ancient, and inward-looking people, foreign criticism (from peoples they still perceived as 'barbarians' and colonialists untutored in Chinese ways) was an affront, and measures taken against them a return to the coercions of the past." George H. W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1998), pages 89-90. For more on the US political debates over policy responses to the Tiananmen incident see Henry Kissinger, *On China*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), pages 411-428.

⁴⁸⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-must-adhere-to-socialism-and-prevent-peaceful-evolution-towards-capitalism/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

Deng argued that America's past sins against China, including the CoH, support for the GMD, and the Korean War, invalidated any moral high ground that Americans might possess to criticize the PRC's conduct. He followed up by celebrating China's ability to resist the United States despite its weak position.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, we also encountered enormous difficulties. The civil war had just ended, problems were piling up at home, and abroad we were fighting a war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. Actually, it was China and the United States who fought that war. The United States was a big power, and China was comparatively weak, especially in equipment. However, justice triumphed, and the United States had to sit down and hold talks with us in Panmunjom.⁴⁸⁸

By Deng's estimation, if China could withstand the United States at the PRC's weakest, it could surely do so again now that it had grown so much stronger. Deng pointed to historical memory of the Korean War presumably with an aim to undermine the moral superiority of the United States, while simultaneously illustrating China's capacity to resist diplomatic and economic pressure.

Although not directly related to military achievements, Deng glorified the PRC's ability to resist economic sanctions and blockades, especially in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident. Deng's R&OU policy relied on open relations, especially trade, to drive economic growth in the PRC. However, the sanctions regime threatened China's progress and, by extension, Deng's entire governing philosophy. To combat this threat, Deng attempted to argue that sanctions were useless as a technique to compel political changes in China, using historical memory as evidence. In one case he stated to a delegation from Thailand:

Some Western countries have imposed sanctions on China, but to no avail. It was after twenty-two years of fighting that the People's Republic was founded, and the experience of blockades, sanctions and isolation by certain countries has only served to mature it. Our development over the past forty years, and especially over the last decade, has increased our strength. China will never collapse; on the contrary, it will grow stronger. This is what the nation, the people and the times demand.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-must-adhere-to-socialism-and-prevent-peaceful-evolution-towards-capitalism/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁸⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*" <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-are-working-to-revitalize-the-chinese-nation/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. See also Deng Xiaoping, "*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*," <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/china-will-never-allow-other-countries-to-interfere-in-its-internal-affairs/>, Accessed 8/5/2023, "One special feature of China's development is that it has proceeded under international sanctions for most of the forty years since the founding of the People's Republic. If there is nothing else we're good at, we're good at withstanding sanctions. So we are not worried or pessimistic about them; we take them calmly."

Deng asserted PRC immunity to the effects of economic coercion, based on its historical experience. By extension, Deng implied that this experience suggested that such sanctions might as well be taken off the table.

In addition to military exploits, Deng used the Nationalist framework to celebrate other achievements of the Chinese civilization to generate national pride. He employed this use of historical memory to bolster the confidence of the population and motivate them to even greater accomplishments by carrying out his proposed policy programs. For example, Deng claimed that China had a long history of substantial contributions to global development through scientific achievement. Specifically, he used memory of the four inventions (paper, printing, compass, gunpowder) as evidence for this tradition. At the 1978 national conference on science, he opined:

In ancient times, China scored brilliant achievements in science and technology; its four great inventions [paper, printing, the compass and gunpowder] played a major role in advancing world civilization. We should not rest on our ancestors' achievements; rather such achievements should strengthen our resolve to catch up with and surpass the countries that are most advanced in science and technology. Our present contributions in these fields are far from commensurate with the standing of a socialist country such as ours.⁴⁹⁰

However, Deng did not constrain his anecdotes to the ancient past, rather he also celebrated more recent exploits under the auspices of the CPC. Deng suggested that past achievements showed the potential for even greater deeds that would directly benefit China, while advocating for an increase in salary for scientists and technicians. In a 1988 address he proposed:

We must try to increase the material benefits for the few top intellectuals. If we arouse their enthusiasm and show them more respect, they will make more contributions. Haven't we developed the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, satellites and space technology on our own? The engineering of the electron-positron collider that we have completed also ranks among the world's most advanced technologies. The wages of intellectuals must be raised step by step over the next few years, so they will have something to look forward to.⁴⁹¹

Deng elucidated these past successful endeavors by the CPC as reasons to further invest in scientific human resources and continue to make pivotal advancements. Celebrations of China's acquisition of the atom bomb and artificial satellites, alongside the four classical inventions, were common refrains both in

⁴⁹⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 106.

⁴⁹¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/science-and-technology-constitute-a-primary-productive-force/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. The Soviets had previously offered to assist the PRC in acquiring a nuclear weapon but reneged on their pledge, with China successfully testing its first bomb in October 1964. Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976*, (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), page 22, Kindle Edition.

Deng's discourse and carried over into his successors as well. However, according to Deng, to continue to make these national achievements, China must embrace his R&OU program, which he justified using a novel framework not embraced by Mao.

Deng pioneered the use of the Liberal framework by PRC core leaders, adding a new method to the three used by Mao. This framework proved essential for Deng, as he differentiated his governing philosophy from his predecessor's. In fact, certain later enunciations of the Liberal framework would become associated with the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee and Deng's R&OU policy. Underlying Deng's use of the Liberal framework was his interpretation of general historical trends. A fundamental plank of this interpretation was the importance of scientific and technological advancements in dictating national conditions and recognizing their exponentially accelerating pace. Another element was the perception that international relations increasingly favored peace and development and subsequently the risk of global war was receding. In addition, Deng discerned a new international order emerging and sought to better position China in that reshuffle. Finally, economic progress and improving living standards became foundations legitimizing CPC rule. Deng crafted and then employed the Liberal framework to interpret historical shifts in global development and generate support for his policies designed to adapt to such changes.

Despite lacking a scientific background, Deng displayed a fascination with the subject throughout his tenure.⁴⁹² Even as early as 1975, he vigorously argued that the CPC should focus on science and technology as the primary drivers for growth and development. However, as Mao remained the core leader, Deng was compelled to nest that viewpoint within Mao's ideology. At the time, Deng attempted to consolidate and reorganize the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), which had been devastated by the

⁴⁹² Although Deng personally did not have a scientific background, his wife and three of his five children had studied physics at the university level. Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 201, Kindle Edition.

Cultural Revolution.⁴⁹³ As part of those efforts, he presided over the drafting of the CAS's ten-year plan. He specifically instructed the drafters, Hu Yaobang and Hu Qiaomu, to include quotes from Mao and ensure that these quotes were prominently placed in the text. Unfortunately, even with these efforts, Mao did take offense to a particular passage, which claimed that "science and technology constitute a force of production." Upon being informed of this quote, Mao insisted to his nephew, Mao Yuanxin, that he never said such a thing.⁴⁹⁴ Mao used this incident, among other indiscretions, to criticize Deng, leading to his removal in January 1976.⁴⁹⁵ Deng's reform efforts had been halted and he lost his political position for failing to show sufficient respect towards the core leader and making an instrumental use of historical memory against the core's wishes.

After his rehabilitation in 1977, following Mao's death, Deng threw himself back into the ideological fray, this time aimed at Hua Guofeng's "Two Whatevers," governing philosophy. Unlike Mao, Hua was merely an interpreter rather than an authoritative architect, and as discussed above Deng used the Marxist framework to unhinge Hua's ideological position. Once this was accomplished, Deng moved to fill that void by offering a new governing philosophy, but one in which Deng himself was the chief architect and supreme interpreter, as Mao had been previously for his governing philosophy. Part of this new governing philosophy included elements of the Liberal framework. At this early stage, it especially focused on the role of science and technology, and their ever-accelerating rate of growth. Within Deng's interpretation of the Liberal historical framework, advances in science and technology served as mutually reinforcing phenomena and he argued that this trend would continue. In his speech at the opening of the National Conference on Science in March 1978, Deng explained his perception of a revolution in science:

⁴⁹³ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), pages 128-133, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁹⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 132, Kindle Edition.

⁴⁹⁵ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 143, Kindle Edition.

Modern science and technology are now undergoing a great revolution. The advances over the last three decades have not been limited to particular scientific theories or production techniques, nor have they just represented progress and reform in the usual sense. Rather, profound changes have taken place and new leaps have been made in almost all areas. A whole range of new sciences and technologies is continuously emerging. Modern science opens the way for the improvement of production techniques and determines the direction of their development.⁴⁹⁶

A few months later, he expanded on this theme, articulating the breathtaking speed of such advancements.

He stated, “The world’s advanced technologies continue to develop rapidly, with the rate of development no longer calculated in terms of years, but in terms of months, and even in terms of days, a trend which we call ‘changes coming with each passing day.’”⁴⁹⁷ Finally, that September he observed the geopolitical implications for this revolution and the need for the PRC to adjust its policies accordingly.

The world is advancing. If we do not develop our technology, we cannot catch up with the developed countries, let alone surpass them, and we shall be trailing behind at a snail’s pace. We should take the world’s advanced scientific and technological achievements as starting points for our country’s development. Such a lofty aspiration should be ours.⁴⁹⁸

According to Deng, if the PRC hoped to catch up with the developed world, embracing science and technology was essential. Deng’s perception of science and technology’s impact on historical development laid the foundations for his instrumental use of the Liberal historical framework.

According to the Liberal framework used by Deng, as science and technology continued to advance, national economies became more complex and intertwined globally. As a result, structural forces compelled nations towards greater cooperation and mutual benefit through economic interaction, leading to greater international peace and development. Rather than merely being the choice of leaders or nations, Deng articulated this shift as the inevitable result of historical forces. However, benefits from this shift were not universal, and only states which actively participated in this process could receive the rewards and keep pace with the rest of the globe. In 1988, Deng argued for a faster pace of reform and widening Chinese participation in the international community. In a text titled, “Science and Technology Constitute a Primary Productive Force,” he proposed that China had to keep an open door or risk falling

⁴⁹⁶ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 103.

⁴⁹⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/realize-the-four-modernizations-and-never-seek-hegemony/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁴⁹⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/update-enterprises-with-advanced-technology-and-managerial-expertise>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

behind, as it had in the past. He warned, “The world is changing, and we should change our thinking and actions along with it. In the past we pursued a closed-door policy and isolated ourselves. How did that benefit socialism? The wheels of history were rolling on, but we came to a halt and fell behind others.”⁴⁹⁹ China had a choice, follow the “wheels of history”, or be left behind in their dust. Furthermore, he argued that peace and development had emerged as the major influencing forces in international politics. As part of his 1992 Southern tour, he stated:

Peace and development are the two major issues in the world, and neither one has been resolved. Socialist China should show the world through its actions that it is opposed to hegemonism and power politics and will never seek hegemony. China is a steadfast force for safeguarding world peace.⁵⁰⁰

These elements remained the major influences in the world, but they were threatened by what Deng termed hegemonism and power politics, requiring a new approach to international relations to fully take advantage of the opportunity.

Although ideas of peace and development versus hegemony had pervaded Deng’s discourse throughout the 1980s, a shift occurred with the new decade. As the Cold War came to an end, and China stabilized after the Tiananmen Square incident, Deng sought to rehabilitate China’s international image. As his governing philosophy still relied upon open relations with the international community, failure to reintegrate China would have proven disastrous. In pursuit of this task, Deng called for a new international order, one based primarily on the ideals established at the end of World War II and embodied in the philosophy behind the United Nations. However, Deng emphasized that those values must stop short of interference in domestic affairs. Deng claimed to a Canadian delegation in 1990 that

⁴⁹⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/science-and-technology-constitute-a-primary-productive-force/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵⁰⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/excerpts-from-talks-given-in-wuchang-shenzhen-zhuhai-and-shanghai/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. Deng appears to have borrowed from an earlier articulation by Mao of Peace and Democracy emerging from the Communist world, rearranging international order in an inevitable historical process. Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*: Volume V, page 62. “Nor do they realize that the birth of the socialist Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China and the People’s Democracies, the firm unity between the two great countries of China and the Soviet Union anchored in the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, the firm unity of the entire camp of peace and democracy and the profound sympathy of the peace-loving people of the world for this great camp have ended for good the era in which imperialism could dominate the world.”

universal values derived from Western standards could not and should not be universally applied. He explained:

The key principle governing the new international order should be noninterference in other countries' internal affairs and social systems. It won't work to require all the countries in the world to copy the patterns set by the United States, Britain and France. There are many Islamic countries, making up one fifth of the world's population. In these countries it is absolutely impossible to introduce a so-called democratic system of the American type. The People's Republic of China, with another fifth of the world's population, will not adopt America's capitalist system either. The African countries too, through the Organization of African Unity, demand with one voice that no other country interfere in their internal affairs. This is the general trend throughout the world.⁵⁰¹

Deng attempted to outmaneuver criticisms over Chinese domestic policy, specifically regarding human rights, by suggesting that one system cannot be universally applied to all nations. In his construction, such criticism, and recommendations for adopting Western style democratic institutions, was undesirable, not only for China, but for much of the world. In Deng's presentation, attempts to force nations to submit to such standards would only lead to unnecessary, and ultimately fruitless, conflict. Within the same text, Deng argued that China's longstanding foreign policy, articulated in Zhou Enlai's Five Principles, should serve as the foundation for the new international order.

We must therefore take the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the norms for the new international political and economic order. Hegemonism and power politics, which have emerged in new form, cannot last long. Allowing a few countries to monopolize everything, as they have done for years, has never solved any problems, and it never will.⁵⁰²

Deng's vision for the international order fit squarely within the Liberal international relations theory. By adjusting the content of his discourse and invoking select memory of Zhou's five principles for peaceful coexistence, he laid the groundwork for his preferred vision for China's reintegration into the international system.

⁵⁰¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/china-will-never-allow-other-countries-to-interfere-in-its-internal-affairs/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵⁰² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/china-will-never-allow-other-countries-to-interfere-in-its-internal-affairs/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. The Five principles were articulated during a Sino-Indian summit in 1954 between Zhou Enlai and Jawaharlal Nehru in a joint statement in June 1954. The principles are as follows: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs (4) equality and mutual benefit (5) peaceful coexistence. See <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20299/v299.pdf>, page 70-82 for text of the agreement. See also, Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/seize-the-opportunity-to-develop-the-economy/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

Another element of Deng's employment of the Liberal framework was the elevation of his political program and celebrating the economic progress seen under his tenure. Improving productive forces and raising living standards existed as part of the Marxist framework, but Deng used the Liberal framework to describe this progress. In this articulation, the policies of international trade and market reforms produced economic gains and created in themselves a new legitimizing force for the CPC. To support this viewpoint, Deng reinterpreted CPC history as divided between before and after the Third Plenary Session in 1978. In this historical narrative interpretation, the reform efforts had significance equivalent to the PRC's founding. Describing the importance of the reforms in the context of CPC history, Deng declared:

The reform we are now carrying out is very daring. But if we do not carry it out, it will be hard for us to make progress. Reform is China's second revolution. It is something very important that we have to undertake even though it involves risks.⁵⁰³

According to Deng, this reform program was instituted because of a review of China's historical experience, with Deng adjusting policy based on that review:

It was not until December 1978, when the Eleventh Central Committee convened its Third Plenary Session, that we began to make a serious analysis of our experience in the 30 years since the founding of new China. On the basis of that analysis we formulated a series of new policies, notably the policy of reform and the policy of opening up both internationally and domestically. We set forth a new basic line, which was to shift the focus of our work to economic development, clearing away all obstacles and devoting all our energies to the drive for socialist modernization.⁵⁰⁴

In 1988, as Deng pushed for accelerating efforts at reform, he noted the speed of progress in recent years, and the relative lack of progress between 1957 and 1978. He argued, "In the first eight years after the founding of the People's Republic we made great progress. In 1978 we embarked on a brand-new undertaking: since then we have been building a socialism adapted to our own conditions."⁵⁰⁵ Progress

⁵⁰³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-is-chinas-second-revolution/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵⁰⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-shall-draw-on-historical-experience-and-guard-against-wrong-tendencies/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵⁰⁵ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/circumstances-oblige-us-to-deepen-the-reform-and-open-wider-to-the-outside-world/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. See also Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-are-working-to-revitalize-the-chinese-nation/>, Accessed 8/5/2023, "Forty years have passed since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and we have laid a good foundation for economic development. Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, we have been concentrating on modernizing the country so as to revitalize the Chinese nation."

was specifically bracketed to avoid the two decades associated with the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Deng's discourse propagated the notion that his R&OU policy reflected a distinct era in Chinese history and was primarily responsible for the rapid economic progress the nation then enjoyed.

Deng Xiaoping instrumentally employed all four narratives of historical memory throughout his discourse. This usage included efforts to reinterpret history to justify his governing philosophy and the sustainment of that new interpretation as core leader. Each framework provided unique functions that enabled him to achieve his objectives. Although only used occasionally, the Confucian/Traditional framework enabled Deng to connect with audiences and promote ethical behavior consistent with his governing philosophy. The Marxist framework proved the most essential, as it was through this framework that he first invalidated Hua Guofeng's "Two Whatever" governing philosophy and then put forward his new philosophy as the valid evolution of Marxist and Maoist ideology applied to China's conditions. The Nationalist framework served to bolster unity within China, especially during times of crisis that threatened to destabilize the regime. Finally, Deng introduced the Liberal framework, using it to offer a new pillar of legitimacy both for the regime and himself. In addition, by leaning into the Liberal framework of history and international relations, he better positioned China to expand its participation in the international community as a productive and non-threatening member. The instrumental use of historical memory through the four frameworks played a critical role in Deng's pursuit of core leadership.

Illustrative Texts

The four narrative frameworks served discrete purposes to advance Deng Xiaoping's efforts as core leader. He often used combinations of the four frameworks to better advance his political objectives. To illustrate such uses, and to further show the operation of the instrumental use of historical memory within his discourse, five texts will be examined in further detail below. These texts were selected to provide a representation of various framework distributions, time periods, political objectives, and intended audiences.

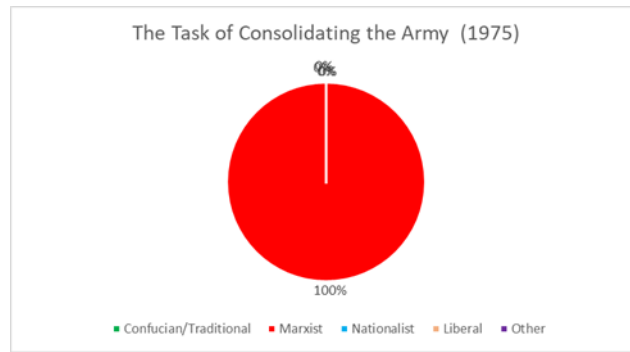


Figure 3.8 References by category for text titled “The Task of Consolidating the Army” (1975).

The first text is titled, “The Task of Consolidating the Army,” taken from a speech delivered to an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission of the Central Committee on July 14th, 1975. As such, the primary audience of the speech was the Party, with emphasis on the senior military leadership of the PLA. At this point, Deng had only recently been rehabilitated and faced the task of proposing reforms to reverse the severe damage of the Cultural Revolution on the PLA while adhering to Maoist ideology, as governed by the elderly Mao. Any ideological misstep would have exposed Deng to attack from his opponents, specifically Jiang Qing.⁵⁰⁶ Deng could only operate within the parameters set by the core leader, Mao. The text includes eight discernable references to historical memory, all within the Marxist framework.

Deng’s objective for the address appears to have been to build support for his PLA reform program. Although he stated that overall, the PLA remained healthy as an institution, he identified several issues which degraded its capacity. He explained, “To sum up, the general situation in our army is good. But bloating, laxity, conceit, extravagance, and inertia are to be found in certain degrees. We should not overlook these problems, even though they exist only in certain units.”⁵⁰⁷ To counter these issues, Deng proposed several organizational reforms designed to streamline the PLA and amplify its ideological discipline. As he made his argument, Deng used historical memory of the revolutionary period to explain

⁵⁰⁶ As an illustration, Jiang Qing used an incidence involving the Historical Novel *Water Margin*, to launch an attack against Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai by comparing them to the character Song Jiang in August-September 1975. Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 684, Kindle Edition.

⁵⁰⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 32.

how some of these negative attributes emerged. Once explained, he pointed to positive aspects from that time as inspiration to add legitimacy to his proposals, seeking to improve the PLA in certain sectors that had degraded. He also used historical memory of the revolutionary period to illustrate changes in the character of war and the need to adapt. Furthermore, he grounded his proposals firmly within Maoist thought to avoid any accusations that his proposals were out of sync with the prevailing governing philosophy. The Marxist framework proved essential as Deng sought to navigate the difficult task of reforming the PLA while avoiding the ideological landmines that existed at this point in his career.

Deng utilized historical memory of the revolutionary war period extensively within the speech. Not only could Deng point to direct knowledge from his participation during the war, but it also allowed him to keep Mao front and center. First, Deng described the problem of factionalism that had taken root within the PLA during the Cultural Revolution, tracing its origins back to the “mountain stronghold” mentality. He observed:

Historically, our army was formed on the basis of a number of “mountain strongholds”, with comrades hailing from all corners of the country. Organizationally, we had three front armies, each of which was established on the basis of many “mountain strongholds”, and this naturally gave rise to a “mountain-stronghold” mentality in varying degrees.⁵⁰⁸

Deng referred to the faults of the “mountain stronghold” mentality in other institutions in 1975, but in this case, it referred directly to the PLA. However, while acknowledging its influence, he credited Mao for correcting the error at Yan’an. He explained:

During the rectification movement in Yan’an, Comrade Mao Zedong called on us to combat sectarianism and to solve the problem of the “mountain-stronghold” mentality throughout the Party and in different places, especially in the army. This problem was solved with three or four years of effort, starting from the beginning of the rectification movement in 1941. After the movement, cadres in the army and the localities pooled their wisdom and strength, making a single, tremendous force, and that is why we were victorious in our revolutionary wars. Since that time, the question of combating sectarianism in the army has never arisen again until now.⁵⁰⁹

Deng argued that Mao’s efforts to eliminate factionalism allowed the PLA to have great successes in the revolutionary period, and that this problem had only recently reemerged. Another area of concern that

⁵⁰⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 28.

⁵⁰⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 28.

Deng noted was conceit among PLA officers, originating from their recent activities under Lin Biao.⁵¹⁰

Once more he compared the problem to one that had occurred during the revolutionary period. Although its previous incarnation had been resolved, it recently reemerged among the ranks. He stated:

Third, there is a certain amount of conceit. This problem is nothing new in our army. In the war years, since the army was making great contributions and enjoyed high prestige, some comrades tended to become conceited. After many years of corrective effort, by and large the problem was solved. It should be pointed out, however, that a new situation developed during the “cultural revolution”. Since the army was given the task of “supporting the Left”, it wielded great power.⁵¹¹

Deng provided a historical reference in which the same problems facing the PLA in the past had been successfully rectified. As similar situations have been resolved in the past, so too could similar techniques solve the more recent issues. Critically, those solutions had previously been orchestrated by Mao, giving ideological cover to Deng’s proposal. The use of historical memory in this case allowed Deng to criticize such behaviors, while simultaneously offering solutions clothed in the historical memory of Mao.

After identifying the problem, Deng moved forward to offer a program to redress the issues facing the PLA. He offered a series of proposals aimed at streamlining the PLA from an organizational standpoint and reassigning personnel to the civilian sector. In addition, he instrumentally used historical memory both as inspiration and to highlight the need to adjust to new historical conditions. Two elements that Deng proposed were a return to a focus on discipline and what he termed “plain living” for PLA officials. He explained:

Our army used to have very good traditions in this respect. But now little attention is paid to unity and discipline. The least we can say is that the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention are not so respected as in the past. Some people, casting aside the tradition of hard work and plain living, pursue a bourgeois way of life. Examples of this abound. It would be dangerous to underestimate the gravity of these things or to lower our guard against them.⁵¹²

⁵¹⁰ For more on the PLA’s role in the Cultural Revolution under Lin Biao see Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People’s History, 1962-1976*, (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), pages 128-146, Kindle Edition.

⁵¹¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 30.

⁵¹² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 30, The reference to Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention refers to a revolutionary era order from Mao titled, “Order on Rectifying Military Bearing and Discipline,” issued March 21, 1930, although the initial composition had only six orders, with Mao adding two more at later date. Stuart Schram (ed), *Mao’s Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume III: From the Jinggangshan to the Establishment of the Jiangxi Soviets July 1927-December 1930*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pages 283-284, Kindle Edition. “The three main rules of discipline were (1) Obey orders in all your actions; (2) Don’t take anything from the workers and peasants; (3) When attacking the local bullies, turn over [whatever you take from them]. The Six Points for Attention were (1) Put back the doors [you have taken down for bed boards]; (2) Put back the straw [you have used for bedding]; (3) Speak

Deng offered up the PLA's traditions as displaying examples to follow, with special attention to rules of discipline established by Mao. On the other hand, Deng did admit that, in certain circumstances, a break from the past was necessary. For example, he expressed the need to focus on combined arms warfare and adapt to the modernization of warfare.

Present-day wars are fought by combined armed units, in the air, on the ground and on and under the seas. They cannot be conducted by following our old formula of "millet plus rifles". Nowadays a company commander has to perform his duties in a different way than in the past. In the past, a company commander at the front could just hold up a Mauser and cry, "Charge!" Today he must know much more. And this is even more true of officers above the company level.⁵¹³

In the above case, Deng proposed a reversal of the policy of Lin Biao's, who he blamed by name earlier in the text for the current faults within the PLA. Fundamentally, the solution for these problems lay in the next generation of leaders learning from those that came before, especially Mao.

For several decades our army has been a very good one on the whole. We have exerted some effort to make this so; that is, we have made contributions in this respect. At present, whether the undesirable tendencies in the PLA can be overcome and whether the fine traditions of so many years can be carried forward depend mainly on how much we older comrades can do to help and guide the young and middle-aged cadres and pass on our experience to them. In my view, if we all set an example by following Comrade Mao Zedong's motto, "unity, alertness, conscientiousness, liveliness", we will find that the problems in our army are not hard to solve, and that the line, principles and policies of the Party can be implemented effectively.⁵¹⁴

Deng argued that rather than allowing those inexperienced youths to dictate policy, as had occurred at the height of the Cultural Revolution, it was better for such young leaders to learn from their elders. This emphasis on learning lessons from senior leaders allowed for a recentralization of authority around the senior party elite, from which Deng drew his political support. Deng was careful to include Mao as the central figure to avoid any direct contradiction of the prevailing governing philosophy. Throughout the speech, Deng attempted to shield his actions towards reform through the selective use of the Marxist framework. However, his efforts remained restrained as he lacked the capacity to launch his own reinterpretation of historical memory and governing philosophy at this point in his career.

politely; (4) Pay fairly for what you buy; (5) Return everything you borrow; (6) Pay for anything you damage. In January 1929, Mao added two more Points for Attention: (7) Don't bathe within sight of women, and (8) Defecate only in the latrines." In 1947 the orders were reformatted. Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*: Volume IV, page 155, "The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows: (1) Obey orders in all your actions. (2) Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses. (3) Turn in everything captured. The Eight Points for Attention are as follows: (1) Speak politely. (2) Pay fairly for what you buy. (3) Return everything you borrow. (4) Pay for anything you damage. (5) Don't hit or swear at people. (6) Don't damage crops. (7) Don't take liberties with women. (8) Don't ill-treat captives."

⁵¹³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 34.

⁵¹⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 38.

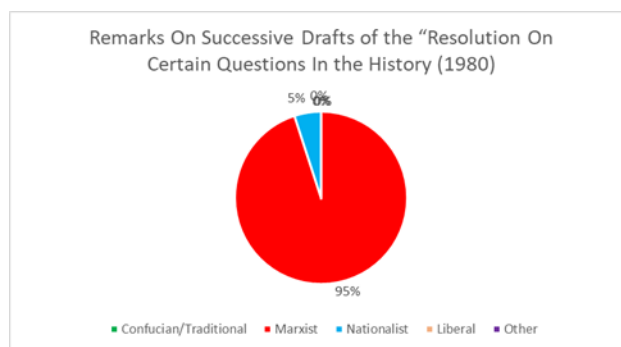


Figure 3.9 References by category for text titled, “Remarks On Successive Drafts of the “Resolution On Certain Questions In the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China” (1980).

The second text I examined is unique in that it is a collection of remarks on successive drafts of the “Resolution On Certain Questions In the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China,” adopted by the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in June 1981.⁵¹⁵ The text includes seven instances of Deng commenting on successive drafts of the report from March 1980 to April 1981, as well as two speeches delivered in May and June to the Central Committee, prefacing the release of the report. All nine portions are collected into a single entry within the second volume of his *Selected Works* and presented as a single text. The inclusion of Deng’s thoughts and directed influence in shaping the resolution displays the importance of the report in establishing Deng’s reinterpretation of the CPC’s historical narrative. Once Deng’s elucidation of CPC history had been adopted by the Central Committee, he was free to enact his governing philosophy as core leader, which sprung from this new interpretation. The primary audience for the text was the Party, specifically the drafters of the resolution, the Central Committee, and the rest of the CPC’s governing structures. The text includes twenty discernable references to historical memory. The text deals almost exclusively with the Marxist framework, which is unsurprising given its subject matter.

⁵¹⁵ For the full text of the report translated into English see: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/resolution-certain-questions-history-our-party-founding-peoples-republic-china>. Accessed 7/28/2023.

The main objective for Deng in this text was presumably to shape collective historical memory of the CPC to provide justification for his governing philosophy. This method echoed that employed by Mao when he supervised the release of the previous resolution on party history in 1945.

In this way the document can perform the same function as the 1945 resolution on the history of our Party, that is, to sum up experience, unify thinking and unite all our comrades as one in looking to the future. I think this draft meets these requirements.⁵¹⁶

Deng intended this document to unify the party and clarify contentious questions of historical memory, paving the way for Deng's governing philosophy. This resolution could only be implemented once Deng had achieved consolidation and gained supremacy as core leader. Deng had several clear goals for the Resolution, and he gave explicit guidance to its crafters to achieve these objectives. The most important facet for reviewing Party history was to deal with the legacy of Mao. Deng had publicly declared that he had no desire to repeat Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech.⁵¹⁷ Framing Mao's memory was essential as Deng crafted a new philosophy distinct from the now disgraced view of "Two Whatevers." As such, Deng called for recognition of Mao's positive impacts and even directed placing his errors in a wider context. Furthermore, Deng imparted the importance of Mao Zedong Thought and its role both in Party history and in shaping ideology moving forward. Finally, Deng dealt with questions related to those who had previously been denigrated in past ideological battles, redeeming some, but not all. Asserting his distinct reinterpretation of Mao and key portions of CPC history, and stamping those views as official Party doctrine, solidified his position as core leader.

Deng had previously established that Mao had been mistaken at times, especially after 1957. However, he was explicit that despite these faults, Mao's contributions to the revolution were essential, and it was necessary to highlight these positive aspects. Deng identified the importance of Mao's memory to many within the CPC and how intertwined it was with Party history:

⁵¹⁶ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 293. Gao Hua describes the role of the text in cementing Mao as the core with all others either in left or right orientations. Furthermore, he shows that Mao borrowed the tactic from Stalin and his History of the CPSU in the enterprise. It appears that there is a direct line in the instrumentalization of party history from Stalin to Mao to Deng. Gao Hua, trans Stacy Mosher & Guo Jian, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2018), page 233, Kindle Edition.

⁵¹⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 329.

If we don't mention Mao Zedong Thought and don't make an appropriate evaluation of Comrade Mao's merits and demerits, the old workers will not feel satisfied, nor will the poor and lower-middle peasants of the period of land reform, nor the many cadres who have close ties with them. On no account can we discard the banner of Mao Zedong Thought. To do so would, in fact, be to negate the glorious history of our Party. On the whole, the Party's history is glorious.⁵¹⁸

Deng observed the need to reestablish Mao's role during the revolution and to review that history to cement the positive aspects of Mao's contributions. Deng flatly rejected an earlier draft of the resolution for failing to properly credit Mao's contributions prominently enough in the text. He chided the drafters stating:

I have gone over the draft of the resolution. It is no good and needs rewriting. We stressed at the very beginning that the historical role of Comrade Mao Zedong must be affirmed and that Mao Zedong Thought must be adhered to and developed. The draft doesn't reflect this intention adequately. The passages dealing with the events before 1957 are all right as to the facts, but the way they are presented — the sequence and especially the tone of presentation — should be reconsidered and altered. We have to give a clear account of Comrade Mao Zedong's contributions to China's socialist revolution and construction.⁵¹⁹

It wasn't enough to simply rehash Mao's accomplishments, Deng was also concerned about their presentation having sufficient gravitas in the text. In fact, there were multiple incidents of Deng having this problem with successive drafts as well. Referring to a discussion with Chen Yun on the subject, Deng explained:

One is that we should add a section reviewing the entire history of the Party in the 60 years since its founding, including the years before Liberation. With this 60-year review, he said, it will be possible to make a more comprehensive summary of Comrade Mao Zedong's merits and contributions, and we will have an adequate basis for affirming Comrade Mao Zedong's historical role and the necessity of adhering to and developing Mao Zedong Thought.⁵²⁰

Within the historical review, Deng found it necessary to focus on the revolutionary period to rehabilitate both Mao and Mao Zedong Thought in the eyes of the Party. Without such a rehabilitation of the previous core leader, Deng would be in danger of losing his own recently gained authority to enact his governing philosophy, which borrowed legitimacy from Mao's legacy.

Critical to that borrowed legitimacy was the role of Mao Zedong Thought as the enduring ideology under Deng. He clarified that while Mao Zedong Thought was the product of several contributors, Mao was its principal author. Furthermore, this ideology took its main, although not

⁵¹⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 284.

⁵¹⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 282.

⁵²⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 289.

complete, form during the Yan'an Rectification movement. He specified the need during the initial drafting to focus on Mao Zedong Thought and the centrality of Yan'an in its formation.

The history of Mao Zedong Thought — its origins and development — should be written into the document. It can be said that Mao Zedong Thought assumed relatively complete form during the Yan'an period. The theories on the new-democratic revolution, including those on Party building and the principles on the handling of inner-Party relations, all essentially took shape around the time of the rectification movement [of the early forties] in Yan'an. The resolution on certain questions in the history of our Party adopted [in April 1945] by the [enlarged] Seventh Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee in the main criticized the three "Left" lines in contrast to the correct line represented by Comrade Mao Zedong. But it did not systematically expound the entire content of Mao Zedong Thought. This time, as we intend to give a correct evaluation of Mao Zedong Thought and scientifically establish its guiding role, we have to expound its main contents in general terms, especially those elements which we shall continue to implement in the future.⁵²¹

Deng specified the need to keep Mao Zedong Thought viable as it eased justifying his future policy proposals. However, to monopolize control over Mao Zedong Thought, Deng took steps to frame it as an exclusively Chinese product. It was not a development of Marxism-Leninism as a whole. Rather, it applied specifically to China's conditions. He explained:

It is right not to say that Mao Zedong Thought is a development of Marxism-Leninism in all its aspects or that it represents a new stage of Marxism. But we ought to recognize that Mao Zedong Thought is the application and development of Marxism-Leninism in China. In the course of applying it to the solution of China's practical problems, our Party has indeed developed Marxism-Leninism in many respects. This is an objective reality and a historical fact.⁵²²

This separation allowed Deng to sidestep ideological battles with other Communist actors internationally and adjust future relations as needed without undue doctrinal baggage. This method came at the cost of any inclination of leadership in international communism, but there was little hope of achieving such leadership anyway given the geopolitical realities Deng faced. However, Deng utilized other methods, such as the Third World construct, to maintain an influential role, while avoiding unnecessary tensions with either the United States or the Soviet Union as a direct ideological competitor. The key objective was to keep Mao Zedong Thought within the exclusive purview of the CPC leadership, specifically under Deng as core leader.

Deng ensured that the positive aspects of both Mao personally and of Mao Zedong Thought were preserved in the Resolution, but Mao's failings also had to be recognized. However, Deng opted to avoid placing blame for past indiscretions and errors on Mao exclusively, instead preferring to highlight

⁵²¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 277.

⁵²² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 285.

systemic issues and collective responsibility. He provided the following guidance on how to approach

Mao's errors:

Because certain recent remarks about some of Comrade Mao Zedong's mistakes have gone too far (sic). These excesses should be corrected so that, generally speaking, the assessment will conform to reality and enhance the image of the country and the Party as a whole. Part of the responsibility for some past mistakes should be borne collectively, though the chief responsibility, of course, lay with Comrade Mao. We hold that systems and institutions are the decisive factor, and we all know what they were in those days.⁵²³

By moving away from overly focusing on any one personality and stressing collective rule, Deng hoped to reestablish institutional authority for the CPC Central Committee, within which he was the dominant presence. To support his point, Deng highlighted two historical episodes from the revolutionary period to argue that responsibility for mistakes could not be so narrowly attributable. In the first instance, he recalled the Anti-Bolshevik (A-B) campaign as an example of blame extending beyond Mao's personal faults. He recalled:

Today, some comrades attribute many problems to the personal qualities of Comrade Mao Zedong. As a matter of fact, there are quite a few problems that cannot be explained in that way. Mistakes are unavoidable under some circumstances even for people of fine quality. During the period of the Red Army, a campaign was mounted against the A-B ["Anti-Bolshevik"] Group in the Central Revolutionary Base Area. Can it be said that all the participants in the campaign were bad people? At first, Comrade Mao Zedong also took part in this struggle, but he came to see what was wrong with it earlier than others and drew the necessary lessons.⁵²⁴

In this case, according to Deng, the fault for the A-B campaign was a result of circumstances, and Mao had seen the error sooner than many of his contemporaries. In another example, Deng mentioned the excesses of the Yan'an Rectification movement. He explained:

Later, in Yan'an, he put forward the principle of "killing none and arresting few". In the exceptionally tense wartime conditions that then prevailed, when bad elements were discovered within our ranks, it was necessary to heighten our vigilance. However, when we failed to act soberly and make clear analyses but simply believed in confessions by the accused, it was hard to avoid mistakes.⁵²⁵

⁵²³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 295.

⁵²⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 286. Jung Chang takes a different view and argues that rather than the A-B campaign not primarily being the responsibility of Mao, he took advantage of the campaign to solidify his control through violent purges of his political enemies. Jung Chang, Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2005), Kindle Location [1927 of 17130], Kindle Edition. "IN LATE NOVEMBER, Mao started his slaughter. He ordered all the troops to gather in the center of the Red territory, where it was hard to escape. There, he claimed that an AB League had been uncovered in the branch under Peng De-huai—which in fact contained people who had resisted being taken over by Mao. Arrests and executions began. One interrogator wrote in his unpublished memoirs how an officer who had led an attempt to leave Mao's fold was tortured: 'the wounds on his back were like scales on a fish.'"

⁵²⁵ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, page 286. Jung Chang details similar episodes of violence against political enemies at Yan'an. Jung Chang, Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2005), Kindle Location [4746 to 5048 of 17130], Kindle Edition.

In both cases, responsibility was shifted to the collective, and although Mao still had faults, even in those errors he appeared less egregious compared to others. Deng appeared committed to avoiding a Khrushchev secret speech moment and took steps to retain the value of selective historical memory associated with Mao.

Although Mao was a major focus for Deng, he also took efforts to weigh in on the treatment of various figures who had previously been denigrated. Deng himself had lost his positions repeatedly but managed to secure rehabilitation, and a substantial amount of his support came from Party members who had faced similar persecution. However, Deng was unwilling to offer a blanket amnesty that would endanger the CPC's legitimacy. For example, he suggested that the removal of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi in 1955 was proper and went into further detail regarding the overzealous use of the two-line struggle and the need to differentiate degrees of errors between various figures.

The basic verdict on the case of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi remains unchanged, but it too can hardly be categorized as a struggle between two lines . . . The case of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi was of a similar nature though, of course, they did not form a separate central committee. Qu Qiubai's errors lasted less than half a year and Li Lisan's only three months. In the past, certain struggles in the Party's history were inaccurately categorized as two-line struggles, and that's one reason why we don't favour using this term. Another reason is that, for a long period, whenever differing views arose in the Party, they were dubbed differences of line and criticized as errors of line. So we must approach this issue very seriously, as it has to do with the improvement of our Party's style of work.⁵²⁶

Deng viewed it as necessary to retain the capability to discipline party members to maintain centralized authority. However, he sought to avoid overly draconian methods that left too many potential allies exposed to ideological prosecution. Thus, he sought to strike a balance in shaping historical memory to allow him to justify persecution, if necessary, but avoid its excessive application. In addition, Deng sought to ensure the primacy of the Party as possessing an uninterrupted history, despite the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. He directed:

So it's not right to say that neither the Twelfth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee nor the Ninth Party Congress was legitimate. This is clear if we take into consideration Comrade Mao Zedong's policy decision (a wise one) in Yan'an concerning the legitimacy of the provisional central leadership set up in

⁵²⁶ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume II, pages 293-294. Li Lisan and Luo Zhanglong had been purposefully sidelined in Mao's consolidation of power and his reinterpretation of party history in 1945. Qu Qiubai had been excluded from major party positions earlier in 1931 for failing to condemn the Li Lisan line, he was executed by the GMD in 1935. Alexander Pantsov with Steven Levine, *Mao: The Real Story*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), pages 235, 340, and 426.

Shanghai in 1931 and of the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee that it later convened. Some comrades have argued that the Party ceased to exist during the “Cultural Revolution”. We can’t say that.⁵²⁷ Even if errors had occurred in the past, they must not allow for perceptions to fester in memory in which the CPC was not the legitimate ruling institution of China. To invalidate any period of CPC rule as illegitimate would potentially imperil it in the future. Opponents of Deng could instrumentally use the historical memory of the discredited period to draw parallels to his rule as a means of attack. Deng ensured that the Resolution addressed past figures and periods of CPC history in such a way that preserved his flexibility and authority as core leader.

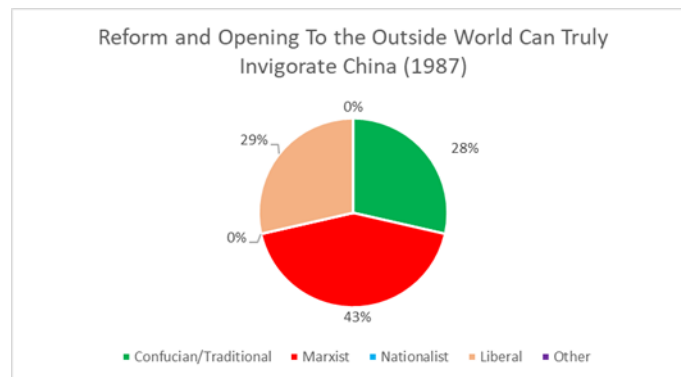


Figure 3.10 References by category for text titled, “Reform and Opening To the Outside World Can Truly Invigorate China” (1987).

The third text examined is titled, “Reform and Opening to the Outside World Can Truly Invigorate China.” This text is based on discussion that occurred when Deng received Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers in May 1987. The speech is primarily aimed at a European visiting delegation. At this point Deng had weathered the winter student protest movement and had installed Zhao Ziyang as his new heir apparent. In addition, given his advanced age (82) and several statements regarding his intent to step down, his retirement appeared imminent. The text includes seven references to historical memory. The distribution appears even between the Marxist, Liberal, and Confucian/Traditional frameworks.

Deng’s overall objective within the text appears to be to generate further support in the international community for embracing China’s deepening integration into global institutions while

⁵²⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume II*, page 290.

preserving the Party-State's prerogatives to direct internal policy. Gaining support for this position from a nation like the Netherlands, and more widely within Western Europe, would only strengthen China's diplomatic hand and further Deng's goal of cementing his Opening Up program. Deng used each of the historical frameworks to pursue subsidiary goals of this wider objective. The Confucian/Traditional framework served primarily as part of Deng's personal charisma to connect with his audience, but also offered some credence to using history as a guide to contemporary policy. The Marxist framework portrayed the CPC and socialism as the only viable paths available to the PRC. Finally, Deng leaned more heavily into the Liberal framework, using European historical memory of the recent World Wars to point towards the shared desire for a more stable Liberal international order. Furthermore, Deng argued that this order would benefit China's growth and in turn the global order would benefit from China's participation. This text offered a concise example of Deng's conception of China's role in the emerging world order, at least for liberally minded international audiences.

Deng didn't often use the Confucian/Traditional framework. However, in this case it appears he saw an opportunity to instrumentally use historical memory to forge a connection with his Dutch counterpart. Interestingly, he decided to offer a parallel between Dutch and Chinese historical memory in the form of land reclamation as a symbol of perseverance and far-sighted vision for both countries.

Although I have not been to your country, I know that much land in the Netherlands was reclaimed from the sea, and your spirit of hard work is marvelous. In China we have a saying, "The foolish old man removed mountains." This represents a tradition of our nation. One might say of your people "The foolish old man reclaimed land from the sea." China's average per capita amount of arable land is small, and yours is even smaller, but you have been successful in your work, and your country has become a big exporter of farm products. So we should learn from you.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. The story can be traced back to the Daoist text *Liezi*, Book 5, para 3. <https://ctext.org/liezi/tang-wen>, 汝心之固，固不可徹，曾不若孀妻弱子。雖我之死，有子存焉；子又生孫，孫又生子；子又有子，子又有孫；子子孫孫，無窮匱也，而山不加增，何苦而不平？」 Mao also made use of this story as he consolidated power in his Oral Political Report at the Seventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, April 24, 1945. It can also be found in Mao's *Selected Works* Volume III, as "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains," dated June 11, 1945. Stuart Schram (ed), *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949: Volume VIII: From Rectification to Coalition Government: July 1927-December 1930*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2015), page 842, Kindle Edition. Mao Zedong, *Selected Works: Volume III*, pages 321-324.

Deng complimented the Dutch efforts at land reclamation and their country's capacity to overcome geographic disadvantages as worthy of emulation. For China's part, Deng recalled the legend of "The foolish old man who removed the mountains," which recalled a man's willingness to labor for decades, and pass on the task to his descendants, to remove a mountain. The story is portrayed originally in a Daoist text, although Mao had also made use of the reference. By positing a common national spirit, illustrated by his references to each nation's collective memory, Deng positioned China as a worthy partner in a similar project that would require unyielding hard work and vision to see it to ultimate fruition. Deng would further explain the value in using history as a guide to public policy. After discussing Party history and the need to maintain socialism in China, he opined:

Why am I telling you about this history? Because our present line, principles and policies were formulated after we reviewed our successes and our failures and reverses. The experience of successes is valuable, and so is the experience of mistakes and defeats. Formulating principles and policies in this way enables us to unify the thinking of the whole Party so as to achieve a new unity; unity formed on such a basis is most reliable.⁵²⁹

According to Deng, history offered lessons both in what to embrace and what to avoid, and he expounded on this concept further as he examined China's recent history through the Marxist lens.

Deng focused on recent PRC history to offer evidence that only socialism under the purview of the CPC, moderated by Deng's core leadership, could deliver progress for China. In reviewing CPC history, Deng presented the Party as a learning organization, one which made errors but corrected itself in the process. He cites errors on both sides of the political spectrum during the revolutionary period by figures such as Chen Duxiu and Wang Ming.

You may not be very familiar with the history of the Chinese Communist Party. It has followed a tortuous path. For a long time the Party did good work, but it also made mistakes of various kinds. During the later period of the Great Revolution, from 1925 to 1927, Chen Duxiu made Right opportunist mistakes, which led to the defeat of the revolution. Our Party was driven underground and forced to fight a protracted war with Chiang Kai-shek. During the early 1930s Wang Ming made the mistake of "Left" opportunism, as a result of which most

⁵²⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. For more on the 1925-1927 period and Chen's role see Alexander Pantsov with Steven Levine, *Mao: The Real Story*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), pages 161-185. Page 185, "The main cause of the defeat of the Chinese communists was that throughout all the years of its existence the CCP (CPC) had remained tightly bound to the Soviet Communist Party and under its powerful control and ideological pressure. Chen Duxiu and the Central Committee lacked freedom of maneuver. In everything they had to ask for instructions from Moscow or, if the situation demanded an immediate resolution, from its representatives such as Voitinsky, Maring, Borodin, or Roy."

of our revolutionary bases were destroyed by the enemy and the revolutionary army was reduced from 300,000 to 30,000. Why did we begin the Long March? We were forced to do so.⁵³⁰

By referring to Left and Right errors, Deng implied that history had shown him the need to take a middle course in adopting policy, one associated with careful moderation and more attractive for his European audience. He next credited Mao with locating the correct policy position, enabling China to succeed both against Japanese aggression and in the Chinese Civil War. “Beginning in 1935 our Party, under the correct leadership of Comrade Zedong, led the people successfully in the War Against Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation. And in 1949 the People’s Republic of China was founded.”⁵³¹ Afterwards, he recounted more errors of policy orientation during the construction period.

During the first eight years after the founding of New China we carried out the socialist transformation of ownership of the means of production and set up some basic industries. For more than twenty years after 1935 we did good work. But in 1957 we made another mistake when we expanded an anti-Rightist struggle to include as targets many persons who were not, in fact, Rightists. Then in 1958, being too impatient for development, we initiated the Great Leap Forward and established people’s communes, which were also mistakes and brought about disastrous results.⁵³²

The overall theme was to acknowledge past errors on leaning to one ideological and to correct those mistakes moving forward by maintaining a moderated path. For Deng, this path remained socialism with Chinese characteristics, as it had allowed China to succeed through its many struggles. Failures were the result of deviations from the proper moderated path that Deng advocated. He presented a more moderated vision of Chinese socialism through the recollection of CPC history. This more circumspect version stood to integrate into a Liberal international order more smoothly, albeit within set parameters which safeguarded China’s internal affairs from interference.

Deng offered a vision for an international order with the Liberal framework at its foundation. Key to this proposal was a focus on peace and development emerging as the primary forces influencing

⁵³⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵³¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵³² Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

geopolitics. Within this text, he identified Europe as one of the primary sources for this influence and traced the origins of this movement to European war memory. He declared:

In analyzing the world situation, we pay particular attention to Europe, because Europe is the key area determining whether there will be peace or war. For a very long time our relations with the East European countries were not normal. Having made an objective analysis of the world situation, we believe that the East and West European countries represent forces safeguarding peace. Those countries need to develop, and the more they develop, the greater force they will become for peace. Why do we say that Europe is a force for peace? Because Europe has gone through two catastrophic world wars. If there were to be a third world war, only the two superpowers would have the capacity to unleash it. And once the war began, Europe would be the first to bear the brunt of it. We are hoping for a united, strong and developed Europe. As long as the countries of Europe — I mean both Eastern and Western Europe — do not harness themselves to another country's war chariot, war will not break out.⁵³³

In Deng's estimation, Europe now endeavored for peace because it had experienced the devastation of the two World Wars. Furthermore, in a nod to his audience, he stressed the value of Europe as key to maintaining this peace and further suggested that a united and developed Europe was in the world's interest, as well as China's. Deng displayed an alignment of his objectives squarely with political forces in Europe that could ease China's further integration into the global community. He explained his policy goals explicitly:

So we think that a relatively long period of peace is possible. If, in the first 50 years of the next century, all Europe and the countries of the Third World, including China, can make gratifying progress in developing their economies, the danger of war can truly be eliminated. We have the impression that Europe is comparatively liberal, especially about the transfer of technology; we are pleased on that score, although we are not completely satisfied. We have established the policy of developing friendly and cooperative relations with Europe, including both Eastern Europe and Western Europe. That's not just for the purpose of developing our economy but also for the purpose of safeguarding world peace.⁵³⁴

Deng endeavored for an increase in technology transfers to benefit China's development. As both China and Europe were aligned in their objectives seemingly for decades to come, he hoped that his European audience would be receptive to this request. Alongside the Confucian/Traditional framework establishing connections, and the Marxist framework to set the boundaries of the relationship, Deng used the Liberal framework to push for European acquiescence to integrating China and assisting in its development.

⁵³³ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵³⁴ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-can-truly-invigorate-china/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

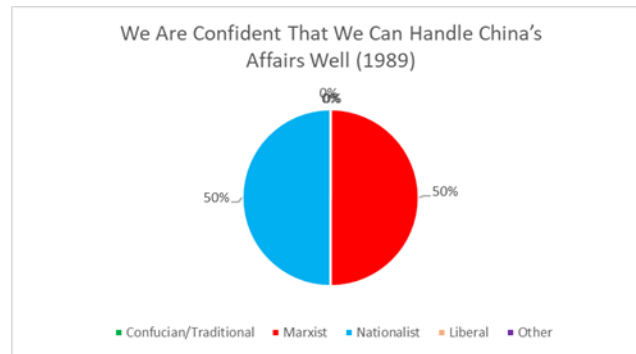


Figure 3.11 References by category for text titled, "We are Confident That We Can Handle China's Affairs Well" (1989).

The final text is titled, "We are Confident that We Can Handle China's Affairs Well," which was based on talks between Deng Xiaoping and Chinese-born American physicist Tsung-Dung Lee in September 1989.⁵³⁵ I assess the primary audience of the text as domestic, even though Lee is an American citizen. Although the text certainly appeared in part aimed at a foreign audience, it seemed that Deng intended the speech to be aimed at the Chinese nation, which in this case included not only domestic citizens of the PRC, but also expatriates still invested in China, such as Dr. Lee. Furthermore, this meeting with Lee was the first public appearance by Deng in three months since the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen Square Incident, and it occurred in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.⁵³⁶ Despite his advanced age, having removed his second heir apparent Zhao Ziyang in favor of Jiang Zemin, Deng seemed to believe he had to reassert his authority as core leader to stabilize the political situation. Part of that stabilization required reasserting his interpretation of Party history and instrumentally using historical memory to support this effort. He returned to both Marxist and Nationalist themes to achieve this stabilization. The text includes four references to historical memory.

Deng's objective for this text was presumably to restore a perception of stability within the PRC and portray the CPC as unfazed by the recent disturbances. The Marxist and Nationalist frameworks proved the most adept at meeting these demands. Deng used the Marxist lens of historical memory to

⁵³⁵ Deng's relationship with Lee stretched back to 1974. Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), page 227, Kindle Edition.

⁵³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/09/16/world/deng-after-absence-is-reported-in-public.html>, Accessed 8/3/2023.

emphasize that, in his view, only socialism could save China. Furthermore, it was faith in the socialist system, led by the CPC, that allowed it to overcome the challenges of the past. However, Deng also leaned heavily into the Nationalist framework and positioned himself as defending the aspirations of the Chinese people. In his retelling, the accomplishments of recent memory were earned by the Chinese people as a nation, and as a united people they had nothing to fear from foreign schemes. These assertions were made at a time when confidence in the stability of China was perhaps the thinnest it had been since 1977.

Once more Deng reinforced the notion within the Marxist framework that only the CPC and socialism could save China and any other system would only doom it to regression to the CoH. He declared:

China will get nowhere if it does not build and uphold socialism. Without leadership by the Communist Party, without socialism and without the policies of reform and opening to the outside world, the country would be doomed. Without them, how could China have gotten where it is today?⁵³⁷

In Deng's estimation, CPC rule, the socialist system, and his governing philosophy all were necessary to prevent the country from descending into chaos. However, he further argued that China faced an ideological opponent in the form of the capitalist world. Furthermore, this exploitative cabal had altered its tactics from overt military power to a more insidious technique in recent years. He explained:

Capitalists want to defeat socialists in the long run. In the past they used weapons, atomic bombs and hydrogen bombs, but they were opposed by the peoples of the world. So now they are trying peaceful evolution. The affairs of other countries are not our business, but we have to look after our own.⁵³⁸

In his estimation, the capitalist powers could not overcome China and other oppressed peoples even with the coercive power of nuclear weapons. Instead, they turned towards the concept of peaceful evolution to alter the character of states through infiltration and agitation for internal reform.

⁵³⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-are-confident-that-we-can-handle-chinas-affairs-well/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵³⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume III*, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-are-confident-that-we-can-handle-chinas-affairs-well/>, Accessed 8/5/2023. Deng's concerns appear to have some merit. A few years later at his confirmation hearing Secretary of State Christopher Warren phrased the Clinton Administration's policies towards China would, "seek to facilitate a peaceful evolution of China from communism to democracy by encouraging the forces of economic and political liberalization in that great country." Henry Kissinger points out that similar language had previously been used by Secretary of State Dulles in the 1950s. Henry Kissinger, *On China*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), pages 462, Kindle Edition.

Next, Deng presented himself as a spokesman for the Chinese nation, unbowed by supposed foreign machinations. He framed criticisms of China's policies, or recommendations for reforms, as attacks upon the PRC itself and contrary to the desires of the nation. He exclaimed:

The Chinese people will not easily give up the People's Republic that they founded after more than twenty years of bloody struggle. They will not easily give up the achievements in building socialism that they have scored through decades of hard work, and especially through the last ten years of reform and opening to the outside world. If those achievements were forfeited in favor of capitalism, the first problem would be how to feed the 1.1 billion people. And if they didn't have enough food, would the Chinese people accept that situation? It was in order to emancipate poor people that we made the revolution.⁵³⁹

Deng expanded the importance of socialism in China not only from a perspective of utility, but as a treasured achievement, born from the sacrifices of the Chinese nation. He also used the specter of mass starvation as the expected result of abandoning socialism. Famines within relatively short historical recollection meant that fear of such an outcome was immediately conceivable within Chinese collective memory. In addition, Deng pointed to China's recent military history and its ability to endure against stronger opponents until ultimate victory.

The Chinese people have confidence in themselves; they would get nowhere if they felt themselves inferior. They felt inferior for more than a century, but now, under the leadership of the Communist Party, they have stood up. A great beast may be terrifying to some people, but not to the Chinese. We fought the War of Resistance Against Japan for eight years and the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea for three years. We have a tradition of defeating the enemy when we are outnumbered and weaker . . . I believe that when faced with foreign aggression and intimidation, our people will not be frightened, nor will future generations.⁵⁴⁰

Deng invoked Chinese participation in both World War II and the Korean conflict as examples of resisting foreign aggression and displaying China's endurance. In addition, he took steps to conflate the United States and Imperial Japan as equivalent enemies of the Chinese nation. He sought to shore up the confidence of the Chinese people in both their capacity to resist foreign intrigues and to view the CPC and the socialist system as a point of national pride.

Deng Xiaoping calibrated his instrumental use of historical memory and the constituent frameworks based on the requirements of his political position and objectives. This included adjustments to which frameworks were used and in what combination. In 1975, Deng was hamstrung by Mao

⁵³⁹ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-are-confident-that-we-can-handle-chinas-affairs-well/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

⁵⁴⁰ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: Volume III, <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/we-are-confident-that-we-can-handle-chinas-affairs-well/>, Accessed 8/5/2023.

retaining his core leader status and thus had to restrain his instrumental use of historical memory to remain consistent with Mao's governing philosophy. Essential to consolidating his influence as core leader was his shaping of the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of the Party." In this case, Deng relied on the Marxist framework to guide the reinterpretation of CPC history, softening criticisms of Mao, preserving the CPC as the ruling institution, rehabilitating key figures, and enshrining Mao Zedong Thought as a legitimizing, if malleable, guiding ideology. In a text later in his tenure, Deng offered a similar explanation of his governing philosophy, synchronizing it with the Liberal international order through the integrated use of several historical frameworks. Finally, as the CPC faced a supreme challenge in 1989, Deng fell back on the Marxist and Nationalist frameworks to generate a unifying national feeling and targeted the United States for its criticisms. Each of these illustrative cases offers instances of Deng adjusting his instrumental use of historical memory over time in ways which sought to maximize their political utility.

Conclusions

Like Mao, Deng relied upon the instrumental use of historical memory across the breadth of his discourse as he pursued core leadership. However, unlike Mao, Deng sought to avoid concentrating absolute political and ideological power within a single person, even himself. As Deng struggled against his political competitors, he relied on a reinterpretation of Chinese historical memory. This new viewpoint enabled him to offer up a novel governing philosophy to guide PRC policy. He retained dominant authority over this ideology, historical memory, and its policy applications. On the other hand, Deng took concrete steps to ensure loyalists were in key positions and assumed an influential, if not absolute, authority over the CPC's policy direction. He appeared willing to allow a high degree of latitude in executing his policy preferences, except for key pillars enshrined in the Four Cardinal principles. However, this latitude resulted in either reform moving too slowly, in his estimation, or leaders failing to live up to his expectations in maintaining the regime's legitimacy. Thus, even into his eighties, Deng found himself striving to reestablish his authority as core leader to safeguard both the regime and his

reform program. Deng relied upon the instrumental use of historical memory first to reinterpret CPC history and then to sustain his authority as core leader and advance his political objectives.

The frequency of Deng's instrumental use of historical memory varied throughout his time as core leader. The high point for Deng occurred as he competed with Hua Guofeng for core leadership and redefined the official interpretation of Party history. By 1982, he had succeeded in defeating Hua and established his governing philosophy as the operative ideology of the PRC. Deng ceded political power to allies but retained sufficient authority to direct policy when needed. During this period, he still maintained some instrumental use of historical memory, although at lower levels than previously. There were some spikes which correspond to episodes where Deng's ideology was challenged, such as during the Anti-spiritual pollution campaign in 1984 - 1985. However, starting in the winter of 1986 - 1987, Deng faced a series of escalating crises in the political, economic, and international spheres, compelling him to reassert his authority over defining ideology through a higher frequency of instrumental uses. After 1990, Deng struggled to maintain his influence, aimed at retaining his reform program, culminating in his Southern Tour of 1992. This effort succeeded and he enshrined his governing philosophy in Jiang Zemin's early administration.

Deng's instrumental use of historical memory included all four narratives used by PRC core leaders: Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and his newly introduced Liberal. Deng calibrated his use of these frameworks based on the audience, as well as his political position and immediate goals. His use of the Confucian/Traditional framework was minimal, although there were some striking examples in which he used it to forge a connection with his audience, both foreign and domestic. The Marxist framework dominated much of his discourse, especially when aimed at the Party. He recalibrated the official memory of Mao to a fallible yet consequential leader, while redefining the core component of Mao Zedong Thought to the concept of "seeking truth from facts." This alteration allowed Deng to advocate for new policies based on the shifting circumstances of China's conditions as a counter to any dogmatic ideological competitors. He made two critical historical interpretations within the Marxist framework: the need to develop productive forces and the recognition that China was in the primary stage

of socialism. Recognizing these proposed historical realities, Deng offered his reforms as conforming with this reality and used market economics to drive growth and improve living standards. The Liberal framework was reserved mostly for his foreign audience, especially that in the capitalist West. Central to his interpretation was the importance of science and technology, which pervaded his discourse. He argued that science and technology were the primary forces that drove development of productive forces, that these developments were accelerating, and that only by international engagement could China keep up with that development. Furthermore, because of advancements and economic entanglement, he perceived that peace and development would supplant power politics and hegemonic competition in international politics. The Nationalist framework, mostly aimed at his domestic audience, was employed especially in periods of crisis to shore up support for the regime with Deng cultivating collective memory of the CoH and China's wartime experience. He emphasized the CPC role in ending these episodes as evidence that only the CPC and socialism could save China, and any backsliding on the Four Cardinal Principles would return to a state of chaos and exploitation. Deng employed all four of the historical narratives within his discourse to secure his status as core leader and subsequently advance his political agenda.

Similar to other core leaders, Deng did not use the four frameworks in isolation, rather juxtaposing them to maximize their effectiveness in advancing his political objectives. Prior to Mao's death, Deng restricted the historical memory he engaged with, relying on the revolutionary period as the primary source for his references. As he directed the reevaluation of official CPC history, he made sure to take a balanced approach to preserve the utility of that memory as a legitimizing force for the CPC and himself as core leader. Although Deng would present China as a willing and able partner in the Liberal international order, he prefaced this assertion with the Marxist framework to argue that China's political system and institutions could not be altered without plunging the nation into chaos. When facing pressure from international sanctions, Deng offered a mixture of Nationalist and Marxist referents to deflect criticism and attempt to invalidate sanctions as an effective tool against China. The form and function of his instrumental use of historical memory shifted across his discourse, displaying a deliberate approach.

When asked how he evaluated his career, Deng responded that he would be satisfied if it was estimated as half good and half bad.⁵⁴¹ His status as a core leader can be described in much the same way. Deng emerged as the victor in the power struggles following Mao's death, offering a new governing philosophy based on his reinterpretation of historical memory. Throughout his tenure as paramount leader, he consistently used historical memory to support his interpretation and advance his specific political objectives. However, Deng had devolved a portion of his political authority to several of his acolytes, losing some of his influence as a result. This allowed others to execute the minutiae of his policies and enabled him to focus on general guidance. China experienced substantial growth as it implemented his R&OU policy while maintaining the existing political structure, although that growth was not always at the speed he hoped for. However, his devolution of power came at a cost, as his selected heirs on two occasions did not live up to his expectations. Simultaneously, runaway inflation, the collapse of international communism, and political instability which culminated in the Tiananmen Square incident shook confidence in the regime. During the twilight of his tenure, with the selection of his third heir Jiang Zemin, Deng reasserted his authority as core leader and enshrined his governing philosophy to prevent R&OU backsliding. In fact, his effort was so successful that Deng's reform policy and the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee became synonymous with ushering in economic growth and improving living standards. It remained a guiding principle in the governing philosophies for both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. This effort succeeded in stabilizing the regime and solidifying Deng's legacy, at the cost of curtailing Jiang's ability to offer his own governing philosophy and play for core leader, at least until after Deng's passing.

Deng took a different path from Mao, who fully embraced core leadership, yet Deng retained and wielded this authority at times to preserve both his, and the CPC's privileges. This muddled approach allowed Deng to overcome many challenges and preserved the regime. However, it left the role of core

⁵⁴¹ Alexander Pantsov & Steven Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, page 433, Kindle Edition.

leadership as an institution in Chinese political culture unclear. He appeared willing to shed authority when things were going well, but if the political course drifted too far, he violently grabbed back the helm to course correct. Deng never fully embraced or rejected core leadership, seemingly groping for a middle ground he never quite settled on. Despite his declarations of Jiang as the third-generation's core leader, it would be left to his successor to seize core leadership for himself and move beyond Deng's shadow.

Chapter 4 - Jiang Zemin:

Oh, I Just Can't Wait to Be

Core

Introduction

Jiang Zemin's circumstances presented him with a different challenge in achieving core leadership than Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping. Although he could point to minor participation in revolutionary activity before 1949, he was far too young to be a key figure in the momentous events shaping Communist Party of China (CPC) history. Furthermore, he lacked military experience or ideological credentials. Instead, Jiang studied industrial technology and served in technical fields and bureaucratic management.⁵⁴² Jiang ascended to paramount leadership during a period of acute crisis during the Tiananmen Square Incident (1989). His two predecessors, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, fell from grace and were replaced on the orders of Deng. Deng's continued political activity, especially after his 1992 Southern Tour and the release of Deng Xiaoping Theory (邓小平理论) in 1994, further prevented Jiang's early consolidation of power. On the other hand, these actions by Deng did offer greater stability for the collective leadership. Jiang ascended to core leadership after Deng's death in 1997, but despite his efforts, Jiang's influence waned with the rise of the fourth generation of party leadership under Hu Jintao starting in 2002.⁵⁴³ Despite these difficulties Jiang vigorously pursued core leadership, and he found the instrumental use of historical memory a vital tool in that pursuit.

⁵⁴² Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Locations 276-287, Location 617 & Location 951), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴³ Susan Shirk. *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*, pages 111-112. "The actual influence retired leaders have over personnel and policy decisions stands as one of the mysteries of China's politics today. Jiang, who had used his ten years in power to appoint a large flock of friends and associates to high-level positions, still held sway after his 2003 retirement, although how much is not clear. Almost everyone I interviewed insisted that he continued to have enormous power. But when I asked them to give me concrete examples of Jiang's interventions in decision-making, they couldn't provide any, other than to point to the high-level officials in Hu's administration whom Jiang had appointed, and who, they assumed, were still doing his bidding."

Jiang had some advantages that helped propel and sustain him in his pursuit of core leadership. He gained the support of Deng Xiaoping and leveraged that support to cement his legitimacy.⁵⁴⁴ Deng's retreat from politics and eventual death in 1997 also came at an opportune time, allowing Jiang sufficient space to stabilize his rule under Deng's protective umbrella. After Deng's death, Jiang had the opportunity to perpetuate his own governing philosophy, the Three Represents (三个代表), at the height of his political power.⁵⁴⁵ In addition, Jiang proved adept at avoiding being unacceptable to any major faction in CPC politics and maintained his position as a consensus candidate. Furthermore, Jiang cultivated and relied on a robust *guanxi* (关系) network, centered on figures like Zhu Rongji and others tied to his primary support base referred to as the Shanghai faction, so called due to having been forged during Jiang's time as mayor and later party secretary of the metropolis in the 1980s.⁵⁴⁶ Jiang certainly didn't lack confidence in himself. Anyone who unironically proposes a duet with President Clinton playing Saxophone cannot be described as a shrinking violet.⁵⁴⁷ This confidence extended to his discourse as well. When addressing a student protest movement in Shanghai while he was mayor, Jiang Zemin attempted to mollify the crowd by reciting Lincoln's Gettysburg address verbatim.⁵⁴⁸ Despite its failure to

⁵⁴⁴ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Locations 949-958 & Locations 2105-2115), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴⁵ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Location 51), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴⁶ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Location 986 & Location 4264), Kindle Edition. "It escaped no one's notice that the raft of appointments Jiang made in late 1992 and early 1993 contained a large number of Shanghai cadres. Many, such as Zhu Rongji and Lieutenant General Yu Yongbo, were simply being taken from the Shanghai incubator for up-and-comers where they had been sent in the first place, a system explained earlier. But others, like Zeng Qinghong, Liu Ji, Ba Zhongtan, Gong Xinhan, and Zhou Ruijin, seemed to constitute a kind of 'Shanghai faction.' They were promoted primarily because of their affiliations with Jiang." Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Location 2794), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴⁷ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Location 4524), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴⁸ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Location 1211), Kindle Edition.

quell the protest movement, Jiang prided himself on his performance, repeating the story multiple times.⁵⁴⁹

Jiang Zemin's ideology developed relatively late in his tenure compared to other core leaders, due mainly to the fact that Deng maintained substantial influence for several years into Jiang's tenure. This overlap stabilized Jiang's rule but stunted his capacity to deviate from Deng's established line.⁵⁵⁰ However, Jiang could not assume core leadership without introducing an independent governing philosophy. Failure to do so would place Jiang in the same tenuous position as Hua Guofeng when he assumed power between 1976 - 1978.⁵⁵¹ As Deng's health declined and he eventually passed away in February 1997, Jiang initiated the process of establishing an ideological theory with himself as the main architect and authority. Jiang began propagating initial theories related to military and political work, such as the three stresses (三讲). However, Jiang's signature theory, the Three Represents, did not fully emerge until 2000, two years before the end of his paramount leadership. Jiang advanced the narrative that his ascension to core leadership was a continuation and evolution of Mao's and Deng's legacy, and especially leveraged Deng's Reform and Opening Up (改革开放) (R&OU) policy as the foundation of his governing philosophy. He framed shifts in policy as adaptations to keep up with emerging dynamics both domestically and internationally. The Three Represents called for the CPC to represent the advance of productive forces, represent the advance of China's cultural forces, and represent the fundamental interests of the population.⁵⁵² Thus, Jiang sought to continue and even accelerate modernization and

⁵⁴⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume I*, pages 68-69.

⁵⁵⁰ Guo Xuezhong, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, page 60, Kindle Edition. "The collective shadow of the senior veteran leaders, particularly Deng Xiaoping, slowed down Jiang's process to establishing his authority as the paramount leader, and he thus lost the opportunity to become a political strongman. Jiang increasingly became dominant in the party leadership after Deng's death in 1997."

⁵⁵¹ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, (Kindle Locations 3197-3207), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵² Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, page 8. Jiang faced some opposition for his focus on productive forces, which was often intertwined with privatization and increasing authority for business leaders, which in turn garnered resistance from the more conservative leftist wing of the CPC.

growth while maintaining sufficient political stability by providing for the economic and security needs of the population. Jiang faced criticisms from the conservative Left which argued that his policies were moving too far away from Marxism and Maoism. Simultaneously the right chafed from the lack of progress towards liberal political reform. Jiang had to establish his governing philosophy in a relatively short time frame while defending it from criticisms from both his left and right flanks.

Scholars have examined Jiang Zemin's discourse and the instrumental use of historical memory in relation to his political goals. Bruce Gilley's biography, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, examines Jiang's career up to 1998, including examples of his use of historical memory, such as the Gettysburg Address episode. He traces Jiang's elevation amid the political crisis of 1989 and his continual balancing between various factions, and being at least acceptable to all, to maintain his legitimacy.⁵⁵³ Furthermore, he cites the importance of Deng Xiaoping lending his authority to bolster Jiang's leadership position. On the other hand, he argues that Deng's influence, especially after the 1992 southern tour, limited Jiang's ideological independence. However, as Deng's health deteriorated and his public profile diminished, Gilley argues that Jiang had the space to assert an independent governing philosophy. He writes, "For Jiang, Deng's protracted last gasp was a gift from heaven. In the previous two years, as Jiang had outlined the ways in which he would distinguish his rule, the abiding presence of Deng had seemed to lend a sort of imprimatur to his efforts."⁵⁵⁴ Gilley argues that the initial iterations of Jiang's governing philosophy began in 1995 but accelerated substantially in the latter half of 1996. However, Gilley further illustrates that after Jiang promulgated his ideology, he faced severe challenges

For example, Jiang's scheme to divest some state holding assets, while retaining a controlling interest, faced vitriolic opposition, "Any endorsement of shareholding as a substitute for state ownership-privatization ship-privatization in most people's eyes-would, of course, be a radical departure for China. A torrid article in the hard-left *Zhenlide zhuigui* (Search for Truth) magazine in April 1997 had warned that the plan would virtually bring an end to socialism. 'Calling for the implementation of a shareholding system in state-owned enterprises can only have a destructive effect on development,' it said. 'In essence, this is no more than a cover for weakening the state-owned economy and achieving private ownership.'" Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, Kindle Locations 4340-4343. Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵³ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Location 4612). Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵⁴ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Locations 3998-4000). Kindle Edition.

and had to engage in efforts to mollify those critical elements to maintain his legitimacy.⁵⁵⁵ Gilley's biography charts Jiang's journey toward core leadership before 1998 and identifies several instances of his instrumental use of historical memory throughout that pursuit.

Ta-chen Cheng examines Jiang's contribution to Chinese military theory and its role in solidifying his political power. Cheng argues that Jiang's freedom to develop military theory expanded and gained independence from Deng's influence, writing:

As time goes by, Jiang has gradually been transforming from a rookie leader who had to follow Deng's instructions and compete with other senior generals for influence in military matters to a matured civilian commander willing to express his view and plans for national defense and grand strategy.⁵⁵⁶

As Jiang lacked military clout compared to his predecessors, gaining influence over the CMC was not a natural endeavor for him. However, Cheng displays its importance for Jiang's pursuit of core leadership, of which control of the PLA through the CMC was a critical element. By disseminating a distinct theory and elevating political allies to positions of influence, Cheng discerns that Jiang sought to maintain his influence over the PLA even into Hu Jintao's ascension.

Chien-kai Chen elaborates on the mutability of Chinese discourse on policy questions by examining rhetoric aimed at Taiwan for both Jiang and Hu. Chen argues:

This paper demonstrates that two factors combined to result in Jiang's impatience and Hu's patience concerning the Taiwan issue: first, Jiang's and Hu's conflicting perceptions of Taiwan's politics and Taiwan's China policy, and second, their differing perceptions of US behavior and attitude regarding Taiwan.⁵⁵⁷

Chen maintains that Jiang perceived a more hostile environment regarding Taiwan, leading to more impatience in resolving the issue within his rhetoric. However, as the attention and political realities shifted during Hu's reign, dialogue regarding a timeline for resolving the Taiwan issue softened. Chen shows that circumstances, whether in domestic or international affairs, influenced Jiang's rhetoric and ideological expressions.

⁵⁵⁵ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Locations 3968-3978). Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵⁶ Ta-Chen Cheng, "Jiang Zemin's Military Thought and Legacy," *International relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 2006, Vol.6 (2), page 245.

⁵⁵⁷ Chien-Kai Chen, "Comparing Jiang Zemin's Impatience with Hu Jintao's Patience Regarding the Taiwan Issue, 1989-2012," *The Journal of Contemporary China*, 2012, Vol.21 (78), page 971.

Maurizio Marinelli explores Jiang Zemin's discourse toward intellectuals. He holds that this rhetoric had a specific political utility to generate and maintain Jiang's position of authority. Marinelli posits Jiang's goal with regards to intellectuals was analogous to Deng's, arguing:

The primary intention of Jiang's discourse is to reaffirm Deng's concern with the rehabilitation of intellectuals: intellectuals' support of the Party's policies is essential to guarantee the "modernisation" of the country, which is based on the axiomatic link between the three elements of reform, development and stability.⁵⁵⁸ As Marinelli observes, Jiang had to walk the tightrope of allowing intellectuals space to advance modernization without spinning beyond the control of the Party. The focus on stability and ideological work aimed at improving loyalty to the Party and Nation was meant to serve as that check.

Jane Duckett clarifies influences on Jiang's use of what I term the Liberal framework with her study on international influences on Chinese policymaking. In particular, she proposes the emergence of a new political framework she describes as Network authoritarianism in Jiang's and Hu's administrations. This structure allowed for more diverse inputs from non-state entities into policy making while maintaining the centrality of China's political authority. Key to her argument is the political importance of deepening international ties for Jiang Zemin. She writes, "Jiang Zemin had made it a personal goal to secure the PRC's bid to join the WTO as a defining achievement of his administration and so its influence was likely to be particularly strong at that point."⁵⁵⁹ She concludes that admittance into the global community through joining key institutions, articulated under principles associated with what I term the Liberal framework, fulfilled Jiang's political objectives.

Jinghan Zeng uses a quantitative methodology to examine the instrumental use of ideology by both Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin. Zeng argues that Jiang and Hu pursued differing goals in their use of ideology based on a shift in the elite political structures within China. Zeng writes:

This article argues that the decreasing need to monitor followers' loyalties because of a more stable elite politics on the one hand, and the increasing need to recruit new protégés (owing to top leaders' different strategic uses

⁵⁵⁸ Maurizio Marinelli, "Jiang Zemin's Discourse on Intellectuals: The Political Use of Formalised Language and the Conundrum of Stability," *Journal of current Chinese affairs*, 2013, Vol.42 (2), pages 132-133.

⁵⁵⁹ Jane Duckett, "International Influences on Policymaking in China: Network Authoritarianism from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao," *The China quarterly* (London), 2019, Vol.237, page 33.

of ideological campaigns) on the other hand, led to the changing manner of displaying loyalties through ideological campaigns in post-Deng China.⁵⁶⁰ Zeng asserts that rather than expanding his sphere of influence, Jiang sought to identify allies to solidify and maintain his position as core leader during the twilight of his tenure. Joseph Fewsmith concurs with this position and argues that Jiang sought to maintain influence even after leaving the post of General Secretary of the CPC. Examining Jiang's address at the Sixteenth Party Congress in 2002, Fewsmith postulated that Jiang sought to minimize Hu's influence as a potential core leader.⁵⁶¹ Both authors discern a competition for influence between paramount Chinese leaders fought over in the ideological arena.

Jiang Zemin's core leadership quest was filled with opportunities and pitfalls. As the first leader to achieve that position without robust revolutionary credentials, he was compelled to leverage historical memory without the benefit of consequential association with that celebrated past. On the other hand, Jiang did not lack confidence, and his rhetoric teems with unabashed examples of collective memory instrumentalization. This usage varied in frequency and type throughout his tenure. Jiang employed all four categories of historical memory including the Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal frameworks. However, his application of the Liberal narrative was negligible until after Deng's 1992 Southern tour speeches.

I divide Jiang's rhetorical use of historical memory into four phases. The first was between 1988 - 1991, in which Jiang struggled to establish his political authority while tackling the dual challenge of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis and the general collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. The second period between 1992 - 1996 saw Jiang share the spotlight with Deng, and only towards the end of this period did Jiang begin to assert ideological independence. The third period between 1997 - 2000 reflects the ascent of Jiang into undisputed core leadership with the dissemination of his Three Represents governing philosophy by 2000. The fourth period between 2001 - 2002 reflected Jiang's attempts to maintain influence as the fourth generation of leadership led by Hu Jintao came to the

⁵⁶⁰ Jinghan Zeng, "Changing Manners of Displaying Loyalties through Ideological Campaigns in Post-Deng China," *The Journal of contemporary China*, 2016, Vol.25 (100), page 14.

⁵⁶¹ Joseph Fewsmith, "The Sixteenth National Party Congress: The Succession that Didn't Happen." *The China Quarterly*, 2003, 173, 1-16.

forefront of PRC politics. I anticipate that there will be a general increase in the use of collective memory starting in the second phase and culminating in the third phase, with only a potentially slight decline towards the end of Jiang's tenure. Jiang Zemin found that wielding collective memory served to enhance his position, but despite these efforts apparently there are limits to how far it can take a leader reaching for core status in Chinese political culture.

Metrics

Jiang Zemin's discourse shows that he often and repeatedly used historical memory while pursuing and maintaining his position as core leader. The data set examined includes a total of 207 texts attributed to Jiang Zemin from 1988 - 2002, including speeches, addresses, articles, and other publications, mostly taken from his three volume *Selected Works*. When translated into English, the word count for all texts combined exceeds 666,000. A total of 1,390 references were discerned within the total dataset. A total of twenty texts had no perceptible references to historical memory or application of historical narratives. Appendix C includes a complete listing of the works and identified references from the dataset.

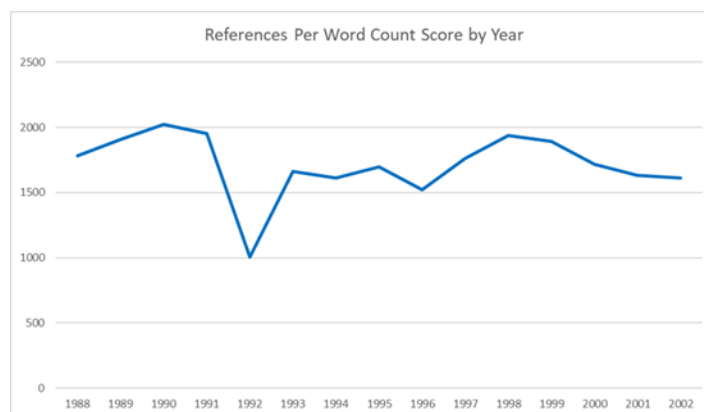


Figure 4.1 References per Word Count Score yearly average. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4000) to account for observed articles without historical references.

Jiang's discourse generally follows the expected pattern with some noteworthy variations requiring exploration. The first item worth interrogating is the elevated level of historical references found during the initial period between 1988 - 1991 when Jiang first assumed significant political power

following the ouster of Zhao Ziyang in 1989. This may reflect Jiang's attempt to compete for and then consolidate his influence within the collective leadership during this tumultuous period. The sharp collapse in 1992 appears to reflect the influence of Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour. Not only did Jiang's instrumental use of collective memory drop precipitously, but his speeches during this period were filled with deference to Deng's guidance as the organizing principle for the state. However, replacing my 25-year separation rule with a shorter period for inclusion would likely increase the incidences for Jiang's use of historical memory. This decrease may be due to Jiang's discourse at this point heavily featuring memory associated with the Reform and Opening Up policy, the 1978 Third Plenum, and Deng's rule generally, which lay within 25 years of 1992. After the initial reset, Jiang appears to have a relatively stable use of historical memory, with an increase in usage starting after 1996, reaching a peak in 1998. However, while Jiang's usage remained relatively high from this point until the end of his tenure, it did drop slightly earlier than expected, appearing to decline steadily by the year 2000. This is surprising since it was that year in which his ideology of the Three Represents came to the forefront. However, it may reflect that despite his best efforts, Jiang had difficulty in firmly establishing his governing philosophy as an enduring compass for governance akin to Mao Zedong Thought (毛泽东思想) and Deng Xiaoping Theory(邓小平理论).

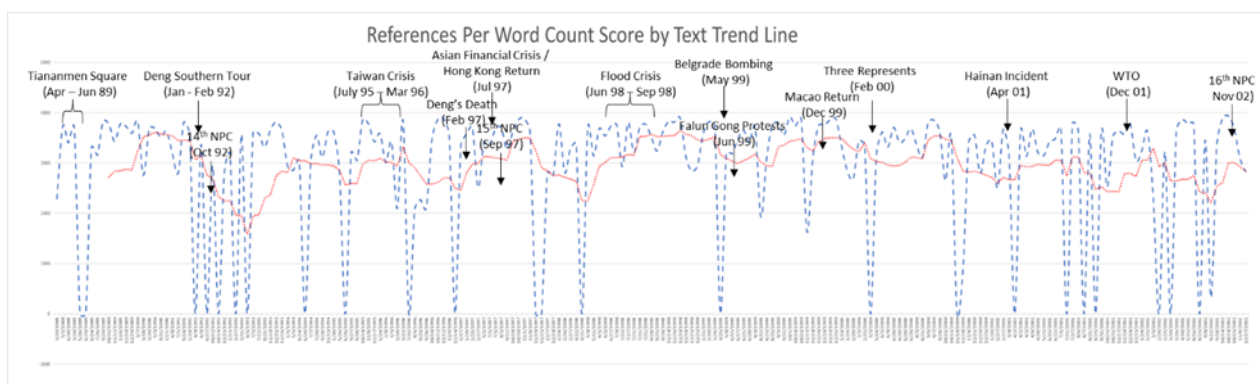


Figure 4.2 References per Word Count Score for each observation. The Blue Dash represents each individual Reference Per Word Count Score. The Red Dots represent the ten-data point moving average for the same data set. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4000) to account for observed articles without any historical references within.

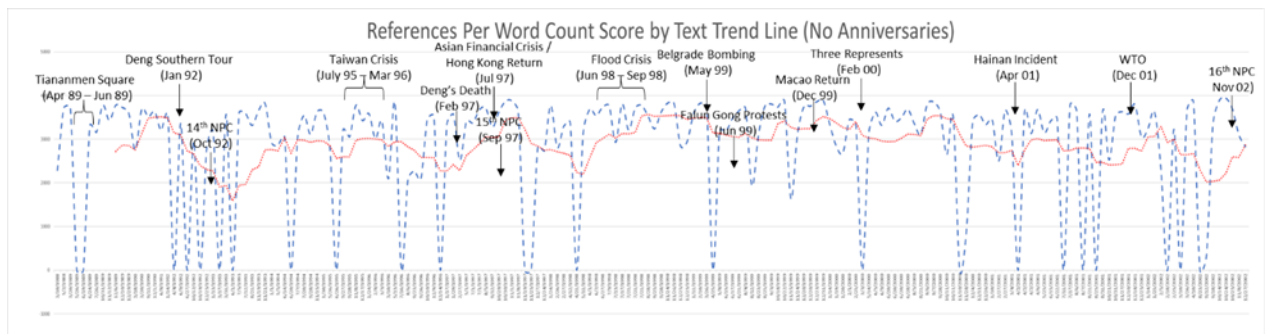


Figure 4.3 References per Word Count Score for each observation dropping speeches marking historical anniversaries.

According to Figure 2, Jiang's instrumental use of historical memory shifted considerably during his time in leadership. However, as Figure 3 displays, this variation appears independent of events marking historical anniversaries. Furthermore, it appears that crisis events alone, either internationally or domestically, are not sufficient to fully account for shifts in the data. The same can be said for major regime achievements, such as the retrocession of Hong Kong and Macao. Instead, it seems that events that contradict or diminish the ideological framework, and more specifically the underlying assumptions in Jiang's articulation of relevant historical narratives, coincide with this decline. One example is the 1997 Asian financial crisis casting doubt on the Asian model for Liberal market reforms as an enduring method for driving PRC economic growth.⁵⁶² Another incident in 1997 revolved around the backlash associated with interpretations of Jiang's ideology in works titled *Yu zongshuji tanxin* and *Guanjian shike*, compiled by scholars of the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS). Critics of these articles portrayed Jiang, who they claimed supported these articles, as lacking conviction as a Marxist and rebuked his ideology.⁵⁶³ As Bruce Gilley observes:

The veiled attacks on Jiang's theories of governance in magazines like *Zhongliu* and *Zhenli de zhuigui*, which would continue through 1997, were serious indeed. The examples of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang provided ample evidence that while a modern Chinese leader could make mistakes on any number of government policies and emerge unscathed, when it came to ideology, there was no room for compromise. Jiang had apparently come close to committing an ideological fault by offering tacit support for *Yu zongshuji tanxin* and *Guanjian shike*. Now he was paying the price.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶² "This crisis [the Asian financial crisis] compelled us to rethink global integration." — Wang Xuebing, president and vice-chairman, Bank of China, July 2, 1998, quoted from Lampton, David M. *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping*, page 108.

⁵⁶³ Bruce Gilley. *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite* (Kindle Locations 3911-3954). Kindle Edition.

⁵⁶⁴ Bruce Gilley. *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite* (Kindle Locations 3951-3954). Kindle Edition.

If Jiang could be credibly accused of being an insincere Marxist, then his appeals to authority as the successor of Mao and Deng carrying forward socialism with Chinese characters could be called into question and thereby erode a major source of his legitimacy as core leader. In addition, the bombing of the PRC Belgrade embassy in 1999 took Jiang by surprise and had the potential to derail relations with the United States, and by extension integration into the global international order.⁵⁶⁵ It could be that these episodes which contradict Jiang's governing philosophy and historical narrative caused his retreat from instrumental usage as he yielded authority to the collective leadership with the goal of consensus building to stabilize his political situation.⁵⁶⁶ If faults are identified in the paramount leader's governing philosophy which threaten the continued stability of the regime, then they must yield to the collective leadership to help guide the leader towards solutions, and forego redefining or selectively invoking historical memory as the sole arbiter as per the role of the core leader. Once that stability is regained, if the leader chooses and retains sufficient independence, they may attempt to reestablish their pursuit of core leadership. These renewed attempts are reflected in the later increase in the instrumental use of historical memory, which Jiang pursued throughout his tenure when feasible.

Following the substantial dip in the instrumentalization of collective memory in Jiang's writings after Deng's Southern Tour, its usage stabilized and recovered slightly by 1993. His usage remained stable until the autumn of 1996, when Deng's health became more precarious, and it became clear that he would soon pass away. This event allowed Jiang to advance his ideological independence and secure more political authority for himself as core leader and is reflected in the rapid rise of his use of historical memory. It was essential during this period to redefine historical memory to portray Jiang as the logical

⁵⁶⁵ For a brief overview of the impact of Belgrade bombing in the PRC and the flustered response by Jiang and the central leadership see, David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping*, pages 117-119. Another dangerous factor for this incident that Lampton illuminates is that the mass reaction to the incident took Jiang by surprise and was in danger of spiraling beyond the control of himself and the wider Party-State.

⁵⁶⁶ Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, page 391, Kindle Edition.

successor in authority to both Mao and Deng. However, prior to this, the third Taiwan Strait Crisis offered a significant challenge for Jiang on the international stage.

There were substantial elements within this crisis that afforded Jiang the opportunity to use historical memory to advance his objectives. Some examples of these options included: appeals to Chinese nationalism on both sides of the strait, reminders of common cause with the GMD in World War II, recollections of Chinese suffering at the hands of foreign powers during the Century of Humiliation (CoH hereafter), and US interference in the straits during the Korean War and beyond. Jiang did use many of these themes within his discourse during this period and beyond, but there was not a perceptible increase in the total use of memory as might be expected. Nor was there a decrease reflecting a loss of authority for Jiang either. The consistency in usage may reflect that despite the rhetoric, the crisis did not threaten Jiang's ideological foundations and was instead consistent with his policy framing towards Taiwan. That framing included an emphasis on the 1992 consensus along with the "One Country, Two Systems" scheme for eventual reunification and a dismissal of both the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Lee Teng-hui as pro-independence destabilizing elements. The main concern appeared to be to prevent a movement towards independence as opposed to compelling Taiwan towards immediate reunification. Furthermore, Bruce Gilley argues that rather than leading during the Taiwan crisis, Jiang's actual control over the military establishment was limited.⁵⁶⁷ Although the Taiwan crisis in 1995 - 1996 offered ample opportunity to use historical memory instrumentally, Jiang's usage remained surprisingly consistent.

Throughout the first half of 1997 Jiang's use of historical memory expanded. The culminating point appeared to be around the retrocession of Hong Kong from British control in July 1997. This event marked a crucial point in Chinese historical memory and for Jiang's legitimacy. Jiang claimed a triumph against one of the last vestiges of colonial rule and the CoH. This event validated Deng's "One country

⁵⁶⁷ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Locations 3554-3564). Kindle Edition.

Two systems,” schematic, which Jiang sought to use towards reunification with Taiwan.⁵⁶⁸ However, that same month saw the eruption of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis in Thailand, which spread throughout several East Asian nations and affected the global economy. Although the effects on China were relatively muted, Jiang had invested substantial ideological capital into engaging in economic modernization, often using the most impacted countries as models, to achieve rapid growth as a source of legitimacy both for Party rule and for himself as core leader. The economic difficulties resulting from the crisis called into question the wisdom of Jiang’s economic program and, more dangerously, his governing philosophy. If Jiang’s governing philosophy was exposed as flawed, such as having a misplaced faith in market liberalization, then any assertion for core leadership could be opposed by rivals for ideological authority within the Party. In this case, Jiang may have been forced to curb his instrumental use of collective memory until such a time as he could reinvent his historical interpretation to account for these new realities.

By 1998 Jiang accelerated his use of collective memory. One event which seemed to jumpstart this usage was the recovery efforts associated with significant flooding in the Yangtze and other river systems in the summer of 1998. Jiang hailed the disaster relief program as a great victory both for the Chinese nation and the Party-State directing those efforts. He leaned heavily into nationalistic rhetoric in describing those recovery efforts. Furthermore, he associated these efforts with sacrifices and victories by the CPC during the revolutionary era (1921 - 1949). This period also marked the broad dissemination of Jiang’s governing philosophy, first with the Three Stresses and later with the Three Represents by the winter of 2000. However, two crises appear to have slightly diminished Jiang’s use of historical memory. The Falun Gong protest movement, especially the protest near Zhongnanhai in 1999, took Jiang’s regime by surprise and appeared as a possible threat to the stability that Jiang saw as essential to maintaining his

⁵⁶⁸ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Location 4208). Kindle Edition.

and the Party's authority.⁵⁶⁹ Furthermore, the US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the subsequent anti-American protest movement in May of the same year offered an additional challenge. Large protest movements based on nationalist fervor, while seen as beneficial to an extent, carried the potential to destabilize the authority of the CPC.⁵⁷⁰ Second, Jiang had invested heavily in the theory that international relations were moving towards global cooperation for the foreseeable future. However, the bombing forced Jiang to awkwardly adjust his rhetoric with caveats, diminishing its utility and calling into question his ability to fully read the dynamics impacting global events. Although Jiang continued to push forward his governing philosophy, these events forced uncomfortable adjustments and subsequently saw Jiang decrease his use of historical memory.

Throughout the remainder of 1999 and into 2000, Jiang's use of historical memory remained generally stable. This stability occurred despite major victories for Jiang, such as the retrocession of Macao on New Year's Eve 1999 and the official release of Jiang's *Three Represents* theory a few months later. The lack of substantial impact suggests that Jiang could only push so far in advancing his status as core leader. However, Jiang's usage began declining by the Fall of 2000 but would be stabilized again by the winter of 2001 and remained relatively stable through the 16th National Party Congress in 2002. Neither the Hainan Island incident in April 2001 nor China's entrance into the WTO in December 2001 appear to have significantly impacted the trajectory. Neither event threatened Jiang's ideological framework and thus they were unlikely to impact Jiang's status as core leader and his use of historical memory. However, by 2002 Jiang's time as paramount leader was ending due to age restrictions put into place by Deng. Despite Jiang's continued efforts to maintain influence, much like Deng had done during Jiang's initial tenure, he had to make room for the incoming fourth generation led by Hu Jintao. Hu

⁵⁶⁹ Peter Sandby-Thomas, *Legitimizing the Chinese Communist Party since Tiananmen: A Critical Analysis of the Stability Discourse*, New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010, page 89. Jiang described the incident in April 25, 1999 as follows: "Without prior knowledge and from out of nowhere more than ten thousand people suddenly gathered at the entrance to the center of Party and government power, surrounding it for the whole day." *Jiang Zemin, Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume II*, page 311.

⁵⁷⁰ Discussing the issue of protests on May 9, 1999 Jiang warned, "All protest activities need to be carried out in a civilized, rational and orderly manner, to prevent the rise of extremism." *Jiang Zemin, Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume II*, page 316.

himself was not an immediately assertive figure, and thus Jiang's efforts after 2002 may have limited Hu's political and ideological independence, but this power was fleeting and had evaporated by 2005. By this point Jiang had to retire from his last major political positions in the CMC and Hu was well on the way to propagating his own governing philosophy in the Scientific Outlook on Development. The ebb and flow in Jiang's use of historical memory appears coincide with to his status as core leader, with Jiang instrumentally using historical memory to forge a narrative to allow him to assume the role of core leader like his predecessors Mao and Deng. In addition, that usage also included attempts to bolster the legitimacy of his policies. However, events that undermined his governing philosophy by challenging his proposed vision of history appear to correspond to temporary declines in his instrumental use. Such retreats indicate Jiang's suspension of defining and wielding historical memory as a function of core leadership, instead relying on collective leadership to bolster his legitimacy.

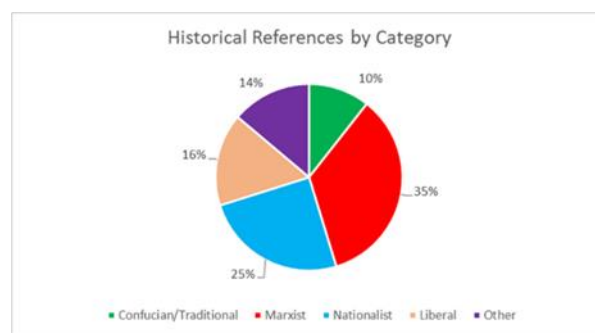


Figure 4.4 References by category percentage across the entire dataset.

Jiang Zemin's use of historical memory in his discourse conforms to the four main narrative structures employed by PRC leaders 86% of the time. By far, the largest percentage he used was the Marxist framework. This plurality reflects the continued importance of Marxist narratives to justify the CPC rule over China, often associated with its founding of New China in 1949 and myriad accomplishments since. Furthermore, Jiang relied upon the Marxist framework to fend off ideological criticisms of his program by associating his policies with key Marxist figures and theories. The Nationalist narrative comprised just shy of 25%. Jiang used this framework mainly as a unifying force within China and employed it in select international settings to bolster China's position. The Liberal narrative amplified Jiang's domestic legitimacy in line with Deng's Reform and Opening Up (R&OU

hereafter) policy and its reliance on economic growth and rising living standards. In addition, Jiang tapped into popular conceptions of Liberal international theory to make his arguments for deeper integration of China into the international system more palatable.⁵⁷¹ However, he remained careful to hedge and leave space for a unique Chinese cultural heritage to dissuade calls for Western-style reforms in China's political system. Central to arguing for a unique and deep-seated culture was using the Confucian/Traditional narrative, which accounted for 10% of the data set. Jiang also felt comfortable leaning into the Confucian/Traditional framework in his discourse to promote ethical behavior, especially in efforts to combat a growing perception of corruption within the CPC. Finally, Jiang used several non-associated references, especially favoring personal anecdotes, to advance his political objectives in various circumstances. Jiang's instrumental use of historical memory largely conformed with the main four narratives employed by PRC core leaders.

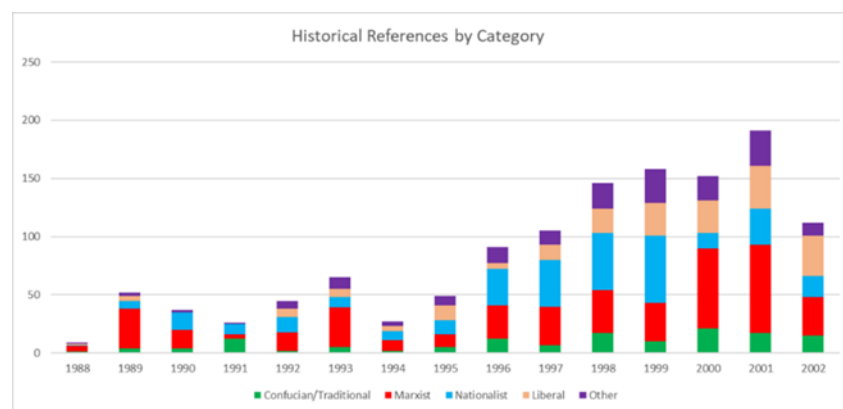


Figure 4.5 References by category for each year.

⁵⁷¹ There is substantial nuance within the Liberal International Relations Theory and various authors have taken differing positions within those arguments. For a general summary contemporary to Jiang Zemin, Robert Keohane offers an effective summarizing definition, “Liberalism makes the positive argument that an open international political economy, with rules and institutions based on state sovereignty, provides incentives for international cooperation and may even affect the internal constitutions of states in ways that promote peace.” Robert Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2002, page 40.

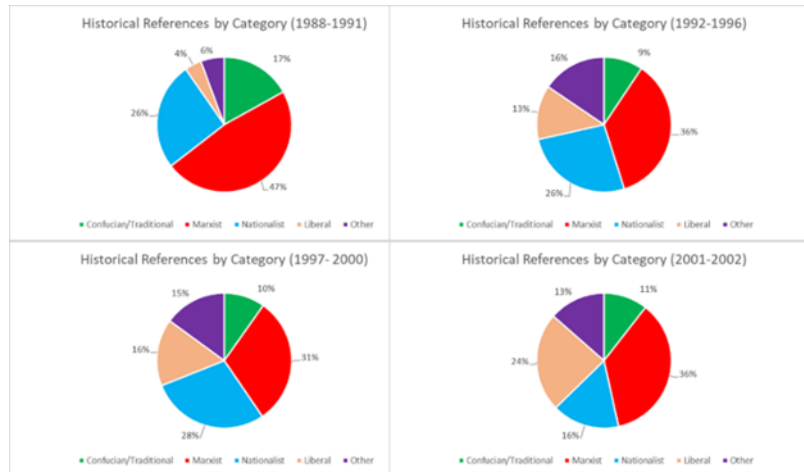


Figure 4.6 References by category divided into four sections, the ascent in crisis (1988-1991), the shadow of Deng (1992-1996), the movement towards the core (1997-2000), and the attempt to maintain core leadership (2001-2002).

Jiang's elevation to paramount leadership came during a period characterized by both national and international upheaval. Both the Tiananmen Square incident and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc were potentially severe blows to the legitimacy of the CPC. As such, it is not surprising that the Marxist framework dominated this period. Jiang sought to shore up his Marxist credentials, especially given that his immediate predecessor, Zhao Ziyang, had been removed for straying too far towards liberalization.⁵⁷² In addition, both the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks provided Jiang with tools to unify China in a time of division. The Liberal framework was almost completely avoided as it would have been likely associated with both the Tiananmen Square protest movement and efforts to Westernize China by foreign forces. In fact, Jiang repeatedly cited the latter as an objective of the West to facilitate China's division and conquest.

The next period saw the reassertion of Deng as the purveyor of ideology and interpreting historical memory through both his Southern Tour in 1992 and the publication of Deng Xiaoping theory with the release of the third volume of his *Selected Works* in 1994. Jiang modeled his discourse to conform to Deng's policy guidance, especially in the first half of this period.⁵⁷³ The Marxist framework remained prevalent but diminished somewhat, allowing other narratives room to expand. The most

⁵⁷² Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Location 2124), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁷³ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Location 2645), Kindle Edition.

significant growth was the Liberal framework, matching both Deng's rhetoric and apparent growing confidence in China's internal stability and its more secure position in the global community. The Nationalist framework remained at relatively the same percentage, continuing its role as a stabilizing force. Finally, the Confucian/Traditional framework diminished slightly as Jiang deferred to Deng for emulation instead of crafting instrumental uses of his own.

The third phase saw the rise of Jiang's ideology under the Three Represents and the height of his political and ideological power. However, there was a relatively slight change in the percentage spread of the four narratives. The Marxist framework diminished slightly in favor of slight increases in both the Nationalist and Liberal frameworks. However, the Marxist framework remained the largest and was crucial in legitimizing Jiang's *Three Represents* by portraying it as a continuation and evolution of previous ideological thoughts guiding China. This maneuver was essential to fend off criticisms from the conservative Left that Jiang was abandoning the PRC's Marxist foundations by implementing and expanding the market economy. The Liberal framework continued to play a vital role in China's foreign policy of opening to the world. However, this opening up came with the essential caveat that all nations, but especially China, have unique historical and cultural conditions that must be respected to maintain healthy cooperative relations. Both the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional narratives offered justification for this idea.

The final period represented Jiang's attempt to maintain influence despite the elevation of the fourth generation of leadership. Interestingly Jiang's *Selected Works* only include three items from 2003 and 2004, despite his continued position in leadership within the CMC. In fact, the only texts within his third volume from those years are a short speech during a visit to Britain and two farewell speeches to the CMC in 2004. A collection of his speeches on science and technology, including works up to 2006, also do not provide any texts to draw from between 2003 and 2004. This decrease in public discourse indicates that Jiang's direct influence waned, and he soon lost ground to Hu in this battle for influence. The Marxist framework returned to previous levels as Jiang sought to solidify the Three Represents in the CPC's ideological canon. In addition, the Liberal framework grew considerably. This may reflect Jiang's

continued reliance on Deng's R&OU to leverage legitimacy domestically. Additionally, the War on Terror and China's entrance into the WTO in late 2001 offered more significant opportunities for China to appear as a responsible stakeholder in the international order and correspondingly raise its prestige. Throughout Jiang's entire tenure, he continuously shifted his emphasis on each of the four narratives.



Figure 4.7 References by category between speeches marking anniversaries and those that did not.

Jiang Zemin's instrumental use of historical memory varied substantially based on the circumstances and the target audience they were primarily aimed at. There appears to be significantly greater Nationalist usage for anniversary events, with a still significant representation for the Marxist framework. This spread is not surprising because these events usually marked celebrated events in Chinese or CPC history. Anniversaries allowed Jiang to link his political program and ideology to past glories and infuse those policies with a gravitas that otherwise would have been absent.

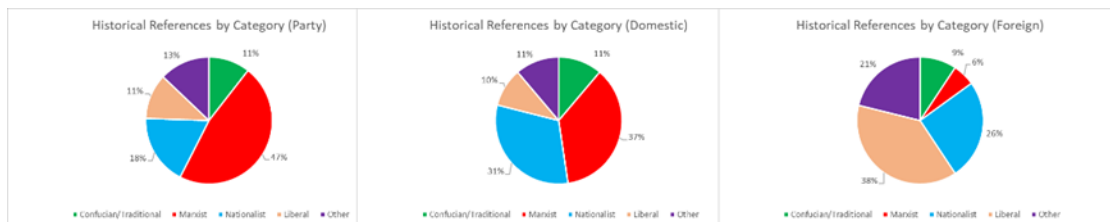


Figure 4.8 References by category between speeches to different primary audiences: Party, Domestic, and Foreign.

Jiang's use of the four narratives varied depending on his intended audience. Regarding his speeches centered on the Party, many of his instrumental uses of historical memory relied on the Marxist framework. The CPC's foundation remained rooted in Marxist thought, and he used it to characterize the Party and justify its rule. Furthermore, he used the Marxist framework to describe policy proposals and craft ideological arguments. This usage was especially essential for Jiang to counter arguments accusing

him of straying too far from Marxism with his reform efforts. By relying on arguments leveraging Marxist language, concepts, and historical references, Jiang could claim to be ideologically consistent with previous rulers and seen as still embodying Marxism at the core of his governing philosophy. However, it was equally essential for Jiang to evolve that ideology and claim his contribution to it to achieve core leadership. The other three historical frameworks provided ideological room for Jiang to advance the independence of his political program. Jiang employed the same qualification of the concept of Socialism with Chinese characteristics as used by his predecessors Mao and Deng.

Jiang's discourse aimed at a wider Chinese domestic audience tended to have a wider distribution of types of references than that aimed exclusively at the CPC and its constituent organs. The Marxist framework remained the most prevalent but dropped from holding an outright majority. However, this continued reliance indicates that Jiang perceived the instrumental use of Marxist narratives and references as resonant within the broader Chinese population. The Nationalist framework increased the most as a result. To unify his domestic audience around his leadership Jiang turned to a celebration of Chinese culture and history. Jiang increased his use of historical memory oriented toward points of unifying pride and shame to solidify his legitimacy and motivate the population to support his policies. He labored to avoid any hint of overt Han chauvinism and attempted to include various ethnic and religious minorities into a broader Chinese cultural and historical tradition. The other two categories of Liberal and Confucian/Traditional narratives were present but remained at the same levels as those found in discourse aimed at the Party apparatus. Political speech aimed at his domestic audience included the use of all four narratives, but the Nationalist framework gained more prominence at the expense of the Marxist framework.

Jiang Zemin's addresses to foreign audiences have the most significant variation compared to those made to domestic and Party audiences. The Marxist framework shrinks radically to only 6% of total references. Often these references were made during speeches delivered in fellow Communist states, such as Cuba or North Korea. The Liberal framework witnessed the greatest growth, as this narrative proved essential for Jiang to argue for the integration of China into the international order. However, that

entrance was qualified by appeals to China's unique historical and cultural conditions. Both the Confucian/Traditional and Nationalist frameworks proved necessary tools to accomplish this task. Curiously, the Confucian/Traditional framework appeared the most consistent across all three audiences. This may indicate Jiang's confidence in using that framework, albeit sparingly, for multiple purposes. It is also worth noting that a substantial percentage, over 20%, of references to foreign audiences did not conform to the four primary frameworks. These often took the form of individualized references to historical memory to forge direct connections between Jiang and the group he was addressing.⁵⁷⁴ Jiang clearly moderated his use of historical memory in accordance with the intended audience's preferences.

Jiang Zemin made substantial use of historical memory in pursuit of core leadership throughout his tenure as paramount leader. His usage generally conformed to the expected pattern but offered some interesting variations as well. One key component was the elevated level of usage during Jiang's initial crisis period between 1989 - 1991. Jiang's usage declined temporarily when domestic or international events contradicted his established ideological framework. However, successes or setbacks, when aligned with his ideological framework, did not appear to substantially impact the level of his usage. The spread of Jiang's references displays a reliance on the Marxist framework but also reveals consistent usage of the other frameworks as well. For example, the Liberal framework gained steadily in prominence throughout Jiang's tenure, especially after Deng's Southern Tour. Jiang also clearly moderated his use of historical memory based on his audience. This can be seen by the increased usage of the Marxist framework when addressing the Party, the Nationalist framework when addressing the domestic Chinese audience, and the

⁵⁷⁴ For example, in a Feb 1999 speech Jiang described his personal experience witnessing the development of technology as an electrical engineer. "At present, science and technology are constantly changing and developing rapidly. When I was in college, advanced fields such as genetic engineering still did not exist. I studied electrical engineering, and there were only vacuum tubes then. Transistors were not invented until 1948, integrated circuits were invented in 1958, and the invention of large-scale and very- large-scale integrated circuits came later." Jiang Zemin, *On The Development Of China's Information Technology Industry*, page 253. Another example can be found in a speech during his state visit to Russia in 1998. "Russia is a world power in science and technology and Russian scientists have made outstanding contributions to the progress of human civilization. Lomonosov, Mendeleev, Pavlov, Tsiolkovsky, and Popov, among others, are glorious names in the world history of science and technology. Today, Russia still leads the world in many key scientific and technological areas." Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 231.

Liberal framework towards foreign audiences. However, each framework served a political purpose for Jiang as he pursued his status as core leader. The following section will explore his use of these frameworks of collective memory across the breadth of his discourse.

Frameworks

Jiang Zemin's usage of the four frameworks served political objectives to advance his position as core leader and craft that memory to justify his assumption of supreme authority. While not exhaustive, the following will attempt to outline some of the most prevalent uses of historical memory by Jiang within the four frameworks. Like Mao, Jiang littered his discourse with references to Chinese imperial and ancient philosophers, historians, and poets to illuminate his points. Furthermore, Jiang applied this tactic to all three major audiences, displaying confidence and affinity for the material. These references imparted a sense of gravitas to Jiang's discourse by clothing his speeches in the wisdom of the ancients. Jiang remained cognizant of Mao's refrain to make the past serve the present, especially when applied to the Confucian/Traditional framework. One significant facet of the Confucian/Traditional framework is conjuring the memory of historical figures displaying righteousness to spur on contemporary moral behavior through emulation. Within the Confucian tradition, moral behavior is portrayed as a key component for social and political stability. Donald Munro explained, "Because the existence of model persons was always so important to educated Chinese (stability and peace depending on their influence), the nature and function of such sages are central in Confucian ethics."⁵⁷⁵ Jiang leveraged the long-standing tradition of pointing toward figures to model behavior and referencing Confucian philosophers extolling virtue.

These figures did not necessarily have to be ancient paragons but could also be individuals from modern history. One example is the literary figure Lu Xun (1881 - 1936). Jiang dedicated a speech in 1991 to celebrating Lu Xun and offering him as an example for Chinese people to follow. Lu Xun proved useful to Jiang as an example of an intellectual who remained loyal to the CPC at a time where some

⁵⁷⁵ Donald Munro, *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China*, page 176.

prominent intellectuals called for greater reform and celebrated ousted figures like Hu Yaobang.⁵⁷⁶ The memory of Lu Xun served as an example to follow for intellectuals who may have grown reticent towards the ruling Party in the wake of the Tiananmen Square incident. Jiang praised Lu's patriotism and revolutionary spirit, writing:

Beginning in his youth, Lu expressed the noble ideal that, "I will offer my blood to the Yellow Emperor." . . . He was merciless to the enemy but felt a genuine love for the motherland and its people . . . Lu's rocklike revolutionary resolve and tenacious militancy had their origin in a correct grasp of the laws of historical development and his intimate ties with the masses and progressive social forces. From his example, we can see what great Marxist wisdom and courage are, what kind of noble character a true revolutionary should have, and what the backbone of the Chinese people is.⁵⁷⁷

Lu Xun served as a unifying figure in Chinese collective memory and one who was widely admired, especially among intellectual circles. Jiang sought to instrumentalize that memory by pointing toward Lu Xun's perceived faith and steadfast loyalty and to have him act as an example for contemporary generations.

Jiang Zemin returned to offering exemplars of behavior in his speech marking the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the Communist Youth League (CYL) in 2002. Hu Jintao, Jiang's named successor, centered part of his network of support around connections made within the CYL.⁵⁷⁸ Hence, Jiang needed to appeal to this constituency to maintain his status as core leader and curtail some of Hu's influence. Jiang lists several figures from the CYL who warranted admiration:

Over the past 80 years, under the CPC's leadership, generation after generation of young people have stood at the forefront of the times, carried out a relentless struggle, endured hardships, and made achievements admired by the people the world over, and brought forth in many exemplary people and groups. For example, the fearless national hero Dong Cunrui who sacrificed his life to blow up a blockhouse; Liu Hulan who remained faithful and unyielding and faced death unflinchingly even under the enemy's guillotine; the great communist soldier Lei Feng whose service to the people knew no bounds; Zhang Haidi, a young woman with a disabled body but an iron will who forged ahead in the face of adversity; Li Xiangqun, a heroic soldier of the new period who bravely sacrificed his life in a deadly struggle against surging floods; and the contemporary role model Qin Wengui, who is firmly rooted in the primary level and is dedicated and hardworking. In the long development of our country's youth movement, advanced people like them are too numerous to count. They are classic examples of our country's young people with high ideals, and they are beacons of the great spirit of struggle of the Chinese nation.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁶ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, 1998, (Kindle Location 1580), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁷⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume I*, pages 161-162.

⁵⁷⁸ Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler*, Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2012, page 16.

⁵⁷⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume I*, page 466.

Jiang referenced figures from across CPC historical memory, casting as wide a net as possible. The unifying themes of faith in the CPC and willingness for self-sacrifice in the service of the nation appear as the main characteristics that Jiang sought to impart to the Chinese youth. This glorification of the past and Jiang's declared admiration for the youth may have been his attempt to cut into a core constituency for Hu.

Jiang sought to cultivate other morals within various constituencies by promoting exemplars and elevating a tradition of moral behavior in Chinese culture. One element that Jiang stressed is the value of hard work, thrift, and industriousness:

The Chinese nation has always been renowned as hard working, thrifty and undaunted by hardship . . . Chinese ancients said, "Trials and tribulations can lead to triumphs." "You can save the country through worry and toil, but will lose yourself through leisure and pleasure." "Life springs from sorrow and calamity, and death from ease and pleasure." These maxims still hold profound lessons for readers today. We need to use them to educate our comrades.⁵⁸⁰

Jiang targeted Party cadres hoping to instill a spirit of thrift to combat the perception of rampant corruption. Jiang also attempted to foster a spirit of integrity when he proclaimed:

Stressing integrity is one of the fine traditions of both our Party and the Chinese nation. There are several ancient Chinese sayings that address this subject, for example, "I am skillful in nourishing my vast, flowing passion nature" and "A small amount of awe-inspiring righteousness brings a great deal of gratification." These sayings mean that one must cultivate integrity and have a strong sense of justice. One must have integrity in order to fearlessly make progress and unflinchingly contribute to the success of the country and society.⁵⁸¹

Here Jiang quotes Mencius and a Northern Song-era poet to illustrate that integrity is necessary for progress. By extension, he further implied that those that lack integrity are guilty not just of a personal sin but by their actions degrade China's progress. Jiang sought to offer philosophical arguments to motivate the party to maintain a specific morality and tied that morality to the health and progress of the state.

Jiang appeared greatly concerned with the perception of corruption, especially among Party cadres. In fact, this enhanced focus marked a major plank of his governing philosophy and continued to reverberate with his successors. Jiang presented this corruption as corrosive, eating away at the legitimacy

⁵⁸⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 604-605.

⁵⁸¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 474. Mencius, "Gongsun Chou I," para 2. (我善養吾浩然之氣) James Legge translation, "I understand words. I am skillful in nourishing my vast, flowing passion-nature." <https://ctext.org/mengzi/gong-sun-chou-i>. From the associated *Selected works* footnote: Su Shi (1037-1101), a writer and calligrapher of the Northern Song Dynasty, "To Zhang Woquan from the Pavilion of Felicity in Huangzhou," set to the tune of Shui Diao Ge Tou.

of the CPC and damaging its ability to govern effectively. Jiang turned to Chinese historical memory to illustrate the dangers of corruption and its role leading to the collapse of past dynasties. He not so subtly implied that unless the problems were addressed, the CPC might fall into the dreaded dynastic cycle. He lamented:

In Chinese history there have been upright emperors and officials devoted to the country's welfare, but throughout China's history the ruling class was never able to solve the problem of corruption. By its very nature, the exploiting class stood in opposition to the people, and political corruption played an important role in the overthrow of all of China's dynasties.⁵⁸²

Jiang further drew on the memory of the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1912) to make a specific point to the CMC on the dangers of corruption. He presented the parable of the Manchu Eight Banners as an example of how a lethal military force can be undone by corruption. In 1998 he articulated:

In ancient and modern times in China and abroad, there have been countless cases of troops finally succumbing to extravagance and corruption after extended tours of combat. The Eight Banner Army was at first a very capable fighting force. However, after the establishment of the Qing Dynasty, due to being left idle and enjoying privilege and comfort, an atmosphere of self-indulgence spread throughout the army, and within a hundred years it completely lost its combat effectiveness and the troops became pampered soldiers incapable of fighting. When the need came to suppress the Revolt of the Three Feudatories led by Wu Sangui and others, its weaknesses were fully exposed. We should not forget this historical lesson.⁵⁸³

Jiang warned the PLA against becoming too soft and embroiled in corruption, pointing to a historical example from China's history in how quickly a fighting force can lose its warfighting capability. Jiang sought to arrest the rampant corruption by use of illustrative historical cases.

Jiang further discussed the corrosive impact of corruption using several examples from China's dynastic history in a speech to the CCDI in 2000. Jiang provided three examples from Dynastic history on the dangers of corruption to regime stability. First, Jiang pointed to the dangers of losing the people's faith. To illustrate this argument, he pointed to the rapid rise and fall of the Qin Dynasty (221 – 206 BCE):

And it was the Qin empire [221-207 BC] that buried itself; others didn't bury it. If the six states had had the support of their people, they would have defeated Qin. If Qin had taken care of the people of the six states after conquering those states, no one could have destroyed it and it would have continued in power for three generations, even ten thousand generations.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 314.

⁵⁸³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, pages 179-180. For a brief overview of the Three Feudatories rebellion see John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, pages 145-146.

⁵⁸⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, pages 136-137.

Regardless of how powerful a state may be, Jiang referenced the Qin as evidence that without the support of the people, any state will be overthrown. Next, Jiang used an example from the Sui dynasty (581 – 618) to discuss how corruption may emerge rapidly even from a previously secure and prosperous regime. He proclaimed:

When Emperor Yangdi of the Sui Dynasty [581-618] succeeded to the throne after his father, Emperor Wendi, he inherited an economically strong nation. At first, he did a great deal of work to safeguard the country and improve the economy and transportation by restoring the transportation route to the Western Regions, building roads, reconstructing the Great Wall and digging the Grand Canal. But later, the people rose in revolt because they had suffered too much as a result of excessive enslavement by the emperor and his indulgence in luxury and extravagance, and the despot himself finally ended up by hanging himself in Yangzhou.”⁵⁸⁵

In this case, despite a good start, according to Jiang, Emperor Yangdi was overthrown as the people were made to suffer because of his lack of moral character. Jiang warned that corruption had the potential to rapidly evaporate the legitimacy of the CPC. Finally, Jiang pointed to the Tang dynasty (618 – 907) and the An Lushan rebellion (755 – 763), which he described as caused by corruption and lack of morality. He recited:

Emperor Xuanzong, for instance, let himself be infatuated with his favorite concubine, Lady Yang, so much so that, to quote the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi, “She slept till the sun rose high, for the blessed night was short / From then on the monarch held no longer morning court.” He left the reins of government to Yang Guozhong, Lady Yang’s cousin, who, with all authority arrogated to himself, stopped at nothing in doing evil and connived at officials at all levels when they embezzled government wealth, took bribes, lorded it over the people and bled them white. Finally, An Lushan, a provincial military governor, rose in rebellion against the Tang empire on the pretext of “launching a punitive campaign against Yang Guozhong under orders.”⁵⁸⁶

According to Jiang, as the emperor allowed himself to be distracted by unethical behavior, immoral actors came to the fore and corrupted government offices for their personal gain, in turn losing the faith of the people. Each historical case illustrated a particular facet for how corruption eroded public trust in the government. Jiang instrumentally used this memory of dynastic corruption and rise and fall to stress the immediacy and danger of corruption for the CPC. Furthermore, he stressed the role of combating it to his audience the CCDI, whose role was to counter that corruption.

Jiang employed historical memory to illuminate other aspects of CPC governance. A key feature that Jiang emphasized was that stability is achieved only through the support of the people. Jiang argued

⁵⁸⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, page 137. For a brief overview of Emperor Yangdi’s rule see John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, pages 77-78.

⁵⁸⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, pages 137-138. For a brief overview of the An Lushan rebellion rule see John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, pages 82-83.

that support occurs only if the government orients itself to meet the needs of the people and places them at the center of public policy. In an address on poverty reduction efforts in 1996 he observed:

In some localities in the southwest and northwest, I personally found that some people's houses are nothing but bare walls, that they have barely enough cornmeal gruel to stave off starvation, and that they have great difficulty getting salt for their food and water to drink. My heart was touched by this sight. In ancient times, a Chinese statesman said, "There is no greater motive than love for the people, and no greater action than making them happy."⁵⁸⁷

Jiang stressed the need to care for the people as the main object for government and invoked

Confucian/Traditional memory to ground this viewpoint in ancient wisdom. Besides compassion,

Jiang further promoted preparedness and foresight as virtues in government affairs claiming:

An ancient saying goes, "In all things success depends on previous preparation, and without such previous preparation there is sure to be failure." Another states, "He who worries much is safe, but he who worries not at all is in danger." We need to stand higher, see further, and make scientific forecasts and correct judgments about economic risks that might arise as we move forward in order to be able to take preventive measures and always occupy an impregnable position.⁵⁸⁸

Here again, Jiang used historical memory referencing ancient wisdom to articulate contemporary government policy. The importance of proper moral behavior in government affairs is a crucial element of Jiang's use of Confucian/Traditional framework.

Jiang did not restrict his use of the Confucian/Traditional framework to Chinese audiences. He also repeatedly employed it with foreign audiences, presumably to soften the image of China on the international stage. Jiang presented China's international relations as shaped not by Marxist ideology but by pervasive philosophical and cultural influences stretching back at least to Confucius. According to Jiang, these ethical influences were embedded into the nucleus of Chinese statecraft. One component that Jiang highlighted was the value of good neighborliness and an enduring desire to have cordial and friendly relations. Addressing the diplomatic corps in 2001 Jiang opined:

Good-neighborliness and friendship are an important aspect of our country's independent foreign policy of peace and a fine tradition of the Chinese nation. Our forefathers long ago realized the importance of handling relations with neighboring countries well. The Zuo Zhuan from the Spring and Autumn Period says, "Loving people and treating neighbors kindly are most valuable to a country." Guan Zhong said, "If an emperor is wise, people come to him from far away and his neighbors befriend him," and "Former emperors treated people from

⁵⁸⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 536.

⁵⁸⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 526. *Book of Rites*, Zhong Yao, para 22. (凡事豫則立，不豫則廢) James Legge translation, "In all things success depends on previous preparation, and without such previous preparation there is sure to be failure." <https://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong>. From the *Selected Works* Footnote the source for the other quotation is the *Collected Writings of Zhuge Liang*, "Sixteen Strategies: Yincha"

far away with courtesy, and people from nearby with substance.” Maintaining friendly relations with neighboring countries will greatly serve our country’s interests.⁵⁸⁹ Jiang conveyed to the practitioners of the PRC’s foreign policy the importance of maintaining friendly relations with other countries and even employed references to China’s ancient past to illustrate this point.

Jiang endeavored to deflect international criticism of the PRC’s record on human rights through invoking historical memory. For example, he sought to parry criticisms of the PRCs record by citing long-standing traditions of respect for individual human dignity found within the Confucian/Traditional framework. During a visit to the United States in 1997, he answered critics claiming:

Respect for human dignity and value is a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation. Ancient Chinese sages declared, “Nothing is more valuable in the universe than human beings,” and “There is no greater goodwill than loving your fellows,” and these ideas have had a deep-rooted influence on Chinese society.⁵⁹⁰ Here Jiang pointed to a longstanding tradition in Chinese political culture of respect for human rights stretching back millennia. Leaning further into this theme, Jiang highlighted the need to respect diverse cultural and historical circumstances and maligned universal conceptions of human rights. In an address to the United Nations in 2002, Jiang proclaimed:

There are more than 200 countries and regions in the world, over 2,500 ethnic groups, and numerous religions and customs. “It is the nature of things to be of unequal quality.” As human civilization developed from eating the raw flesh of birds to animals to today’s bioengineering, and from slash-and-burn farming to today’s IT, different ethnic groups and civilizations all made their contributions to this process. Civilizations can be classified by how long they exist, but not by how good or bad they are. Differences between civilizations are not the source of world conflicts, but they should be the starting point for world exchanges. The sea is great because it admits myriad rivers.⁵⁹¹ The need to respect diversity in political cultures as a bedrock of international relations is a theme that Jiang repeated often.⁵⁹² Historical memory within the Confucian/Traditional framework granted Jiang

⁵⁸⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 308.

⁵⁹⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 53, From the *Selected Works* Footnote: Sun Bin: *The Art of Warfare*, “The Moon and Warfare.” Elder Dai’s *Book of Rites*, “Royal Speeches.” The original passage reads, “There is no greater good- will than loving your fellows, no greater knowledge than recognizing virtue and talent in others, and no better practice of government than appointing the virtuous and talented to positions of authority. If the ruler of a state masters these three principles, then people everywhere will bow in obeisance and await the ruler’s command. Then he can take action.”

⁵⁹¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 504, The quote “It is the nature of things to be of unequal quality,” (夫物之不齐，物之情也) is attributable to Mencius: Mengzi, Teng Wen Gong I, para 4. Interestingly the context of the quote is on the need for diversity in quality of products in an economy and the inadvisability of reducing all products to the same quality and price. <https://ctext.org/mengzi/teng-wen-gong-i>, (Accessed 5/22/2023). The final statement “The sea is great because it admits myriad rivers,” is a favorite line for not only Jiang but also Xi Jinping and is a paraphrase from Laozi’s *Dao De Jing*, para 66, <https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>.

⁵⁹² For examples of Jiang discussing diversity in nations see: Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 322, 469, Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 153, and Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, pages 107, 111, 218, 304, and 406.

room to define China's international relations in a manner that advanced its deepening connection with the community of nations while simultaneously seeking to shield the PRC's governing system from criticism.

Jiang further employed historical memory when discussing the utility of history for crafting policy with foreign audiences. This viewpoint treated the study of history as instructive and offering potential solutions to contemporary problems. Jiang drew attention to this legacy in an address discussing Sino-Russian relations in 2001. He recalled:

As an old Chinese saying goes, "Using a bronze mirror, we can adjust our clothing. Using history as our mirror, we can understand why powers rise and fall. Using other people as our mirror, we can understand success and failure." Looking back at the history of the development of Sino-Russian relations, one comes to a clear conclusion: that kind of old-style alliance or mutual antagonism between China and Russia, two major neighboring powers, is not conducive and can even be very damaging to the long-term, steady development of bilateral relations.⁵⁹³

Jiang drew on the recent history between China and Russia, highlighting the recent failures of both alliance and antagonism in advancing the interests of either nation. Instead, he endorsed a new kind of relationship between Russia and China based on cooperation but not targeted against any other power. This formulation benefited China in securing its northern border while avoiding antagonizing Western powers needed to drive China's economic growth. Although used sparingly compared to the other three frameworks, the Confucian/Traditional narrative proved essential to Jiang's instrumental use of historical memory.

Jiang used the Marxist framework the most throughout his political discourse. This framework proved essential for Jiang to justify his governing philosophy and cement his position as chief interpreter of ideology and arbiter of historical memory for the Party. This included efforts to interpret his ascension as a logical successor to the previous core leaders, Mao and Deng. In addition, Jiang had to display his Marxist credentials and offer a vision for the future based on his interpretation of the past. First and foremost, he used historical memory to bolster the argument that only a Marxist system led by the CPC could bring China into the future; all other paths would lead only to ruin. To bolster Jiang's ideology of

⁵⁹³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, pages 299-300.

Three Represents, he focused on establishing a direct and continuous lineage from Marxism-Leninism through Mao and Deng to his governing philosophy. Next, he used Marxist historical memory to justify numerous policies within his political program. Finally, the Marxist narrative proved a useful tool when discussing grand historical trends, both to dismiss setbacks, glorify achievements, and present progress as inevitable.

To be core leader, Jiang first needed to ensure that the existing political system endure unchallenged. Primarily this required the maintenance of the CPC as the dominant political force in Chinese governance. Furthermore, the justifying ideology of the CPC remained Marxism-Leninism, as applied to China's conditions. If the CPC was no longer Marxist in character, then the value of ruling theoretical interpretations diminished and the need for a core leader would dissipate. Therefore, Jiang needed to preserve, at least to an extent, the primacy of the CPC and at the very least a veneer of Marxist character. As the Maoist era patriotic song goes, "Without the Communist Party, there would be no New China" (沒有共產黨就沒有新中國). In the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident Jiang laid out this specific point and ruminated on its implications:

The establishment, consolidation and development of the socialist system comes as a manifestation of the objective laws governing the functioning of modern Chinese society, and represents the greatest and most profound transformation in Chinese history. Without the people's revolution to establish socialism, it would have been impossible for China to overthrow imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism and transform the dark world of old China into the brilliant New China. If China had not taken the socialist road and not upheld the people's democratic dictatorship after the founding of the People's Republic, it would not have been able to safeguard national unity and independence, and not been able to gradually realize the dream of bringing prosperity to all of its people. If we do not keep to the socialist road in the future, but return to the capitalist road as some people suggest, and use the sweat and toil of Chinese workers to breed and fatten the bourgeoisie again, then with China's huge population and low level of productive forces, the majority of the people would slip back into extreme poverty.⁵⁹⁴

Jiang argued that the CPC and the socialist system it implemented were the key elements to ending the deprivations of the CoH. More importantly for Jiang, any deviation would result in a collapse back into that pit of despair that the CoH represented within Chinese collective memory. According to Jiang, the

⁵⁹⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 64, see also Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 3, "The conclusion to be drawn from these major changes over the past century is that only the CPC could have led the Chinese people to national independence and liberation and the victory of socialism; pioneered the path of building socialism with Chinese characteristics; rejuvenated the nation; rendered the country prosperous and strong; and improved the people's wellbeing."

successes achieved in recent decades were primarily due to CPC rule guided by socialism. Furthermore, he declared that only that system could have possibly led to such an outcome. By leveraging historical memory regarding the CPC ending the CoH and highlighting achievements since then, Jiang argued for a continuation of the system.

Despite the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Jiang continued to use historical memory to shore up international communism in the early 1990s. During an official visit to Cuba in 1993 he cited numerous revolutionary martyrs and declared that their sacrifices had imbued the socialist system with a sacred character in Chinese collective memory. He remarked, “Several generations of Chinese have sacrificed their blood and their lives to reach the conclusion that only socialism can save and develop China. Socialism has already deeply permeated the hearts of the Chinese people.”⁵⁹⁵ Jiang did not shy away from conjuring the memory of the revered dead to boost his desired political system or encourage his international allies.

Establishing the historical narrative that Jiang’s governing philosophy was a natural evolution of Mao’s and Deng’s was essential if he was to enjoy ideological authority over the collective leadership. This tight-rope maneuver was essential for Jiang to claim core leader status, where he needed to draw on past legitimacy while adapting it to new circumstances to justify himself as chief interpreter of the new governing doctrine. However, before Jiang could advance his own theory, he had to ensure continued faith in the previous ideologies and draw a straight path from Marxism-Leninism through Mao and Deng. In an address to the Party in 1998 Jiang asserted the enduring importance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and its connection to both Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought:

In contemporary China, only Deng Xiaoping Theory, which combines Marxism with our contemporary experiences and the tenor of the times, can answer the question of socialism’s future and fate. No other theory can do this. Deng Xiaoping Theory is Marxism for present-day China, and it is a continuation and development of Mao Zedong Thought and a new stage in the development of Marxism in China . . . This is our most reliable guarantee for success in overcoming all difficulties, eliminating all interference and withstanding all tests on the road ahead.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 327.

⁵⁹⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 258.

At this point in time Deng Xiaoping Theory remained operative as the overriding ideological framework guiding Jiang's policies. However, Jiang positioned Deng theory as an ideological advancement consistent with the changing times while remaining consistent with past theories. Thus, he opened space to advance his own theory as a further evolution while still leveraging the authority of the previous governing philosophies.

Jiang attempted to carve out space to advance his philosophy by portraying the nature of Marxism itself as what he termed as scientific. Jiang repeatedly stressed the evolutionary character of Marxism and its ability to adjust based on new historical conditions. For example, he appealed to the past key figures of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and Deng, suggesting all endorsed this viewpoint in crafting their theoretical work. Jiang observed:

Marx, Engels, Lenin, and comrades Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping all excelled at introducing new ideas and theories in light of developments and changes in actual conditions, thereby setting a shining example of adhering to the scientific and innovative spirit. Above all, Marxism emphasizes the scientific and innovative spirit.⁵⁹⁷

Jiang sought to undercut critics appealing to a more dogmatic stance by recalling those very figures had done the same in crafting their theories. Furthermore, Jiang discussed the advancement of Marxist thought in China as a scientific process. Addressing party education in 2000 Jiang declared:

Marxism is a science, and our ideological- political belief. Since it was introduced into China, Marxism has witnessed two great "historic leaps" in the process of being integrated with Chinese practice — resulting in the two theoretical achievements of Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory. Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory have come down to us in one continuous line as a unified scientific system and the guiding ideology of our Party.⁵⁹⁸

This construct allowed Jiang to continue to selectively leverage the authority of past ideologies while still leaving room for him to evolve his own theories. Jiang posited that just as science innovated while building on past advancements, so too does the governing ideology of the CPC need to continuously refine itself, under his guidance as core leader.

As Jiang shored up and then opened space for his ideology, his next task was to tie his Three Represents theory directly to the previous guiding ideologies. In an address on Party work in October

⁵⁹⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 364.

⁵⁹⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, pages 50-51.

2000, Jiang argued that his Three Represents' implementation was necessary to fulfill the objective of both Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory:

The requirements of the "Three Represents," put forward according to the character, purpose, historical experience and reality of our Party to better fulfill the Party-building requirements of Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory in a comprehensive way in the new practice during the new period, are the foundation for building the Party, the cornerstone for its exercise of state power and a source of its strength, as well as our basic principle to strengthen Party building in the new period. Much work has to be done to make all the comrades of our Party deeply understand, and fully and correctly grasp, the requirements of the "Three Represents."⁵⁹⁹

He continued to call for the reverence of the past but to achieve the objective of modernizing China the CPC must adjust to the times. That adjustment meant adherence to the new theory in which Jiang was the chief architect and primary interpreter. Jiang continued stressing the continuity between the various thoughts but placed the Three Represents as the operative framework. For example, when addressing cultural creators in 2001, Jiang stated:

I hope writers and artists steadfastly take Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory as their guide, carry out the Three Represents; dedicate themselves to and gain a thorough understanding of the praxis of reform, opening up and modernization; focus on the leading edge of the world's scientific and cultural developments; and constantly promote the development and flourishing of China's literary and artistic undertakings.⁶⁰⁰

Although the previous governing philosophies should be treated as a guide, by 2001, Jiang called for his Three Represents to be the operative theory shaping contemporary state policy. Jiang used the Marxist framework of historical memory to legitimize his Three Represents by linking it to past ideological thoughts while simultaneously advancing it as necessary for keeping up with the times.

Jiang also used the Marxist framework to fend off criticism of his political program and thereby block efforts to curtail his influence as core leader. Jiang characterized criticisms, broadly speaking, as the left taking issue with perceived deviations from Marxist ideology while the right advocated for more expansive Liberal reforms. For example, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, Jiang forcibly defended the Marxist character of the CPC and its continued rule as essential. Part of that character was the need for the party to enforce discipline among its cadres through the practice of criticism and self-criticism. He declared:

⁵⁹⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, pages 87-88.

⁶⁰⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume III*, page 391.

The Party has always insisted that while changing the objective world we must also change the subjective world. For this reason, the Party has always advocated using the tools of criticism and self-criticism to carry out vigorous ideological struggle to strengthen the Party ideologically. We long ago created a formula for properly correcting confusion in the Party between correct and erroneous ideology and between advanced and backward ideology: unity — criticism and self-criticism — unity. This is a basic lesson we have learned from experience for strengthening the Party ideologically. Some comrades believe that criticism and self-criticism are “Left” practices and that vigorous ideological struggles will undermine unity. They are actually playing a role in covering up erroneous ideology, words and actions and allowing them to exist in the Party.⁶⁰¹

Jiang underscored the longstanding tradition of the Party using criticism and self-criticism to justify the continuation of the practice and criticized rightist opponents who sought to curtail it. However, Jiang also attacked those on his left. One such example occurred in 2000 when he blamed them for past failures such as the Cultural Revolution that undermined popular confidence in the CPC:

To be frank, there are some people who are still having a “crisis of confidence” when it comes to the CPC. In the early period after liberation, the people of the country upheld the leadership of the CPC and believed in the socialist road. However, due to the subsequent occurrence of “Left” errors and the disaster caused by the Cultural Revolution, the masses had complaints and some people began to question communist ideals and the socialist road. A great number of conflicts have arisen among the people and in society in the course of deepening reform. If we fail to appropriately and promptly resolve them, bad people might use them to aggravate the situation, which could lead to new disturbances. High-level Party and state leaders and all Party comrades must never treat this issue lightly, and they must remain highly vigilant and further improve all of their work.⁶⁰²

In this case, he warned opponents that failures stemming from straying too far left might degrade the credibility of the CPC and the socialist system. Jiang stressed the need for unity and chided deviations from both left and right political elements.

Jiang faced enduring criticism from the left for the continuation and development of the R&OU program initiated under Deng. At times, this criticism represented a principal threat to his aspirations as core leader, especially as he advocated for the implementation of his governing philosophy beyond the protection of Deng Xiaoping Theory. One of the key arguments that Jiang returned to repeatedly was that China remained in what he agreed was the primary stage of socialism, borrowing a motif from Deng. He explained the concept:

Among other things, he (Deng) pointed out that our country is still in the primary stage of socialism and it takes the arduous and unremitting efforts of several, a dozen or even several dozen generations to consolidate and develop the socialist system . . .⁶⁰³

⁶⁰¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 91.

⁶⁰² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 546.

⁶⁰³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 28.

Jiang argued that no shortcuts could be taken in the development of the productive forces under socialism, as had been tried in the late Mao period. This recognition of historical conditions framed within Marxist historical dialectics was one of the primary foundations for Jiang's Three Represents. He referred to it to forestall any discussion of moving away from market economic policies. For example, on the question of private investment and market economics, Jiang invoked the memory of both Marx and Engels to justify the practice. He argued:

Dwelling on the situation in which capitalism had developed to the point where joint-stock companies and trusts had emerged in "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891," Frederick Engels asserts that capitalist production by joint-stock companies is no longer private production but production on behalf of many associated people. "And when we pass on from joint-stock companies to trusts, which dominate and monopolize whole branches of industry, this puts an end not only to private production but also to planlessness." In the "Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," Karl Marx says that a social order never perishes before all the productive forces for which it is broadly sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the womb of the old society.⁶⁰⁴

By using Marx and Engels, Jiang sought to deflect attacks from the Left that his policy reforms were deviating from Marxism. In many cases, Jiang found that the best course of action to deflect criticism of his policies as being too liberal was to invoke historical memory within the Marxist framework to justify those very policies.

Another area where Jiang employed the Marxist framework was in describing the general course of history. This practice proved useful to minimize setbacks as transitory while portraying progress as inevitable. In 1990 as confidence in the Communist system waned, Jiang attempted to place the decline into a wider context of world history. He explained:

At present, world socialism is at a low ebb, but the situation is not as bad as claimed by those who say that socialism has already collapsed. It has been 142 years since the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, and the first socialist country was born 73 years ago. However, this is but a fleeting moment in the long course of human historical development. Capitalist countries already have a history spanning 350 years, counting from the English bourgeois revolution. Bourgeois revolutions simply replace one exploiting class with another, but, before the Western bourgeoisie took firm grasp of power, a number of restorations and counter-restorations took place. Even today, a number of European countries still retain vestiges of feudalism. Socialism is a new social system that eradicates the system of exploitation. It has a history of only 73 years, and it is difficult to entirely avoid encountering a few setbacks and difficulties and making a few detours. In their writings, Marx, Engels and Lenin analyzed many fundamental conflicts in today's world, as did their successors. Capitalism has definitely failed to resolve these conflicts. Only socialism can do so. If socialist countries concentrate their efforts on accelerating economic development, become more powerful, and fully manifest the superiority of the socialist system, socialism will triumph in the end.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, pages 28-29.

⁶⁰⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 129.

Jiang articulated the ebb and flow in development of capitalist systems and compared the length of history for both systems, noting the relatively short history of socialism. He concluded that only socialism could resolve the structural conflicts plaguing the world and that the collapse of Communist states in Eastern Europe was merely a temporary setback for world socialism. In the meantime, however, he suggested that socialism could achieve success by outcompeting the capitalist countries, by implementing the R&OU policy under his core leadership.

Religious and class conflicts remained thorny issues for Jiang to navigate. Overly aggressive efforts, such as those enacted during the Cultural Revolution, caused a backlash that he hoped to avoid. On the other hand, Jiang was concerned with religious elements such as the Buddhists in Tibet and the Falun Gong movement throughout China. Religion could be tolerated if it remained loyal to the Party and proved no threat to stability. As a Marxist, Jiang articulated that the elimination of religion was inevitable, but he was in no hurry to exterminate it. He explained:

We Communists are materialists who do not believe in religion, but we respect objective laws governing its existence and development. Religion is a social phenomenon with a very long history, and it will exist in socialist society for a long time to come. The eventual extinction of religion is necessarily a long historical process, one that is perhaps even longer than the eventual withering away of classes and countries.⁶⁰⁶

Jiang took a similar stance towards the elimination of class struggle as well. In a speech on the need to uphold Deng's Four Cardinal principles in 2002 Jiang declared:

The exploiting class is long gone from China. However, due to various international and domestic factors, particular forms of class struggle not only still exist, but will continue to exist in certain areas for a long time to come and occasionally become very intense. We will not repeat our past error of taking class struggle as the key link, but all Party comrades must never treat lightly the particular class struggle that presently exists in certain areas: our struggle against the enemy under the new situation.⁶⁰⁷

Jiang refuted the idea of returning to the late Maoist view on class struggle as essential but noted that it might still occur in China for some time into the future. For both religious and class struggle Jiang adjusted the level of accommodation based on his policy objectives. Although Jiang Zemin did not rely solely on the Marxist framework of historical memory, it filled critical roles that the other frameworks could not as easily address in pursuing core status.

⁶⁰⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 147.

⁶⁰⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 218.

The Nationalist framework proved to be the second most frequent category within Jiang Zemin's political discourse. This high percentage is not surprising as it provided Jiang with perhaps the best tool for securing unity among the widest possible domestic audience. However, appeals to nationalism can be dangerous as it may grow beyond the control of the Party-State if the government is no longer viewed as acting in the best interests of the nation. Jiang's concern over the protest movement after the inadvertent US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 displayed his awareness of this danger.⁶⁰⁸ Despite the inherent risk, Jiang used this framework to establish civilizational pride in the population. Furthermore, he used it to advocate for national loyalty and counter separatist narratives. The collective memory of the CoH was a particularly potent motif that Jiang employed to foster pride and generate resentment as needed. Invoking self-esteem in military exploits, especially in World War II, not only generated domestic pride but also lent Jiang authority within the wider international community. In addition, scientific and economic advancements since the founding of the PRC served Jiang as evidence of progress creating legitimacy for the CPC generally and for his political program more specifically.

Collective memory associated with Chinese civilization offered Jiang a wealth of material to inspire his domestic audience and awe the international community. Jiang drew deeply from the vast cultural accomplishments of the Chinese civilization and its contributions to world civilization. One of the frequent facets that Jiang brought up was Chinese civilization as one of the four cradles of world civilization. Another was the contribution of the four civilizational inventions: paper, the compass, gunpowder, and printing to world progress. For example, in a speech centered on scientific development given in Russia in 1998 Jiang explained:

China is one of the cradles of world civilization and has a glorious history of both education and science. Ancient Chinese science and technology, exemplified by the four famous inventions — papermaking, gunpowder, printing and the compass — once tremendously influenced the course of human civilization development and profoundly changed the face of world civilization.⁶⁰⁹

Beyond the potent power of pride in accomplishment, Jiang's use of this memory served to elevate China's reputation internationally. In his formulation, China not only was a primary source of world

⁶⁰⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, pages 315-316.

⁶⁰⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 233.

civilization, but also provided the essential building blocks that enabled the scientific revolution and global economic integration that animated contemporary progress.

A further point that Jiang focused on was the enduring contribution of Chinese civilization and its vital role in world affairs. In a speech focusing on scientific development in China Jiang stated:

Before the 15th century, Eastern civilization, epitomized by Chinese civilization, was far more advanced than Western civilization. For over 14 centuries, from the Han Dynasty to the early Ming Dynasty, China's science and technology were among the most advanced in the world.⁶¹⁰

Although here Jiang is speaking specifically about scientific advancement, he more broadly advocated the position that China historically was a major driver of global civilization. It is only during the most recent centuries, specifically under Qing (1644 – 1912) (Manchu) rule and epitomized by the CoH, that China fell behind. Thus, China's return to prominence is not merely a rise but a return to a long-standing historical condition.

Jiang aimed to counter regional separatism and maintain national unity. The PRC is a vast state with numerous overlapping ethnic and religious minorities. In Jiang's construction, even the slightest movement towards secession could lead to disintegration of the Chinese state and usher in a period of extended turmoil, as occurred several times throughout China's history. Jiang firmly characterized support for such secession as in line with historical attempts to divide and exploit China.⁶¹¹ To combat any schisms that developed, Jiang used the Nationalist framework to illustrate the indivisible character of the nation. The two western autonomous regions of Xinjiang and Tibet proved hotbeds for secessionist activity and demanded substantial attention from Jiang. For example, when discussing Xinjiang, he argued that it had been an integral part of China for millennia:

Xinjiang has been part of China since antiquity. In ancient times, Xinjiang and the surrounding regions were called the Western Regions. In 101 BC, the Western Han Dynasty appointed local officials, who directed garrison troops or newly settled peasants to open up wasteland for grain cultivation. In 60 BC, the dynasty also established the Western Regions Frontier Command and put it in charge of military and political affairs in the Western Regions. This shows that at that time, Xinjiang had already formally become Chinese territory. Beginning with the Han Dynasty, all of China's dynasties attached great importance to the Western Regions and exercised jurisdiction over them.⁶¹²

⁶¹⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 482.

⁶¹¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 156.

⁶¹² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 160. For a brief summary of the Han expansion into Central Asia see Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*: Volume I, pages 111-14.

Jiang asserted that not only had there been a long history tying Xinjiang to the rest of China but also highlighted a tradition of development of the region by central authorities, indicating its historical importance as a part of China. He applied a similar viewpoint regarding Tibet. For example, when discussing ethnic work in Tibet in 1992 Jiang observed: “Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times. This is an incontrovertible historical fact.”⁶¹³ He argued on more than one occasion that Tibet remained historically tied to China and this fact justified its continued integration into the PRC.⁶¹⁴ Jiang justified suppression of any separatist sentiment in Tibet and Xinjiang at least in part by exploiting historical memory of both foreign and domestic audiences the historical association of those regions with China.

Another region where Jiang engaged in countering separatism involved PRC relations with Taiwan. Unlike Xinjiang or Tibet, Taiwan remained de facto politically independent from Beijing. The prominent historical rivalry between the PRC and the ROC for control of China, including periods of cooperation, made any discussion of Taiwan’s political status rife with potential for instrumental use of historical memory. Jiang leveraged collective memory within the Nationalist framework to justify reunification with Taiwan. In a speech in 1995 discussing relations with Taiwan Jiang claimed:

Taiwan is an inseparable part of China. A hundred years ago, on April 17, 1895, Japanese imperialists used belligerent means to force the decadent Qing court to sign the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki, under which they forcibly seized Taiwan and the Penghu Islands and subjected the people of Taiwan to a half-century of Japanese colonial rule. The Chinese people will never forget this humiliation.⁶¹⁵

Not only did Jiang lobby for the integration of Taiwan into the PRC but tied its separation directly with the CoH. The implication being that until this historical slight was rectified, China had failed to completely reverse the traumatizing experience of the CoH. He continued:

Fifty years ago, the Chinese people, together with other peoples of the world, defeated Japanese imperialism. Taiwan and the Penghu Islands returned to the Chinese domain on October 25, 1945, and the people of Taiwan cast off the shackles of colonial rule. However, for reasons known to all, Taiwan has been in a state of separation from the Chinese mainland since 1949. Achieving the complete reunification of the motherland and promoting all-round rejuvenation of the Chinese nation are still the sacred missions and lofty goals of all Chinese.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 180-181. For a brief summary of the Tang expansion into Central Asia and interactions with the Tibet see Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*: Volume I, pages 234 & 243-251.

⁶¹⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 296.

⁶¹⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 407

⁶¹⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 407

Here Jiang conjured the memory of World War II and argued that despite the nation's collective sacrifices against Japan, China was denied full reunification. For Jiang it appeared that reunification was a straightforward conclusion based on the historical record. Although here he is obscure, he often blamed the United States directly for the separation of Taiwan from the mainland.⁶¹⁷ However, it is worth noting that to a more exclusive audience Jiang adopted a nuanced view. In a speech to high ranking PLA members in 2001 Jiang spoke to the complexity of the problem, "The Taiwan question has evolved over a long period of time, and it involves historical and current factors as well as domestic and international factors, all of which are complex, making it a very difficult question to solve."⁶¹⁸ Here Jiang tempered his discourse regarding Taiwan in an apparent bid to create room for resolving tensions. Unlike the Taiwan crisis in the mid-1990s, in this case the United States' attention was focused elsewhere. Jiang speech was delivered only weeks after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the Bush Administration was focused on Islamist Terrorism. This allowed Jiang to take a more measured and patient approach to Taiwan. Although an evolution in Jiang's thinking cannot be ruled out, it seems more plausible that Jiang adjusted his discourse to meet the needs of his audience and his political objectives at the time.

The CoH features prominently as a defining epoch within the Nationalist Framework of historical memory in China. This historical period's termination marked a seminal achievement in the historical memory for both the PRC and the ROC. Furthermore, CPC leaders, including Jiang, used it as a reference point for measuring contemporary progress and goals for the future. Jiang characterized the reduction of China to a semi-colonial status by foreign imperial powers as the inciting incident that propelled the formation and eventual success of the CPC. At an address celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the CPC Jiang proclaimed:

After 1840, the invasion by Western powers gradually reduced China to the status of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and subjected the Chinese people to two-fold repression by imperialism and feudalism. The national crisis and social crisis were unprecedentedly grave. From the Opium Wars, through the Movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the 1898 Reform Movement and the Yihetuan Movement, the Chinese people carried out dauntless struggles, and numerous people with lofty ideals were trying strenuously to explore a road

⁶¹⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 150.

⁶¹⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 351.

to salvaging the country and the nation. All the attempts ended in failure one after another although each time they helped promote progress in China under given historical conditions.⁶¹⁹ Although many patriotic groups were compelled by China's conditions to endeavor to reverse the CoH, Jiang maintained that it could only be the CPC guided by socialism with Chinese characteristics that could achieve success. Jiang would repeatedly invoke the memory of the CoH to foster a universal feeling of resentment towards that experience.⁶²⁰ Beyond the unifying effect, Jiang guided this feeling of bitterness to target either foreign powers that Jiang accused of seeking to divide and exploit China, or domestic elements opposing the CPC.

Jiang used the memory of the CoH to attack perceived opponents on both the domestic and international fronts. By highlighting those nations that participated in the perceived humiliation of China, Jiang sought to direct public opinion towards specific policy objectives aimed at countering those countries. For example, Jiang condemned certain religious institutions as tools of foreign manipulation and accused them of weakening China by their actions. In a speech about religion in 2001 Jiang asserted:

Religion always accompanied the early colonial expansion of Western colonialism and imperialism. During the invasions of China by Western powers in modern Chinese history, Catholicism and Protestantism were tools used proficiently to carry out political and cultural infiltration and enslave the Chinese people.⁶²¹ In this case Jiang classified religion as a tool for Western expansion and exploitation in China. In addition, Jiang used memory of the CoH to denigrate countries critical of the CPC rule as practicing imperialism against China once more. In the chaotic period in 1990, Jiang pushed back against perceived Western interference through their advocacy for political reform in China as analogous to previous foreign exploitation during the CoH:

In July this year, the G7 Summit issued a political declaration on the subject of "securing democracy," which advocated promoting the "world democratic trend," sought to expand the changes that took place in Eastern Europe, encouraged the continuation of changes in the Soviet Union, and adopted a carrot and stick approach to socialist and third world countries. Some Western countries are going a step further and interfering in other countries' internal affairs in the name of democracy and are trying to force them to adopt the Western political and economic model. When I met with former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger the other day, I told him that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the Opium War. Six of the seven G7 countries were members of the Eight-Power Allied Forces that invaded China. Recently, the Museum of Chinese Revolutionary History held an exhibition commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Opium War, the purpose of which was to teach people not to forget that period of history.⁶²²

⁶¹⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, page 173.

⁶²⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 113-114, 118, 470, & 567.

⁶²¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 368.

⁶²² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 128.

Jiang not only associated the G7 members with previous imperial powers, but explicitly linked the dissemination of CoH memory to counter these perceived hostile efforts. One avenue in which this instrumental use of memory was accomplished was through a museum exhibit on the subject. The Museum of Chinese Revolutionary History was meant to raise awareness among the public and shape their perceptions. This technique allowed Jiang to connect historical memory of past slights more effectively to contemporary issues and increase his capacity to leverage it within his discourse for political ends.

In addition to utilizing the CoH as a general concept, Jiang also referenced individuals and specific movements from that period. These references remained consistent with the goals of the Nationalist framework as they aimed towards generating pride in the general population and calls to action to support specific initiatives. One figure that Jiang returned to repeatedly from this era was Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Collective memory of Dr. Sun proved highly valuable given wide familiarity and general reverence for him both in mainland China and within segments of Taiwanese society.⁶²³ Foreign audiences were also more likely to be familiar with him as well, given both his achievements and his international travels during his lifetime. Jiang attempted to harness Sun's legacy to his own ends. In a speech in 1996 Jiang eulogized:

When China was suffering from domestic turbulence, foreign invasion, poverty and backwardness, Dr. Sun was the first to give voice to the resounding slogan, "Regenerate China." He unequivocally stated that "development is the sole aim of revolution," and he mapped out a blue- print for developing modern industry, communications and agriculture in such writings as the "Plans for National Reconstruction," which showed his brilliant ideas and bold vision for the future development of China. He believed that to catch up with and surpass economically developed Western countries, we should "open China to the outside world" and "learn the strengths of foreign countries," while emphasizing that "if control over development is in our hands, China will survive; if it is in others' hands, China will perish." He firmly advocated safeguarding our state sovereignty and national unity, opposed all acts designed to divide the motherland, and stated, "Unification is the hope of all Chinese people. If China can be unified, all Chinese will enjoy a happy life; if it cannot, they will suffer." Dr. Sun's great patriotic spirit and thinking still play an enormous role in enlightening, educating and inspiring the Chinese people who are building a modern socialist country and all our compatriots at home and abroad who are devoted to making the motherland prosperous and powerful and achieving national reunification.⁶²⁴

⁶²³ For more on Dr. Sun's legacy in shaping political thought in Taiwan see David Lorenzo, *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and Chiang Ching-kuo*, pages 80-83.

⁶²⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume I*, page 580.

In this speech Jiang instrumentalized the memory of Dr. Sun for several specific political purposes. He used Sun to amplify support for the R&OU program under Jiang's guidance by highlighting similar ideas within Sun's political ideology. He also pointed to Dr. Sun's patriotism and desire for a unified China, which was especially potent for its dual effect both in mainland China and in Taiwan in the months following the Third Taiwan Strait crisis. Finally, Jiang was specific that the memory of Dr. Sun would continue to motivate and enlighten future generations of Chinese towards Jiang's preferred political orientation. Jiang found Dr. Sun a useful tool within the Nationalist framework of historical memory.

Another referent from the CoH that Jiang often relied upon was the May 4th Movement. This movement had long held a special place in Chinese historical memory as a moment that symbolized resistance against both foreign and regressive elements.⁶²⁵ As the movement was dominated by students and the youth, Jiang sought to use memory of the event to motivate contemporary youth to become invested in China's future, as characterized by Jiang. At a speech marking the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CYL), Jiang leveraged this memory presumably to connect with young people. He started off with setting the historical stage for the CYL's founding:

At the start of the 20th century, due to aggression and bullying by imperialists and the corruption and incompetence of a feudal autocratic government, China was shrouded in darkness and the nation was beset by disaster. Thousands upon thousands of passionate young people campaigned to save the country and rejuvenate the Chinese nation, and actively sought the truth and a path that could save the country and the people.⁶²⁶

Jiang blamed both foreign imperialists who sought to exploit China and incompetent rulers for China's dire conditions. According to him these conditions motivated young people to discover a way to assist China in its pitiable condition, and this desire found expression in the May 4th Movement. However, Jiang implied that it was only through the CPC and socialism with Chinese characteristics that such efforts could achieve their goal. Jiang continued to extol the youth movement proclaiming, "The great May 4th Movement signaled that the Chinese people's resistance had reached a new beginning, and that China's

⁶²⁵ For more on the May 4th Movement and its connection to the CPC see John Fairbank and Merle Goldman's *China: A New History*, pages 267-269 and 275-278.

⁶²⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 465.

youth had become the vanguard of the Chinese people's fight against imperialism and feudalism."⁶²⁷

According to Jiang, the May 4th Movement served as a turning point when China began to stand up against foreign exploitation. By recalling the glories and challenges associated with this event, Jiang hoped to offer an example to motivate contemporary Chinese youth to similarly support Jiang's efforts to rejuvenate China.

Jiang relied on celebrating resistance to invaders within the Nationalist framework to generate support. He referred to his own participation in resistance efforts against Japan during World War II as a student. For example, in a speech eulogizing Li Enyu, an associate of Jiang during his university days in Nanjing 1943, Jiang reminisced:

The campaign took place in the winter of 1943 when both Comrade Li and I studied at Nanjing Central University. He was already a senior in the Department of Foreign Languages, and I was a freshman in the Department of Electrical Engineering. When the campaign began, we still did not know each other. I joined the campaign because I ardently wished for progress. Several thousand of us gathered together on a bitterly cold night to shout slogans demanding the prohibition of drugs. We marched toward Confucius Temple, smashing all the opium dens around it, dragging out dissipated opium addicts, many of whom were enemy and puppet officials. We also found a large quantity of opium, other drugs and drug paraphernalia. We burned the confiscated drugs and paraphernalia in the square in front of the National Grand Assembly Hall while surrounding the fire and singing the "Graduation Song": "Fellow students! Everyone rise up! Take the fate of the country on your shoulders. Listen! The people's cries of grief are deafening. Look! More of our land is perishing every year. Do we choose war or surrender? We must be masters of our fate and brave death on the battlefield...." The Japanese military police stood behind us in formation with their rifles and glared at us. We were filled with emotions of sadness and anger, but we felt devoid of fear. This scene greatly boosted the morale of the Chinese people and roused the masses.⁶²⁸

Jiang portrayed himself as an active participant in the struggle against Japanese rule in Nanjing and by extension having displayed courage in the face of the enemy. In the same speech, Jiang directly drew a connection between the Opium Wars and the illicit narcotics proliferation in occupied Shanghai as examples of efforts to weaken China by foreign powers who sought to dominate it. He extended that view to impress the need to combat drugs in modern China by framing their proliferation as consistent with past exploitations by both the British and Japanese.

Despite his best efforts, Jiang's lack of military credentials, especially compared with Mao and Deng, minimized his capacity to use military references in his discourse. However, Jiang still employed

⁶²⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 465.

⁶²⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 171.

war memory to unite the nation through celebration of past martial achievements. For example, Jiang used the opportunity of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War to generate public support by invoking what he termed the Korean War Spirit. In 2001 he stated:

The great spirit of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea [1950-1953], the spirit of those who successfully launched China's first atom bomb, hydrogen bomb and satellite, the spirit of the Chinese people in combating floods, and the "64-character pioneering spirit" are all actual embodiments of the spirit of unremitting struggle of the Chinese nation.⁶²⁹

Jiang located a spirit of enduring struggle within the Chinese nation and offered up examples, such as the Korean War, as episodes where that spirit has shown forth. By this instrumental use of historical memory, Jiang hoped to motivate the population to rekindle that spirit and apply it to executing his political program.

Jiang used historical memories of World War II with foreign audiences as well. This appeal to pride in military accomplishments offered Jiang an opportunity to ingratiate himself with his international hosts using a historical episode in which China was a major participant. For example, Jiang celebrated the Soviet victory in World War II during a state visit to Moscow:

Sixty years ago, amid the thick smoke of gunpowder from World War II, the Great Patriotic War was fought on this sacred land. The courageous and indomitable Soviet people spilled their blood in battle and made great sacrifices to defeat the extremely ferocious fascist invaders and win the Great Patriotic War. The Soviet people, along with all the other peace-loving people of the world, made an indelible contribution to a historic victory in the worldwide struggle against fascism.⁶³⁰

Although the focus is on military accomplishments of the Soviet Union, Jiang implied that these victories were part of a larger joint struggle and connected the two nations through shared historical memory. Jiang employed a similar technique during a visit to a conference of African nations in Ethiopia. Jiang cited Ethiopia's struggle against Italy as not only materially contributing to allied victory, but also serving as an example of resistance that inspired China in their efforts against Imperial Japan. He observed:

We will never forget the courageous resistance of the Ethiopian people against the Italian aggressors or the important contributions of Africans to the defeat of fascist Germany, Italy and Japan which gave tremendous encouragement and support to the Chinese people in their resistance against Japanese aggression.⁶³¹

These references to unified struggle in World War II offered common ground on which Jiang hoped to deepen relations with these nations. As they were previous partners, so too could they be partners again.

⁶²⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Three Represents*, page 159.

⁶³⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 300.

⁶³¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 511.

Jiang also used the Nationalist framework to celebrate the achievements of the PRC since its founding. For example, in a speech in Thailand discussing the rise of Asia, Jiang praised the accomplishments in the region since the end of World War II. Focusing on poverty reduction and international recognition he declared:

The 20th century history of Asia is a magnificent epic of the Asian people persevering in an unyielding fight against colonialism and imperialism to win national independence and liberation. It is also a bold portrait of Asians working hard for success, constantly progressing, gradually lifting themselves out of poverty and backwardness, and taking their rightful place among the world's nations. After World War II, through tenacious struggle, Asian countries eventually stepped onto the international stage as independent and equal members of the international community, and made significant contributions to peace and development in Asia and across the world. In the last 20 years, Asia, especially East Asia, has experienced rapid economic growth and become one of the most dynamic regions in the world.⁶³²

Jiang celebrated Asian countries gaining national independence and reclaiming their territorial integrity both for China and Asia generally. In that same speech Jiang recognized the return of Macao and Hong Kong as a restoration of Chinese territorial integrity and as a victory for all Asia. By illuminating the national achievements in fighting poverty Jiang hoped to generate positive feelings for the PRC's efforts and by extension garner support for his continued economic policy to further develop China. Among the four frameworks, the Nationalist narrative was unmatched in its capacity to generate unity among the national population, a key requirement in Jiang's quest for core leadership.

The fourth framework of historical memory that Jiang employed was the Liberal framework. This narrative was tied substantially to the R&OU policies articulated by Deng Xiaoping. Given the proximity of these events to Jiang's discourse only those that do not run afoul of my twenty-five-year cut off rule are explored below, although that still leaves a sizeable population within his discourse. Celebrating China's progress since the initiation of R&OU, especially in the economic sphere, was a common refrain from Jiang.⁶³³ Another essential element of the Liberal framework was alignment with Liberal international relations theory. Just as this theory gained traction following the end of the Cold War, so too did Jiang increasingly rely upon it in his discourse.⁶³⁴ Jiang engaged with elements of the Liberal theory

⁶³² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 395.

⁶³³ For examples see Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, pages, 188, 233, 336, and 408.

⁶³⁴ For a brief discussion on the Liberal IR theory and other narratives competing with it during this period see Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, (Locations 211 – 272 of 9501) (Kindle Edition).

such as globalization, multi-polarization, global stability, and mutual development thoroughly in his political speech. Finally, Jiang relied upon the Liberal framework to shape China's interaction with international institutions, such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. Participation in and influence over these organizations was a key objective for Jiang, and he employed historical memory to strengthen his efforts to ingratiate himself and the PRC to these institutions. Jiang's use of the Liberal framework, while not as robust as some of the other narratives, provided him a valuable tool to discuss elements of his domestic agenda and substantially improve China's image on the global stage.

Deng Xiaoping and his R&OU policy had a profound impact on Jiang Zemin's discourse. Deng had reasserted his authority over ideological interpretation through such actions as the Southern Tour in 1992 and the release of his third volume of *Selected Works* in 1994, solidifying Deng Xiaoping Theory as the governing philosophy.⁶³⁵ During this period Jiang had to moderate his attempts at core leadership, at least until Deng's declining health and eventual death afforded him a new opportunity to advance his own governing philosophy. However, even after Deng's retreat from public life, Jiang did not abandon the R&OU policy, instead modifying it for his own purposes to create a distinctive ideology with himself as chief architect. In fact, Jiang described R&OU as the only policy scheme that could secure China's future given what he described as the trend of the times. He opined:

History has amply demonstrated that China's development cannot be separated from the rest of the world and that developing behind closed doors is impossible. Opening to the outside world conforms to the tenors of our times and the laws governing the world's economic and technological development, and is an inevitable choice for accelerating China's modernization, so we must adhere to this basic state policy for a long time.⁶³⁶

To achieve the evolution of R&OU, Jiang demanded a process of studying to keep up with the times. In

1999 he instructed:

Reform and opening up and socialist modernization are unprecedented undertakings. At present, the international and domestic situations are developing rapidly. If leading cadres want to calmly respond to new conditions, constantly adapt to new circumstances and correctly understand and solve new problems, they must study, study, then study some more. Studying should be a habit and should be institutionalized.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite*, (Kindle Location 2693), Kindle Edition.

⁶³⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume II*, page 248.

⁶³⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume II*, page 438.

The subjects for study evolved over time, eventually including Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and Jiang's own Three Represents theory as the essential guides to understanding and making policy. Examining these past ideologies and connecting them to his Three Represents theory and its adjustments to R&OU were essential for Jiang to build his ideology and seize core leadership.

To legitimize evolutions from Deng Xiaoping Theory and continue to build support for his program, Jiang relied upon memory associated with the R&OU policy through the interpretive lens of the Liberal framework. A principal element that Jiang used was the necessity for a change in policy direction in 1978 in the first place. However, he had to be careful to avoid overly denigrating Mao Zedong as he still relied upon memory of Mao as founder of the PRC as essential to the CPC's right to rule. He focused criticism on the general chaos created in the wake of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. For example, Jiang Zemin credited Deng with reversing the devastating effects of those policies in agriculture. He observed, "Ten years of catastrophe pushed the national economy to the brink of collapse, and problems were particularly prominent in the countryside. At the time, 250 million people did not have enough to eat. Feeding the people was our most urgent task, and we had no choice but to undertake reform."⁶³⁸ He painted a stark picture of China's condition at the time, a memory of deprivation that would be immediately familiar to his constituency. He continued by crediting Deng for embarking on a new reform program:

The success of rural reform is a great victory for Deng Xiaoping Theory. The series of expositions Comrade Deng Xiaoping gave on agriculture, rural areas and farmers and on rural reform, development and stability pointed out the way for rural reform. Comrade Deng Xiaoping explicitly supported and promoted reform at every crucial moment. The history of rural reform shows that we can break free from the fetters of antiquated thinking and rigid systems and explore new ways to build socialism with Chinese characteristics only by adhering to the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory, emancipating our minds and seeking truth from facts.⁶³⁹

Jiang credited the reform efforts of Deng with addressing the key issue of food insecurity. He extended that praise with the insinuation that the example of reform should be emulated in its process, and that Deng Xiaoping Theory should further evolve over time. This evolution opened the door for Jiang to advance his own ideology.

⁶³⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 204.

⁶³⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 205.

Jiang commonly employed the slogan of deriving truth from facts within his discourse to counter ideologically orthodox arguments against his policy proposals. The rapid economic progress and other advancements for China since the initiation of R&OU in 1978 was a common refrain used by Jiang to justify continuation of reform efforts. Jiang explained:

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China more than half a century ago, and especially since the reform and opening up policy was instituted more than two decades ago, the Chinese people, under the leadership of the CPC, have made constant progress on the development path they have chosen; the country's economic strength, national defense capabilities, and scientific and technological might have increased enormously; and the people's living standards have improved significantly. These tremendous accomplishments have greatly increased the Chinese people's national pride and confidence.⁶⁴⁰

This achievement, while credited to the whole nation, was only accomplished thanks to the guidance of the CPC, according to Jiang. Furthermore, it was the application of the R&OU policies, under both Deng and Jiang, which accounted for the lion's share of these accomplishments. By framing China's progress before and after the initiation of R&OU, Jiang offered a metric to judge the validity of the policy and the desirability of maintaining a similar scheme in the years to come.

Although Jiang used the Liberal framework for domestic purposes, he did so often in the international arena. Although celebrating China's R&OU program was part of his internationally aimed discourse, he also nested his rhetoric into the Liberal international relations theory. At the conclusion of the Cold War, this theory of international relations, focusing on interconnectivity and a rules based international order appeared as the major driving force in global affairs.⁶⁴¹ Jiang consistently applied this framework in his internationally aimed discourse after 1992. There are several interrelated aspects of the Liberal IR theory, but two of the animating concepts for Jiang were the ideas of globalization and multipolarization. Globalization referred largely to worldwide economic integration while multipolarization referenced the decline of the binary ideological blocs of the Cold War, or even worse for Jiang, US dominated hegemony, in favor of multiple centers of power and influence.

⁶⁴⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 302. See also, Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 100, "Since the founding of New China and especially during the 20 years of R&OU, we have acquired a relatively solid material and technological foundation, and our economy has undergone a long period of rapid growth."

⁶⁴¹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (Kindle Location 4692), Kindle Edition.

Jiang's use of the Liberal framework posits a continual process of general progress in human history propelled by mutually reinforcing aspects. One of those aspects is that scientific and technological development would drive the world towards greater progress and simultaneously necessitate deeper global interconnectedness to sustain it. Echoing this viewpoint Jiang observed:

Interconnectedness and diversity on the frontier of scientific and technological development and the ever-accelerating production, dissemination and application of scientific and technological knowledge have stimulated tremendous economic and social progress, and opened up a bright future for human civilization.⁶⁴²

Jiang hoped to harness this technological progress and new interconnectedness to drive China's continued growth and build CPC legitimacy by delivering that progress for China. The most direct reflection of that growth would be rising living standards. In a 2001 speech to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit Jiang opined:

On the one hand, peace and development remain the themes of our times; the trend of economic globalization continues to deepen; science and technology are progressing at an amazing speed, and new- and high-technology industries are flourishing. This presents countries with new opportunities for developing their economies and improving their people's living standards.⁶⁴³

Jiang identified what I label as the Liberal framework as the trend of the times and noted its connection to giving countries the opportunity to raise their standard of living. This opportunity fed into a positive feedback loop in which increases in living standards would drive further developmental growth as new customers drove demand to meet the increasing volume and complexity of their needs. However, while Jiang identified this phenomenon as the trend of the times, for him it does not occur without direction, and states must orient themselves to profit from these global developments. Jiang framed his political program as taking advantage of this situation and used the beneficial results to support his status as core leader.

Jiang articulated the concept of multipolarization as another component of the Liberal Framework in his foreign policy. Multipolarization for Jiang meant breaking down the previous power blocs that dominated the Cold War era, as well as pushing against a unipolar moment in history with the United States as hegemon. However, Jiang was careful to maintain Deng's format of hiding strength and never

⁶⁴² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 232.

⁶⁴³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 338.

taking the lead in international affairs.⁶⁴⁴ Furthermore, he stressed the idea of China's peaceful rise and argued against realist conceptions of rising power conflict.⁶⁴⁵ He especially took issue with Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' conception of international relations, although he did find other uses for Huntington, such as discussing the importance for states to have the capacity to influence international finance.⁶⁴⁶ Jiang argued that world history was moving away from the power blocs of the Cold War and previous eras in favor of greater international cooperation, spurred on by economic globalization. In a speech delivered in Switzerland in 1999 Jiang observed:

Since the end of the Cold War, significant and deep changes have taken place in the international situation. The trend toward world multipolarization and economic globalization is intensifying and, on the whole, is conducive to the relaxing of the international situation and to world peace and development.⁶⁴⁷

Jiang identified the trend of world history accelerating the impacts of multipolarization and globalization and their benefits both for China and the world. However, this faith in progress was not absolute and certain events caused Jiang to hedge his estimation. Following the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade on May 7, 1999, Jiang's rhetoric noticeably shifted, qualifying his statements regarding the trend of the times. For example, in August of the same year Jiang observed:

We are at an important historical moment at the turn of the century. Peace and development are still the themes of the times. The world is becoming multipolar, but hegemonism and power politics still exist and manifest themselves in new ways.⁶⁴⁸

With this equivocation, Jiang still clung to the general Liberal framework but recognized the continuing role of what he described as hegemonism, evidenced by the behavior of the United States. This shift in rhetoric represented a potential regression in Jiang's standing as core leader as his previous assertions had been placed into doubt by contemporary events. He had previously argued that the world was moving away from such conflict and that China could rely on a period of stability to build itself up economically. However, if this was not the case and war with the United States was plausible, then his entire governing

⁶⁴⁴ See Henry Kissinger's, *On China*, pages 437-439 for a brief description of Deng's statement and its potential implications.

⁶⁴⁵ See Graham Allison's, *Destined for War: Can America and China Avoid Thucydides' Trap?* for an exploration of rising power conflict theory applied to the US and China.

⁶⁴⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 414.

⁶⁴⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 305.

⁶⁴⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 368.

philosophy was built on a misconception. If Jiang could not be relied on to provide ideological guidance that proved effective, then power would regress towards collective leadership to better manage affairs.

Political stability as a chief aim of governance has longstanding prevalence in Chinese history and finds expression in all four narrative frameworks. This legacy permeates into the Liberal Framework and places political stability as the key to any progress; conversely the lack of stability makes any progress impossible. For Jiang, this focus on stability applied to individual states and global affairs. At an APEC speech in 1994 Jiang declared:

Stability is a key prerequisite for us to successfully steer the ship of history into the new century. The world needs stability, regions need stability and countries need stability. Without an environment of stability, we can accomplish nothing and will lose what has already been accomplished.⁶⁴⁹

For Jiang, anything that might threaten stability had to be avoided at all costs and became central in framing China's foreign policy. The principal means to avoid international instability was reliance on Zhou Enlai's Five Principles for peaceful coexistence, which included non-interference in domestic affairs.⁶⁵⁰ This view of non-interference at times ran counter to conceptions of universal human rights but was essential to maintain the dominance of the CPC politically in China and by extension Jiang as core leader. Therefore, Jiang repeatedly framed non-interference in his international discourse as respect for diversity and differences in systems. He prefaced this respect for diversity as a recognition of cultural and historical distinctiveness in nations. At an APEC speech in 1993 Jiang explained in detail:

The people of each country choose the social system and development model best suited to conditions in their own country and formulate effective laws and policies suitable for it. This is fair and reasonable, and deserves respect. This rich diversity in the world is a good thing, not a bad one. Every country and culture can and should interact with and learn from other countries and cultures to compensate for their weaknesses and share the accomplishments of human civilization. This can only occur, however, when the people of each country act independently in accordance with their own desires. The people of a country are the best judges of conditions there and are best qualified to determine the most suitable development path. Therefore, the government and the people of each country should be the ultimate arbiters of their own affairs without outside interference. The history of the world, especially in the last century, admonishes us that seeking to impose a development model on another country can have disastrous consequences. It always engenders resistance, chaos and even war. This is a lesson we all must heed . . . As two major powers with global influence, China and the United States should set a good example in this regard and make a positive contribution.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 402.

⁶⁵⁰ Zhou Enlai's Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence was established in a Sino-Indian summit in 1954 and have remained a core feature of Chinese public international diplomacy since. The Five articulated principles: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs (4) equality and mutual benefit (5) peaceful coexistence. See <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20299/v299.pdf>, page 70-82 for text of the agreement.

⁶⁵¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 322.

Jiang relied on memory of the twentieth century characterized by conflict to advocate for respect for diversity in political systems through a policy of non-interference in domestic affairs. The goal seems to be to maintain both global and Chinese stability. This stability required international acquiescence regarding the governing structure for China with the CPC at the head, and socialism with Chinese characteristics as the general ideology.

With stability assured, peaceful development could occur, and Jiang identified that trend as characteristic of the general course of history consistent with the Liberal framework. Jiang cited the violence of the 20th century, specifically World War II, as producing a fervent desire among the world's population towards peaceful development. Consistent with the view that people are the main drivers of history, Jiang posited that the widespread devastation felt across the globe in World War II created the desire for a peaceful world order focused on development. Reflecting on the legacy of the United Nations founding, Jiang explained:

Fifty years ago, the UN was born at the time of the great victory in the World Anti-Fascist War. This was a great event in the history of international relations. In the first half of this century, two world wars broke out less than 30 years apart, bringing unprecedented calamity and misery to humanity. The writing of the UN Charter and the establishment of the UN suited the objective necessity of the times for progress; embodied the ardent desire of the people of all countries to eliminate the scourge of war; and reflected the grand ideal of the human race to create a new world of peace, equality, cooperation and prosperity.⁶⁵²

Jiang went on to note that the legacies of colonialism and ideological conflict further delayed the realization of the desire of the people for peaceful development but framed his contemporary period as an opportunity to rectify this situation. Jiang articulated this phenomenon as the trend of the times driven by historical forces. For example, at the 14th Party Congress in 1992 he claimed, "Peace and development remain the two themes in the world today. Development demands peace, and peace cannot be maintained without development. Hegemonism and power politics have always been the main obstacles to peace and development."⁶⁵³ Realist orientations on power politics and ideological blocs should be shunned in favor of a democratization of international affairs. Jiang consistently phrased the trend of history as moving

⁶⁵² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 465.

⁶⁵³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 232.

towards peace and development but sought to shape it in such a way that the CPC could benefit from that system economically while maintaining absolute authority domestically.

The concept of the United Nations also featured in Jiang's instrumental use of the Liberal framework. The structure of the UN reflected Jiang's desired orientation of global affairs. The General Assembly conformed to the democratization of international affairs, with each nation having a single and equal vote. This allowed China to leverage its economic and political power to influence nations, especially within the Third World, towards adopting preferred policy positions. Meanwhile, the Security Council allowed China a permanent veto over any policy that it viewed as threatening its core interests. To generate international goodwill and alleviate concerns about China's rising power, Jiang sought to associate the PRC with the principles of the United Nations.⁶⁵⁴ In his address at the Millennium meeting of the United Nations in 2000 Jiang declared:

China has always pursued an independent foreign policy of peace and adhered to establishing and developing friendly and cooperative relations with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has always scrupulously abided by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and supported the United Nations in playing its important and irreplaceable role in safeguarding world peace and international security and in solving global problems. In the future, China will continue to fulfill its duties and obligations.⁶⁵⁵

By leveraging memory of the United Nations and the PRC's relations to it, Jiang argued that these factors would continue to dominate China's international behavior and that the PRC would not seek to become a new hegemon either regionally or globally. Jiang contrasted PRC behavior with that of the United States, arguing that compared to China, the United States was acting as a hegemon, ignoring the spirit of the United Nations in its actions.

Jiang critiqued American anti-terrorism policy in the months following the 9/11 attacks through the Liberal framework. To be clear, Jiang avoided outright denunciation of the United States for defending itself, and indeed considered the US focus on Islamist terrorism as an opportunity to improve

⁶⁵⁴ Although Jiang avoided discussions of power politics internationally, he did offer contrary viewpoints to domestic and especially party audiences. For example, in discussion with PLA leaders in 2001 on the strategic environment Jiang adopted a more realist viewpoint, "Throughout the ages, a country's power has been the decisive factor in winning an international political struggle." Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume III*, page 347.

⁶⁵⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin: Volume III*, pages 108-109.

relations that had soured over events like the Belgrade bombing in 1999 and the EP-3 incident in April 2001.⁶⁵⁶ However, he did publicly chide US behavior as potentially ignoring the international order and acting irrationally. Discussing the matter months after the attack Jiang observed:

We advocate that anti-terrorist activities should have hard evidence, a clear target and not harm the innocent; be carried out within the scope of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and be vetted through discussions in the UN Security Council; and have a long-range outlook; and be beneficial to world peace and development. Our position is sensible and reasonable, upholds justice, stands for fairness and is widely applauded.⁶⁵⁷

By pointing to US policy as disregarding the role of the United Nations, Jiang contrasted it with China's international profile and attempted to position the PRC as the more reliable and reasonable international player. Jiang sought to associate China with the United Nations and its stated principles to raise its international profile, especially as compared to the United States. To accomplish this task, Jiang employed historical memory of the United Nations Charter and China's past behavior to paint the PRC in the least threatening and most constructive light.

As part of his international policy, Jiang also leveraged other international organizations beyond the United Nations. Within Jiang's application of R&OU, these organizations proved essential in propelling China's economic growth and securing its prestige on the international stage. To advance China's interest in these organizations, Jiang used historical memory to improve his position. One such institution was the Shanghai Five, and its successor the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional association of Central Asian states. In a speech in 1999 at a meeting of the Shanghai Five, Jiang described the principles underpinning the organization, which conformed to the Liberal Framework. After invoking the memory of both the triumphs and tragedies associated with the 20th Century, Jiang declared:

Maintaining world peace and promoting economic development have become the aspirations of all the peoples of the world. Although progress toward a multipolar world has been tortuous, this trend cannot be stopped. Today, every country gives top priority to developing its economy and raising the standard of living of its people, and economic contacts between countries are constantly growing. Science and technology advance with each passing day, international markets are expanding rapidly, and factors of production are flowing more

⁶⁵⁶ At a meeting with the senior PLA leaders in October 2001 Jiang explained, "Since the end of the Cold War, Sino-American relations have been far from smooth, with periods of good and bad relations. After the September 11th incident, out of consideration for its own strategic interests, the United States sought our support and cooperation in opposing terrorism. The Central Committee promptly adopted measures to steer the development of Sino-American relations in a positive direction." Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 344.

⁶⁵⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 357.

quickly, thereby providing opportunities for national development. For all countries and peoples who cherish peace, opportunities outnumber challenges and hope outweighs difficulties.⁶⁵⁸ Jiang recounted substantial elements of the Liberal framework as creating both the need and opportunity for the organization to play a positive role. Another organization that Jiang invested significant political capital into was the World Trade Organization. Jiang considered entrance into this organization, on terms favorable to China, as essential to ensuring Chinese economic growth through greater access to the global market. Celebrating the accession of China to the WTO Jiang stated:

Acceding to the WTO signifies that our country has entered a new stage in opening to the outside world. We need to take this as a new starting point for further deepening reform and opening up wider, have a more positive attitude as we reach out to the world, adjust to the trend of economic globalization in the new situation, and continue to comprehensively open up on more levels in more areas, in order to provide a powerful new impetus for our country's economic development.⁶⁵⁹

Jiang framed China joining the WTO as a key achievement in the PRC's history and as an impetus to further commit to the R&OU policy under his leadership and guidance. These international organizations helped secure Jiang's position as core leader and China's participation in them formed a crucial component of his governing philosophy.

Jiang pursued core leadership through the deliberate application of historical memory. That historical memory conformed largely to the four main narrative frameworks used by PRC core leaders. The Confucian/Traditional framework provided a method to appeal to desirable forms of social and political behavior, especially when combatting corruption within the CPC. It further extended Jiang's capacity to describe concepts of government in easily recognizable concepts for his domestic audience. The Marxist framework provided the central justifying element for Jiang's rule as a continuation from past leaders and reason to maintain the CPC's domination of political structures in the PRC. Furthermore, it provided the tools necessary for Jiang to propagate his ideology of Three Represents and fend off criticisms, especially from his ideological left. The Nationalist framework served as a unifying force to generate support for Jiang and the PRC at large. Jiang used collective memory regarding the CoH, and its termination by the CPC, prolifically to build resentment over past slights and direct the resulting energy

⁶⁵⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 392.

⁶⁵⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 442.

towards application of his policy programs. Although reserved mostly for foreign audiences, the Liberal framework still proved essential as Jiang sought to advance his R&OU policies. To advance China's economic power, greater engagement with the international community was necessary, although that engagement could not threaten the stability of the PRC, specifically through weakening the ideological and political dominance of the CPC. Jiang used the Liberal framework, especially with international organizations like the United Nations, to maneuver the PRC into a position that met those requirements. Jiang's instrumental use of historical memory used all four frameworks, and each were made to serve Jiang's vision for China as core leader.

Illustrative Texts:

Jiang's instrumentalization of historical memory, expressed mainly through the four narrative frameworks, pervades across his entire discourse. This application shifted both in quantity and in type over time, matching differing requirements as he strove for and, after attaining it, sought to maintain his authority as core leader. However, solely examining each framework in isolation only provides a partial picture of their usage, as many references interacted together within a speech to amplify a desired effect. As such, it is necessary to examine a sampling of Jiang's speeches to illustrate this usage. Four specific addresses have been selected to cover a variety of time periods and desired audiences to display Jiang's instrumental use of historical memory. These illustrations will assist in displaying their relation to his specific political objectives.

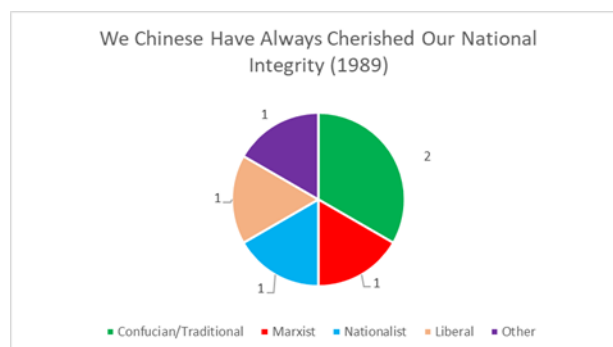


Figure 4.9 References by category for speech titled “We Chinese Have Always Cherished Our National Integrity” (1989).

The first speech examined is titled “We Chinese Have Always Cherished Our National Integrity,” and was presented in October 1989. Jiang made this speech in response to US policy towards the PRC in the wake of the Tiananmen Square incident.⁶⁶⁰ Jiang had only recently been elevated to national leadership and had to both cement his position and defend the PRC’s actions. This address appears to have been aimed at both domestic and international audiences but the focus on the United States led me to classify it as having primarily a foreign audience. I found a total of six references to historical memory within the speech including all four frameworks.

Presumably, Jiang’s overall objective for the speech was to denounce the United States for its criticism of the CPC for their handling of the Tiananmen Square incident. Within that objective there were some subsidiary goals and Jiang instrumentally used historical memory in pursuit of these objectives. First, Jiang pushed back against criticisms of the CPC that emerged from the Tiananmen Square incident itself. He dismissed any argument that Deng’s reforms pointed towards capitalism: “Chairman Deng’s R&OU policy keeps to the socialist road and will not lead to capitalism. This road is the choice the Chinese people have made based on the lessons learned from their practical experience over many years of struggle.”⁶⁶¹ Jiang maintained the need for the R&OU but dismissed any abandonment of Deng’s Four Cardinal principles securing CPC authority over the PRC’s political structure.⁶⁶² In addition, although not conforming to any of the four main frameworks, Jiang presented himself as possessing a thorough understanding of the desire for liberal democratic reform. He recalled an incident in 1986 at Shanghai University in which he recited Lincoln’s Gettysburg address to a collection of agitated students. Jiang’s presentation of the incident paints the students as having an incomplete understanding of the address compared to himself.

In 1986, some students in Shanghai picked two passages from the Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln’ as their slogan, but knew nothing about the historical background against which the address was delivered. I

⁶⁶⁰ See Henry Kissinger’s, *On China*, pages 411-428 for a discussion on the Bush (41) administration policy vis-à-vis China during this period.

⁶⁶¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 67.

⁶⁶² The four cardinal principles articulated by Deng in 1979: “(1) adherence to the socialist road; (2) adherence to the people’s democratic dictatorship; (3) adherence to the leadership of the Communist Party of China; and (4) adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.” <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/uphold-the-four-cardinal-principles/>

studied the address more than 40 years ago when I was a sophomore in secondary school, and I memorized it by heart. On December 18, 1986, I went back to Shanghai Jiao Tong University (my alma mater) to talk with students and recited the address to them.⁶⁶³

By referencing this episode, Jiang attempted to elevate his credentials on judging the issues raised by the Tiananmen Square incident. Jiang instrumentally used historical memory both of PRC history and the Gettysburg Address for the purpose of improving his authority over these questions thereby adding weight to his dismissal of their calls for reform.

Although Jiang targeted the Tiananmen Square protest itself, the main object of the speech was an attack on the United States. More specifically, he labelled US policy in the wake of the incident as interference in China's internal affairs with an aim to divide and splinter the PRC's territorial integrity and foment instability. To counter this perceived onslaught, Jiang used a combination of the Liberal, Confucian/Traditional, and Nationalist frameworks. First, he argued that US policy criticizing the PRC was ill-advised. He opined, "Quelling the political disturbances in China this year is the country's internal affair, so I do not know why the United States has reacted so strongly. As an old Chinese proverb goes, 'It is only the dumbest person who looks for trouble when peace reigns over the land.'"⁶⁶⁴ In Jiang's view, the United States should stay out of China's business, and he used a reference to an ancient Chinese proverb to further illustrate the point. He implied the United States lacked the maturity that comes from possessing a longstanding civilization like China's.

Jiang continued by arguing that China had never threatened the United States and maintained a foreign policy of seeking friendly relations. He proclaimed, "China has always sought to develop friendly relations with other countries, including the United States, on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence."⁶⁶⁵ The principles of coexistence, built on the Westphalian notion of nation-states' non-interference with each other's domestic affairs, fit neatly within the Liberal framework. The wording

⁶⁶³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 68-69.

⁶⁶⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 67.

⁶⁶⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 68.

outlines that China may seek such friendly relations based on Zhou Enlai's Five Principles, but the implication of course is that when threatened China would act to defend itself and its interests.

Furthermore, in an intriguing reference, Jiang recalled a personal anecdote from his experience as a student in Shanghai during the Japanese occupation. Drawing from an analogy from his past, Jiang described US behavior as not only contrary to mutual interests but as a visceral insult, or humiliation, to the whole Chinese nation. He declared:

Such behavior is diametrically opposed to the national integrity and dignity of the Chinese nation. I am a native of Yangzhou, and a couplet hanging in the Shi Kefa Memorial Hall there reads, "The plums blooming, scattered, are like tears shed for a fallen country; The moon, shining bright, reflects the loyal heart of the old subject." During the Japanese occupation of China, many Chinese people went to visit this memorial hall to boost their morale when fighting the Japanese. I was a secondary school student in Yangzhou at that time; I went there every week, and it was very edifying. We Chinese have always cherished our national integrity, and never yielded to force.⁶⁶⁶

This reference intertwined multiple frameworks for a relatively dense instrumental use of historical memory. He recalled a memorial to the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) that marked a dark chapter of deprivation at the hands of a foreign occupier, specifically the massacre at Yangzhou at the hands of the Qing in 1645. In addition, Jiang described visits to the hall as motivating himself and many others to action, displaying how participation in collective memory propelled people to political action. The Yangzhou massacre offered a useful parallel to the Rape of Nanjing (1937 - 1938) and similar acts by the imperial Japanese targeting the Chinese during World War II. This description of the steadfast Chinese resistance to the brutal Japanese occupation speaks to a resolve that Jiang hoped would deter the US from further action along this path. This construction also had the added benefit of placing the United States in a similar position to Japan vis-à-vis China as a power seeking to divide and conquer it for imperial purposes. Finally, Jiang amplified his credentials not only by recalling previous personal actions in the national struggle against the Japanese, but by associating himself with the same purported feelings of national resentment towards the United States for its interference. Jiang drew a straight line between the

⁶⁶⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 69. "Ming general Shi Kefa had ordered that the splendid city of Yangzhou be defended to the death, and in May 1645 when it fell to the Qing forces much of the population was deliberately killed and survivors raped and murdered by unruly Chinese soldiers in Qing employ." William Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing*, pages 23-24. Rowe goes on to describe how collective memory of that massacre played a role in generating Han nationalist opposition to the Qing regime in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, leading to the Qing regime's collapse.

Qing, the Japanese, and potentially the Americans as diabolical opponents who sought to oppress and harm the Chinese. Altogether, Jiang aimed to use historical memory to build a unifying feeling within the Chinese nation and by doing so alter US behavior towards the PRC in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident.

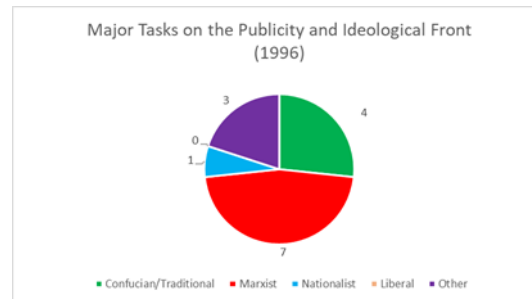


Figure 4.10 References by category for speech titled “Major Tasks on the Publicity and Ideological Front” (1996).

The second speech examined is titled “Major Tasks on the Publicity and Ideological Front,” delivered in January 1996. During this period Jiang began to tentatively assert his authority as core leader by developing a governing philosophy independent from Deng Xiaoping Theory. Although it would be several years before Jiang’s Three Represents fully took shape, this speech offers an early example of Jiang attempting to independently influence ideological work through cultural organs. The primary audience appears to be a Chinese domestic audience, particularly those organs which generate culture in various forms. By speaking to these groups and directing their efforts, Jiang would have an exponentially wider impact on the population downstream. The speech includes fifteen discernable instrumental uses of historical memory. Jiang relied mostly on a Marxist framework but also uses of the Confucian/Traditional framework.

Jiang’s overall objective for this speech appears to be to influence the direction of culture work and ensure that it aligned with his burgeoning governing philosophy. He sought to ensure ideological conformity with Socialism with Chinese characteristics, although he did offer room for additional influences, so long as the ideologically sacred cows were not threatened. Next, he stressed both the positive and negative outcomes from cultural work generally. In line with this outlook, Jiang noted the

need to foster positive attributes among the population. Finally, Jiang discussed with some more specificity how culture may serve as a positive influence through its various mediums of transmission.

Before moving on to any other matter, Jiang underscored the paramount importance of the established Marxist writings for himself and for Chinese political culture at the time. At this point the canon of official ideology included selected works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and Deng. Jiang noted the importance of reviewing these texts continuously and that they must be kept front and center in any cultural production. He opined:

On my desk are books with carefully selected materials that I often turn to: the *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, *Selected Works of V. I. Lenin*, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* and *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*. I hope that leading cadres at the provincial and ministerial level and above will often study them as well because it will benefit them greatly.⁶⁶⁷

However, as he goes on to say, these texts should not be viewed as dogma and that new circumstances may need to be addressed in ways not explicitly described in those works. In fact, he provides an example of a prediction by Marx which did not happen as he predicted.

For instance, in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx wrote, “No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.” This statement can help us to understand why capitalism has not entirely disappeared yet. However, Marx failed to predict the occurrence of the October Revolution in Russia, a weak link in the chain of imperialism, that gave birth to the Soviet Union. This is why we say that Lenin developed Marxism.⁶⁶⁸

By pointing out the limitations of Marx, Jiang argued for avoiding orthodox interpretations and allowing for other influences to emerge. Interestingly, Jiang offered some non-traditional potential sources of inspiration, such as Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*.⁶⁶⁹ He goes on to propose that a study of the novel can extend beyond literature and be used as a window into the history of the French Revolution. He describes these novels as offering an evocative image of the past in popular perceptions, or collective memory. Cultural touchstones, such as popular novels and films, can have an outsized impact on shaping those perceptions. Of course, these additional influences are never meant to replace the corpus of Marxist

⁶⁶⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 487.

⁶⁶⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 487.

⁶⁶⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 488.

thought discussed earlier, but rather Jiang suggests that their use allows for an enlarged perspective to better address contemporary problems.

Jiang observed the substantial impact that cultural work had on shaping public opinion and on China's political and social stability. For him, if successful this work could amplify the work of cadres implementing CPC policy. On the other hand, if done poorly, cultural work might even contribute to the unraveling of political and social order within the PRC. In fact, Jiang stressed the failure to manage public opinion as a major contributing factor to the Tiananmen Square incident, along with other unnamed historical successes and failures. He lamented:

Public opinion is very important and we must not disregard it. We have had both successes and painful experiences in our history in this regard. The serious mistakes we made in guiding public opinion during the political disturbances in 1989 serve as a profound lesson for all Party members.⁶⁷⁰ Jiang articulated an instrumental use of Tiananmen Square incident memory as a warning to Party cadres of the importance of shaping public opinion.

A key element to shaping that public opinion was to foster beneficial ethical attributes within both cadres and the wider public. Jiang credited the dual fonts of Marxism and Chinese civilization as the sources for these desirable characteristics. Describing their impact on the CPC Jiang declared:

Socialist modernization would not succeed in an economically and culturally backward country like China without generation after generation of noble-minded, progressive people, and without their efforts to unite with and lead the people in a concerted struggle. When I speak of noble-mindedness, I refer to the Party's lofty ideals and beliefs, fine traditions and work style, as well as the fine cultural traditions and virtues developed by the Chinese nation over thousands of years.⁶⁷¹ Jiang attributed China's unique access to both systems as enabling it to succeed under the CPC despite its dismal historical conditions. Jiang called upon cadres to live moral lives and to cultivate themselves ethically, squarely within the Confucian/Traditional attribute of self-cultivation.

⁶⁷⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, Page 490.

⁶⁷¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 492. Jiang goes into some detail listing scholarly behavior from the Confucian/Traditional framework in pages 489-490. "People in Jiangsu say, 'Even if you have tons of gold at home, you can only eat three meals a day.' Lu Fangweng wrote in a poem, 'Worldly desires drive us to destruction like a stampeding herd of cattle, While a sandpiper soars over the earth untouched by human affairs . . . People who are overly preoccupied with fame and money will also find it worthwhile to heed the wisdom in the poem 'Taoist Songs of Praise' by Zheng Bangqiao.' It says, 'An old scholar lives in a bare room, reading from the sages of yore and immersing himself in ancient times. Success in the imperial examination brings young men to prominence. At home, their servants are as aggressive as tigers, and abroad, their flags fly high in the air. When power changes hands, they fall to their doom. Better to live in a humble abode and teach small children at home.'"

However, Jiang also relied on the Marxist framework as well, stressing Deng's exhortations on the importance of ethical behavior. Recalling Deng Xiaoping he exclaimed:

Let us now recall an important statement Comrade Deng made when the reform and opening up policy was first implemented. He said, "We should educate all Party members so that they will act selflessly, put overall interests first, work hard, perform their official duties honestly and uphold communist ideas and morality. . ."⁶⁷² Jiang agreed with Deng's view on the need to educate Party members and propagate moral behavior, in this case morality specifically associated with the communist ideal. Jiang continued by enunciating Deng's interpretation of that morality as having emerged from the CPC's history, especially from the revolutionary period. This revolutionary spirit had to be imbued not only among the cadres but the wider Chinese culture.

He (Deng) said, "A Party member who lacks this spirit is not fit to be a Communist. But that is not all: we must call on members of the Party to foster this spirit among all our people, particularly our young people, through exemplary deeds, so that it becomes the main pillar of a culturally and ideologically advanced civilization in the People's Republic of China. Our country will then be looked up to by all revolutionary- and progressive-minded people in the world and admired by all who feel frustrated and suffer from spiritual emptiness for lack of purpose in their lives."⁶⁷³ For Jiang, developing ethical behavior based on Marxist principles was essential to implement the government's policies and carrying forward their modernization efforts. To proliferate that morality, Jiang, taking a page from Deng, underlined a spirit born from the CPC's revolutionary period. He instrumentally used historical memory both to motivate and illustrate proper ethical behavior for the Party and the nation.

Jiang proceeded to give specific guidance on how cultural work should be carried out. He started by providing an ideological cornerstone in the form of Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory. He instructed, "I hope people working in the fields of publicity and culture will often study Comrade Mao's 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art' and Comrade Deng's 'Speech Greeting the Fourth Congress of Chinese Writers and Artists.'"⁶⁷⁴ Jiang issued this reminder to ensure that all works remained grounded and did not violate any of the core ideologies that generated legitimacy both for the CPC and Jiang as leader. He continued, "In creating their works, writers and artists must hold to the

⁶⁷² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 492.

⁶⁷³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 493.

⁶⁷⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 496.

orientation of serving the people and socialism and adhere to the principle of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend, thereby creating an atmosphere of bold exploration and vigorous creativity.”⁶⁷⁵ The requirement of serving the people and socialism provided the limitations on artistic expression but conversely also called for vigorous exploration within those guardrails. Jiang called on artists to create boldly, but remain cognizant of the limitations placed on them by invoking the memory of Mao and Deng.

Furthermore, Jiang spared some space to discuss individual modes of artistic expression and his hopes for them in shaping the culture moving forward. These included various formats such as novels, films, music, and others. Jiang offered some examples for artists to emulate.

I hope that many new outstanding works will emerge among the novels, plays, poems, essays, films, TV programs, musical compositions and works of fine art being produced in this new period. Excellent songs such as “March of the Volunteers,” “Yellow River Cantata,” “Unity Is Power” and “Song to Our Motherland” have inspired and educated quite a few generations, and will be handed down to posterity. These represent the kind of works I am talking about here. One example is last year’s variety show called “Tribute to the Light” staged in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti- Fascist War. Another example from last year is the concert to mark the 60th anniversary of the national anthem. They had high ideological and artistic value, and were therefore very moving experiences.⁶⁷⁶

As Jiang illustrated, works should be judged not only as artistic pieces for their aesthetic value but for their contribution to ideology and specifically their capacity to shape and generate historical memory that can be molded for political purposes. Jiang also discussed the importance of novels and historical storytelling in shaping collective memory both in Chinese culture and throughout the world.

Maintaining the correct orientation of public opinion is not possible without outstanding works of literature and art. Such works are a concentrated expression of the intellectual, ideological and cultural level of a nation and an era, and have a major effect on and serve as models for the further production of cultural and intellectual products. While it is true that many literary works were popular for only a short time in the history of literature, some world- famous classics such as *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy and *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell are still read today. We also have classics of our own such as *A Dream of Red Mansions*, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *The Water Margin*. Any work that paints a true picture of a historical period, has a high literary value and is rich in content is imperishable. This is the level toward which Chinese writers and artists should strive.⁶⁷⁷

Jiang observed that only by creating and proliferating effective literature reflecting historical memory could public opinion be managed. In effect, those that control the image of the past in the public’s mind

⁶⁷⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 496.

⁶⁷⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, age 495.

⁶⁷⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, page 495.

can influence how they perceive their reality and direct them towards the preferred policy orientation. This activity stands at the heart of a major function of the core leader within the PRC political culture, having dominant power over policy while simultaneously serving as the source of ideology directing all social and political activity.

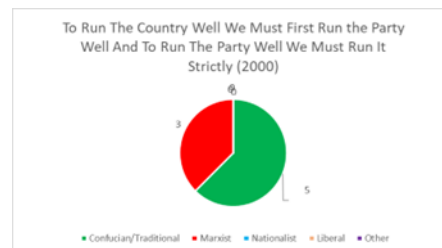


Figure 4.11 References by category for speech titled “To Run The Country Well We Must First Run The Party Well And To Run The Party Well We Must Run It Strictly” (2000).

The next speech examined is titled “To Run The Country Well We Must First Run The Party Well And To Run The Party Well We Must Run It Strictly,” delivered in January 2000. This speech was given at what should have been the height of Jiang’s authority as core leader. He began disseminating his governing philosophy under the banner of the Three Represents theory. However, Jiang faced criticism for a number of his policy positions. One of the chief and perhaps most grievous concerns came from the instability of uneven development intertwined with perceptions of pervasive corruption within the CPC itself. The Party organ best positioned to tackle that corruption was the CCDI, as it was the institution responsible for managing behavior within the CPC and was the primary audience for this speech. I discerned eight references to historical memory within this text. Jiang relied on a mixture of Confucian/Traditional and Marxist frameworks, consistent with an aim to regulate ethical behavior.

Presumably Jiang’s main objective was to accelerate anti-corruption efforts through direct guidance to the CCDI. He pointed to the long tradition of discipline activities of the party and dismissed criticisms of those efforts. Furthermore, he ruminated on the unique historical forces that led to more vulnerability within the Party to corrupting forces, but also stressed past exemplars of behavior as sources of inspiration to resist and counter temptation. Next, Jiang underscored several examples of negative behavior, such as undue pursuit of leisure, fame, and favors for family members. Finally, Jiang drew

attention to the deterrent effects of enforcement by highlighting past examples from CPC historical memory.

First, Jiang established the vital role of discipline in the Party's history and the specific conditions that made focus on it imperative. He argued that maintaining discipline was nothing new, and in fact had been a longstanding tradition within the CPC. He stated:

Running the Party strictly is our Party's fine tradition and a valuable lesson that the Party has learned from experience and a principle it has consistently upheld. Firmly implementing this principle is an important guarantee for maintaining the advanced nature and purity of the Party, and for strengthening its cohesiveness and capabilities.⁶⁷⁸

Not only was there a tradition of discipline, but Jiang identified it as essential to maintaining the Party as an effective organization. He proceeded to answer critics from his right who argued that such a focus on discipline and moral behavior was draconian, implying his focus on discipline was associated with previous excesses such as the Yan'an Rectification Movement (1942 - 1944) or the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976).⁶⁷⁹ He argued, "Meanwhile, other leading cadres still have not learned the correct lessons from history, and confuse running the Party strictly with 'Left' practices. They think 'strict' means 'Left.' They do not criticize and combat wrong-doing."⁶⁸⁰ Jiang asserted that failure to correct corruption through activities like criticism and self-criticism can be just as dangerous as corruption itself. For those critics who argued Jiang was going too far, he accused them of having an improper understanding of Party history and its lessons.

Jiang interpreted the problem of corruption as emerging from the progress gained during the reform period. Although material wealth had increased substantially under both Deng's and Jiang's tenure, this growth was uneven across all levels of society. Furthermore, the Party cadres, who were responsible for carrying out this policy, had lost direct connection with the revolutionary spirit and were vulnerable to corrupting influences that came with this new material wealth and their authority within the

⁶⁷⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 488.

⁶⁷⁹ For more on excesses of the Yan'an rectification movement see Gao Hua, translated by Stacy Mosher & Guo Jian, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origin and Development of the Yan'an Rectification movement 1930-1945*, pages 679 – 712.

⁶⁸⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 490.

Party-State. The dynastic cycle theory of the Confucian/Traditional framework posits that regimes grow stagnant and corrupt over time and state authority and legitimacy erode, until eventually the mandate of heaven, or support of the people, abandons the regime and it is overthrown. To combat this decay, Jiang instructs the cadres that they must reinvigorate themselves by studying the past and the approved ideology to recapture the desired revolutionary spirit and cultivate the individual morality necessary to govern.

This is the basic reason the Central Committee has repeatedly emphasized that leading cadres need to stress study, politics and integrity; be dignified, self-critical, self-cautioning and self-motivated; and work hard to improve themselves. “When things decay, vermin thrive.” It is imperative that leading cadres at all levels fully understand this life philosophy in order to strengthen their consciousness of Party spirit more purposefully. Leading cadres face many temptations and tests in the new historical circumstances; therefore, they must regularly clear the dirt from their minds, be very much on the alert and never lose vigilance.⁶⁸¹

Strengthening what Jiang described as Party spirit was a matter of regime survival, and failure to address corruption might lead to the collapse of the PRC. Furthermore, he identified that cadres faced fresh challenges and tests in the new historical circumstances influenced by the reform period. To combat this corruption Jiang highlighted several areas for anti-corruption efforts to focus on.

One area that Jiang highlighted to combat corruption was to call for cadres to embrace a culture glorifying suffering and sacrifice in service of the CPC and shy away from leisure and comfort by taking undue advantage of their position. Jiang posited that in previous periods, but especially during the revolutionary era, it was far easier for cadres to maintain their discipline as suffering was common given the harsh conditions CPC cadres operated in. However, as material wealth increased, and cadres gained authority over the levers of power, the temptation for abuse became ever more pervasive. Furthermore, unlike the memory of the revolutionary period where cadres shared mutual hardships with the people, now they were separated from those conditions and had no access to those experiences. In a way, this fear reflected a concern from Mao Zedong on the separation of the cadres from the masses and the need for a continuous state of revolution to transmit that revolutionary spirit on to the next generations.⁶⁸² To address the issue Jiang called for study and to imbue the lessons on proper principles, both Confucian/Traditional and Marxist, to serve the people in the present. He declared:

⁶⁸¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, Page 492.

⁶⁸² Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong*, pages 156-157.

Regardless of whether it is a period of revolution, construction or reform, leading cadres must adhere to the principle of enduring hardship first and enjoying comforts later. They must correctly understand and implement the Party's policy of bringing prosperity to the people, and do everything they can to help the masses, especially those in impoverished areas, prosper. Leading cadres should take the lead in bearing hardships, be willing to dedicate themselves and possess the spirit of being "the first to worry about the world's troubles and the last to enjoy its pleasures." We need to repeatedly talk with leading cadres at all levels about these principles and requirements. If leading cadres hold higher ideals, have a genuinely firm ideological line of defense, and conscientiously act in accordance with the Party's principles and requirements, then many problems can be avoided.⁶⁸³

The quoted line on "first to worry and last to enjoy" is taken from the Northern Song Dynasty poet Fan Zhongyan's "On Yueyang Tower," and is one that Jiang returned to repeatedly when discussing the issue of corruption and the need for cadres to embrace hardship.⁶⁸⁴ This reference to ancient wisdom to display proper behavior, especially for governing officials, is a central feature of the Confucian/Traditional framework.

Another area of concern for Jiang was the abuses carried out by cadres' family members. The permissiveness in these circumstances created a thorny problem for Jiang as the corruption was not directly perpetrated by Party members. Within the Confucian moral tradition, family relationships featured prominently, and loyalty was chiefly respected, specifically of children towards the parent.⁶⁸⁵ Part of the Confucian tradition was a demand for governing officials to maintain order in their home life as a prerequisite for proper governance. He argued:

Here I would also like to emphasize the need for leading cadres to do a good job supervising their spouses and children. An ancient Chinese maxim states, "Cultivate the moral self, regulate the family, maintain the state rightly and make all peaceful." If you cannot supervise your own families, how can you expect to successfully run the Party and the country?⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 493.

⁶⁸⁴ Jiang used this same reference in speeches in 1990, 1997, 2001. Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 122 & 609 and Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 324.

⁶⁸⁵ Confucius Analects 2:5 "When parents are alive, serve them according to the rules of propriety. When they die, bury the according to the rules of propriety and sacrifice to them according to the rules of propriety." Translated Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, page 23.

⁶⁸⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 493. The Liji (Book of Rites) Da Xue (Great Learning) para 11, expresses this concept. From James Legge translation: "What is meant by "In order rightly to govern the state, it is necessary first to regulate the family," is this: It is not possible for one to teach others, while he cannot teach his own family. Therefore, the ruler, without going beyond his family, completes the lessons for the state. There is filial piety - therewith the sovereign should be served . . . Let the ruler discharge his duties to his elder and younger brothers, and then he may teach the people of the state. In the Book of Poetry, it is said, "In his deportment there is nothing wrong; he rectifies all the people of the state." Yes; when the ruler, as a father, a son, and a brother, is a model, then the people imitate him. This is what is meant by saying, "The government of his kingdom depends on his regulation of the family." <https://ctext.org/liji/da-xue>

Jiang recalled a maxim from the Chinese past within the Confucian tradition to demand that cadres take stock of their families and prevent them from profiting from their position. In fact, he goes so far as to say that if these cadres cannot manage this, they have no business leading from within the CPC:

The power of leading comrades is granted to them by the people, and they must use this power only in the interest of the people. They must never use it as a means for obtaining personal gain for themselves and their families . . . Whether or not leading cadres can satisfy this requirement is a practical and serious test they must pass.⁶⁸⁷

For Jiang, moral behavior by individuals was insufficient, for it also had to extend to their families.

The final category that Jiang discussed related to the pursuit of fame as a vice. Jiang framed this issue against those seeking excessive accolades and personal glorification as opposed to working towards the betterment of society. Jiang described the desired outlook as one of continuous struggle, with the aim of that struggle oriented towards the accomplishment of the CPC's goals.

When we come to this world we are without fame and fortune, and we cannot take them with us when we die. We must always do more to benefit the country, society and the people. This is the fundamental expression of the value of life . . . Countless poems, songs and prose throughout Chinese history advise people to strive to excel, not to seek fame and wealth, and not to shamelessly seek personal gain for the sake of unearned honors or petty profits. Laozi said, "There is no greater mistake than following desire; There is no greater disaster than forgetting contentment." I'm not saying that everyone should be disillusioned with this world; that is a negative attitude toward life. The philosophy of Communists is a philosophy of struggle, and we should tirelessly struggle for the interests of the Party, the state, the nation and the people.⁶⁸⁸

Jiang recalled both classical literature and Chinese ancient philosophy to illustrate this point for striving for success but avoiding obsession with temporary rewards associated with that success. He was careful to clarify his instrumental use of the Confucian/Traditional framework and avoid a direct endorsement of Daoist philosophy and its focus on negation.⁶⁸⁹ His clarification instead called for a continuous struggle according to a Communist philosophy that maintained a commitment to avoiding the corrupting vice of obsession with fame and fortune.

Jiang concluded with a warning for those who failed to abstain from corruption, and with a call to action for the CCDI. He particularly praised prosecuting prominent cases and publicizing them widely for their deterrent effect. He proclaimed:

⁶⁸⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 494.

⁶⁸⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 494. Laozi, *Dao De Jing*, para 46. (禍莫大於不知足 ; 咎莫大於欲得). James Legge translation: "There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot; no fault greater than the wish to be getting." <https://cext.org/dao-de-jing>

⁶⁸⁹ Kung-chuan Hsiao, translated by F.W. Mote, *History of Chinese Political Thought: Volume I*, pages 277-283.

Prosecuting prominent cases will also have a great deterrent effect. In the early 1950s, we resolutely handled the cases of Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan. This played an important role in warning Party members and cadres about combating corruption, promoting incorruptibility, and guarding against degeneration after they entered the cities. We must severely punish cadres who dare to ignore the law and discipline, and who engage in illegal and criminal activities.⁶⁹⁰

Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan were CPC members who were accused of high levels of corruption and executed in 1952.⁶⁹¹ The accusations against them included misusing government funds to support a lavish lifestyle. The evocation of this historical memory was a stark warning. Although Jiang avoided calling for draconian enforcement, such as executions, he certainly used that memory to cement the gravity of corruption and the essential need for the CCDI to aggressively pursue it. Jiang made tackling corruption a centerpiece of his political program and used historical memory within his discourse to address it.

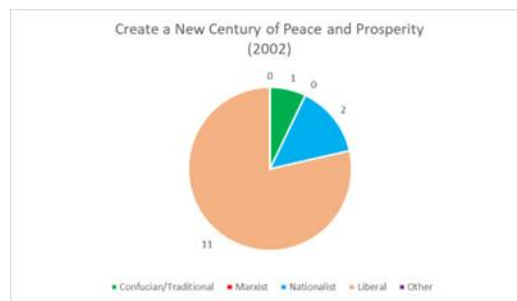


Figure 4.12 References by category for speech titled "Create a New Century of Peace and Prosperity Together" (2002).

The final text examined is titled "Create a New Century of Peace and Prosperity Together," delivered April 2002 in Germany. The primary audience for the speech was international. Jiang's tenure was ending with Hu Jintao established as the clear successor. Hu began taking over the key political positions starting at the 16th Party Congress later that year. However, Jiang attempted to retain elements of his authority as core leader just as Deng had done during the initial years of his reign. The text includes fourteen discernable references to historical memory. Consistent with a primarily international audience, Jiang relied mostly on the Liberal framework, with minor use of Confucian/Traditional and Nationalist narratives.

⁶⁹⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 497.

⁶⁹¹ For more on the arrest and execution of Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan see, Dikötter, Frank. *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945-1957*. (Location 2826-2876 of 7514), Kindle Edition.

The primary objective of the speech appears to be to increase the PRC's international standing and smooth the road to greater integration of China into the international community, on the PRC's terms. To accomplish this objective, Jiang employed historical memory at several points to shore up his arguments. First, he displayed adherence to the view of contemporary historical development adopted by the Liberal IR theory. Next, he advocated for the application of this theory in international relations, particularly through the institution of a democratization of international relations, while respecting diversity in systems of governance. Following this, Jiang presented China as possessing a political culture attuned to this international environment based on its historical experiences. Finally, Jiang catalogued the successes China had gained from its R&OU program and how continuation of that policy through managed interaction with the international community benefited both China and the world.

Jiang began by associating himself with the arguments of the Liberal IR theory regarding the forces shaping international affairs at that time. In his international speeches, Jiang commonly used the Liberal framework to assuage concerns and build connections with his audience. He observed, "As we enter the new century; peace and development are still the themes of the times. The world needs peace, the people want cooperation, countries pursue development, and societies seek progress – these are the trends of our times."⁶⁹² Jiang hoped that if he presented China as a participant in the global community in accordance with the Liberal IR theory, then it would be more readily accepted with fewer strings attached. Furthermore, he categorized the motivational forces behind these developments as the World Wars and the end of the Cold War, although he politely abstained from celebratory rhetoric regarding World War II given his German audience.⁶⁹³ He argued that it was necessary to align China's policy to those prevailing trends, and by extension that it was in the world's best interests to enable China to accomplish this objective. He stated:

We believe that the correct path for safeguarding world peace and promoting shared development is to conform to the trends of the times and aspirations of the peoples of all countries, adroitly guide actions according to

⁶⁹² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 458.

⁶⁹³ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 458.

circumstances and actively promote the establishment of a just and equitable new international political and economic order.⁶⁹⁴

Jiang articulated a view of history, including its general direction and influences, in line with the general feelings of many in the West following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This presentation enabled him to portray China's rise and integration as non-threatening and even essential to the future that many hoped to create in the wake of the end of the Cold War.

By recognizing multipolarization, Jiang angled for the inauguration of a specific type of global governance in the form of democratization of international relations. Discussing the need for multipolarization Jiang observed:

Being dedicated to the establishment of a multipolar world accords with the objective laws of world development, and is conducive to giving expression to the common aspirations and interests of all countries and their peoples, giving impetus to the establishment of a fair and equitable new international political and economic order, and facilitating coordinated and balanced political, economic and cultural development throughout the world.⁶⁹⁵

The term multipolarization would be carried forward into Hu Jintao's discourse. Jiang called for a globally inclusive approach to address global dilemmas. He recommended:

Promote the democratization of international relations and concentrate the efforts of the peoples of all countries on solving outstanding problems. History has repeatedly proven that global issues must be resolved jointly by all countries and global challenges must be dealt with through the cooperation of all countries.⁶⁹⁶

Rather than assault the rules based international order guaranteed by the United States, Jiang proposed to allow for a diffusion of global power and responsibility with China positioned as a valuable contributing member. Although Jiang supported many elements of Liberal IR theory, he drew a line where it came to universal rights and political systems intruding upon CPC rule in China.

To safeguard CPC prerogatives, Jiang attempted to maneuver his discourse in a non-threatening way through the Liberal framework. The answer Jiang arrived upon was a need to respect diversity of nations.⁶⁹⁷ He located that diversity in the unique historical and cultural conditions for each country and

⁶⁹⁴ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 459.

⁶⁹⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 459.

⁶⁹⁶ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 459.

⁶⁹⁷ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume I, pages 322 & 469; Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume II, page 153; Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, pages 107, 304 & 506.

demanding that nations respect internal affairs of others as a prerequisite for stable and fruitful international relations.

Respect the diversity of the world and ensure that all countries live in harmony and respect each other. The peoples of different countries have created colorful and varied civilizations in the course of their own development. Cultures communicating with and learning from each other drives human progress. Different cultures and social systems in the world should and can coexist for a long time, learn from and help each other through competition and comparison, and develop together by seeking common ground while putting aside differences. The world is rich and varied, and cannot and should not have only one model. A world of peaceful coexistence and shared development will certainly be dynamic, bright and colorful world, where different cultures meet and learn from each other, and all countries treat and respect one another as equals.⁶⁹⁸

Not only did Jiang call for respect of diversity among countries' socio-political systems, but he further argued that interaction between these diverse cultures was the source of progress itself. By Jiang's argument it is only by respecting diversity of cultures, and by implication allowing for the CPC to rule China as it sees fit, that there can be stability and mutual development. He attempted to carve out an independent position for China within the general Liberal framework by using arguments that would find a ready audience, especially in the West, while simultaneously advancing an advantageous position for China.

Jiang did not confine his speech to discussions on general historical trends but offered specific arguments for China's greater participation in the global community as inherently beneficial. He found evidence for this in three threads within Chinese historical memory. The first thread comes from the Confucian/Traditional framework and attributes a Chinese disposition that is inherently peace-loving and which values good neighborliness. He suggests these characteristics were imbedded within ancient Chinese culture and carried forward to the present.

The Chinese nation is a peace-loving nation. The purpose of China's foreign policy is to safeguard world peace and promote shared development. The thinking that "Friendship with neighboring countries is the treasure of a country," and the maxims, "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you" and "If you want to succeed you should also help others succeed, if you want to obtain something you should also help others attain it," which were put forth by ancient Chinese thinkers, reflect the peace-loving Chinese people's strong desire for and rich cultural heritage of living in friendship with all mankind.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁸ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 460. Jiang extended this argument to international stability promoted by respect for diversity in nations and their interdependence. Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, pages 460-461. "As interdependence deepens and common ground on security increases among countries, it has become difficult for any country to achieve its security objectives on its own. We can effectively deal with global security challenges and achieve universal and lasting security only by strengthening international cooperation. All countries should seek security through mutual trust and seek cooperation based on mutual benefit in order to fundamentally reduce the sources of insecurity and safeguard global strategic balance and stability."

⁶⁹⁹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 461.

Jiang claimed that Chinese culture possessed notions of desiring peace and good relations with foreign nations for millennia and these influences remained operative in his time. The second thread came from the Nationalist framework and leaned into China's formative period as a victim of imperialism and colonialism during the CoH.

In modern times, China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and the Chinese people experienced the chaos of war and the hardships of poverty because of foreign colonization and invasion by big powers. It was only after waging a long struggle and paying a dear price that the Chinese people finally won national independence and the people's liberation and became able to build their own country in peace. The Chinese people have learned well from their tragic experiences that peace is extremely precious and is the fundamental premise for China's development and prosperity. The Chinese government and Chinese people will always safeguard world peace.⁷⁰⁰

According to Jiang, as China had been a victim of foreign aggression and exploitation, this collective experience left an indelible mark on its historical memory. It had internalized a rejection of any such activity in the conduct of its affairs with other nations. The final thread came after the PRC's founding and related to China's position in international relations since 1949, particularly the articulation of Zhou Enlai's Five Principles in 1954.

Events since the founding of New China have shown the world that China is always a steadfast force for safeguarding regional and world peace. China long ago proposed the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression and noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, and has abided by its solemn commitments not to join military blocs, not to establish a sphere of influence, and never to seek hegemony, thereby making a positive contribution to promoting regional and world peace and security.⁷⁰¹

Jiang argued that there existed a consistent policy by the PRC to adhere to standards of mutual respect and global development in its foreign policy and that it sought merely to continue with that policy through further integration into the global community. Jiang presented China as a country whose historical and cultural legacy preconfigured it to be a beneficial nation within the new global international relations system by leveraging elements of various historical frameworks.

The final argument which Jiang made using historical memory was to highlight the accomplishments of the PRC under the R&OU program and the opportunities moving forward. Jiang invested substantial political capital into advocating for the R&OU program and sought to associate it with the recent accomplishments of the PRC. Highlighting these successes Jiang declared:

⁷⁰⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 461.

⁷⁰¹ Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 462.

Since the founding of New China, especially since adopting the reform and opening up policy, Chinese society has undergone great historic changes, and remarkable achievements have been made in China's development. Today's China enjoys political stability, economic development, ethnic solidarity and social progress. Our socialist market economy is taking shape; democracy and the legal system have further improved; and the people's lives as a whole have reached a moderately prosperous standard.⁷⁰²

As Jiang credited the PRC's recent successes to these reforms, the international audience could safely assume that these policies would continue along a similar trajectory.

Jiang instrumentally used historical memory throughout his discourse and these four texts offer illustrations of some types and purposes for those uses. Although the exact purpose for each speech differed, the fundamental rationale of each was to serve a political interest of Jiang as he pursued or sought to maintain his authority as core leader. The first speech, issued during a period of turmoil, sought to push back against the United States and solidify both the CPC's authority and Jiang's own position, using Marxist and Nationalist frameworks to accomplish this task. The second came as Jiang began asserting greater authority as ideological leader as Deng faded from the scene. In this speech he instructed cultural creators to shape perceptions of China and imbed his policies favorably in collective memory. The third speech was issued in response to a perception of increased corruption that threatened to erode the very foundations of the CPC's authority. Jiang employed a mixture of historical narratives to combat this phenomenon and empower the CCDI in its work. The final speech occurred at the twilight of Jiang's tenure and reflected his attempt to better integrate the PRC into the international community through the Liberal framework, while preserving the PRC's core interests through an invocation of Nationalist, Confucian/Traditional, and even Liberal narratives. Although varying in frequency and tenor, these examples displayed Jiang instrumentally using historical memory within his discourse and revealed the political intention behind their usage.

Conclusions

Jiang Zemin faced several challenges as he pursued core leadership, and once he ascended his difficulties did not recede. He possessed nothing remotely analogous to the revolutionary credentials of his predecessors Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping. He faced major turmoil both domestically and

⁷⁰² Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*: Volume III, page 462.

internationally during the initial years of his tenure. Although he had reached the pinnacle of political power, the recent removals of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang illustrated that such authority could be rescinded. Deng Xiaoping's reassertion of ideological influence in 1992 helped stabilize the regime, but constricted Jiang from developing his own governing philosophy. After Deng's death, Jiang had the opportunity to craft his ideology known as Three Represents theory and propagate it across the CPC, thus achieving the two prerequisites of dominant political power and ideological authority. In addition, he labored to redefine historical memory to present himself as the natural successor to both Mao and Deng in a process of continued evolution of Socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, even at this pinnacle Jiang faced major challenges, especially from his political left, which chafed under his continued reform efforts. Uneven development and corruption among the CPC cadres further diminished his power, as did certain international incidents that contradicted the grand historical narratives that he presented in his discourse. Finally, the restrictions on term limits and need to turn over power to the fourth generation of leadership by the Sixteenth Party Congress in 2002 further constrained his authority. Throughout all his efforts and in the face of all these trials, Jiang relied on the instrumental use of historical memory within his discourse to pursue his political agenda and solidify his hold on core leadership.

The volume of Jiang's instrumental use of historical memory generally coincides with his relative grip over the position of core leader. The highest frequency periods appear during his initial tenure when he gave maximum effort towards establishing himself and in the late 1990s when opportunities emerged for him to monopolize ideological authority. Following Deng's intervention in 1992 Jiang's use of historical memory plummeted, but it recovered on a steady upward trajectory in the following years. Towards the end of his tenure Jiang maintained an elevated level of instrumental use but did see a slight decline as the fourth generation came to the forefront. Events which contradicted Jiang's established narratives, such as the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the 1999 Belgrade Embassy bombing, appeared to temporarily depress his instrumental use. Jiang's use of historical memory shifted in accordance with his pursuit of core leadership but remained ever present in his discourse.

Jiang's use of historical memory conformed substantially to the four narrative frameworks used by PRC core leaders. Jiang attempted to locate himself as the natural successor of Mao and Deng Xiaoping, carrying forward Deng's general policy orientation but offering updates based on China's new circumstances, a rationale not dissimilar to Deng's own justification for deviations from Mao's governing philosophy. However, he did not offer a comprehensive novel interpretation of Party history and his propositions underpinning his governing philosophy faced hurdles as events transpired which undermined those assumptions. Regardless, he calibrated his instrumental usage based on his audience and objectives to maximize their effect. The Confucian/Traditional framework, focused on establishing moral behavior, proved essential as Jiang attempted to influence the behavior of CPC cadres, especially when combatting corruption. The Marxist framework, favored by primarily Party audiences, established Jiang's authority, and linked his ideology to his predecessors Marx, Engels, Lenin, and especially Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. It also proved useful in answering critics of his R&OU policies. The Nationalist framework, favored with a wider domestic audience, used collective memory of events such as the CoH and China's military experience to unite the population and motivate them to achieve a directed political goal. Finally, the Liberal Framework, used mostly, although not exclusively, with a foreign audience, celebrated China's achievements under the R&OU program. Furthermore, Jiang leveraged the ascendent Liberal IR theory to position China's rise as necessary and beneficial to the international community, seeking to counter fears of China's rise as inherently destabilizing to the world order. Examining Jiang Zemin's official discourse displays how his instrumental uses of historical memory interacted together to advance his political agenda and propel his narrative buttressing his claim to core leadership.

Jiang proved ready and willing to use historical memory instrumentally in pursuit of core leadership. He did achieve the pinnacle of political power and eventually was able to perpetuate his Three Represents theory as the operative ideology guiding PRC policy. Jiang's governing philosophy sought to address issues of uneven development, especially with its third leg of representing the fundamental interests of the Chinese people. Although he may not have reached the same heights as Mao and Deng as core leaders, he appears to have achieved core leadership, however fleeting. Unfortunately for Jiang,

various circumstances stunted his efforts at several important junctions. Even during the height of his authority at the turn of the century, Jiang faced major challenges that restrained his power. Furthermore, he failed in his attempts to retain meaningful authority as core leader after the ascension of Hu Jintao, despite staying on as CMC chair for some time after 2002. Jiang did not possess the same authority as Deng Xiaoping, who managed to have meaningful ideological clout well into his retirement. Jiang certainly pursued core leadership and achieved some measure of success in that objective, with his instrumental use of historical memory ever present in that pursuit. However, Jiang's use could only take him so far and did not overcome the forces restraining his authority.

When drawing a line from Mao through Deng to Jiang, the core leader as an institution was losing prevalence. In its place collective leadership seemed to restrain the paramount leaders and dilute their sole authority over ideological control. As such, the instrumental use of historical memory, while still present, would seem likely to decline further in utility with the next generation of leadership. Furthermore, although Jiang could claim minor participation in China's struggles during the revolutionary period, future generations of leaders could no longer even rely on that source of legitimacy. Jiang's successor, Hu Jintao, appeared as a less flamboyant figure compared to Jiang. His discourse was correspondingly dryer and more methodical and his authority as core leader the weakest of any leader examined, if he can even be labelled as such. However, Hu still found a need to rely on the instrumental use of historical memory to pursue his political agenda - even if he never matched the colorful, if sometimes misplaced, applications of Jiang Zemin.

Chapter 5 - Hu Jintao:

“Core Lite”

Introduction

Hu Jintao is perhaps the most challenging paramount leader to analyze. His public discourse can be characterized as sparse and formulaic. To illustrate this point, Kerry Brown subtitled his biography of Hu, *China's Silent Ruler*. Hu rarely referenced his past in public discourse, and he gave few interviews. Consensus-building among the collective leadership appeared to be Hu's primary objective. While many may contribute to crafting a leader's discourse, Hu appeared to take this to an extreme. His report to the 17th Party Congress went through several dozen reviews and revisions by various editors before he finally delivered it.⁷⁰³ Yet despite these factors, Hu did instrumentalize historical memory, but it is not clear whether these efforts ever vaulted him to the summit of core leadership. Susan Shirk observes, “Hu Jintao never achieved ‘core leader’ status, however, and used only the more modest description, ‘the party center with Comrade Hu Jintao as General Secretary.’”⁷⁰⁴ However, despite perhaps failing to reach the peak, Hu appears to have made some modest attempts to strive towards it, indicated by his variable instrumental use of historical memory. Furthermore, that instrumentalization included the Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal narrative frameworks. Among all the leaders examined, Hu appears to be the least successful in achieving core leadership and least effective at wielding historical memory to aid in that endeavor.

Despite limits on his core leader status, Hu did occupy the key positions of paramount leadership in the PRC Party-State structure and advanced his own governing philosophy. Hu termed his governing philosophy as the Scientific Outlook on Development (科学发展观) and it represented the guiding theory

⁷⁰³ Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler*, page xix.

⁷⁰⁴ Susan Shirk. *How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise: Overreach*, page 279.

for the PRC during Hu's tenure. This ideology carried forward several of the key tenets of Jiang's Three Represents. For example, it paid renewed attention to combating corruption, especially among Party cadres. Additionally, the ideology placed a premium on improving China's international image and leveraging the global economy to foster continual growth while maintaining a veto over critical issues involving political stability. Beyond the Three Represents, Hu's ideology stressed its connection to Deng Xiaoping Theory (邓小平理论), specifically the Reform and Opening up (改革开放) policy, with emphasis on reliance on science and technology to sustain rapid growth. Hu maintained Deng's restriction on the scope of Reform and Opening Up (R&OU hereafter) by strict adherence to the Four Cardinal Principles, maintaining the CPC's firm grip on power. The relationship between the Scientific Outlook on Development and Mao Zedong Thought (毛泽东思想) vacillated during Hu's tenure between outright support and careful distancing. Hu propagated an independent governing philosophy and thereby fulfilled an essential condition for becoming the core leader alongside holding paramount political office, following the same course as his predecessors.

Hu's tenure as paramount leader, his governing philosophy and rhetorical style have both been examined in various aspects by other scholars. Kerry Brown's biography offers not only an examination of Hu's rule but also a summary of his ideology. In fact, he dedicates an entire chapter of his book to the subject. He observes that rather than fading in importance, instruction in and enforcement of political theory at all levels of government remained a potent force in Hu's China. "Ideology," Brown argues, "remains important even in the pragmatic world of Hu Jintao's PRC . . ."⁷⁰⁵ In his examination of Hu's ideology, Brown alludes to what I classify as the four major historical narrative frameworks employed by core leaders. He found nationalism expressed through evoking collective memory of the Century of Humiliation (CoH hereafter) as a common theme in framing international affairs.⁷⁰⁶ In addition, under the

⁷⁰⁵ Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler*, page 143.

⁷⁰⁶ Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler*, page 116.

banner of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, nationalist themes played an essential role in reframing Marxist doctrine and establishing the Chinese manifestation as an independent ideology. Brown further argues that Marxism and, by extension, Maoism remained active in Hu's governing philosophy. One example he cites is Hu's trip to the revolutionary historical site Xibaipo immediately after his election as General Secretary as evidence of this affinity.⁷⁰⁷ Brown further displays how ancient Chinese philosophical concepts (including Confucianism, although it wasn't named outright) provided an essential ingredient in Hu's governing philosophy. Hu invoked these concepts to add further weight to his discourse aimed at cultivating stability, improving people's livelihood, and encouraging national unity. Finally, Brown notes the importance of Deng's R&OU as the impetus towards progress in Hu's governing philosophy. Brown further summarizes Hu's view on the Liberal framework, "The Party has only ever had one direction, and that is to pursue modernity, progress, and development."⁷⁰⁸ Kerry Brown's biography, especially his exploration of Hu's governing philosophy, offers insight into Hu's instrumentalization of collective memory.

Bo Zhiyue articulates a shifting approach to ideology among the core leaders of the CPC, including Hu Jintao. Writing in 2004, Bo argues, "Hu replaced Jiang as the sole legitimate interpreter of the ideology of the Party as the General Secretary of the Party and thus institutionalized the ideology."⁷⁰⁹ In addition, Bo highlights instances of Hu borrowing both Maoist terms and Marxist interpretations in articulating the still active Three Represents. "He (Hu) replaced Jiang's slogans from the Cultural Revolution with modern terminologies, and emphasized the role of the person in ideology and anchored the 'Three Represents' in Maoist principles."⁷¹⁰ Bo finds Hu returning to Marxist viewpoints in his

⁷⁰⁷ Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler*, pages 151-152. Xibaipo was the town where the CPC set up its headquarters after having been driven from Yan'an and planned the counterattack against the GMD forces in 1948, Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War 1946-1950*, page 188.

⁷⁰⁸ Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler*, page 157.

⁷⁰⁹ Bo Zhiyue. "Hu Jintao and the CCP's Ideology: A Historical Perspective," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, vol. 9, no. 2, Fall 2004, page 39.

⁷¹⁰ Bo Zhiyue. "Hu Jintao and the CCP's Ideology: A Historical Perspective," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, vol. 9, no. 2, Fall 2004, page 38.

discourse. Another scholar studying Hu's ideology is Xing Guoxin, who finds Hu's discourse shifting away from Marxism. Xing, writing in 2009, argues that the Party-State under Hu's governing philosophy "... is shifting from its self-claimed official ideologies, which are in tune with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, to post-Marxist discourses for legitimacy building."⁷¹¹ For Xing, Hu balanced ideological challenges from his political left and right flank to maintain his legitimacy. Xing proposes the reason for the shift appears to be functional, with Hu borrowing from Marxist and post-Marxist narratives where necessary to appease factions jostling for influence in formulating state policy.⁷¹² Bo and Xing offer differing but compelling interpretations of Hu's reliance on Marxism in his ideology and the difference may be partly accounted for by differences in the years examined. It could be that Xing detected Hu's shifts towards establishing his own governing philosophy later in his tenure, while Bo discerned the early attempts by Hu to create the necessary ideological space for him to compete with Jiang for authority.

Studies of Hu's political speech also extend to his use of rhetoric, including observations of the instrumentalization of historical memory. Raviprasad Narayanan traces the discourse development of China's "peaceful rise" and "peaceful development" during Hu's tenure. He also argues that Hu adopted a functional view of these concepts. Narayanan posits that peaceful development was an attempt to sidestep realist IR theories regarding conflict between rising and established powers.⁷¹³ Narayanan identifies that this discourse traverses through three levels, the Party leadership, domestic posturing, and international image.⁷¹⁴ Furthermore, the Liberal narrative expressed through multilateralism and globalization as unstoppable forces of progress appears as a prominent aspect of Hu's ideology. "In locating the present, the discourse on the 'rise of China' acknowledges the international geopolitical environment being determined by a process of accelerated economic globalization and interdependency."⁷¹⁵ According to

⁷¹¹ Guoxin Xing, "Hu Jintao's Political Thinking and Legitimacy Building: A Post-Marxist Perspective," *Asian Affairs* 36, No. 4, 2009, page 213.

⁷¹² Guoxin Xing, "Hu Jintao's Political Thinking and Legitimacy Building: A Post-Marxist Perspective," *Asian Affairs* 36, No. 4, 2009, page 223.

⁷¹³ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 647.

⁷¹⁴ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 648.

⁷¹⁵ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 650.

Narayanan, instrumentalizing Confucian constructs, such as Harmony, proved beneficial in creating space for China to engage with the international system while maintaining the independence of its political system from western ethical concepts.⁷¹⁶ However, while Hu appears sensitive to conveying concepts simultaneously to multiple audiences through curated language, Narayanan argues that balancing these concepts with multiple audiences would likely create challenges for the regime.⁷¹⁷ Narayanan identifies the importance of Hu's political rhetoric to engage with the three significant audiences for the core leader and provides some concrete examples of what I term the Liberal and Confucian/Traditional frameworks within that discourse.

The formulaic aspect of Hu's rhetoric is another crucial component that illustrates its instrumental nature. Alfiya Alikbeet et al. examine Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping's New Year's addresses as examples of political discourse. They find in the speeches highly ritualized formats with deliberately selected phrasing in pursuit of the leaders' political objectives.⁷¹⁸ Another scholar, Una Aleksandra Berzina, provides a substantial analysis of the linguistic features of Hu's address to the 17th Party Congress. She posits two major discourses at play, socialist and traditional. Despite her initial hypothesis, Berzina discovered several other discourses in the speech, some aligning closely with what I term the Liberal framework for example.⁷¹⁹ Furthermore, she discerns that part of the speech aimed to advance Hu's influence at the expense of the previous core leader, Jiang Zemin. "Hu Jintao also addressed a more personal aim – to lessen the influence of his predecessor Jiang Zemin's ideological legacy."⁷²⁰ Studies of Hu's rhetorical style indicate a functional approach to his discourse with the goal of advancing his influence towards core leadership.

⁷¹⁶ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 650.

⁷¹⁷ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 657.

⁷¹⁸ Alfiya Alikberov et al., "New Year Address as a Genre of Political Discourse: Political and Linguistic Research (On the Material of Chinese President Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping)," *Journal of Sustainable Development*, Vol 8:5, 2015, page 85.

⁷¹⁹ Una Berzina, "Traditional Chinese Discourse in Hu Jintao's Report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Riga Stradins University, 2014, page 32.

⁷²⁰ Una Berzina, "Traditional Chinese Discourse in Hu Jintao's Report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Riga Stradins University, 2014, page 36.

Scholars have also studied the deliberate use of language in Hu's China, including the instrumentalized use of language describing international relations. David Scott traces the development of numerous elements common in international relations theory within Hu Jintao's discourse. He argues that these concepts are ". . . overtly instrumentalist rather than normative . . ."⁷²¹ In other words, Hu, and the larger PRC public diplomacy apparatus at his direction, carefully curated their discourse to achieve an intended purpose beyond the immediate subject under discussion. He explores the evolution of linguistic descriptions of policy concepts, such as "Multi-polarity" to "Good Neighbourhood Policy" and "Peaceful Rise" to "Peaceful Development," between Jiang and Hu.⁷²² Scott argues that the language surrounding these policies was adjusted to better uphold their legitimacy to various audiences. He observes Hu wielding what I call a Liberal framework for interaction with certain international audiences, employing terms such as multilateralism and democratization.⁷²³ Scott shows how discourse in public diplomacy had been instrumentalized by Hu.

Among the leaders of the PRC, Hu Jintao was the furthest from achieving status as core leader. In addition, Hu's public discourse is far less robust and more clinical than the other PRC leaders. However, Hu's rhetoric still possesses significant examples of the instrumentalization of collective memory. Furthermore, his uses do conform substantially to the four primary frameworks used by PRC core leaders: Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal. Although Hu's influence was shallower compared to other leaders, it seems he did still attempt to become core leader.

During the first few years of his tenure, Hu struggled against Jiang Zemin's lingering presence as previous core. The 17th Party Congress and the 2008 Beijing Olympics represented the height of Hu's influence. However, Hu's power waned sharply following a series of crises ahead of the 18th Party Congress in 2012 and the rise of Xi Jinping and the fifth generation of leadership. Although Hu's more muted approach makes any forecast difficult, I would expect to see a relative rise in instrumental uses of

⁷²¹ David Scott, "China's Public Diplomacy Rhetoric, 1990-2012: Pragmatic Image-Crafting," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol 26:2, 2015, page 248.

⁷²² David Scott, "China's Public Diplomacy Rhetoric, 1990-2012: Pragmatic Image-Crafting," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol 26:2, 2015, page 260.

⁷²³ David Scott, "China's Public Diplomacy Rhetoric, 1990-2012: Pragmatic Image-Crafting," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol 26:2, 2015, page 253.

historical memory early in Hu's tenure as he competed with Jiang, as well as a high point around his major achievements towards the 17th Party Congress, then falling off in the years to follow. Even a Chinese leader as low-key as Hu Jintao instrumentalized historical memory for political ends.

Metrics

An examination of Hu Jintao's discourse reveals that he relied on historical memory to energize his political arguments throughout his tenure. I examined forty-eight unique examples of Hu's political discourse, including speeches, articles, addresses, and public interviews from 1999 through 2012. The total word count exceeded 132,000 when translated into English. I identified 217 unique examples of references to historical memory and use of historical narratives. As a result, Hu Jintao included approximately one historical reference per seven hundred and fifty-six words. In addition, of the forty-eight examples, a total of eight had no discernable references to historical memory. Appendix **D** includes a full listing of the works and identified references.

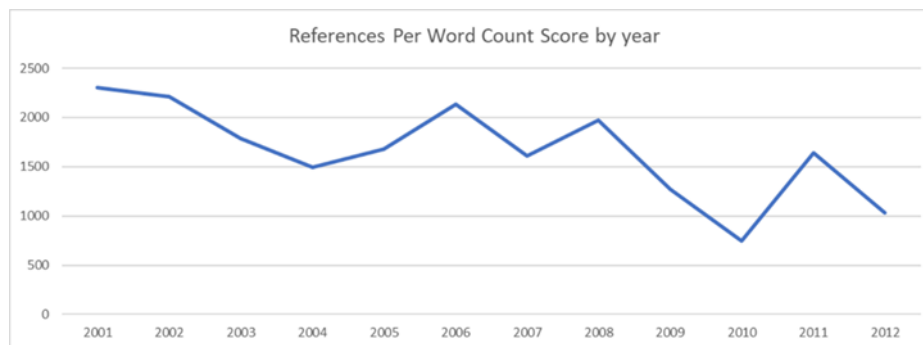


Figure 5.1 References per Word Count Score yearly average. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4000) to account for observed articles without historical references.

Hu Jintao's public discourse generally follows the expected course for a rise and decline of core leadership but with far more variation than anticipated. As Figure 1 displays, Hu appears to have a higher level of incidence in his early years as he moved into the spotlight as the next paramount leader prior to 2003. Next, there is a relatively stable level of utilizing historical references between 2003 - 2004, with a slight rise starting in 2005. The incidents appear to stabilize between 2006 - 2008 when Hu's position as core leader status appeared most secure. Following 2008 there is a precipitous decline in the usage of

instrumentalized collective memory, as Hu began losing prominence as his identified successor Xi Jinping, began to lay the groundwork for seizing core leadership. There is a recovery in 2011, perhaps reflecting a renewed attempt by Hu to reassert authority ahead of the 18th Party Congress. While the model generally conforms to the expected course, the unexpected variation warrants further discussion.



Figure 5.2 References per Word Count Score for each observation. The Blue Dash represents each individual Reference Per Word Count Score. The Red Dots represent the five datapoint moving averages for the same data set. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4000) to account for observed articles without any historical references within.

The above figure offers a more detailed display of the dataset by including each incidence individually instead of a yearly average, as in Figure 1. The general trend line still generally conforms but with some deviations. The first issue is the case of higher incidents of instrumentalization of historical memory in 2001 and 2002. It could be evidence of Hu asserting his ideological and political acumen ahead of the 16th Party Congress to generate confidence in his elevation to the highest leadership level among the collective leadership. However, the model has too few data points to assert this conclusion with full confidence for Hu, although it does match a similar trend found with Jiang Zemin.

The lower utilization of historical memory in Hu's early years reflects his unsteady position and competition with Jiang Zemin for the core leadership in the years immediately following the 16th Party Congress. Unfortunately, the dip between 2003 - 2005 also suffers from a lack of robust data points. However, other factors may help explain the dip by using the core leader framework. Hu Jintao's ideological framework for Scientific Outlook on Development only began to be propagated among the Party leadership in late 2003-2004.⁷²⁴ Furthermore, Jiang Zemin remained in the important top post of the

⁷²⁴ Joseph Fewsmith, "Promoting the Scientific Development Concept," *China Leadership Monitor*, No.11, 2004, page 3.

Party CMC Chair until September 2004 and the State CMC until March 2005. Finally, as Joseph Fewsmith observed, Hu faced ideological challenges from other quarters. Recounting some apparent ideological disagreements with Jiang loyalist Zeng Qinghong, Fewsmith writes, “While such dissension should not be taken as indicating an open split in the leadership, it does suggest that there is a long way to go in defining a scientific development concept and perhaps in fully accepting Hu Jintao’s leadership.”⁷²⁵ Zeng eventually came around as Jiang’s influence faded, but the need to contend with Jiang’s lingering impact and to foster cohesion among the collective leadership may have contributed to Hu curtailing his use of historical memory and exerting influence to redefine historical memory with himself as sole arbiter.

Hu’s utilization of historical memory to improve his political position peaked between 2005 - 2008. This increase appears earlier than expected but makes sense when tied to the introduction and broader dissemination of the Scientific Outlook on Development in the PRC governing structure. The 17th Party Congress inaugurated Hu’s second term and enshrined his Scientific Outlook on Development in the CPC’s constitution in October 2007. By this time, Jiang’s competition to retain core leadership status had long since ceased viability. However, to actually achieve core leader status, Hu needed to refine and disseminate his governing philosophy and consolidate his political position. The instrumentalization of historical memory had proven an essential tool for previous Chinese core leaders in this endeavor, and it appears that Hu followed their example. In addition, the 2008 Beijing Olympics served as a culminating international event for both the PRC and Hu Jintao, announcing the arrival of a modern China on the world stage. It gave both an international and domestic platform to showcase the perceived success of the Chinese system and solidify the legitimacy of the regime’s hold on power.⁷²⁶ However, this period would mark the zenith of Hu’s ascent towards core leader, and his influence would decline in the remaining years of his tenure.

⁷²⁵ Joseph Fewsmith, “Promoting the Scientific Development Concept,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No.11, 2004, page 8.

⁷²⁶ Geremie Barmé, “China’s Flat Earth: History and 8 August 2008*,” *The China Quarterly*, 197, 2009, page 64.

While a decline was expected in Hu's utilization of historical memory following the 2008 Olympics, the steep collapse was a surprise. A contributing factor to this decline was a high incidence of speeches addressing the 2008 financial crisis. These speeches tended to avoid historical references and instead focused on reassurance and damage control efforts, an indication of Hu retreating towards the support of the collective leadership and foregoing any active movement to the core. Furthermore, Hu relied on using continued economic growth and subsequent rising living standards as a justification for CPC's political dominance. However, the financial crisis hit China's growth rate substantially; it dropped from over 14% in 2007 to 9.7% in 2008, and remained around 10% for the rest of his tenure.⁷²⁷ Beyond the serious challenge posed by the financial crisis, Hu had a series of other incidents that preoccupied his discourse. He faced domestic problems such as unrest in the Tibet and Xinjiang autonomous regions. This turmoil, including a substantial spike of terrorist incidents, undermined Hu's presentation of China as a stable nation built on harmony.⁷²⁸ All these challenges may have contributed to undermining Hu's authority and stifled moves towards core leadership. These challenges likely resulted in a need for Hu to diffuse some authority to the collective leadership to maintain political stability.



Figure 5.3 References per Word Count Score for each observation controlling for speeches marking historical anniversaries.

Hu's use of historical references rose in 2011 before declining again as the 18th Party Congress in 2012 approached. It is worth noting that relative to the highs of the 2005 - 2008 period, the 2011 period

⁷²⁷ World Bank GDP Growth rates:

https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2021&locations=CN&start=2006&year_high_desc=true, accessed 5/19/2023.

⁷²⁸ GTD incidents of terrorism in China:

https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?start_yearonly=&end_yearonly=&start_year=2002&start_month=&start_day=&end_year=2012&end_month=&end_day=&asmSelect0=&country=44&asmSelect1=&dt2=all&success=yes&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=, Accessed 5/19/2023.

was still lower, if only slightly. However, the severe depression from 2009 - 2010 appears to have enabled a relative rise in the incidence of historical reference usage. Following the decline, Hu may have clawed back some of his influence and approached core leadership status again. 2011 also marked two important anniversaries, the 100th anniversary of the Xinhai revolution and the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CPC. It could be that these speeches impacted the data trend towards the increase. However, when I dropped all addresses marking anniversaries as displayed in Figure 3, it appears these two speeches do not fully account for the rise. It seems likely that after some recovery to his authority, perhaps aided by the stabilization of the GDP growth rate, Hu quickly made way for Xi Jinping to move towards becoming core leader by the 18th Party Congress. A low point for Hu's use of historical references occurred during the transition period. The pattern of Hu Jintao's instrumentalization of collective memory appears to correspond with his relative position towards core leadership.

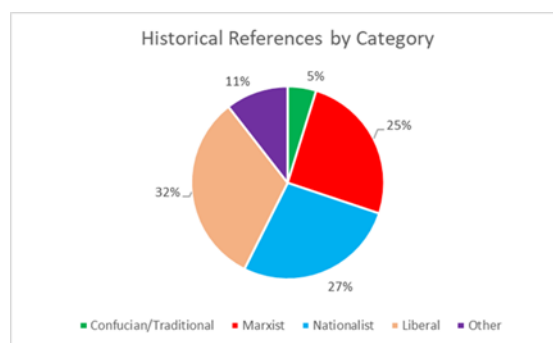


Figure 5.4 References by category percentage across the entire dataset.

Hu Jintao's use of collective memory conformed to the standard historical frameworks used by PRC core leaders. In fact, nearly 90% of references within Hu's discourse examined can be categorized within the four categories of Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal. Hu employed the Confucian/Traditional framework far less than the other three major categories, accounting for less than five percent of total references. Given Hu's education and his reserved rhetorical style, it is unsurprising that he generally avoided using classical Chinese texts in his discourse. This restraint singles Hu as an outlier, at least when compared to figures such as Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping, who appeared to relish in their usage. Hu utilized the other three major categories of Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal frameworks

evenly across his discourse. His reliance on Marxist historical memory to such a large degree indicates that Hu had not abandoned Marxism or Maoism within his discourse.

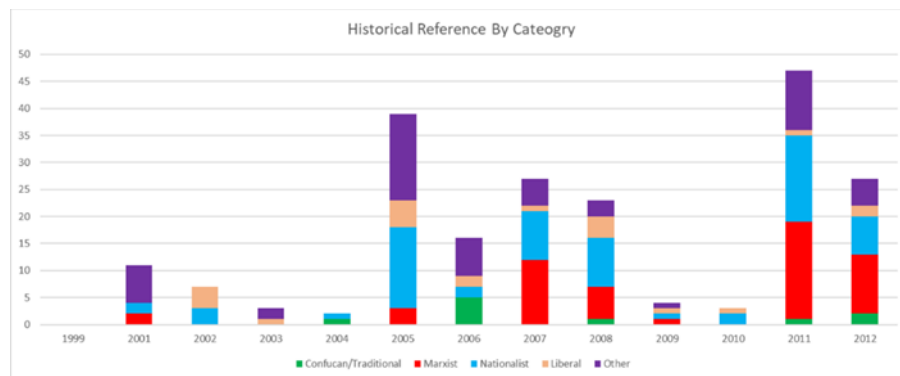


Figure 5.5 References by category for each data point.

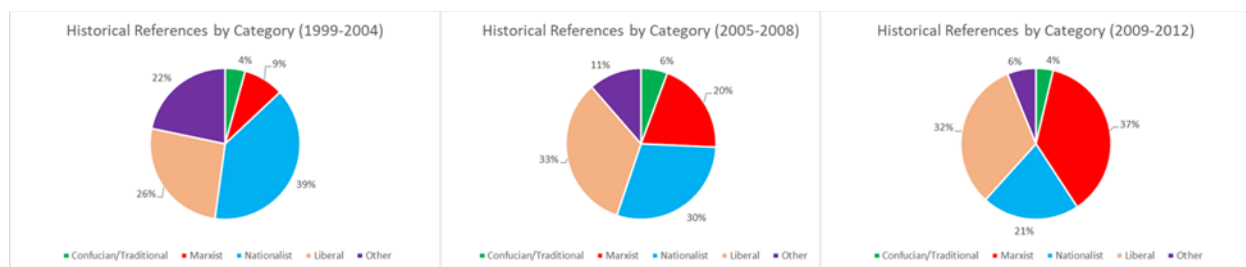


Figure 5.6 References by category divided into three sections, consolidation (1999-2004), approaching core (2005-2008), and collapse (2009-2012).

When broken down into discrete periods, it becomes apparent that Hu's instrumental use of historical categories varied over time. Hu's use of the Liberal framework is mostly consistent across all three periods. The Confucian/Traditional framework remained a small proportion throughout. On the other hand, the Nationalist framework had a significant presence throughout all three periods but appeared highest during the consolidation phase. This perhaps indicates that the unifying nationalist narratives served to garner domestic support as Hu competed for core leadership against Jiang Zemin or a lingering resentment against the United States for the Belgrade bombing and Hainan Island incidents. Finally, the Marxist lens substantially increased from the initial to the final phases. This trend may have resulted from the increasing number of Party speeches in the dataset towards later periods. It may also show the growing need for Hu to answer criticism from the conservative Left within the Party by anchoring his ideology within the Marxist framework. Hu Jintao's instrumentalization of different

categories of historical memory did not remain static over time but shifted to meet his needs as core leader.

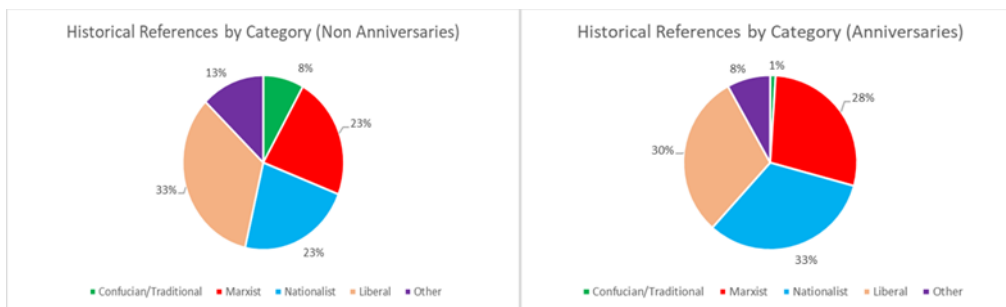


Figure 5.7 References by category between speeches marking anniversaries and those that did not.

Hu Jintao used anniversaries celebrating potent historical events to infuse his political program with gravitas and heighten personal legitimacy. These remembrances can imbue a greater sense of grandeur in what might otherwise be considered a more mundane political speech. Of the forty-eight texts examined in this study, eleven marked an anniversary. Hu's use of the Liberal framework remained consistent between the two formats. However, the Marxist and Nationalist frameworks saw a substantially higher percentage at the expense of the Confucian/Traditional. This pattern is not surprising as the events commemorated were usually tied to important historical dates in either the Nationalist narrative or major milestones in CPC historical memory.

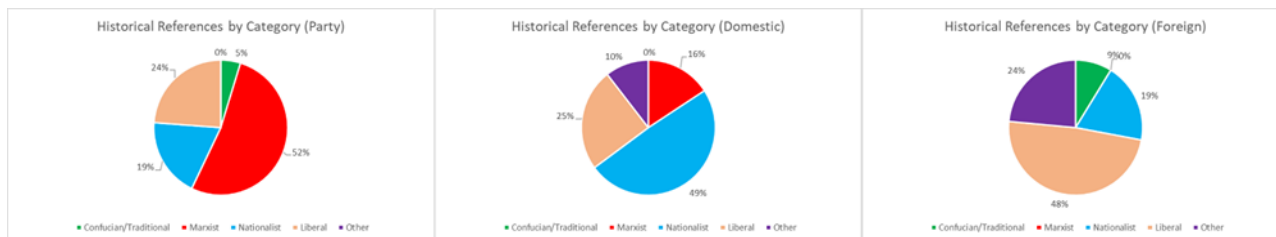


Figure 5.8 References by category between speeches to different primary audiences, Party, Domestic, and Foreign.

Starting with those speeches aimed at the Party, it is unsurprising that the Marxist framework dominates. This frequency displays how essential it was for Hu to appeal to Marxist references and framework to build and maintain the legitimacy of his governing philosophy. The Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks are also present, used mostly to generate unity by appeals to common ancestry and Chinese ethical traditions. The Liberal narrative also maintained a healthy representation,

often finding its expression through association with Deng Xiaoping and the R&OU. While other narratives are at play, when Hu addressed his fellow members of the CPC, Marxism dominated.

There is a clear distinction for Hu Jintao when addressing the broader Chinese domestic audience as opposed to primarily the CPC. Marxist narrative frameworks see a substantial decline to less than 20%, although they remain present, indicating at least some salience with the wider Chinese public. The Liberal framework maintained a consistent level. Surprisingly the Confucian/Traditional framework disappears almost entirely, even though it should have had significant resonance domestically in China. It could be that Hu remained hesitant using the Confucian/Traditional framework and its associated memory as he wasn't as comfortable with it in his discourse, at least to an audience that would have been intimately familiar with them. However, it is no surprise that the Nationalist was the most dominant framework for the domestic audience, given its broad appeal. As faith in continued rapid economic growth began to wane, especially after the 2008 financial crisis, nationalism remained a potent tool for Hu to maintain legitimacy.

The foreign audience is the final group targeted by Hu's discourse, and here we see wide divergence compared to the other audiences. The Liberal narrative is most prominent, approaching 50% of all references. It is not surprising that Hu completely abandoned Marxist references when addressing foreigners, especially in the decades immediately following the end of the Cold War. Its absence made way for individualized historical references to connect directly with specific foreign audiences that do not fit into the four main categories. Hu embraced the Liberal narrative which posited the arc of history bending ever upwards towards progress, interconnectedness, and peaceful development. Hu sought to maneuver China's ideological position to align with this historical interpretation and laced his speeches with references to advance this position. However, Hu was sensitive to aligning too closely with this view of history for fear that it would spur calls for political reform that would threaten the primacy of the CPC. To resolve this dilemma, Hu employed both the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks to argue for the uniqueness of China in the international system. Using these narratives, Hu argued China

would develop peacefully and harmonize within the international community in accordance with its unique cultural and historical legacy but would not alter its fundamental political structures.

Hu's instrumentalization generally accorded with his approximate status as the core leader, with variation likely tied to shifts in relative power position vis-à-vis the collective leadership. In addition, Hu's use of historical memory conformed to the four major categories identified as common across PRC core leaders. However, within those categories, it is apparent that Hu calibrated his usage in an attempt to maximize potential use when aimed at varying audiences. This curated application indicates an instrumental approach by Hu regarding the public discourse surrounding his governing philosophy. The following section will explore Hu's specific applications of the four historical frameworks.

Frameworks

Hu Jintao used the four historical frameworks to advance specific objectives within his discourse. However, Hu Jintao utilized the Confucian/Traditional framework the least within his public discourse, although he still found uses for it in specific circumstances. Hu framed some of his policy proposals using terms meant to invoke ancient Chinese philosophical concepts in line with the Confucian/Traditional framework. One aspect of the Scientific Outlook on Development is the concept of the Harmonious Society. By labeling his policy under the title of Harmonious Society, Hu employed a Confucian/Traditional framework that served the dual purpose of generating domestic support while deflecting international criticism.⁷²⁹ Despite campaigns against Confucianism in modern Chinese history, it maintained its resonance within Chinese political culture.⁷³⁰ This conflation between Hu's policies and

⁷²⁹ An example of the concept of Harmony and its political implications from the *Analects*, Ji Shi (1): "For when the people keep their several places, there will be no poverty; when harmony prevails, there will be no scarcity of people; and when there is such a contented repose, there will be no rebellious upsets. So it is. Therefore, if remoter people are not submissive, all the influences of civil culture and virtue are to be cultivated to attract them to be so; and when they have been so attracted, they must be made contented and tranquil." <https://ctext.org/analects/ji-shi>, accessed 5/19/2023.

⁷³⁰ David Lampton wrote regarding Chinese governance, "In a discourse deeply resonant with the Confucian tradition, the leader's legitimacy resides less in being representative than in being far-seeing, wise, and educated . . ." He continued later in the same book, "The intellectual and cultural roots of Chinese foreign policy lie in Confucian and Taoist thought . . ." David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping*, pages 50 & 100. For some examples of campaigns against Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution see Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962–1976*, pages 83-85 & 301-304.

a Confucian/Traditional framework was an attempt to shield himself from liberal and international criticism by appealing to a cherished cultural/civilizational foundation for his policies.

Hu's use of collective memory towards Confucianism extended beyond the vague application of the concept of Harmony. In line with the Harmonious Society was the adoption of the concept of eight honors and eight shames(八榮八恥).⁷³¹ An element found within Confucianism prescribes a system of behaviors to be celebrated and shunned as a method for constructing a civil society.⁷³² Use of numbered listing of virtues also harken back to memory associated with Confucianism, such as Mencius' four virtues.⁷³³ Hu leveraged that collective memory to bolster his program for a Harmonious Society by crafting a new set of explicit ethical imperatives that echoed familiar constructions. Furthermore, in his report to the 18th Party Congress in 2012, Hu Jintao referenced the Hundred Flowers concept. He declared, "We should adhere to the goal of serving the people and socialism, the policy of having a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend, and the principle of maintaining close contact with reality, life and the people."⁷³⁴ This referenced the period of philosophical contention in Chinese history during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States era.⁷³⁵ Hu presented a case where philosophical exploration was not only possible but encouraged, albeit within the established confines of "serving the people and socialism." This episode illustrates Hu's attempt to link current policies with an established Chinese tradition of spirited discourse. Although he only applied it selectively, Hu did make instrumental use of Confucian/Traditional historical memory.

Hu Jintao seemed far more willing to use the Confucian/Traditional framework with international audiences. As will be seen with certain elements of the Nationalist, the Confucian/Traditional framework

⁷³¹ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up," translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷³² Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, vol. 1, translated by F.W. Mote, pages 107-108.

⁷³³ Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, page 54. The four virtues are Humanity (仁), Righteousness (义), Propriety (礼), and Wisdom (智).

⁷³⁴ Hu Jintao, "Report to the Eighteen National Congress of the Communist Party of China," China.org.cn, November 16, 2012. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/18th_cpc_congress/2012-11/16/content_27137540.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023, Section VI

⁷³⁵ Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, vol. 1, translated by F.W. Mote, page 28.

allowed Hu to speak with authority as the inheritor of an ancient, rich, and continuous civilization. To certain international audiences, who measured their nations' histories in decades or centuries, the rich cultural and philosophical tradition available to Hu clothed his public rhetoric with an aura of prestige. From this higher position of civilizational wisdom, he could swat aside any criticisms of China's policies or governing structures. One of the main avenues that Hu sought to expand the PRC's influence was partnerships with foreign academia through Confucius Institutes. It is no accident that Confucius was the name chosen, as the philosopher was non-threatening to Western audiences. It also implied a break from the radicalism that marked the later years of Mao's rule.⁷³⁶ Naming China's academic outreach program after the country's most renowned philosopher was no accident but rather an attempt by Hu to leverage historical memory to advance his public diplomacy efforts.

Hu Jintao's use of the Confucian/Traditional framework pointed to some purported immutable Chinese characteristics defining the nation's conduct in international affairs. For example, at the Boao Forum for Asia (2004), Hu declared, "China since ancient times has had a fine tradition of sincerity, benevolence, kindness and trust towards the neighbors."⁷³⁷ In this instance, Hu Jintao used the Confucian/Traditional framework to assuage any potential concerns about China's rise and presented his foreign policy as driven primarily by pervasive, and non-threatening, Chinese civilizational characteristics.

Hu Jintao reserved his instrumentalization of Marxist collective memory mostly for CPC audiences, with some spillover for general domestic consumption. Marxism-Leninism remained foundational for discourse within the CPC. Therefore, a great deal of effort was placed on Hu establishing his Scientific Outlook of Development as a continuation of governing philosophies of past core leaders. The instrumentalization of historical memory using the Marxist category was an essential tool to locate

⁷³⁶ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 646.

⁷³⁷ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Hu Jintao at the Opening Ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia 2004 Annual Conference," China.org.cn, April 24, 2004. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/features/2004-04/24/content_1093897.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Hu's ideology as a continuation of previous governing philosophies and fend off any challenges from his political left.

Hu did not apply Marxism in isolation but almost always after a process of Sinicization, carrying forward Mao's Socialism with Chinese characteristics formulation. Hu explained, "We Chinese Communists believe that the basic tenets of Marxism are an irrefutable truth, and that Marxism must be constantly enriched and developed as practice changes, and we never take Marxism as an empty, rigid, and stereotyped dogma."⁷³⁸ Hu argued that Marxism must be adapted constantly based on the time and place in which it operates. In one example, Hu described Tibetan development under CPC rule, "With the abolition of feudal serfdom, under which the Tibetan people had long been suppressed and exploited, millions of erstwhile serfs who did not even have the minimum of human rights have now stood up and become masters of their own fate."⁷³⁹ Jiang Zemin similarly focused on Tibet's legacy of feudalism as a main feature in his discourse regarding the region.⁷⁴⁰ Applying concepts like feudalism and serfdom fit neatly into the Marxist construction of historical development adopted by paramount leaders.

Hu Jintao also applied the Marxist framework when invoking noncommunist figures and political movements from Chinese historical memory. This technique enabled him to coopt historical figures, invoking their successes while explaining away any shortfalls as due to these individuals and groups being insufficiently Marxist. Hu used this method to mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, declaring, "Not resigned to fate, the Chinese people launched one struggle after another, such as the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement, the Reform Movement of 1898, and the Yihetuan Movement, but

⁷³⁸ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/CPC_90_anniversary/2011-07/01/content_22901507.htm. Accessed on February 5, 2023, page 5.

⁷³⁹ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Vice-President Hu Jintao at the Rally in Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" China.org.cn, July 19, 1999. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16346.htm>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁴⁰ See Chapter III, page 273 for Jiang's engagement on the Tibet issue.

all these struggles ended in failure.”⁷⁴¹ In each of these movements, Hu found a spirit of resistance to be commended in the Chinese people, a use in isolation which leans on the Nationalist framework. However, Hu suggested that as they were not guided by the CPC and Marxist ideology applied to China’s conditions, they were doomed to fail. He applied the same logic to the 1911 revolution and the efforts of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, “The Revolution of 1911 led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen put an end to the autocratic rule that had existed in China for several thousand years. This revolution greatly boosted China’s social progress, but it did not change the country’s nature as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society or end the misery of the Chinese people.”⁷⁴² Here again, there were past accomplishments, but according to Hu, only the CPC could change China’s historical condition and bring it into modernity.

A key component of the Marxist historical framework for Hu was the memory of Mao Zedong, both for his political achievements and ideological contributions. Despite some refutation of his later rule, Mao remained an essential figure in Hu’s presentation of Party history. Hu did not shy away from selectively praising Mao. In a speech marking his birthday and extolling his contributions to China, Hu stated, “Comrade Mao Zedong was a great Marxist; a great proletarian revolutionary, strategist, and theorist; a great patriot and national hero in modern day China; and a great man of his generation who led the Chinese people to thoroughly change their destinies and the face of their nation.”⁷⁴³ It is worth noting that the first description Hu applies to Mao was his status as a great Marxist, placing that contribution at the forefront of Mao’s achievements. Hu’s use of Mao glorified China’s accomplishments but did so by

⁷⁴¹ Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China,” Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/CPC_90_anniversary/2011-07/01/content_22901507.htm Accessed on February 5, 2023, page 1.

⁷⁴² Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China,” Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/CPC_90_anniversary/2011-07/01/content_22901507.htm Accessed on February 5, 2023, page 1.

⁷⁴³ Hu Jintao, “Speech by CCPCC General Secretary Hu Jintao at a forum commemorating late Chairman Mao Zedong’s 110th birth anniversary in Beijing,” Xinhua, December 26, 2003. Available at <http://academics.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/308S/Readings/HuonMao110.htm#:~:text=China%27s%20President%20Hu%20Jintao%20has%20lauded%20Mao%20as,thought%2C%20Deng%20Xiaoping%20theory%20and%20the%20Three%20Representations> Accessed on February 5, 2023.

crediting his application of Marxism to China's conditions and associating Hu's ideology by implication as a continuation of that practice.

Although Hu evoked the memory of Mao as a Marxist, his instrumental use of Mao Zedong Thought appears to have some subtle variation across his discourse. During the 17th Party Congress, Hu separated Mao Zedong Thought from the ideological frameworks of the other core leaders:

Theories of socialism with Chinese characteristics constitute a system of scientific theories including Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development and other major strategic thoughts. This system represents the Party's adherence to and development of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought and embodies the wisdom and hard work of several generations of Chinese Communists leading the people in carrying out tireless explorations and practices.⁷⁴⁴

Hu Jintao presented his governing philosophy as a development of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought but distinguishes the post-Mao ideologies in operation as separated from them. This represents a tightrope for Hu who cannot repudiate Marxism or Maoism but still seeks to create some room to advance his ideology. It is no coincidence that this distinction was made during the height of his approach towards core leader status and represents a high point of his instrumental use of historical memory. However, Hu shifts this view to erase that separation at the 18th Party Congress:

The most important achievement in our endeavors in the past ten years is that we have formed the Scientific Outlook on Development and put it into practice by following the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents and by making courageous theoretical innovations on the basis of practices and developing closely interconnected new ideas and viewpoints on upholding and building socialism with Chinese characteristics.⁷⁴⁵

As Hu's status as core leader waned and he prepared to hand over power to Xi Jinping, he could no longer attempt any degree of separation for his governing philosophy, and both Marxism and Maoism were elevated once again as operational. However, regarding military theory, Hu is consistent between the 17th and 18th Party Congresses. For military affairs, he prescribes following Mao Zedong Thought, along with Deng Xiaoping Theory, Jiang's Three Represents, and of course, his Scientific Outlook on Development as the guiding principles.⁷⁴⁶ Hu Jintao appears to have vacillated slightly in his orientations toward Mao

⁷⁴⁴ Hu Jintao, "Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Section II, China.org.cn, October 15, 2007. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁴⁵ Hu Jintao, "Report to the Eighteen National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Section I, China.org.cn, November 16, 2012. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/18th_cpc_congress/2012-11/16/content_27137540.htm. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁴⁶ Hu Jintao, "Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Section I, China.org.cn, October 15, 2007. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm>. Accessed on February 5, 2023, & Hu Jintao, "Report to the Eighteen National

Zedong Thought between it being worthy of active application and as merely an inactive but necessary philosophical contribution.

Although R&OU played a crucial role in Hu's use of the Liberal framework, he was careful to couch it within the Marxist framework. Failure to do so would have opened his governing philosophy to attacks as being divorced from the organizing principle of the CPC and, by extension, Hu's very right to rule. Therefore, the best weapon to dismiss such accusations would be to rely on Marxist framework to dismiss such accusations. For example, Hu justified market reforms, and his governing philosophy which embraced them, as necessary due to China's current level of development according to Marxist theories of history. "In light of the basic reality that China is in the primary stage of socialism, the Scientific Outlook on Development has been formulated to meet new requirements of development by analyzing China's own practice and drawing on the experience of other countries in development."⁷⁴⁷ By arguing that China remained in the primary stage of socialism, Hu justified the need for reform as consistent with the founding ideology of the CPC.

Hu Jintao reserved his use of the Marxist category for Party and domestic audiences, but it still played a key role in his instrumental use of historical memory. Perhaps more than anything else, appealing to the Marxist framework served to justify the CPC's rule by associating its application with all the success achieved since 1949. In an address marking the anniversary of the CPC's founding, Hu declared, "The CPC was founded 90 years ago today, which was an epoch-making event in the history of the Chinese nation. From then on, the Chinese people embarked on the bright road of striving for independence and liberation and began the glorious pursuit of prosperity and strength for the country and themselves."⁷⁴⁸ Hu argued that the Marxist CPC was the sole driving force for China's success in the past

Congress of the Communist Party of China," Section I. China.org.cn, November 16, 2012. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/18th_cpc_congress/2012-11/16/content_27137540.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁴⁷ Hu Jintao, "Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Section III. China.org.cn, October 15, 2007. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm> Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁴⁸ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/CPC_90_anniversary/2011-07/01/content_22901507.htm Accessed on February 5, 2023, page 1.

and remained so. By extension, Hu's own rule as the aspirant core leader of the CPC inherited that legacy and he pledged to continue that progress through his governing philosophy.

Hu Jintao also used the Nationalist historical framework to advance his influence. Nationalism, specifically the invocation of historical motifs to glorify a nation, is often used by political leaders to strengthen their standing among their constituent population.⁷⁴⁹ Hu Jintao certainly used this technique to praise the Chinese people to both domestic and foreign audiences. In addition, by celebrating certain popular figures and movements, Hu pursued efforts toward reconciliation among various factions within the nation. Furthermore, he employed this framework to forge connections with foreign audiences as the spokesperson for one civilization addressing another. Hu's use of the Nationalist category spanned several subjects and was employed to advance various political objectives toward achieving core leadership.

One of the most consistent Nationalist motifs that Hu Jintao engaged with was China as an ancient civilization. China's ancient uninterrupted civilization was a source of gratification. At the 18th Party Congress, Hu stated, "It (CPC) has thus enabled the Chinese nation, which has a civilization of over 5,000 years, to stand rock-firm with a completely new image in the family of nations."⁷⁵⁰ He also engaged in this motif with foreign audiences, as shown in his address to the Australian parliament in 2004, "China has a 5,000-year civilization, and its people of 56 ethnic groups have worked together to shape the magnificent Chinese culture."⁷⁵¹ By placing the length of uninterrupted Chinese civilization against others, Australia, in this example, Hu implied his cultural heritage bestowed on him far greater wisdom than those he was addressing. Furthermore, including the fifty-six ethnic groups enabled Hu to avoid criticism of Han chauvinism, with the PRC representing all groups in China. This method presumably sought to preempt ethnic separatism by implying that all groups participated within the Chinese civilization and did not possess an alien identity justifying partition.

⁷⁴⁹ Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, pages 6-9.

⁷⁵⁰ Hu Jintao, "Report to the Eighteen National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Section XII. China.org.cn, November 16, 2012. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/18th_cpc_congress/2012-11/16/content_27137540.htm Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁵¹ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao given to federal parliament (Australia)," *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 24, 2003. Available at <https://www.smh.com.au/national/full-text-hus-speech-20031024-gdhnfs.html> Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Hu's Nationalist historical references involving the ancient include subjects other than the entirety of Chinese civilization. This more specific usage appears to share the same purpose, to cause awe for foreigners and a unifying pride among his domestic audience. For example, Hu described the ancient and storied character of the city of Beijing to a visiting foreign delegation in 2005:

The city of Beijing, with its long history of over 3,000 years, stands testimony to that effort. It became the nation's capital over 800 years ago. A short distance from the Great Hall of the People, where we are in right now, is the world-renowned Forbidden City. First built some 600 years ago, the former Imperial Palace is the largest and most complete existing ensemble of ancient royal architecture in the world.⁷⁵²

Not only did China have an ancient and deep civilization, but as Hu explored in some detail, so too did the city of Beijing. Engrossing visiting dignitaries in the majesty of Chinese civilization, including cultural artifacts and locations like the Forbidden City, placed Hu in a superior position over his guests. H.R. McMaster later identified this technique in operation by Xi during an official state visit by President Trump.⁷⁵³ Another example was Hu's description of Tibet during a fiftieth-anniversary speech marking Tibet's entry into the PRC. He stated, "Over the past 50 years, which is just a wink of the eye in the long history of human progress, the ancient and fascinating land of Tibet has undergone unrivaled changes and worked unprecedented miracles on earth."⁷⁵⁴ Hu acknowledged Tibet's ancient character but also emphasized Tibet's achievements since it came under the rule of the CPC as part of the Chinese nation. He goes further later in the speech:

The industrious and talented people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have, in a long historical development, made outstanding contributions to the creation of a glorious culture of the Chinese nation and creation of a unified multi-ethnic country. In the last half a century in particular, the Tibetan people have written brilliant chapters in the development and progress of Tibet and added new glory to the big family of our socialist motherland. We feel profoundly proud of the past and immensely confident about the future.⁷⁵⁵

Although this section provided further examples of leveraging historical memory of progress to justify continued CPC rule over Tibet, the last line is particularly interesting. He argued that pride in past

⁷⁵² Hu Jintao, "Keynote Speech Delivered by China's President Hu Jintao to the Fortune Global Forum in Beijing," CNN.com International, May 17, 2005. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/05/16/eyeonchina.hu.jintao.fulltext/index.html> Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁵³ H.R. McMaster, *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World*, pages 92-93.

⁷⁵⁴ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Vice-President Hu Jintao at the Rally in Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" China.org.cn, July 19, 1999. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16346.htm> Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁵⁵ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Vice-President Hu Jintao at the Rally in Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" China.org.cn, July 19, 1999. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16346.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

achievements gives confidence about future endeavors. The logical extension of this argument was that efforts at recalling the past, per Hu's definition, improves faith in the current political program, a program choreographed by Hu as paramount leader.

Hu often accompanied his instrumental use of China's ancient civilization by invoking the CoH. In fact, these two concepts are often linked together within the same paragraph of an address in what I affectionately term the Obi-Wan Kenobi fable.⁷⁵⁶ By doing so, Hu implied that China's long and uninterrupted civilization was evidence of the proper position historically for China, while the suffering during the 19th and 20th centuries was a painful aberration. Hu laid the blame for that state of affairs on both foreign and domestic bad actors, "Beginning in the mid-19th century, China was reduced to dire misery as the country suffered one humiliating defeat after another and the people languished in poverty and starvation as a result of brutal foreign aggressions and corrupt and incompetent feudal rulers."⁷⁵⁷ Hu implied that exploitative foreigners and corrupt Chinese would reduce China back to its previous state of misery if given the opportunity, just as they had done during the CoH. By recalling this collective memory, Hu Jintao sought to instrumentalize feelings of shame and transmute them towards hostility for those elements he deemed dangerous.

Although Hu used the CoH as a general concept in his public discourse, he made use of individual references from that period as well. For example, the May 4th Movement (1919) was a galvanizing reference for Hu. He wrote in 2011, "To promote the grand development and grand flourishing of socialist culture, we must forcefully carry forward excellent Chinese cultural traditions,

⁷⁵⁶ This narrative, of a traditionally longstanding period of stability only recently interrupted by an enemy ushering in a dark time matches the 5,000-year Chinese history interrupted by the Century of Humiliation. It takes the same narrative form as Obi-Wan Kenobi's explanation of the Jedi to Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977). "For over a thousand generations the Jedi Knights were guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic, before the dark times, before the empire."

⁷⁵⁷ Hu Jintao, "Keynote Speech Delivered by China's President Hu Jintao to the Fortune Global Forum in Beijing," CNN.com International, May 17, 2005. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/05/16/eyeonchina.hujintao.fulltext/index.html>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

forcefully carry forward the revolutionary cultural tradition shaped since the May 4th movement . . .”⁷⁵⁸

Hu’s goal in engaging with the collective memory of the May 4th Movement seems to be to retain confidence in the new Chinese culture, of which Hu sought to shepherd in directions conducive to his governing philosophy.

Carrying out reunification with Taiwan remained a major policy objective for Hu Jintao throughout his administration. To advance cross-strait relations, Hu employed Nationalist historical memory to foster a common identity. He argued, “Although the mainland and Taiwan are not yet reunified, the fact that the two sides belong to one and the same China has remained unchanged since 1949.”⁷⁵⁹ Here Hu posited that both sides have adhered to the theory of a single unified China as a matter of political and diplomatic history. In addition, he argued that both sides are part of the same nation and that both sides yearn for reunification. “The 1.3 billion people on the mainland and the 23 million people in Taiwan are of the same blood and share a common destiny.”⁷⁶⁰ Including the population for each entity implied their relative representative power of the Chinese nation, with the PRC far outweighing the ROC.

Hu Jintao employed the instrumentalization of Nationalist collective memory for foreign audiences as well. By invoking historical connections, Hu Jintao sought to forge links with various elements of the international community and put them at ease as they engaged with China. For example, Hu referenced the long history of contact between China and Australia during his address to the Australian parliament in 2004. Those references included Zheng He’s voyages and the legacy of immigration of Chinese to Australia over the centuries.⁷⁶¹ Hu sought to mollify skeptics of greater economic integration and immigration to Australia by pointing to the history between the states,

⁷⁵⁸ Hu Jintao, “Striving to construct a strong socialist country,” China Copyright and Media, January 4, 2012. Available at <https://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2012/01/04/hu-jintaos-article-in-qiushi-magazine-translated/>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁵⁹ Hu Jintao, “President Vows to Check Taiwan Secessionist Forces,” China.org.cn, March 5, 2005. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2005-03/05/content_1121817.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁶⁰ Hu Jintao, “Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” Section X. China.org.cn, October 15, 2007. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁶¹ Hu Jintao, “Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao given to federal parliament (Australia),” *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 24, 2003. Available at <https://www.smh.com.au/national/full-text-hus-speech-20031024-gdhfns.html>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

suggesting that it had a longstanding historical precedent and should not be feared. Another example was Hu referencing the shared anti-imperialist struggle between China and Africa and the nationalist movements. Addressing the Forum of Africa-China cooperation, Hu stated:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of diplomatic ties between New China and African countries. Though vast oceans keep China and Africa far apart, the friendship between our peoples has a long history and, having been tested by times, is strong and vigorous. In the long course of history, the Chinese and African peoples, with an unyielding and tenacious spirit, created splendid and distinctive ancient civilisations. In the modern era, our peoples launched unremitting and heroic struggle against subjugation, and have written a glorious chapter in the course of pursuing freedom and liberation, upholding human dignity, and striving for economic development and national rejuvenation.⁷⁶²

Hu posited that the Africans and Chinese possess ancient civilizations and struggled for liberation, implying not only a pride in civilization present in both but also common historical enemy in the West. Hu made this implication to argue for greater cooperation with China in the present. Hu's use of nationalist collective memory sought to connect him with his foreign audiences and advance his agenda.

Hu Jintao most consistently used the Liberal historical narrative framework. This theory of historical development, and the associated liberal international relations theory, was ascendant following the end of the Cold War and remained so throughout Hu Jintao's tenure in office. As such, Hu was able to leverage this narrative to further integrate China into the international community. In addition, this narrative proved an essential tool to Hu Jintao as he crafted his Scientific Outlook on Development. This historical framework pointed toward the progress that had been achieved since the Reform period initiated by Deng Xiaoping. Economic and social progress justified maintaining the regime that engineered these results and by implication was best positioned to continue to do so under Hu's leadership. The Liberal framework provided Hu with an immediate and tangible justification for his regime and was his most potent weapon for dealing with prominent elements within the international community.

A key element within Hu's discourse involving the Liberal framework was the assertion that history was on a path of upward progress. More specifically, Hu located the concept of progress as the animating historical force for contemporary history.

The world today is undergoing tremendous changes and adjustments. Peace and development remain the main themes of the present era, and pursuit of peace, development and cooperation has become an irresistible trend

⁷⁶² Hu Jintao, "President Hu's Speech at China-Africa Summit," China.org.cn, November 4, 2006. Available at <https://dawodu.com/china1.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

of the times. The progress toward a multipolar world is irreversible, economic globalization is developing in depth, and the scientific and technological revolution is gathering momentum.⁷⁶³ In addition, Hu characterized this progress as a positive force and argued that its desirability was global.

“... the trend of our times towards peace, development, and cooperation remains unchanged, and people across the globe hope to see a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.”⁷⁶⁴ He contended that the current period represented the height of progress in history, with nations and people tied closer together than at any previous point.

Countries are now interconnected and interdependent with their interests more closely interwoven than at any time in history. The future and destiny of one country is increasingly tied to that of the world. To work with each other through thick and thin serves the common interests of all countries.⁷⁶⁵ To use the Liberal framework effectively, it was necessary to establish its relevance to the contemporary period, and Hu did so often and with vigor.

Besides discussing the general concept of the Liberal framework, Hu Jintao also articulated some of its specific aspects. For example, Hu portrayed interactions between civilizations as a phenomenon that spurs global progress. Further, Hu argued that diversity in cultures was positive and that a universal culture would contradict the world's interests. Hu made this point explicitly in an address to the United Nations in 2005:

Diversity of civilizations is a basic feature of humanity and an important driving force behind human progress. In the course of human history, all civilizations have, in their own way, made a positive contribution to the overall human progress. It is their differences that allow them to learn from one another and grow stronger together. Uniformity, if imposed on them, can only take away their vitality and cause them to become rigid and decline. The world's civilizations may differ in age, but none is better or more superior than others. Differences in history, culture, social system and mode of development should not become barriers to exchanges between countries, let alone excuses for confrontation.⁷⁶⁶

By arguing for celebrating cultural diversity, Hu sought to blunt criticisms that China might be violating universal values or that it should reform its political system. However, Hu also argued that differences should not impede cultural exchange. Under Hu's system that exchange was necessary for China to

⁷⁶³ Hu Jintao, “Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” Section XI. China.org.cn, October 15, 2007. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁶⁴ Hu Jintao, “Usher in a Better Future Through Mutually Beneficial Cooperation,” China.org.cn, March 29, 2012. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/report/2012-04/27/content_25257041.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁶⁵ Hu Jintao, “Broad Vision, Shared Prosperity,” China.org.cn, May 13, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/report/2011-05/13/content_22560850.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁶⁶ Hu Jintao, “Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity,” UN.org, September 15, 2005. Available at <https://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/china050915eng.pdf>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

continue its economic growth by participating in the global economy. In addition, controlled cultural exchange enabled Hu to instrumentally use China's cultural weight to build its soft power, in line with the concept of Comprehensive National Power.⁷⁶⁷ An essential element of Hu's instrumental use of the Liberal historical framework was endorsing cultural interaction while maintaining civilizational distinction as basic features of positive historical development.

Hu also explored the importance of multipolarity and globalization to progress within the Liberal framework. He argued that the trend towards this phenomenon was not only an animating principle for the contemporary environment but that it would remain so into the future. "In a world where the trend toward multipolarity is irreversible, economic globalization is deepening and the scientific and technological revolution is accelerating, China's future is more closely linked with the future of the world than ever before."⁷⁶⁸ Not only would the process continue, but Hu argued that China's future was tied directly to its participation in the global community. Hu intimated that an immutable law of economics pushes forward globalization. In a speech to the G20 in 2010, Hu declared:

To pursue international division of labor and free trade based on resources endowments of individual countries reflects the law of economics and conforms to the historical trend of globalization. Modern world history shows freer trade brings greater development to the world and a more open economy leads to more rapid development.⁷⁶⁹

Following the 2008 financial crisis, numerous countries considered adopting more protectionist trade policies. Such protectionism would have further threatened China's economic growth, based on high levels of exports, and, in turn, threatened Hu's legitimacy in delivering economic growth. Here Hu made instrumental use of the historical memory of free trade leading to progress to try and influence the trade policy of other countries.

A third component of the Liberal framework that Hu engaged with was that military conflict was an aberration that degrades progress. Whether through the peaceful rise or later the peaceful development

⁷⁶⁷ Raviprasad Narayanan, "The Chinese Discourse on the 'Rise of China,'" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 31:4, 2007, page 647.

⁷⁶⁸ Hu Jintao, "Continuing Reform and Opening-up and Advancing Win-Win cooperation," China.org.cn, April 12, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/business/boaforum/2008-04/14/content_14949772.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁶⁹ Hu Jintao, "Building on Achievements and Promoting Development," China.org.cn, November 12, 2010. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/report/2010-12/14/content_21537589.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

concepts, Hu attempted to frame China's increase in power as non-threatening to global stability. By positioning China as recognizing war as regressive to development, Hu could claim that China would not fall into the Thucydides Trap of a rising power challenging an established international order.⁷⁷⁰ Hu expressed his view towards military conflict impacting development in a 2011 speech at the BRICS group:

Peace and stability form the prerequisite and foundation for development. The two world wars in the last century caused mankind untold sufferings and world economic and social development severe setbacks. It is mainly due to the relatively peaceful and stable international environment that the world economy has been able to grow at such a fast pace in the post-war era.⁷⁷¹

Hu likely assumed he would find a ready audience in some influential quarters of the West who framed the conflict similarly. For example, during the outset of the Global War on Terror, some leaders in the United States conceptualized that conflict as a civilizational struggle and used collective memory of World War II to bolster that argument.⁷⁷² By joining in the instrumental use of the historical memory of World War II, Hu positioned China as being on the right side of history, fighting for peaceful development and progress.

The United Nations, as an organization, emerged from the ashes of World War II ostensibly to safeguard international peace and stability. A major plank of Hu's ideology was the concept of democratization in international relations.⁷⁷³ Under this construct, equal political weight should be afforded among states and the assembled collective voices should determine the course of global politics instead of hegemonic power politics. The United Nations as a venue proved highly valuable in advancing this construct. In an address to the United Nations, Hu declared:

We are glad to see that in the past six decades, particularly since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations has played an important role and made enormous achievements in maintaining world peace, promoting

⁷⁷⁰ See Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can American and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* Locations 169-224, Kindle Edition for an outline of debates surrounding China's rise.

⁷⁷¹ Hu Jintao, "Broad Vision, Shared Prosperity," China.org.cn, May 13, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/report/2011-05/13/content_22560850.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁷² For example, see President Bush's invocation of an "Axis of Evil" sought to associate the new war on terror with the generational struggle of World War II. George W. Bush, "2002 State of the Union Address," *The Washington Post*, January 29, 2002. Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm>, Accessed on February 21, 2023.

⁷⁷³ David Scott, "China's Public Diplomacy Rhetoric, 1990-2012: Pragmatic Image-Crafting," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol 26:2, 2015, pages 255-256.

common development and advancing human progress thanks to the concerted efforts of its members to facilitate its various endeavors.⁷⁷⁴

Hu advocated for the positive role of the United Nations in advancing human progress throughout its history by maintaining peaceful relations between nations. He further developed this concept later in the speech stating, “In the past 60 years, though power politics still lingered and democratized international relations remained elusive, dialogue, exchanges and harmonious co-existence have become the mainstream of state-to-state relations.”⁷⁷⁵ Hu implied that countries should not craft policy based on a realist orientation of power politics but should adhere to the more liberal outlook on international relations embodied by the United Nations. As such, Hu wished China to be viewed as a partner rather than a competitor and that its increase in power and influence should not be viewed as challenging the international order but as contributing to historical progress.

Hu placed a premium on managing relations with the United States as it was the main guarantor of the international order. Perhaps more importantly, access to the United States was crucial to China’s continued economic growth and, by extension, a major source of Hu’s legitimacy.⁷⁷⁶ Hu argued that conflict between the United States and China would benefit neither, while cooperation would be not only beneficial to both nations but also serve the interests of the world and conform to the right course of history.

History and the reality (sic) tell us that cooperation between China and the US will benefit both while confrontation will leave neither unharmed. A steady, sound and growing China-US relationship serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples and the people of the world and is also in line with the historical trend of human progress.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁴ Hu Jintao, “Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity,” UN.org, September 15, 2005. Available at <https://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/china050915eng.pdf>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁷⁵ Hu Jintao, “Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity,” UN.org, September 15, 2005. Available at <https://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/china050915eng.pdf>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁷⁶ The year of this speech the United States accounted for 21% of China’s export market according to the World Bank. <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHN/Year/2005/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/by-country#:~:text=China%20trade%20balance%2C%20exports%20and%20imports%20by%20country,Rep.%2C%20Other%20Asia%2C%20nes%2C%20United%20States%20and%20Germany>, Accessed 5/19/2023.

⁷⁷⁷ Hu Jintao, “Enhanced Mutual Understanding and Trust towards a Conservative and Cooperative Relationship between China and the United States,” Asiasociety.org, May 1, 2002. Available at <https://asiasociety.org/enhanced-mutual-understanding-and-trust-towards-conservative-and-cooperative-relationship-between-ch#:~:text=Enhanced%20Mutual%20Understanding%20and%20Trust%20towards%20a%20Conservative,Republic%20of%20China.%20Washin%20gton%2C%20DC%20May%201%2C%202002>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Hu viewed cordial relations with the United States as a boon for China and sought to cultivate good relations at least partially through appeals to a universal trend of progress in history.

Following the 2008 financial crisis, Hu appeared increasingly concerned about protectionist trade policies in the United States. In addition, the Obama Administration's Pivot to the Pacific, formally announced in November 2011, increased US military attention in the West Pacific, ostensibly aimed at balancing China's rise.⁷⁷⁸ In a speech in January 2011 during a visit to New York, Hu attempted to head off increasing tensions with the United States. Regarding protectionist trade policies, he invoked FDR, stating:

On this day 74 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt made his inaugural speech "The Road of Enduring Progress." He called on the American people who were coming out of the depression to unite as one and redouble their efforts to forge ahead along the road of enduring progress. Today, the turbulence caused by the international financial crisis is receding and the world economy is returning to growth.⁷⁷⁹

Using FDR recalled a popular US President and one especially valued by the Democratic Party, which at the time occupied the White House. Furthermore, it cast any protectionist policies as unpopular and unproductive, as the example of FDR's Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act (1934) implied in contrast to President Hoover's failed protectionist economic policies.⁷⁸⁰ He went on to invoke the Chinese leader who ushered in the Reform period, Deng Xiaoping, in advancing Sino-US relations:

Thirty-two years ago, Mr. Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China's reform and opening-up, paid a historic visit to the United States. He said during the visit that the Pacific Ocean should no longer be an obstacle that sets us apart. Rather, it should be a bond that links us together. History has proved the correctness of this important statement.⁷⁸¹

Hu instrumentally used the collective memory towards historical leaders from the United States and China to advocate for continued positive relations and reverse some of the trends towards competition and trade protectionism he detected emerging from the US.

⁷⁷⁸ For more on the Obama Administration Pivot to the Pacific policy see Mark Manyin et al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administrations Rebalancing" towards Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, 2012. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>.

⁷⁷⁹ Hu Jintao, "Building a China-U.S. Cooperation Partnership Based on Mutual Respect and Mutual Benefit," China.org.cn, January 21, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/world/Hu_visit_us2011/2011-01/21/content_21785755.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁸⁰ For text of the bill see <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/reciprocal-tariff-act-1934-5876>, Accessed on May 19, 2023.

⁷⁸¹ Hu Jintao, "Building a China-U.S. Cooperation Partnership Based on Mutual Respect and Mutual Benefit," China.org.cn, January 21, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/world/Hu_visit_us2011/2011-01/21/content_21785755.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Although Hu Jintao found great utility in the instrumentalization of the Liberal framework for his foreign audience, it was also used to justify his legitimacy domestically. Hu closely associated his Scientific Outlook on Development ideology with the R&OU policy. In turn, that program relied on the Liberal framework to articulate progress ushered in by increasing global contact, trade, and peaceful development. He recalled the progress that occurred in China since 1978 and the start of the Reform period.

Reform and opening up constitute the most salient feature of the new period. From the countryside to the cities and from the economic to other areas, the process of sweeping reform has unfolded with irresistible momentum. From the coastal areas to areas along the Yangtze River and the borders, and from the eastern to the central and western regions, the door has been resolutely opened to the outside world. This great undertaking of reform and opening up, never seen before in history, has greatly stimulated the enthusiasm of hundreds of millions of Chinese people and brought about China's historic transformation from a highly centralized planned economy to a robust socialist market economy, and from a closed or semi-closed state to all-round opening up. Today socialist China is standing rock-firm in the East, oriented toward modernization, the world and the future.⁷⁸²

The above speech was delivered in 2007 at the assumed height of Hu's efforts towards reaching core leadership status. Hu glorified the collective memory of Deng's success and attempted to solidify its hold as an organizing principle of Chinese politics moving forward under his governing philosophy.

Hu Jintao's instrumentalization of historical memory largely conformed to the four frameworks utilized by paramount leaders. Each framework provided Hu with the necessary tools to achieve that aim. Although used sparingly, the Confucian/Traditional framework borrowed authority from China's ancient past to give Hu's ideology greater weight, especially with foreign audiences. Hu employed the Marxist framework to fend off challenges from his political left and maintain a base level of adherence to the philosophy underlying the CPC's dominance in Chinese politics. The Nationalist framework enabled Hu to summon patriotic sentiments to unite the Chinese population while simultaneously providing space for China to assert autonomy within the international system. Finally, the Liberal framework associated Hu's ideology with China's economic growth in recent decades as a source of legitimacy for both the CPC and himself. In addition, Hu presented China's growth as harmonious with global trends. Hu's

⁷⁸² Hu Jintao, "Hu hails Hong Kong as 'window and bridge,'" *Chinadaily.com.cn*, July 2, 2007. Available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-07/02/content_5425058.htm. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

instrumentalization of historical memory showed substantial variation and clear intention toward achieving political objectives and advancing towards core leadership.

Illustrative Texts

Exploring Hu's instrumental use within the confines of individual texts can aid in illuminating the interaction between the frameworks in operation. In addition, political objectives can be more concretely discovered based on the speeches' context. To this end, I have selected four speeches to examine in more depth. Once more these pieces represent various periods, subject matter, and intended primary audiences for Hu's political discourse.

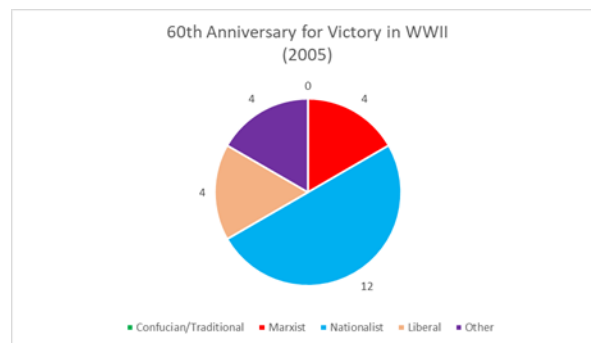


Figure 5.9 References by category for speech marking the 60th Anniversary for Victory in WWII.

The first speech is Hu Jintao's address marking the 60th anniversary of victory in World War II in 2005. This speech primarily had a domestic audience as its target, although it also clearly had foreign audiences in mind as well. There are twenty-four historical references identified within the speech. The speech relied mostly on Nationalist frameworks but included several instances of the Marxist and Liberal frameworks and references to historical memory outside the four main categories.

Hu Jintao displayed consideration for several political objectives with this address. He clearly sought to generate pride within the Chinese population, hoping to unite a wider Chinese constituency by including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau by acknowledging the contributions of the GMD. However, Hu stressed the importance of the CPC and Marxist ideology in setting the conditions for victory. In addition, it was an opportunity to improve regional diplomatic relations by highlighting depredations inflicted upon China by Japan, an experience shared by several other countries. Finally, it was an

occasion to remind the wider international community of China's contributions to World War II and, by extension, its role as a contributor to forming the contemporary international order.

The first component was the pride that Hu believed all Chinese should share in their contributions to victory while acknowledging that they were part of a broader global struggle. "The Chinese people are proud of the great victory of their war of resistance, and of the great victory of the Anti-Fascist War they fought together with the peoples of the world as well."⁷⁸³ Hu reflected on two important aspects of China's contributions to the broader war effort. The first element was that China had been the first major power to engage against the Axis, specifically Japan. "The July 7th Incident in 1937 marked the outbreak of the World Anti-Fascist War in the East, in that China's national war of resistance opened the first battleground, massive in scale, in the world war against Fascism."⁷⁸⁴ As the first to fight, Hu presented China as the original nation to answer the call to resist Fascism and Imperialism. The second element was that China had tied down a substantial amount of Japanese military power in its long struggle, allowing allied nations to press their advantage in other theaters. "For a long time, we Chinese contained and pinned down the main forces of Japanese militarism in the China Theater and annihilated more than 1.5 million Japanese troops. This played a decisive role in the total defeat of Japanese aggressors."⁷⁸⁵ Hu argued that without China, the victory against Japan and the wider anti-Fascist war might not have been possible, or even if so, would have been at an astronomically graver cost.

Hu spread the credit for Chinese victory as broadly as possible, identifying national unity as the key to victory. For example, he invoked multiple individuals and units for their contributions toward victory:

Generals of resistance forces such as Yang Jingyu, Zhao Shangzhi, Zuo Quan, Peng Xuefeng, Tong Linge, Zhao Dengyu, Zhang Zizhong, and Dai Anlan, and heroic groups such as the Eighth Route Army's five heroes on Mount Langya, the Liulaozhuang Company of the New Fourth Army, the eight women members of the

⁷⁸³ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁸⁴ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁸⁵ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, and the 800 heroes of the KMT army were outstanding representatives of the Chinese people in defying the brute force and fighting against the enemy heroically.⁷⁸⁶

By casting a wide net emphasizing united resistance, Hu maximized the unifying effects of his speech. Hu

Jintao also mentioned resistance by other occupied areas, especially Taiwan:

Sharing the hardships of their compatriots on the mainland, our compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan as well as overseas Chinese participated in or supported the war of resistance in various ways, and many of them laid down their lives for the country.⁷⁸⁷

Taiwan's wartime experience radically differed from mainland China, but Hu attempted to craft a narrative that allowed the Taiwanese to participate in World War II memory on the side of the victors as Chinese. Although Hu was willing to share the glory, he still provided Mao and the CPC pride of place within his discourse:

With Comrade Mao Zedong as their outstanding representative, the Chinese Communists integrated Marxism-Leninism with the realities of the Chinese revolution and established and developed the scientific theory of Mao Zedong Thought, which was an important ideological and strategic guide for the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.⁷⁸⁸

For Hu, many contributed to China's victory, but none was more essential than Mao leading the CPC. Hu

Jintao focused on broadening the Chinese audience that could participate in the historical memory of victory while preserving pride of place for the CPC.

Although Hu focused on China's victories, he also delved into the collective memory of Japan's depredations. Hu cataloged China's suffering stating:

Fascist aggressors brought an untold disaster to the world and an unparalleled catastrophe to human civilization. Japanese aggressors wantonly trampled underfoot the beautiful land of China, slaughtered its soldiers and civilians, pressganged its laborers, and raped and tortured its women. They conducted germ and chemical warfare, committed a series of inhuman atrocities such as the Rape of Nanjing, crimes that deserved universal condemnation. The Chinese civilization of millenniums suffered disastrous destruction, and the Chinese nation, huge losses. According to incomplete statistics, China suffered over 35 million casualties, both military and civilian; China's direct economic losses exceeded US\$ 100 billion and its indirect economic losses totaled more than US\$ 500 billion, calculated at the price in 1937.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁶ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁸⁷ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁸⁸ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁸⁹ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Presumably, Hu attempted to make clear to an international audience that its population paid in blood and tears for the victory on a scale only a select few allied nations could match. In addition, the level of Imperial Japanese atrocities was also a continued point of contention with Japan over issues of historical memory, one shared by many other countries in East Asia. In a direct attack upon efforts to reframe memory in Japan regarding memory of war crimes tribunals of wartime Japanese officials, Hu declared, “Those are the trials of history! The just nature of the trials is unshakable and allows of no challenge!”⁷⁹⁰ Hu sought to join with other nations, such as South Korea, in criticizing Japan’s record of wartime abuses, in turn fostering ties with those nations and distracting from China’s contemporary activities that might be considered malign. For Hu, China’s contribution to the international order was purchased by its military accomplishments and the suffering endured by the Chinese population.

Finally, Hu acknowledged the contribution of other nations, groups, and individuals to China’s war effort. After expressing gratitude to individual nations, Hu went into further detail about several groups that provided direct support to China:

We will never forget the American Flying Tigers who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese military and opened up, at the risk of their lives, the Hump Route to deliver strategic supplies to China. We will never forget those foreign medical personnel who traveled long distances to China to help save lives. We will never forget those foreign journalists who truthfully reported and publicized China's war effort. We will never forget those foreign military advisors and others who contributed to China's victory of the war, in particular those Soviet Red Army soldiers who laid down their lives heroically in the battlefield of northeast China. Forever will the Chinese people remember the invaluable contributions made by people all over the world to the victory of China's war of resistance!⁷⁹¹

By invoking individual groups, Hu expressed not only thanks but also a shared historical experience that could foster better relations. Furthermore, Hu pointed towards China’s contributions to victory in World War II as evidence that China valued the liberal world order created in the wake of the war:

The victory of the War Against Japanese Aggression and the Anti-Fascist War has taught the people of the world a vivid and profound lesson and fully proved once again that the achievements of human civilization brook no destruction and its course of advance is not to be interrupted! The wheels of human peace and progress

⁷⁹⁰ Hu Jintao, “Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War,” China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁹¹ Hu Jintao, “Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War,” China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

cannot be stopped! All evil, dark and reactionary forces will eventually be swept away by the powerful current of history!⁷⁹²

Hu argued that China treasured the creation of the international global order and contributed substantially to its creation. By implication, its rise to power should not be viewed as a threat to that order.

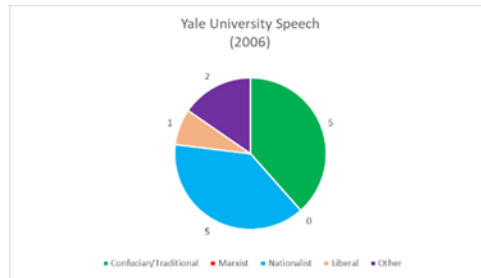


Figure 5.10 References by category for Hu's speech at Yale University in 2006.

The next text I analyzed is Hu Jintao's speech at Yale University in 2006. The speech included thirteen historical references. This speech was primarily aimed at a foreign audience and stressed the Confucian/Traditional and Nationalist historical frameworks. Hu's objectives for this speech were more straightforward compared to the World War II address. Namely, Hu sought to present China as non-threatening and argued for stronger Sino-US relations. In developing this theme, Hu presented China as a willing contributor to the international order with the understanding that the PRC should be provided sufficient space to manage its internal affairs based on what he defined as its historical conditions.

To achieve his objectives, Hu focused on three main components. First, he associated US patriotism with its Chinese counterpart to sidestep negative perceptions regarding Chinese nationalism. Next, he sought to establish a unique Chinese identity informed primarily by longstanding ancient philosophical traditions. Finally, he argued that these cultural differences could be harmonized to benefit both nations and to enhance global stability.

Hu Jintao cleverly used the Yale University venue to invoke American historical memory to his benefit. Early within the speech, Hu referenced Nathan Hale and praised his love for country as a trait he

⁷⁹² Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War," China.org.cn, September 3, 2005. Available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Sep/140771.htm>, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

wished to emulate. “The words of Nathan Hale, an American hero and Yale alumnus, ‘I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country’ have also inspired me and many other Chinese.”⁷⁹³ Given that Nathan Hale’s Alma Mater was Yale, invoking him flowed naturally within the context of the speech. By extension, Hu posited that pride in one’s country should be seen as exemplary, whether oriented toward the United States or China.

Hu Jintao stressed the unique characteristics of China’s historical experience. He began by employing his usual refrain, referencing China’s five-thousand-year-old continuous civilization.⁷⁹⁴ By doing so, Hu attempted to establish China as possessing cultural forces far more engraved in its society than those informing American culture. Next, Hu established his view on the philosophical imperatives that influenced China’s outlook on both domestic and foreign affairs:

The distinct cultural tradition of the Chinese nation that developed in the long course of history has exerted a strong influence on contemporary China, just as it did on ancient China. Putting people first, keeping pace with the times, maintaining social harmony and pursuing peaceful development: these values that are being pursued in China today are derived from its tradition.⁷⁹⁵

Hu proceeded to seed his speech with Chinese philosophical references to emphasize these concepts. For example, addressing the concept of serving the people, he stated, “Centuries ago, the Chinese already pointed out that “people are the foundation of a country; when the foundation is stable, the country is in peace.”⁷⁹⁶ This reference called back to Confucian philosophy, specifically to figures like Mencius with the focus being on improving the wellbeing of the people to produce political stability.⁷⁹⁷ Hu Jintao

⁷⁹³ Hu Jintao, “Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao at Yale University,” April 21, 2006. Available at http://lt.china-office.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/200604/t20060420_2684697.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁹⁴ Hu Jintao, “Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao at Yale University,” April 21, 2006. Available at http://lt.china-office.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/200604/t20060420_2684697.htm Accessed on February 5, 2023. “The Chinese civilization is one that has continued uninterrupted for more than 5,000 years. The distinct cultural tradition of the Chinese nation that developed in the long course of history has exerted a strong influence on contemporary China, just as it did on ancient China . . .”

⁷⁹⁵ Hu Jintao, “Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao at Yale University,” April 21, 2006. Available at http://lt.china-office.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/200604/t20060420_2684697.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁹⁶ Hu Jintao, “Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao at Yale University,” April 21, 2006. Available at http://lt.china-office.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/200604/t20060420_2684697.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁹⁷ For more on Mencius’ philosophy on the Importance of the People, see Kung-Chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, vol. 1, translated by F.W. Mote, Princeton, pages 148-167. The quote itself recalls a stanza found within the *Book of Documents*. (民惟邦本，本固邦寧), James Legge translation, “The people are the root of the country; The root firm, the country is tranquil.” *Shang Shu, Xia Shu, Songs of the Five Sons*, para 2. <https://ctext.org/shang-shu/songs-of-the-five-sons>, Accessed on February 23, 2023.

implied that the two civilizations could coexist, in his terms, harmoniously within the international system while allowing China space to maintain its cultural independence.

Hu's final argument entailed the notion that cultural contact would be mutually beneficial for both countries and advance the causes of global peace and development. He started by recalling the continual relationship between the United States and China across the centuries:

Vast as it is, the Pacific Ocean has not stood in the way of exchanges and cooperation between our two peoples over the past two hundred years, and many moving episodes of mutual learning and mutual help between our two peoples who represent different civilizations have been recorded. In the twenty-seven years since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979, China-US relations have maintained steady momentum of growth despite twists and turns on the way, bringing tremendous benefits to both countries and peoples.⁷⁹⁸

Beyond the long history of relations, Hu pointed to steadily improving relations with the United States since the Reform period and that this interaction had benefited both countries. Hu then argued that interaction between diverse cultures was necessary for historical progress according to the Liberal framework.

Cultural diversity is a basic feature of both human society and today's world and an important driving force for human progress. As history has shown, in the course of interactions between civilizations, we not only need to remove natural barriers and overcome physical isolation, we also need to remove obstacle and obstruction of the mind and overcome various prejudices and misunderstanding. Differences in ideology, social system and development model should not stand in the way of exchanges among civilizations, still less should they become excuses for mutual confrontation.⁷⁹⁹

Hu suggested that those differences in ideology or governing style, including criticisms for lack of democratization or human rights issues in China, should not stand in the way of good relations between the two states. In fact, according to Hu, allowing such issues to degrade interactions would be retrograde to the progress of history itself. Hu instrumentally used historical memory to argue for continually deepening relations with the United States while simultaneously taking any appeals for reform by the United States towards China off the table.

⁷⁹⁸ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao at Yale University," April 21, 2006. Available at http://lt.china-office.gov.cn/eng/xwtd/200604/t20060420_2684697.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁷⁹⁹ Hu Jintao, "Speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao at Yale University," April 21, 2006. Available at http://lt.china-office.gov.cn/eng/xwtd/200604/t20060420_2684697.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

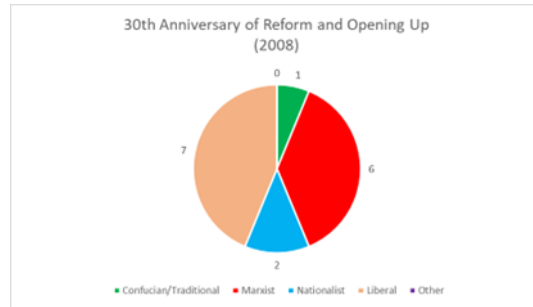


Figure 5.11 References by category for Hu's speech at the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up in 2008.

Next I examined Hu Jintao's address at a meeting marking the 30th Anniversary of the Reform period initiated at the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of 1978. This speech was delivered in December 2008, during a period when Hu's influence appeared to begin to wane, as did the frequency of his instrumental use of historical memory. I discerned sixteen historical references; the primary audience for this speech was the Party, and Hu mainly utilized the Marxist and Liberal frameworks.

Hu appears to have had four interrelated objectives for this text. First, he addressed the Reform period as being necessary in the first place to repudiate faulty ideology. He identified those he found responsible for this unenviable state of affairs and associated criticism of his program with those past figures. Next, he praised Deng Xiaoping and the second generation for having the wisdom to usher in the reforms, associating himself with Deng. After that, he credited the reforms with producing excellent results for China in an attempt to justify their continuation. Finally, he clarified that these policies remained embedded within Marxist ideology to parry criticisms from the left that desired a movement back towards Maoist doctrine. Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook on Development was predicated on the legitimacy established by the R&OU policy's economic success. Thus, Hu sought to shore up the positive orientation of collective memory for the policy within the Party and tighten the association between his governing philosophy and Deng's reforms.

The first objective of the speech appeared to be to identify the villains for Hu's narrative. The Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution served that purpose. "After the overthrow of the gang of four, there was strong public demand that the mistakes of the Cultural Revolution be corrected, and the serious

situation created by 10 years of chaos reversed. Our Party and nation would thus emerge from a difficult period.”⁸⁰⁰ Hu invoked the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution to repudiate those that sought to return to a more orthodox view of Maoism and Marxism in crafting Party ideology. Furthermore, many cadres had gone through or been impacted by the traumatic experience of the Cultural Revolution. Positioning the R&OU policy as the response to it implies that to retreat from that program would be to risk returning to the chaos of that time. Hu extended his criticism further to Hua Guofeng when he declared, “Led by Comrade Deng Xiaoping and supported by other veteran revolutionaries, the Third Plenary Session began correcting Leftist mistakes of all forms committed before and during the Cultural Revolution, firmly repudiated the fallacy of the Two Whatevers.”⁸⁰¹ Hu repudiated Hua’s policy orientation and after establishing the villains of the narrative, he moved on to glorifying the hero.

Hu Jintao offered substantial praise for Deng Xiaoping and the second generation of leadership for the conception and implementation of the R&OU policy. Hu argued that this reform was so monumental that he placed this meeting on par with the founding of the PRC in 1949:

On this day 30 years ago, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was convened. This meeting ushered in a historic period of reform and opening up. A meeting of great significance, it marked a turning point in the Party’s history since the founding of New China in 1949. At that historic moment, Chinese people of all ethnic groups started a great new revolution under the leadership of the CPC.⁸⁰²

Although he offered lavish praise for the policy, he made sure to pay tribute to the efforts made by Mao and earlier generations. He recalled:

While celebrating our success in the past 30 years, we cherish the memory of Comrades Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and other revolutionaries of that generation. Without the struggle of the Chinese people led by the first-generation CPC Central Committee with Mao Zedong at its core, which was bathed in blood, there would be no New China; without the reform and innovation of the Chinese people led by the second-generation CPC Central Committee with Deng Xiaoping at its core, there would be no new era of reform and opening up and no socialism with Chinese characteristics.⁸⁰³

⁸⁰⁰ Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up,” translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸⁰¹ Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up,” translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸⁰² Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up,” translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸⁰³ Hu Jintao, “Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up,” translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

It is worth noting that Hu presented both Mao and Deng in flattering lights, but interestingly they appear to have contributed equally to China's modern historical development according to Hu. This elevation of Deng served Hu's interest since he long made it a policy to present his ideology as an inheritor of Deng's legacy. As Hu had been Deng's handpicked successor for Jiang, this celebration of Deng only further elevated Hu's own standing.

Hu proceeded to illustrate the many benefits achieved since implementing the R&OU policy. One such benefit Hu identified was the standardization of Party Congresses and Plenary sessions.⁸⁰⁴ This reform allowed for greater influence for Party members in shaping policy and the stabilization of political transitions. Furthermore, in line with Deng's formulation, Hu justified the policy based on its results, specifically China's economic development over the past 30 years.

On the whole, our people now live moderately prosperous lives. The past 30 years saw the fastest increase in the income of people both in the cities and the countryside. The people have benefited a great deal from the reform and opening up policy. The average annual disposable income of city and town residents rose from 343 yuan in 1978 to 13,786 yuan in 2007, an increase of 6.5 times. The average annual income of farmers rose from 134 yuan in 1978 to 4,140 yuan in 2007, an increase of 6.3 times. The poor population in rural areas went down from 250 million in 1978 to 14 million in 2007. The average per-capita living space for both city residents and farmers has multiplied. People are richer, have better food and clothes, live in larger homes and enjoy better transportation services. The economy of shortage that had plagued us for a long time before reform and opening up has been fundamentally changed.⁸⁰⁵

Hu highlighted the economic performance in recent years to associate these gains with the Reform period.

He borrowed the positive feelings associated with the collective memory of the economic gains through R&OU and sought to transfer them to support his political program that he presented as an extension of Deng's.

The final objective for Hu Jintao in this speech was presumably to ensure that his policy program fended off any attacks from his political Left for being insufficiently Marxist in character. First, he employed his common construct of referencing China's 5,000-year history, followed by the CoH.⁸⁰⁶ In

⁸⁰⁴ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up," translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸⁰⁵ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up," translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸⁰⁶ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up," translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm, Accessed on February 5, 2023.

this case, the framework reinforced that only the CPC could end the CoH and garner legitimacy for this historic accomplishment. He argued that recent ideological achievements were only possible by adherence to Marxism, as applied to China's historical conditions.

The key to China's great achievement over the past 30 years lies in our efforts in adhering to the fundamental principles of Marxism, constantly adapting Marxism to contemporary China's reality and development, and establishing a system of theories of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which comprises the important strategic theories and thoughts of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of the "Three Represents," and the Scientific Outlook on Development, giving enormous vitality to Marxism in contemporary China.⁸⁰⁷ Hu placed Marxism at the heart of Deng's philosophy and his Scientific Outlook on Development.

Furthermore, by linking Deng's and Jiang's ideologies with his own, Hu sought to establish a continuous developmental narrative. By tying his governing philosophy to those previous core leaders, he borrowed their authority and attempted to shield himself from criticism. He did so by implying that to attack his position was to attack all those previous iterations for which his philosophy was the logical continuation.

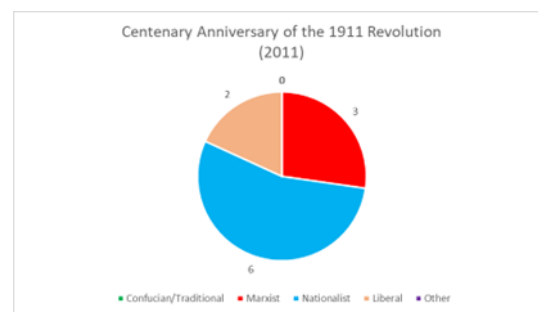


Figure 5.12 References by category for Hu's speech at the Centenary Anniversary of the 1911 revolution in 2011.

The final text I analyzed is Hu's speech at the Centenary Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution. Hu made this speech in 2011, approximately one year before the 18th Party Congress, when his terms in paramount political offices began to expire. I found eleven instrumental uses of historical memory within the text. The primary audience for this speech was a Chinese domestic audience, although residents of Taiwan were also clearly an intended target. Hu mainly relied upon the Nationalist framework for this speech, although it included some Liberal and Marxist elements.

⁸⁰⁷ Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up," translated by Beijing Review, December 18, 2008. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2009-05/11/content_17753659.htm. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

Hu Jintao had four interrelated objectives for this speech and made substantial use of the historical memory of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in their pursuit. First, he recounted the achievements of Dr. Sun and those that orchestrated the 1911 revolution to generate a unifying pride in all Chinese. Next, Hu sought to position the CPC as true inheritors of Dr. Sun's will, engaging in a battle over ownership of his legacy with the GMD. Following this, Hu recalled the progress of China since the 1911 revolution and associated his current political program with a continuation of that progress. Finally, he attempted to instrumentally use the collective memory involving Dr. Sun to push for the reunification of Taiwan with mainland China.

Hu's first objective was to glorify the Xinhai revolution generally and Sun Yat-sen specifically to generate feelings of patriotism and unity among the Chinese population.

The historic contributions made by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and other pioneers of the Revolution of 1911 to the Chinese nation have gone down in the annals of history. All those who fought heroically and those who laid down their lives in that revolution deserve the lasting respect and memory of the Chinese people. The Revolution of 1911 will stand forever as a towering landmark in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.⁸⁰⁸ Hu catalogued the CoH as a low point in Chinese history and credited Dr. Sun and the other revolutionaries for contributing to eventually ending this shameful period. He further praised Dr. Sun as a revolutionary, not only for his actions but also for his ideological contributions through the Three People's Principles.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen was a great national hero, a great patriot and a great leader of the Chinese democratic revolution. He stood in the forefront of the times, and called for "adapting to world trends and conforming to the needs of the masses" and "saving the people from misery and stopping our country from collapsing without delay." He held high the banner of struggle against feudal autocracy, and put forward the political program of the Three People's Principles - nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood.⁸⁰⁹ Hu declared Dr. Sun a national hero worthy of celebration, creating a unifying force in which all Chinese could participate.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen is a central figure in the history of the GMD and the CPC, and thus, both have sought to lay claim to his legacy to bolster their political legitimacy. Hu Jintao engaged in this contest,

⁸⁰⁸ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Commemorating the Centenary of the Revolution of 1911," August 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/HuJintao/HuJintao-SpeechAtMeetingCommemoratingCentenaryOfRevolutionOf1911-Searchable.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸⁰⁹ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Commemorating the Centenary of the Revolution of 1911," August 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/HuJintao/HuJintao-SpeechAtMeetingCommemoratingCentenaryOfRevolutionOf1911-Searchable.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

making the case that the CPC best exemplified the aspirations of Dr. Sun and, by extension, the spirit of the Xinhai revolution. He declared:

Chinese Communists are the staunchest supporters, closest cooperators and most loyal inheritors of the revolutionary cause Dr. Sun Yat-sen initiated, and are dedicated to achieving and furthering the lofty aspirations of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and other pioneers of the Revolution of 1911. Immediately after it was founded, the CPC adopted an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal program for democratic revolution, cooperated with the Chinese Kuomintang led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and established a broadly based revolutionary united front. Having suffered repeated setbacks after the Revolution of 1911, Dr. Sun Yat-sen came to see that Chinese Communists were his close friends; and he reorganized the Kuomintang and implemented the policies of alliance with Russia, cooperation with the Communist Party, and assistance to peasants and workers.⁸¹⁰

Although Hu was willing to share in pride over the Xinhai revolution and Dr. Sun's legacy with all Chinese, he was not so generous as to who could claim to carry on Dr. Sun's historical mission. By establishing that the CPC completed the work of Dr. Sun, Hu sought to coopt his legitimacy as a national unifying figure and transfer that authority to both the CPC and to himself.

Hu's next objective was framing his ideological program and the current political issues he was dealing with in the context of the Xinhai revolution. Hu instrumentally used the collective memory of Dr. Sun numerous times to bolster his political program. For example, Hu discussed the need for stability in Chinese politics and international relations, declaring:

The history of the 100 years since the Revolution of 1911 shows that the development and progress of the Chinese nation require not only a stable and united domestic environment but also a peaceful international environment. Dr. Sun Yat-sen once said, "If China becomes powerful and prosperous, we will not only restore our nation's standing, but also take greater responsibility in the world."⁸¹¹

"The history of the 100 years since X shows" is a rather uninspired construction, lacking specific references to show any real engagement with the history itself. Hu relied on a similar construction the previous month, marking the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CPC.⁸¹² However, using Dr. Sun's words to support Hu's policies plainly displayed his attempt to borrow Dr. Sun's authority to serve his immediate political ends.

⁸¹⁰ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Commemorating the Centenary of the Revolution of 1911," August 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/HuJintao/HuJintao-SpeechAtMeetingCommemoratingCentenaryOfRevolutionOf1911-Searchable.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸¹¹ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Commemorating the Centenary of the Revolution of 1911," August 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/HuJintao/HuJintao-SpeechAtMeetingCommemoratingCentenaryOfRevolutionOf1911-Searchable.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

⁸¹² The specific line he used in that speech was, "The growth of the Party over the past 90 years shows . . ." Hu Jintao, "Speech at the Meeting Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2011. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/CPC_90_anniversary/2011-07/01/content_22901507.htm. Accessed on February 5, 2023, page 7.

Another objective that Hu pursued in this speech was an attempt to offer a unifying message for both Taiwanese and mainland Chinese. As mentioned previously, Dr. Sun was an important figure to both the GMD and CPC, and the historical memory of Dr. Sun remained relevant among significant segments of the Taiwanese population. Hu instrumentally used Dr. Sun's words to push for reunification, stating, "Dr. Sun Yat-sen once remarked, "Unification is the hope of all Chinese people. If unification is achieved, the people will enjoy a happy life; if it is not, the people will suffer." Achieving reunification by peaceful means best serves the fundamental interests of all Chinese, including our Taiwan compatriots."⁸¹³ Hu sought to utilize the mutual celebration of the Xinhai revolution broadly and Dr. Sun particularly as a unifying point between the two polities. By invoking Dr. Sun's words, Hu attempted to maneuver the Taiwanese celebrating Dr. Sun into endorsing the idea of unification on Hu's terms. The instrumentalization of the collective memory of Dr. Sun and the Xinhai revolution was leveraged by Hu to push for his political objective to see reunification with Taiwan on the PRC's terms.

All four pieces examined above are illustrative of how Hu Jintao instrumentally used historical memory to advance his political objectives and advance his efforts towards achieving core leader status. Hu made substantial use of historical memory when it came to his speech marking World War II. These uses included bolstering Chinese pride in their accomplishments, crediting the CPC for ultimate success in the conflict, and carving out space for China's participation in the international order based on its wartime contributions. At Yale University, Hu argued for a unique and firmly embedded Chinese culture informed by the Confucian/Traditional framework, which could work harmoniously and mutually beneficially with the West if China remained free from American meddling in Chinese political culture. Hu Jintao's speech marking the 30th Anniversary of the Reform period offered justification for his governing philosophy, which he based largely on Deng's legacy. He claimed legitimacy from the economic success that had been achieved while still maintaining direct ties to Marxist frameworks as the

⁸¹³ Hu Jintao, "Speech at a Meeting Commemorating the Centenary of the Revolution of 1911," August 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/HuJintao/HuJintao-SpeechAtMeetingCommemoratingCentenaryOfRevolutionOf1911-Searchable.pdf>. Accessed on February 5, 2023.

fundamental basis for his ideology. Finally, Hu Jintao's speech on the Xinhai Revolution sought to borrow the authority of Dr. Sun Yat-sen to foster nationalist pride and as a point for potential rapprochement and reunification with Taiwan. These cases of instrumental use of historical memory served to advance the political objectives that Hu sought to achieve with his discourse. By achieving those objectives and advancing the legitimacy of his agenda, Hu could be better positioned to advance status as the core leader within Chinese political culture.

Conclusions

Hu Jintao is not a leader characterized by his soaring rhetoric or insightful prose, especially compared with others who pursued core leadership status in modern Chinese history. However, as other scholars have documented, Hu's political discourse was purposeful. Furthermore, Hu did use historical memory throughout his speeches, indicating that such inclusion was intentional. It seems that Hu attempted to move to core leadership status during his tenure in leadership. He did manage to assume the highest political positions within the Chinese Party-State and drafted and circulated a unique ideology in the form of the Scientific Outlook on Development. However, Hu did not appear to offer a robust new interpretation of historical memory to justify his elevation to core leadership. He did show some elevated levels of instrumental usages in his rhetoric but appears to have curtailed their employment following the 2008 financial crisis. This decrease is a possible indication of his limited capacity to assert supreme authority over the collective leadership and his inability to effectively use historical memory to bolster his authority.

Shifts in Hu's instrumental use of historical memory correspond to his relative authority against the collective leadership, generally as expected. The early period of his tenure witnessed a relatively depressed level of usage, likely due to continued competition with Jiang Zemin over core leadership. After 2005 his use of historical memory rose and remained high as Hu secured his second term and reveled in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. However, after this period, he lost influence, and the frequency of historical references declined. Although there was a slow increase starting in 2010, Hu's power remained

curtailed, and he did not make any substantial attempt to shape historical memory and retain authority as Xi Jinping assumed the positions of paramount leadership in 2012 - 2013.

Hu's instrumental use of historical memory also largely remained within the confines of the four frameworks. Although used sparingly, the Confucian/Traditional framework lent some of Hu's policies an added air of gravitas, especially when employed with foreign audiences. Hu used the Marxist framework mostly with a Party audience and often employed it to ground his ideology within Marxist foundations to avoid criticisms from his Left. The Nationalist framework was used extensively as a unifying force for his domestic audience. Finally, the Liberal framework was Hu's most consistently used. Hu leveraged the memory of the Reform period and the great strides in economic development, presenting his program as a continuation of that success. Furthermore, Hu attempted to use the Liberal framework to harmonize China's foreign policy with the Liberal internationalist outlook prevalent in many Western diplomatic establishments. Each framework provided Hu with an essential tool to advance his political agenda.

Despite the best efforts of Hu Jintao, including his select instrumental use of historical memory, his actual influence was the shallowest among PRC leaders. In fact, by the end of Hu's term, core leadership status within Chinese political culture appeared to be on the decline, continuing an observable trend encompassing Mao, Deng, and Jiang. Hu's use of historical memory may have been of some assistance in securing his authority but ultimately could only take him so far. However, despite its limitations, Hu did employ historical memory within his discourse and his usage generally coincided with his proximate status towards core leadership. Furthermore, he appeared to deliberately select the form and type of reference to advance his political objectives. From his use, it seems clear that Hu viewed the instrumental use of historical memory as a valid tool to advance his position. Although Hu appeared to represent a diminishment in core leadership for China, his successor would radically reverse this trend and rely heavily on the instrumental use of historical memory to solidify his dominance in Chinese politics.

Chapter 6 - Xi Jinping:

The Return of the Core

Introduction

The ascension of Xi Jinping to core leader of the fifth generation of the CPC's collective leadership reversed the gradual decline of the paramount leader influence in Chinese political culture. In fact, Xi possessed perhaps the most influence of any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong. Unlike his predecessor, Hu Jintao, Xi rapidly consolidated his position following the 18th Party Congress, and soon occupied all three chief positions at the pinnacle of Chinese administrative authority: President of the People's Republic of China, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission.⁸¹⁴ Xi swiftly swept aside any lingering influence held by Hu and clearly enunciated his new vision for the nation. That vision took the form of the China/Chinese Dream (中國夢), which Xi articulated during his address to the 12th National People's Congress:

Realizing the goals of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious, and the Chinese Dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation means that we will make China prosperous and strong, rejuvenate the nation, and bring happiness to the Chinese people. They both embody the ideals of the Chinese people today and represent our forefathers' glorious tradition of untiring pursuit of progress.⁸¹⁵

Furthermore, he set specific dates to realize that dream in the form of the two centennial goals of 2021 and 2049. These years coincided with the centennial anniversaries of the CPC founding and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) respectively.⁸¹⁶ With the 19th Party Congress in 2017, Xi further consolidated his power, removing various restrictions that had limited his predecessors to two terms as President and thereby limited their capacity as core leaders.⁸¹⁷ In addition, Xi cemented his authority by propagating his own ideology, "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese

⁸¹⁴ Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter-Reformation: The Reassertion of Ideological Governance in Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 132 (2021), page 877.

⁸¹⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 56.

⁸¹⁶ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 125.

⁸¹⁷ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 16.

Characteristics for a New Era” (習近平新時代中國特色社會主義思想), in effect elevating himself to the level of Deng and Mao as a theoretician, a crucial component to solidifying his core leadership.⁸¹⁸ In addition, his anti-corruption efforts and institutional reforms enhanced his popular standing and strengthened his control over the Party apparatus. Following his first term, Xi appeared to be in a strong position to enact his vision to achieve the China Dream with the first centennial marker fast approaching.

Despite a strong position going into his second term, Xi faced increasing disturbances that threatened to wake him prematurely from his China dream. Economic growth rates slowed and a series of political shifts in the West threatened to hamper his diplomatic position.⁸¹⁹ By 2018, trade disputes with the United States further derailed efforts to reinvigorate growth rates. On top of that anti- PRC protests in Hong Kong and the presidency of the DPP’s Tsai Ing-wen in Taiwan stalled movement towards peaceful reunification.⁸²⁰ In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic further hardened hostile views towards the PRC in the United States and elsewhere, while the disease itself presented Xi with an immense economic and social crisis within China.⁸²¹ Furthermore, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 shocked nations in East Asia, especially Japan, convincing them to reinvest in their defense and foster regional cooperation aimed at deterring any military expansion by China.⁸²² However, while Xi had to contend with these substantial issues, he had several opportunities to solidify his control over the Party-State and advance his agenda. In addition to the CPC founding centennial in 2021, Xi oversaw several anniversaries that provided him with major platforms, including the 70th anniversaries of both the PRC founding in 1949 and the Chinese People’s Volunteers (CPV) intervention in Korea in 1950. In addition, the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics allowed him to celebrate his achievements and those of the PRC with a wide domestic and international audience. The 20th Party Congress, both in its drama with the removal of Hu Jintao from the proceedings,

⁸¹⁸ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 121.

⁸¹⁹ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China’s Superpower Future*, pages 119-120 and 146.

⁸²⁰ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China’s Superpower Future*, pages 199-200.

⁸²¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/09/28/how-global-public-opinion-of-china-has-shifted-in-the-xi-era/>, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁸²² Defense of Japan White Paper: Digest English, page 1. https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/wp_2022.html, Accessed 3/11/2024.

as well as the elevation of Xi's allies into key positions within the Party's upper echelons, offered further testament to his growing dominance of CPC governing structures.⁸²³ Xi's power over the Party-State as core leader appeared more secure than ever, although the environment for China to achieve Xi's vision presented increasingly intractable difficulties.

Underlying Xi's bid for authority was the drafting and promulgation of his Xi Jinping Thought, enshrined within the CPC Constitution at the 19th Party Congress.⁸²⁴ Xi's governing philosophy was elevated well above Jiang's Three Represents and Hu's Scientific Outlook on Development, instead approaching the impact of Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory.⁸²⁵ The full title for Xi's governing philosophy is Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (習近平新時代中國特色社會主義思想). Furthermore, the extended title clarifies that Xi's governing philosophy is for a new era, one separated from the previous era of Reform and Opening Up (R&OU hereafter) initiated under Deng Xiaoping and carried through by Jiang and Hu, adding a fourth periodization to Party history.⁸²⁶ With Deng's original objective for producing a moderately prosperous society by 2021 declared complete, Xi's governing philosophy shifted its aim to achieving the second centennial goal of rejuvenating the Chinese nation as a modern prosperous state. This second centennial goal was further divided by Xi into two stages, the first culminating in 2035 and the second in 2049 to match the PRC's centennial.⁸²⁷ This date further reflects a symmetry of reversing the decline of the Century of Humiliation (CoH hereafter) in a similar time frame to return, or rejuvenate, China to its proper position and undo this perceived historical aberration.

⁸²³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/former-chinese-president-hu-jintao-escorted-out-party-congress-2022-10-22/>, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁸²⁴ Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter-Reformation: The Reassertion of Ideological Governance in Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 132 (2021), page 879.

⁸²⁵ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 16.

⁸²⁶ Under this new formula the four eras are 1) Revolutionary (1919-1949) 2) Construction (1950-1977) 3) Reform (1978-2021) 4) New Era (2021-2049) with the implication of a new fifth era after the completion of the second centennial goal.

⁸²⁷ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 121.

To achieve this end, Xi's governing philosophy relied on a series of interacting lines of effort. Economic growth remained key to generate legitimacy for the CPC, although with an admission that growth had slowed as China's economy was in the process of switching to what Xi termed high-quality development. As such, reliance on economic growth and rapid improvements to living standards decreased in viability as a substantial source for regime legitimacy.⁸²⁸ Regardless, participation in the global economy remained essential to any growth for China. Projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and international organizations such as the United Nations and the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) group facilitated China's access to the global economy and assured its influence within the international order.⁸²⁹ However, this interaction carried a potential danger of Western influences seeping into China and eroding confidence in the current political system. To ward off such dangers, Xi focused on enhancing confidence in Chinese culture, both contemporary and traditional, as a counterweight to western style liberalization. Furthermore, Xi elevated Mao and the CPC revolutionary historical legacy as a means to unify the Party and avoid deviation from what he termed its founding mission, which he tied directly to his objective for national rejuvenation.⁸³⁰ Therefore, participation in Xi's project meant fulfilling the aspirations of previous generations, and this pride in purpose further guarded the Party from losing its direction and following the Soviet Union's example into collapse. In addition, the completion of China's reunification by the recovery of Taiwan remained a prevalent goal for Xi to signify the elimination of the last vestiges of the CoH.⁸³¹ Xi framed this objective as a matter of national dignity for China and as a wholly internal affair.

Xi's power is tethered tightly to the Party, and Xi's governing philosophy remains wedded to Deng's Four Cardinal principles, which can be summarized as the CPC maintaining its rule and Socialism

⁸²⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 277.

⁸²⁹ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 30.

⁸³⁰ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*, page 196.

⁸³¹ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 180.

with Chinese characteristics as the only valid path for China's rejuvenation.⁸³² However, Xi identified slackening Party discipline and endemic corruption, especially from within the CPC, as substantial threats to both his own vision and regime stability.⁸³³ Xi engaged in significant campaigns to combat corruption, relying both on traditional Chinese ethical systems and Party rectification methods to resolve these issues, often echoing the tactics and rhetoric employed under Mao during the revolutionary period. Xi took great pains to harness the power of historical memory and, like Mao and Deng, orchestrated and designed a resolution on Party History in 2021, the third of its kind.⁸³⁴ Furthermore, like Mao and Deng, Xi not only directly engaged in its drafting, elevating his own contributions within the official Party history, but ensured that his contributions to its development were widely known.⁸³⁵ Xi's governing philosophy and his articulation of an updated official Party history display his efforts to solidify his core leadership to levels unseen in generations.

Numerous scholars have examined Xi's discourse and the character of his tenure as paramount leader. The challenge emerges that any scholarship, including this project, is only working with a partial picture of Xi's tenure, and cannot yet give a full summation. However, these works do offer invaluable insights into the nature of Xi's official discourse and some indication to the likely political objectives he pursued while delivering his rhetoric. Kerry Brown has produced two biographical works on Xi, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping* and *The World According to Xi: Everything you need to know about the New China*. In his first book, Brown made clear Xi's reliance on the Party structure to sustain his authority, writing, "Xi and the Party are inextricable. Its power is his power, and his power is solely derived from it."⁸³⁶ Furthermore, he argues that Xi's influence within the Party was made manifest

⁸³² Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 120.

⁸³³ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 180.

⁸³⁴ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 157.

⁸³⁵ Xi Jinping, "Explanation of the Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on the Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century," *The Governance of China, Volume IV*, pages 19-34.

⁸³⁶ Kerry Brown, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping*, page 52.

through his use of ideology.⁸³⁷ Brown expanded on these ideas in his second book, reinforcing the importance for Xi to maintain a unified Party under a core leader to accomplish national rejuvenation. In addition, he observed the marrying of CPC values to traditional Chinese ethics, especially Confucianism. Brown explains, “It is a hybrid, a means of achieving unity between tradition and modernity, taking elements from Marxism and Chinese traditions and aiming at practical outcomes.”⁸³⁸ He also argues that Xi’s power is limited by the fact that he needs to deliver results for the population to retain sufficient popular support to maintain his influence.⁸³⁹ Brown posits that Xi’s authority is contingent upon the delivery of his promises outlined by his governing philosophy.

Chun Han Wong’s biography, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China’s Superpower Future*, provides a further exploration of Xi’s style of rule, including his political reform efforts and use of historical memory. Wong concurs with Brown that Xi’s power remains tethered to the CPC, but argues that perceptions of slowing economic growth and especially increasing corruption impelled Xi to strengthen Party discipline and unity.⁸⁴⁰ To achieve this end, Wong observes Xi relying on the power of narratives, particularly party history, Confucian and Traditional ethics, and nationalism, to centralize his authority.⁸⁴¹ Wong dedicates an entire chapter to Xi’s efforts to shape historical memory within the Chinese collective consciousness.⁸⁴² These efforts included elevating Xi’s contributions as recorded in the Third Resolution on Party history, as well as a more affirmative approach to Mao’s memory, in what Wong describes as a maneuver to justify Xi’s more authoritarian style.⁸⁴³ Furthermore, Wong catalogues

⁸³⁷ Kerry Brown, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping*, page 58.

⁸³⁸ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 121.

⁸³⁹ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, pages 125-127.

⁸⁴⁰ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 55.

⁸⁴¹ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 6.

⁸⁴² Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, pages 149-177.

⁸⁴³ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 151, “Since then, Xi has directed an all-encompassing struggle to shape China’s collective consciousness. Party propagandists revised textbooks and museums to boost Xi’s image, while diluting criticism of Mao.”

incidences by Xi to suppress historical scholarship contrary to Xi's preferred narrative.⁸⁴⁴ Wong argues convincingly that controlling historical memory is central to Xi's method of governance.

The Department of Commentary of the *People's Daily*, a PRC state media organ, shares Wong's view, although perhaps not his conclusions, stressing the importance of stories within Chinese political culture as an instrument of statecraft. Its work, *Narrating China's Governance: Stories in Xi Jinping's Speeches*, argues that one of Xi's chief roles is to serve as the primary narrator for China's story.⁸⁴⁵ "He often makes the past serve the present by quoting ancient fables, fairy tales, and historical events to explain the present and reality in a clever way, in hopes that people will learn from them and acquire wisdom and knowledge to enhance self-cultivation and doing well in their work."⁸⁴⁶ The text outlines numerous cases of using the past to serve the present, such as ancient exemplars to serve as ethical models in Xi's anti-corruption campaigns.⁸⁴⁷ In addition, they posit that Xi's historical construction begins with the CoH, with this downward trend only corrected by the rise of the CPC and adoption of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, culminating in the inevitable realization of China's rejuvenation through Xi's governing philosophy.⁸⁴⁸ This official organ of the regime describes in substantial detail the method of using narrative, including historical, as a means to support Xi's policy program.

Although it is not a major focus of her work, Xing Lu did trace Xi borrowing aspects and techniques from Mao's discourse. The similarities included substantial use of metaphors to illustrate contemporary concepts, as well as reliance on authoritative texts to bolster legitimacy. In the case of Xi,

⁸⁴⁴ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, pages 171-177.

⁸⁴⁵ People's Daily, Department of Commentary, *Narrating China's Governance: Stories in Xi Jinping's Speeches*, translated by Jing Luo, page 265.

⁸⁴⁶ People's Daily, Department of Commentary, *Narrating China's Governance: Stories in Xi Jinping's Speeches*, translated by Jing Luo, page vii.

⁸⁴⁷ See, People's Daily, Department of Commentary, *Narrating China's Governance: Stories in Xi Jinping's Speeches*, translated by Jing Luo, Chapter 2, "Stories of Morals: "Governing the Country After Cultivating One's Moral Character and Managing the Family's Affairs Well," pages 41-73.

⁸⁴⁸ People's Daily, Department of Commentary, *Narrating China's Governance: Stories in Xi Jinping's Speeches*, translated by Jing Luo, pages xv-xvii.

this included use of texts from traditional sources as well as ample uses of quotations by Mao. However, Xing Lu did note a change in focus, with Xi adopting a nationalistic oriented narrative compared to the more Marxist internationalist bent present within Mao's discourse.⁸⁴⁹ In *Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping*, Kerry Brown and Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova concur on the importance of ideology for Xi to maintain political power. They identify twelve common terms permeating Xi's discourse drawn from both China's ancient and Party historical memory.⁸⁵⁰ Furthermore, they observe the role of these terms in offering a counterweight to Western liberal conceptions. They write, "In the light of Xi's dismissal of Western values as not being suitable for China, the concept of 'spiritual civilisation'(sic) represents an attempt to contribute to a home-grown value alternative . . ."⁸⁵¹ Timothy Cheek argues that Xi pivoted to a more Mao-inspired style in his rhetoric and further argues that in fact the purpose for this shift was to draw a distinction between his discourse and that of Deng, Jiang, and Hu in what Cheek terms a counterreformation.⁸⁵² Cheek observes Xi's reliance on Mao's rectification rhetoric closely associated with the Yan'an period, with far less emphasis for later periods such as the Cultural Revolution, which remain problematic in Chinese historical memory.⁸⁵³ Cheek argues that Xi seeks to instill an ethical disposition, grounded on Marxist and Chinese traditional systems, to correct the inadequacies of CPC rule, but concludes Xi will prove unable to reform the Party-State system through this method.

In an examination of the 2018 constitutional changes, Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova identifies three major narratives within Xi's rhetoric surrounding the New Era: Mission, International Influence, and Party Governance. The Mission narrative linked Xi's policy program with CPC history

⁸⁴⁹ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*, pages 198-199.

⁸⁵⁰ Kerry Brown and Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, "Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping." *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (2018), pages 331-335.

⁸⁵¹ Kerry Brown and Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, "Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping." *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (2018), page 337.

⁸⁵² Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter-Reformation: The Reassertion of Ideological Governance in Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 132 (2021), pages 878-879.

⁸⁵³ Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter-Reformation: The Reassertion of Ideological Governance in Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 132 (2021), pages 883-884.

which maintains its legitimacy by framing it as a contribution to Socialism with Chinese characteristics. The international influence narrative sought to frame China's rise as acceptable internationally. The Party governance narrative aimed to expand the core socialist values and make them more digestible by selectively integrating into them aspects of traditional Chinese culture.⁸⁵⁴ Another scholar, Zhang Feng, finds three other narrative frameworks at play in Xi Jinping Thought specific to Xi's internationally aimed discourse: National Rejuvenation, Global Community, and China's Contribution.⁸⁵⁵ National rejuvenation expressed the growing power and confidence of the PRC and, in line with Bērziņa-Čerenkova's Mission narrative, conceived this project as a culmination of a long historical struggle. In addition, Zhang describes Xi's conception of a global community with a shared destiny encompassing all nations, a component of which I identify with the Liberal Framework. According to Zhang, Xi has asserted that China's rise and subsequent contribution to this global order was a net positive for both China and the international community. Finally, Zhang notes that Xi relied on Jiang's and Hu's efforts to improve China's image through the peaceful rise narrative, as well as mining allusions from China's long history for positive interactions with foreign nations and cultures, to assuage concerns about its growing influence.⁸⁵⁶

Lutgard Lams distinguishes Xi's rhetoric into two distinct categories based on primary audience, foreign and domestic. Lams observes similar trends to Zhang regarding Xi's foreign audience, with Xi attempting to mollify concerns with China's more assertive role, while embracing China as an active participant and even shaper of the international order.⁸⁵⁷ However, regarding the domestic audience, Lams identifies an increasing reliance on nationalistic rhetoric: "... official discourse under Xi's rule cultivates

⁸⁵⁴ Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, "Meaning Behind the 2018 PRC Constitution Amendments – Application of Political Discourse Analysis to the 'New Era' Narratives of Xi Jinping." *Socrates (Rīga)* 3, no. 18 (2020), pages 164-165.

⁸⁵⁵ Feng Zhang, "The Xi Jinping Doctrine of China's International Relations." *Asia Policy* 14, no. 3 (2019), page 12.

⁸⁵⁶ Feng Zhang, "The Xi Jinping Doctrine of China's International Relations." *Asia Policy* 14, no. 3 (2019), pages 16-20.

⁸⁵⁷ Lutgard Lams, "Examining Strategic Narratives in Chinese Official Discourse under Xi Jinping." *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (2018), page 399.

nationalism with increasingly hostile anti-western rhetoric.”⁸⁵⁸ In addition, Lams notes the reliance on Confucian morality and Chinese traditional culture to generate national confidence. Lams argues that Xi maintained reliance on Marxism-Leninism as the basis of his ideology but clothed it with Confucian and traditional rhetoric.⁸⁵⁹ Examining Xi’s theme of global governance, Yi Edward Yang argues from the constructivist international relations theory on the power of discourse to define identity and set the parameters for international relations, with Xi embracing this concept in his rhetoric.⁸⁶⁰ Yang concurs with Lams on Xi abandoning the precedent of minimizing China’s footprint on the international stage writing, “Since becoming China’s indisputable leader, Xi Jinping departed from the ‘keeping a low profile’ ethos that guided China’s foreign policy during much of the reform era.”⁸⁶¹

Exploring Xi’s China Dream and its nationalistic character, Wang Jianyu finds that Xi’s nationalism consists of a hybrid, crossing banal (individualist), state, and cultural forms. He posits that Xi’s China Dream simultaneously encapsulates goals for advancement in conditions at the levels of the individual citizen, the PRC as a nation state, and the Chinese culture.⁸⁶² He posits that Xi ties all three levels together, while also linking the past, present, and future into a unified narrative. According to Wang, Xi’s conception of China’s Dream is shared across all generations, including past and future, with Xi’s ideology serving as a fulfillment of those desired ends.⁸⁶³

⁸⁵⁸ Lutgard Lams, “Examining Strategic Narratives in Chinese Official Discourse under Xi Jinping.” *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (2018), page 400.

⁸⁵⁹ Lutgard Lams, “Examining Strategic Narratives in Chinese Official Discourse under Xi Jinping.” *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 23, no. 3 (2018), page 405.

⁸⁶⁰ Yi Edward Yang, “China’s Strategic Narratives in Global Governance Reform under Xi Jinping.” *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 128 (2021), pages 302-303.

⁸⁶¹ Yi Edward Yang, “China’s Strategic Narratives in Global Governance Reform under Xi Jinping.” *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 128 (2021), page 312.

⁸⁶² Jiayu Wang, “Representing Chinese Nationalism/Patriotism through President Xi Jinping’s ‘Chinese Dream’ Discourse.” *Journal of Language and Politics* 16, no. 6 (2017), page 831.

⁸⁶³ Jiayu Wang, “Representing Chinese Nationalism/Patriotism through President Xi Jinping’s ‘Chinese Dream’ Discourse.” *Journal of Language and Politics* 16, no. 6 (2017), page 845.

The scholarship related to Xi's discourse differs somewhat in classification and focus, but there appears to be substantial alignment regarding the political intention of Xi's ideology and his use of rhetoric to advance it. Furthermore, several scholars have stressed the importance of historical narratives in Xi's formulation and the various frameworks Xi employs to convey his governing philosophy.

Given Xi's rapid ascent following the 18th Party Congress and his continuous gathering of additional powers and prestige, I consider the entire period from 2012 – 2023 as Xi striving for, or striving to retain, core leadership status. Scholarship on Xi's discourse and pronouncements by the PRC indicate the importance of the Party congresses as key markers in Xi's tenure.⁸⁶⁴ As such, I have divided Xi's discourse into three distinct periods, each corresponding to a Party Congress. The first, from 2012-2017, encompasses Xi's rule following the 18th Party Congress, with Xi securing political power, carrying out major anti-corruption efforts, and offering early enunciations of his governing philosophy through the China Dream narrative. I expect a steady rise of Xi's instrumental use of historical memory as he consolidates power and defines his governing philosophy. The second, from 2018-2022 following the 19th Party Congress, witnessed Xi achieving new heights of control and clout, surpassing that won by his immediate predecessors Jiang and Hu and arguably rivaling Deng. Not only did this period see the elimination of tenure restrictions, setting up his previously unprecedented third five-year term since the initiation of the R&OU, but also enshrined his governing philosophy of Xi Jinping Thought as the Party's guiding ideology. In addition, this period saw the completion of the First Centennial goal in 2021, as well as several other important anniversaries and events that elevated Xi's, the CPC's, and the nation's prestige. On the other hand, a series of difficulties and setbacks, especially the COVID-19 pandemic and a souring international environment, threatened to derail the fundamental assumptions facilitating China's rise and the project of national rejuvenation by the second Centennial goal in 2049. As a result, while I anticipate a heightened level of instrumental usage, there may be sudden spikes and depressions coinciding with the intense interplay of factors working for and against Xi's core leadership. The third

⁸⁶⁴ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, pages 254-255.

and final period accounts for Xi's discourse in 2023 following the 20th Party Congress as he assumed his third five-year term as PRC President and further consolidated his control over the Party-State. While I expect a relative decline as he transitions from securing his authority to merely maintaining it as core leader, the available texts examined in this study lack any texts primarily directed towards the Party. Therefore, drawing conclusions on any shift in his discourse is premature. I fully expect Xi to utilize all four of the major frameworks of historical memory. However, I do expect an increase in the Marxist framework and a decrease in the Liberal towards the latter half of Xi's examined tenure. In addition, I anticipate that Xi will increasingly rely on the nationalist framework, especially after 2016, as relations with the United States began to deteriorate and Tsai Ing-wen assumed the Taiwan presidency.

To achieve the realization of his dream for China's rejuvenation, Xi Jinping assumed stronger authority as core leader than Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao, reversing a gradual trend from Mao to Hu of diminishment in relative core leadership clout. Xi rapidly assumed all three major offices associated with paramount leadership and continued to strengthen his control by eroding restraints on that leadership. In addition, Xi Jinping Thought, Xi's governing philosophy, was elevated to levels of influence associated with Mao's and Deng's ideology. Xi even constructed a third resolution on Party history, something only Mao and Deng had done and, like these predecessors, did so in a manner which elevated his own role and shaped it in a direction most conducive to support his vision. Xi's rhetoric relies heavily upon historical memory, with it saturating his discourse. He relies on it in his communications with the Party apparatus, the wider Chinese domestic population, and the international community. Xi structures his China dream for national rejuvenation as not merely the desires of a man, or even a head of state, but rather the common aspirations for all patriotic Chinese in a century-long historical process which he would see fulfilled under his core leadership.

Metrics

The dataset includes 386 texts from Xi encompassing the years 2012 - 2023. I have opted for 2012 as the start date as this marks the earliest of Xi's selected works collected in the four volume *The Governance of China*. Unlike his predecessors, who included some texts from the period before they

ascended to paramount leader, it appears that Xi desired to set a clean break between his past discourse and that occurring after the 18th Party Congress. The endpoint I have selected is Xi's New Year's address on December 31st, 2023, purely because it is the final complete year prior to my completion of this study's drafting. Future updates and editions will include additional documents on a yearly basis as it becomes available. There are two main sources for Xi's discourse within this study. The first is the abovementioned *The Governance of China I-IV*, which covers XI's official discourse from 2012 (following the 18th Party Congress) until the Spring of 2022. The second consists of a collection of Xi's speeches published from 2022 - 2023 online via the CPC Central Committee's bimonthly journal *Qiushi*. Translated into English, the texts within the dataset add up to approximately 473,500 words. Of the 386 texts, a total of seventy did not include a discernable instrumental use of historical memory. Of the remaining 316 texts, I found a total of 1600 instrumental uses of historical memory. A full listing of all texts and instrumental uses can be found in Appendix E.

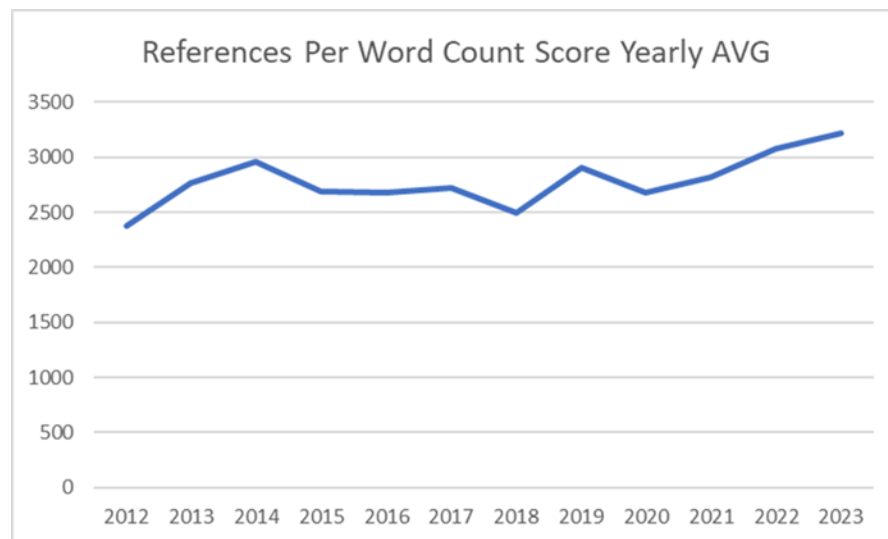


Figure 6.1 References per Word Count Score yearly average. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without historical references.

Xi's instrumental use of historical memory appears generally consistent, although there are some discernable shifts. Xi extensively uses historical memory at a higher rate relative to the other core leaders in this study. Even though the shifts are less pronounced they still potentially indicate alterations in his

pursuit of relative security as core leader.⁸⁶⁵ Overall, it could be that Xi's consistently heightened use dilutes this study's capacity to ascertain his core leadership status. On the other hand, it may be an indication that Xi has continuously labored against opposition and has needed to retain such a tight hold of his ideological control through the instrumental use of historical memory to accomplish the realization of his governing philosophy throughout his entire tenure, which seems a likely explanation. As expected, there is a general rise starting in 2012 as Xi secured his authority. However, it does reach its high point earlier than I expected, in fact as early as 2014, as opposed to the 19th Party Congress in 2017. After generally settling into a consistent rate from 2015 - 2017, it appears that there is a general trend line of an increase in usage starting after the 19th Party Congress. There is a temporary dip in 2020, coinciding with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it did not impede Xi's increasing use of historical memory in the years following. In fact, 2023, the year after the 20th Party Congress, witnessed the highest incidence of instrumental use of historical memory by Xi. This increase may indicate that even after securing more political power following the 20th Party Congress, Xi did not feel secure enough to ease off his instrumental usage. The general trend line indicates that despite an outward appearance of absolute security in his core leadership status, Xi may not yet have reached the point where he can move from actively shaping historical memory to justify his governing philosophy to a phase of merely sustaining its active implementation.

⁸⁶⁵ The References per word Count score metric, taking the total word count divided by the total references, then subtracted by a ceiling of 4000 to account for texts with no references, has an uneven distribution. The lower levels (fewer references per word count) have a wider variance while the higher levels (more references per word count) have a shallower variance between them. However, as the study only measures within each leader's rhetoric, and not across all observed leaders, the method does achieve the goal of displaying relative change within that individual's discourse.

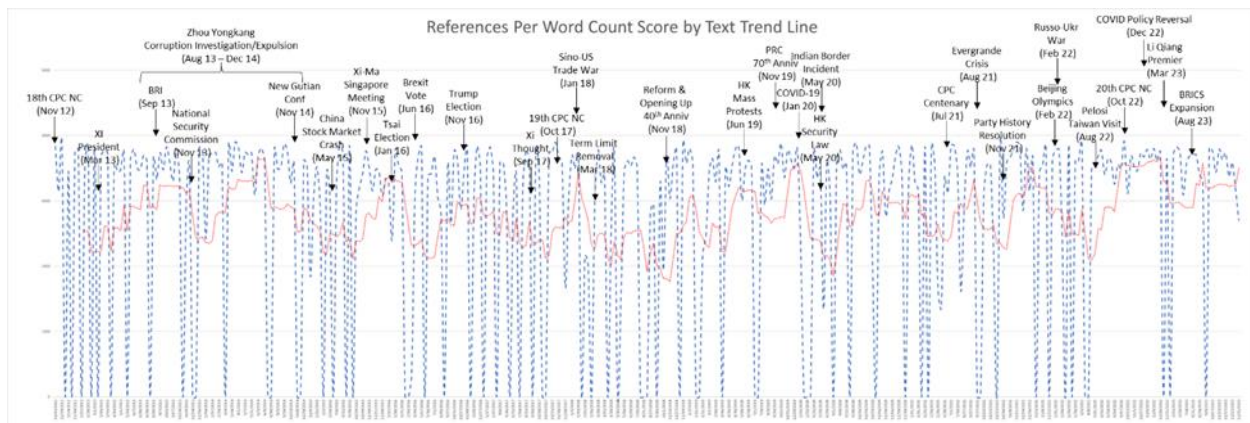


Figure 6.2 References per Word Count Score for each observation. The Blue Dash represents each individual Reference Per Word Count Score. The Red Dashes represent the ten-datapoint moving average for the same data set. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without any historical references within.

Although Xi's instrumental use of historical memory remains generally consistent, there are several peaks and valleys throughout the dataset. Regarding the dips, they appear to be associated with one of two circumstances. The first is the perceived successful execution of Xi's policies with a corresponding shift from actively shaping historical memory to simply maintaining sufficient uses to sustain the new status quo. As an illustration, there appears to be a correspondence between a decline in usage and successful anti-corruption operations, such as the investigation targeting Zhou Yongkang.⁸⁶⁶ Combatting corruption is a key plank in Xi's governing philosophy, and he directly associates it with the stability of the PRC and its capacity to achieve the China Dream. On the other hand, other instances of declines appear to connect to setbacks that contradict his proposed reading of history or inhibit the implementation of his governing philosophy and thereby mark a potential retreat in Xi's sole control in favor of shedding more authority to the collective leadership. For example, the election of Tsai Ing-wen in 2016 corresponds to one such drop, when prospects for a peaceful reunification with Taiwan diminished. Another example occurs with the trade conflict between the United States and China starting in 2018, threatening to further derail hopes for China's economic growth and undermining the concept of a historical trend towards globalization. Yet another decline occurs in the immediate wake of COVID-19,

⁸⁶⁶ Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 69.

further destabilizing China's economy and exacerbating trends towards a more contentious international environment, contrary to the conditions Xi outlined as facilitating China's rejuvenation. Several subsequent rises do appear to coincide with anniversaries and other celebratory events. These events naturally result in higher incidence of instrumental uses, but they also offer excellent opportunities for Xi to reassert his governing philosophy and associate it with these markers in historical memory. Although never drastic, the shifts in Xi's instrumental use of historical memory do largely correspond to the security of his status as core leader.

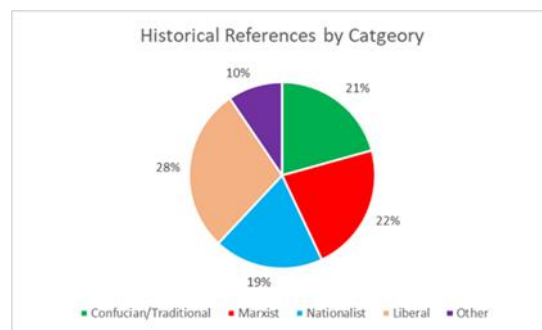


Figure 6.3 References by category percentage across the full dataset.

Xi utilized all four narrative frameworks: Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal, accounting for a total of 90% of his instrumental uses. Overall, there is generally an even distribution between the four frameworks, with only a slightly higher rate of those conforming to the Liberal Framework. That framework accounted for 28%, with Xi utilizing it to highlight the PRC's economic success under the R&OU model initiated by Deng Xiaoping. Also included within that model is support for ideas associated with the Liberal International relations theory such as accelerations in scientific development, globalization, multipolarity, interconnectedness, and collective participation in world governance. Xi relied on this narrative to argue that China deserved a greater role guiding the Liberal international system.

The Marxist framework accounts for 22% of Xi's instrumental uses. To sustain Xi as core leader, the existing Party-State system that enables core leaders in the first place must likewise be maintained. To accomplish this task, Xi leaned into the theory that only the CPC implementing Socialism with Chinese characteristics could deliver progress for China. He also linked any progress achieved to the maintenance

of the PRC's existing political structures. In addition, Xi sought to elevate his policy program by insinuating that it carried forward the founding mission of the CPC to completion. To assist in his anti-corruption and Party discipline projects, Xi emphasized various historical campaigns to normalize these efforts, such as the Yan'an Rectification movement. The Marxist framework provided Xi with a tool to counter perceived degeneration in the CPC's capacity to rule and invest his governing philosophy with greater prestige by charting a course to carry forward the CPC's century-long aspirations.

The next major framework that Xi used is the Confucian/Traditional which accounts for 21% of his instrumental uses. He employed this narrative framework often in a comparable manner to the Marxist and he often intertwined the two. First, it provided Xi with a vast resource to build confidence and pride in Chinese civilization and governing structures, claiming that longstanding and deeply established philosophies and historical legacies continue to inform China's political structures, both in foreign and domestic affairs. In addition, like the Marxist framework, Xi used the Confucian/Traditional as an ethical primer to aid in the task of tackling Party corruption and enforcing discipline. Finally, Xi appears to inject the Confucian/Traditional framework into his discourse to raise its prestige and invest it with an aura of ancient and profound wisdom. This practice presented Xi as not merely a political leader but almost akin to a sage, or philosopher king.

The fourth framework is the Nationalist, accounting for 19% of his instrumental uses. Essential to Xi's concept of national rejuvenation is that it is necessary to reverse China's past historical degeneration. Xi associates that decline with the calamitous CoH, brought about by a combination of Western exploitation and domestic mismanagement. In addition, Xi utilizes the Nationalist framework to generate a unifying pride among the Chinese population, especially generating delight in national accomplishments, both ancient and contemporary. Furthermore, China's martial achievements are celebrated to build confidence in the PLA and the CPC to defend the nation. Finally, the Nationalist framework provides the primary venue to call for a reunification with Taiwan, arguing for a common national identity and redress of historical grievance to justify its reclamation.

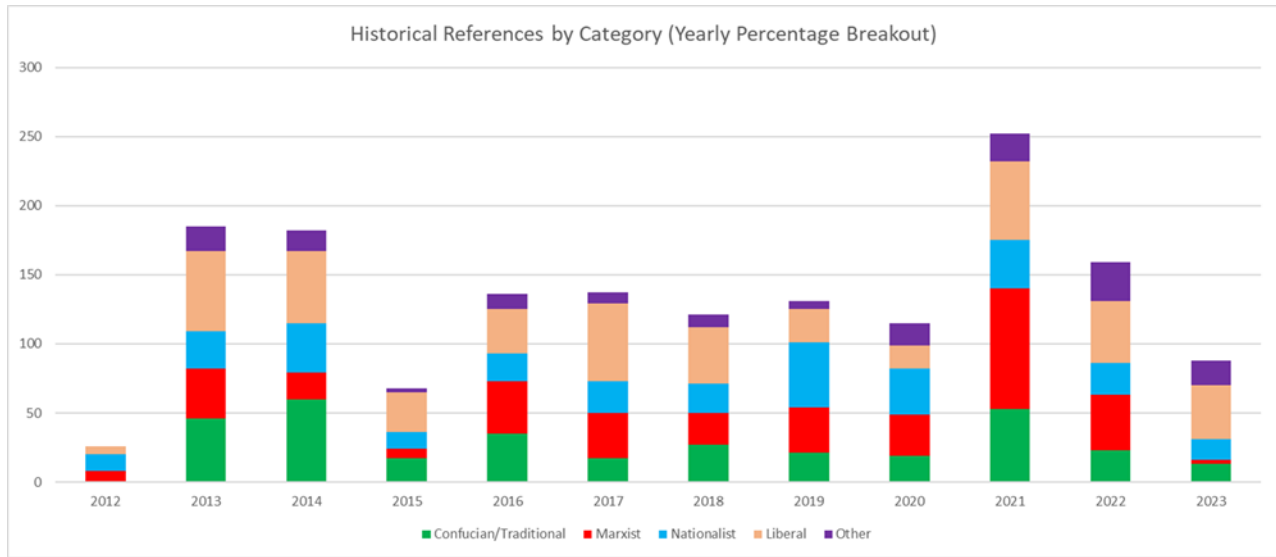


Figure 6.4 References by category for each year.

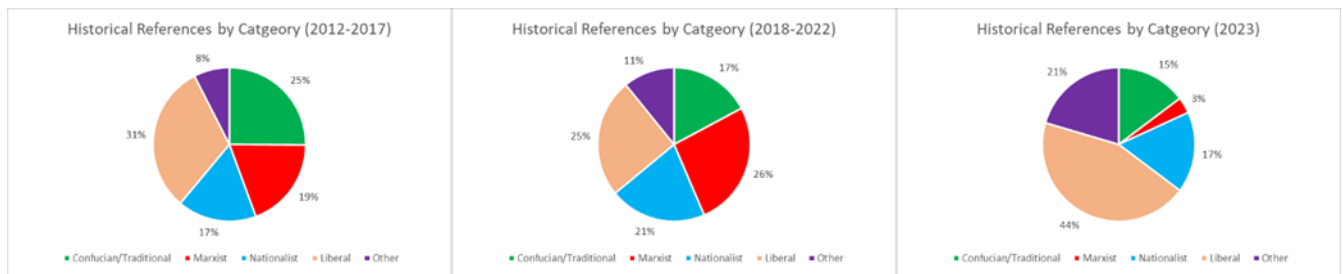


Figure 6.5 References by category divided by diachronic sections, (1) 18th NPC (2012-2017), (2) 19th NPC (2018-2022), (3) 20th NPC (2023-)

Although as an aggregate the distribution is generally even, there are some shifts in the distribution of the four frameworks across the three periods I classified for Xi's tenure. In the first period following the 18th Party Congress, Xi employed the Liberal and Confucian/Traditional frameworks more frequently as a proportion. This increase in the Confucian/Traditional may reflect the additional focus on anti-corruption campaigns launched by Xi. Meanwhile, the increased level of the Liberal framework likely indicates Xi's continuation of galvanizing international support for international projects such as the BRI to drive China's development. The second period after the 19th Party Congress conforms generally to the patterns of the previous period, but Xi's discourse does see a relative increase to the Nationalist and Marxist frameworks. This increase may be related to the series of anniversaries which occurred during this term, as they celebrated key events within the Nationalist and Marxist narratives. On

the other hand, it may also reflect Xi's increasing reliance on alternative sources for legitimacy as the economic growth rate slowed and international environment soured contrary to Xi's interests. In response, he invoked nationalist fervor and memory of past CPC achievements defeating Japanese aggression, unifying the nation, and developing the country to bolster his and the CPC's right to rule. Furthermore, while the Liberal framework is still present, it is during this timeframe that Xi's rhetoric indicates a flagging confidence in the Liberal global order enduring as the trend of the times. The period following the 20th Party Congress is limited in its value as it only includes a single year (2023) and does not include any texts or speeches aimed primarily at a Party audience. This likely explains the collapse of the Marxist rhetoric as a proportion and the substantial increase in his use of the Liberal framework. On the other hand, while Xi's apparent confidence in the Liberal order is more skeptical compared to his earlier stances, following the 20th Party Congress he amplifies his claim that the PRC is a fervent advocate and defender for the Liberal International order. These shifts in focus reflect a reorientation of Xi's instrumental use of historical memory based on the immediate demands of his political environment.



Figure 6.6 References by category between events marking anniversaries and those that did not.

As expected, there does appear to be some variance between discourse marking anniversaries. Although with anniversaries the Marxist framework does see a slight increase, the Nationalist nearly doubles its relative share to the non-anniversary context. Xi often took the opportunities offered by anniversaries to link his policy program to these past events, thereby borrowing their authority to aid in implementing his policies.

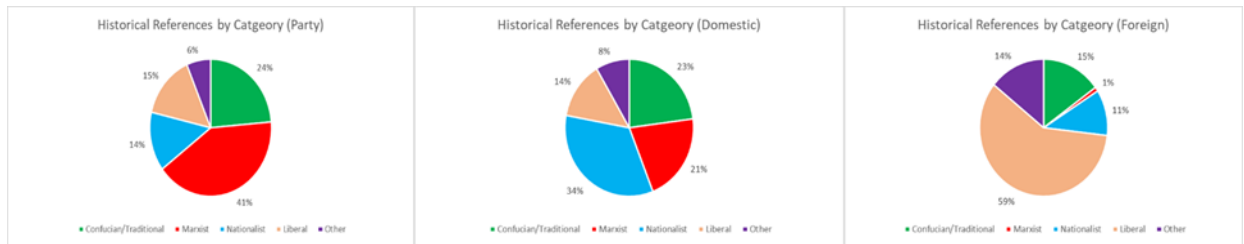


Figure 6.7 References by category by primary audiences: Party, Domestic, and Foreign.

Xi's discourse has substantial variation depending on the primary audience. Unsurprisingly, when it is aimed at the Party, his discourse has a far higher percentage of the Marxist framework, indicating that it remains the principal language for interparty discourse. The Confucian/Traditional framework also appears at its highest percentage when aimed at the CPC, with Xi using it in conjunction with the Marxist as a tool to discipline cadres and elevate his own prestige. Both the Liberal and Nationalist frameworks remain present for this group, indicating the need to communicate using these frameworks to the CPC. The discourse aimed at the domestic audience amplified the Nationalist framework to a proportion of 34%. As Xi aimed this rhetoric at a wider Chinese audience, it provided the best opportunity for his use of it as a unifying national force. The increase in this framework comes at the expense of the Marxist, which nevertheless remains strong at 21%. Both the Liberal and Confucian/Traditional frameworks remain relatively stable, with the Liberal offering evidence of China's progress since R&OU while the Confucian/Traditional fosters desired ethical traits in the population. The foreign audience appears to have the most dramatic shift, as the Marxist framework virtually disappears, indicating that Xi viewed such discourse as potentially damaging to China's foreign relations and feeding into western fears related to China's governing system and potential belligerency. Rhetoric targeting this audience shows for the first time a single narrative framework accounting for a majority of Xi's instrumental use in the form of the Liberal at 59%. Presumably, it assisted Xi in convincing the global community that he remained committed to integrating China into the international order. At the same time, the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks remained present as well. Both served as connections with foreign audiences through shared collective memory as well as to provide Xi with maneuver room to carve out a

distinct space for China to maintain a degree of separation given its national history and civilizational character. Xi tailored his employment of the four frameworks based upon his intended primary audience.

Xi instrumentally uses historical memory more consistently and at higher levels than any other core leader examined in this study. This high rate of usage likely indicates that throughout his tenure, Xi has seen fit to constantly exert pressure towards maintaining and advancing his core leadership as he implements his governing philosophy. Xi's instrumental use does fluctuate, reflecting his relative strength as core leader. He does appear to gradually retreat after victories in his anti-corruption campaigns, but also suffers dramatic drops when historical events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the 2018 US Trade dispute, undermine the underlying assumptions of his governing philosophy and his purported interpretation for the course of history. Xi does rely on all four frameworks, but there is variation in the distribution between them that appears to be based upon intended audience. Consistent with the previous core leaders, this suggests that Xi had specific and deliberate intent for the political use of his instrumentalization of historical memory. The next section will examine Xi's instrumental uses of the four frameworks across his discourse.

Frameworks

The four frameworks operated distinctly in advancing Xi's governing philosophy and further cemented his power as core leader by redefining and then perpetuating his authoritative interpretation of historical memory. The Confucian/Traditional framework delivered essential tools to express ethical concepts. Unlike Hu, Xi appeared more comfortable utilizing the Confucian/Traditional framework, regardless of the audience. By doing so, Xi borrowed authority derived from associated memory and accrued to his own discourse a deeper level of prestige. Furthermore, he aimed to generate a feeling of cultural pride to ward off any potential infatuation with Western culture, and more dangerously, its political institutions. Xi wielded the Confucian/Traditional framework by citing China's unbroken 5000-year history, imbuing Chinese political culture with immutable characteristics that precluded blanket implementation of Western political institutions. In addition, he relied on this framework to underscore the role of history as a contemporary guide and thereby infuse additional value not only to the

Confucian/Traditional framework, but to all the frameworks. Finally, it provided Xi with a means to elaborate on the ethical and moral requirements both for the Party and the nation.

Central to Xi's instrumental use of the Confucian/Traditional framework was employing the historical memory of Confucius and the works attributed to him. Unlike Mao, Xi used memory towards Confucius in a mostly positive manner.⁸⁶⁷ For example, Xi used Confucius to promote what he described as fair and equitable enjoyment of government services and the necessity to avoid the appearance of favoritism. In a Party-aimed speech in 2013, Xi explained:

The Chinese people have always had a perception that "inequality rather than want is the cause of trouble." Based on continued development, we should do a better job of promoting fairness and justice, trying our best while being mindful of our limitations so that we can keep making progress in ensuring people's access to education, remunerable employment, health care, old-age care and housing.⁸⁶⁸

In this case, Xi used a well-known reference from *The Analects* (論語) on the dangers emerging from perceptions of inequality leading to social instability as a warning. In another example, Xi recalled multiple ancient philosophical texts from various schools of thought, including *The Analects*, to advocate for conservation in environmental policy. In a 2016 party address discussing development, he explained:

Our predecessors understood the significance of the eco-environment. The Analects of Confucius says . . . Xun Zi argued . . . Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals also . . . These ideas – taking from nature at the proper time and to the proper extent – have a great and genuine significance.⁸⁶⁹

Xi sought to locate his policy of environmental conservation and fair governance as consistent with traditional Chinese philosophy.

Xi's confidence in using the Confucian/Traditional framework, and memory of Confucius himself, extended beyond a domestic audience. In his discourse targeting foreigners, Xi relied on it to soften the image of China's foreign policy. At a 2017 address in Geneva, Xi contended that China

⁸⁶⁷ Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 184.

⁸⁶⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, Volume I, page 110. This appears to reference *The Analects*, Ji Shi, 1, “丘也聞有國有家者，不患貧而患不安。蓋均無貧，和無寡，安無傾” James Legge translation, “I have heard that rulers of states and chiefs of families are not troubled lest their people should be few, but are troubled lest they should not keep their several places; that they are not troubled with fears of poverty, but are troubled with fears of a want of contented repose among the people in their several places.” <https://ctext.org/analects/ji-shi>

⁸⁶⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 230.

historically and culturally viewed expansionism as abhorrent and would not even contemplate such an endeavor under his leadership.

Even when China was so strong that its GDP accounted for 30 percent of the global total several centuries ago, it was never engaged in aggression or expansion. In the century following the Opium War of 1840, China suffered immensely from aggression, wars and chaos. Confucius said, "Do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you." We Chinese firmly believe that peace and stability are the only way to development and prosperity.⁸⁷⁰

In this case, Xi employed Confucius to show the purported historical source regarding his position that China rejected aggression and expansionism.

Xi also instrumentally utilized Mencius in his rhetoric. For example, Xi relied on the memory of Mencius to assist in his efforts at enforcing Party discipline and combating corruption. In a 2013 speech, Xi warned of the dangers of cadres being lax in their studies. He chided these officials:

These days, there is a general public grievance that some officials do more partying than studying. "Those in the dark are in no position to light the way for others." This will have an adverse effect on our work, and will ultimately hinder our overall development. If we bury our heads in our work to the detriment of our studies, we run the risk of mental sclerosis and vulgarization.⁸⁷¹

Xi proclaimed that merely performing their jobs was insufficient and that they must devote sufficient time to studying Party theory. In addition, Xi noted the dangers of the CPC resting on its laurels. In a 2019 address, he used Mencius to accentuate his point on the need for constant vigilance and the danger should that focus lapse:

As the ancient saying goes, "One prospers in worries and hardships, and perishes in ease and comfort." No external forces but we alone can beat ourselves . . . It should be noted that as our Party has been in power for a long period of time, factors undermining its advanced and wholesome nature are ever-present, and dangers running counter to its founding mission and weakening its foundation are ubiquitous. Unless we guard against these problems or address them in time, they will accumulate into bigger and harder ones which cannot be easily solved. Some of them may even lead to disastrous consequences imperiling the whole country.⁸⁷²

⁸⁷⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 597. *The Analects*, Wei Ling Gong, 24, “己所不欲，勿施於人” James Legge Translation: “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.” <https://ctext.org/analects/wei-ling-gong> . In another example of Xi using Confucius to cultivate better foreign relations, Xi argued, “More than 2,000 years ago, the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius observed that one should make friends with people who are upright, sincere, and well-informed. The CPC is ready to build more friendships across the world.” Xi, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 509.

⁸⁷¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 412. This appears to reference *Mengzi*, Jin Xin, 66, “今以其昏昏，使人昭昭,” James Legge Translation, “Nowadays, it is tried, while they are themselves in darkness, and by means of that darkness, to make others enlightened.” <https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-ii>

⁸⁷² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 616. This appears to reference *Mengzi*, Gong Sun Chou, 4, “今國家閒暇，及是時般樂怠敖，是自求禍也。禍福無不自己求之者” James Legge Translation, “But now the princes take advantage of the time when throughout their kingdoms there is leisure and rest from external troubles, to abandon themselves to pleasure and indolent indifference - they in fact seek for calamities for themselves. Calamity and happiness in all cases are men's own seeking.” <https://ctext.org/mengzi/gong-sun-chou-i>

Xi harangued party officials who merely mouthed compliance with official dictates, lacking any true ethical foundation. He scolded:

Confucius said, "The honest villager spoils true virtue." The "honest villager" here is a person who, devoid of any sense of right and wrong, tries to please everyone in the village. Mencius denounced such people for "just following the herd and being in concord with the filthy world."⁸⁷³

He included references to Confucius and Mencius to express his repugnance of the “go-along to get-along” mentality among some party officials. Xi used Mencius to discipline party members and suggest the need for ethical behavior and self-improvement among officials.

Another philosophical strain which Xi excavated from was the Legalist school. This philosophy, often standing as a contrast with the Confucian, stressed rule by law as opposed to a focus on rule by virtue.⁸⁷⁴ For example, Xi used Shang Yang to discuss the insidious danger of corruption by officials. He warned:

We must tirelessly combat corruption, and always remain vigilant against it. We should keep it in mind that "Many worms will disintegrate wood, and a big enough crack will lead to the collapse of a wall." We must be tough in cracking down on corruption, and ensure that all cases of corruption are investigated and that all corrupt officials are punished, catching "tigers" as well as "flies" – senior officials as well as junior ones guilty of corruption.⁸⁷⁵

He employed Shang Yang to stress the danger of failing to deal with corruption, both large and small. In another avenue, Xi endorsed the longstanding proposition of governing from material conditions and seeking truth from facts as fundamental to Socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, by using

⁸⁷³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 618. The first appears to reference *The Analects*, Yang Huo, 13, “鄉原 · 德之賊也” James Legge Translation, “Your good, careful people of the villages are the thieves of virtue.” <https://ctext.org/analects/yang-huo>. The second appears to reference, *Mengzi*, Liang Hui Wang, 7, “若民，則無恆產 · 因無恆心 · 苟無恆心 · 放辟 · 邪侈 · 無不為已 · 及陷於罪 · 然後從而刑之 · 是罔民也” James Legge Translation, “As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they will not have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do, in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license. When they thus have been involved in crime, to follow them up and punish them - this is to entrap the people.” <https://ctext.org/mengzi/liang-hui-wang-i>

⁸⁷⁴ For a brief comparison of the four major schools of political thought (Confucianism, Mohism, Taoism, Legalism), see Kung-Chuan Hsiao, *History of Chinese Political Thought, Volume I*, pages 41-42.

⁸⁷⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 398. *The Book of Lord Shang*, Cultivation of the Right Standard, 4, “蠹眾而木折，隙大而牆壞” J. J. L. Duyvendak Translation, “Many woodworms and the wood snaps, a large fissure and the wall collapses.” <https://ctext.org/shang-jun-shu/cultivation-of-the-right-standard>

Shang Yang, Xi extended this view beyond merely the Marxist framework, locating it as having another source within China's ancient philosophical inheritance. He observed:

A country's basic conditions determine the path it will take to promote the rule of law and the system it will establish for the rule of law. In the Book of Lord Shang (Shang Jun Shu) it is written: "In governing a country, a wise ruler establishes laws through observing popular customs, thus bringing order. He understands the fundamentals of the land he rules, thus implementing appropriate policies. Where the customs of the times are ignored and the fundamentals of the land neglected, the people will fall into disorder even when laws are made. And the ruler may be kept busy but will achieve little." Therefore, in our efforts to advance the rule of law, we must base our work on the realities of China and in line with our push to modernize the country's governance system and governance capacity.⁸⁷⁶

Xi maintained the practice of adjusting policy to account for new conditions as justification for desired reforms, avoiding invalidating the underlying assumptions that secured both the CPC and Xi's positions of power. Presumably, Xi instrumentally used memory towards Shang Yang to help combat corruption and allow for necessary reforms to take shape with minimal ideological disruption.

Xi also made use of Han Fei Zi along similar lines. For example, Xi discussed the importance of Party officials having concrete experience at the local level before being elevated to higher echelons. He advised:

An ancient Chinese proverb says, "Prime ministers must have served as local officials, and great generals must have risen from the ranks." Our mechanism for selecting officials in China also requires work experience at local levels.⁸⁷⁷

To reassure his Party audience that he himself conformed to Han Fei's dictate, Xi followed up by recalling the various local positions he held, such as party secretary of a production brigade, which he claimed provided him essential experience that aided him as he assumed higher positions. Similar to his use of Shang Yang, Xi also used Han Fei to reinforce the seek truth from facts conception and further

⁸⁷⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 125. *The Book of Lord Shang*, Calculation of land, 10, "故聖人之為國也，觀俗立法則治，察國事本則宜。不觀時俗，不察國本，則其法立而民亂，事劇而功寡，此臣之所謂過也" J. J. L. Duyvendak Translation, "Therefore a sage, in ordering a country, looking to popular custom, fixes their laws with the result that there is order, and examining the state, gives his attention to what is fundamental, with the result that everything is fitting. When laws are fixed without looking to the customs of the times and without examining the fundamental things of the state, then the people will be in disorder, affairs will be troublesome, so that results will be few. This is what I call error." <https://ctext.org/shang-jun-shu/calculation-of-land>

⁸⁷⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 415. This appears to reference, *Han Feizi*, Eminence in Learning (50), Burton Watson Translation, "In the bureaucracy of an enlightened ruler the prime minister has come up from the post of district magistrate and the renowned generals have risen from the ranks," page 110, <https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Han-Feizi.pdf>

buttress it within traditional Chinese political philosophy. In a 2020 text regarding the Civil Code, Xi posited:

"The law must be adaptive to the changing times, so that social order and stability are maintained." As social and economic relationships keep changing along with the social and economic progress, new problems will always emerge during the implementation of the Civil Code.⁸⁷⁸

Xi used Han Fei Zi to bolster his policies towards proper governance for the PRC, both in the work experience necessary for cadres and the need for an adaptive orientation of government policy based on the immediate material circumstances.

Xi also made substantial use of historians and political treatises from the Confucian/Traditional framework. The Han Dynasty historian Sima Qian served as one such major source which Xi excavated from to support his governing philosophy. One of Xi's most often repeated lines uttered to foreign audiences came from this source to justify the enlargement of PRC's participation in the global community. An illustration of that use can be seen in a speech regarding the Belt and Road Initiative in 2019:

The flow of goods, capital, technology and people will power economic growth and create the broad space it needs. As a Chinese saying goes, "The ceaseless inflow of rivers makes the ocean deep." However, were such inflow to be cut, the ocean, however big, would eventually dry up. We need to facilitate free trade and investment, say no to protectionism, and make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all.⁸⁷⁹

This assertion on the need for interconnected relations and trade nests comfortably within the Liberal Framework, but Xi adds the flavor of the Confucian/Traditional via the quote from Sima Qian.

Another historian used by Xi is Chen Shou and his *Records of the Three Kingdoms*(三國志).

Unlike Mao, who often quoted from the novelization *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Xi makes far more use of Chen Shou's work written during the Jin Dynasty (266 - 420 CE). For example, Xi noted the need

⁸⁷⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 325. This appears to reference, *Han Feizi*, Facing South (18), Burton Watson Translation, "Those who have no understanding of government always tell you, "Never change old ways, never depart from established custom!" But the sage cares nothing about change or no change; his only concern is to rule properly. Whether or not he changes old ways, whether or not he departs from established customs depends solely upon whether such old ways and customs are effective or not," pages 85-86, <https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Han-Feizi.pdf>

⁸⁷⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 569. For other examples of this reference see page 521 and *Volume I*, pages 298 & 343. Shiji, 李斯列傳, 7, "河海不擇細流, 故能就其深" <https://ctext.org/shiji/li-si-lie-zhuan>

to cultivate experts that can drive innovation. In an aptly named 2016 speech titled, “Build China into a World Leader in Science and Technology,” Xi explained:

According to an ancient Chinese book, “Feats are accomplished by capable people; work develops because of achievers.” Science and technology activities are great creative endeavors. All innovations are achieved by people. We need a large, well-structured contingent of high-caliber people, and we must stimulate their creative potential in order to build China into a world leader in science and technology.⁸⁸⁰

Much as with Sima Qian, Xi also employed memory regarding Chen Shou with foreigners, showing his consistent confidence to use the Confucian/Traditional framework across all three major audiences. He refers to *Records* on the need to consider history while crafting contemporary policy. In a 2018 APEC speech, Xi opined:

An ancient Chinese philosopher observed that “one needs to clean the mirror before taking a look at oneself, and should learn the lessons of the past before making the decisions of today”. In reviewing history, we should draw on its lessons to prevent the recurrence of past tragedies.⁸⁸¹

To this international audience, Xi invoked Chen Shou on the need to learn from the past to avoid the devastating conflicts that plagued the region and conversely the benefits gained through cooperation.

In addition to ancient histories, Xi also relied upon political treatises under the Confucian/Traditional framework. One such work that Xi repeatedly employed was the *Discourses on Salt and Iron*, attributed to the Han era (202 BCE – 220 CE) scholar Huan Kuan.⁸⁸² One of the lines appearing often within Xi’s rhetoric relates to the need to adjust policy based on shifting circumstances, reinforcing “seeking truth from facts.” In one such example, Xi declared:

Over the years, many countries and regions have developed good practices in maintaining stability and promoting growth. We should continue such practices. However, nothing in the world remains constant, and, as a Chinese saying goes, “A wise man changes his way as circumstances change; a knowledgeable person alters his means as times evolve.” We should abandon our outdated mindsets, break away from the old confines that fetter development, and unleash all potentials for development.⁸⁸³

Xi found the same utility in embracing this concept as previous core leaders, allowing for an adjustment for policy without requiring a direct refutation of his predecessors, and used the Confucian/Traditional framework to justify this stance beyond merely the Marxist framework.

⁸⁸⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 301.

⁸⁸¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 530.

⁸⁸² For a summary of the context and arguments within this text see E. M. Gale’s translation of Huan Kuan, *Discourses on Salt and Iron*, pages xxv-xxx.

⁸⁸³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 342, for other examples of this reference see pages 179 & 365 and *Volume II*, page 241.

Xi also extracted value from historical events themselves within the Confucian/Traditional framework in the same manner; namely, to illustrate and enhance the articulation of his governing philosophy. In one such example, Xi supplemented the Marxist framework concept of practice as key by using the Confucian/Traditional framework. At a Party conference centered on proper methods for studying Marxist theory, Xi detailed:

The purpose of study lies in practice. The ultimate goal of leading officials who dedicate greater effort to their studies lies in honing their capability in work and in solving problems . . . We all should bear in mind the historical lessons of Zhao Kuo of the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), who fought all his battles on paper, or the scholars of the Western and Eastern Jin dynasties (265-420) who became ineffective due to spending too much time in useless debates.⁸⁸⁴

In this case, Xi employed negative examples of ancient figures engaging in frivolous studies untethered from reality and absent any actual application. Another example occurred during an address by Xi regarding media integration in 2019. Within that speech, he recalled:

As we all know from historical records as it is stated in Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals, "Emperor Yao set up a drum for people to beat and offer their advice, and Emperor Shun set up wooden boards for people to write down their criticisms." Their purpose was to collect public opinion. In the late Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) Chen Sheng and Wu Guang rose in revolt. They wrote a fabricated prophecy – "Chen Sheng will be king!" – on a piece of silk and hid it inside a fish for someone to discover. They also mimicked the barking of a fox, crying "Great Chu will rise again! Chen Sheng will be king!" Over time people came to believe it and began to support them. All this shows that the ancients knew well the importance of public opinion.⁸⁸⁵

The first example notes the longstanding tradition of soliciting public opinion to inform policy development. Interestingly, while the first reference recalled how to use the public to better shape policy, the second recalls an episode of manipulating public perceptions with an impact that would make any Russian-bot farmer green with envy. China's ancient history was replete with anecdotes Xi used to season his discourse and to make his proposals more digestible.

Memory from across the wide breadth of China's dynastic history is found within Xi's discourse. He used China's historical legacy to make his policy proposals appear more palatable. For example, Xi

⁸⁸⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 411. The defeat of Zhao Kuo at Changping is recorded in the *Shiji*, Burton Watson Translation, "As a result, Zhao relieved Lian Po of command of the Zhao forces and replaced him with Zhao Kuo, the son of Lord Mafu. Qin inflicted a crushing defeat on Zhao at Changping and went on to besiege the Zhao capital city of Handan. Later, however, the marquis of Ying had a falling out with the Qin general Bai Qi, Lord Wuan, and spoke slanderously of him, bringing about his death." Sima, Qian. *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty, Volume 2*, page 147.

⁸⁸⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 369. The Chen Sheng episode can be found in the *Shi Ji* 48, Burton Watson Translation, Sima, Qian. *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty, Volume 2*, pages 286-287.

engaged in a long rumination on what he discerned as the reasons for China falling behind in the later periods of dynastic history. He explained:

I have been wondering about the reason why our science and technology gradually lagged behind from the late Ming (1368-1644) and early Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Studies show that Qing Emperor Kangxi was very interested in Western science and technology . . . The problem was that, at that time, although some people were interested in Western learning and learned quite a lot of it, they did not apply what they had learned to social and economic development. Rather, they simply talked, without taking any action. In 1708 the Qing government asked some foreign missionaries to draw a map of China . . . However, this important work was confined to the imperial storehouse as a top-secret document, away from the public eye. Therefore, it had no impact on social or economic development. But the Western missionaries who had drawn the map took the data back to the West and had it published. Hence, for quite a long time the West knew China's geography better than the Chinese people did. What can we learn from this story? It means that science and technology must be combined with social development.⁸⁸⁶

Xi identified the fundamental failure not in the lack of capability of Chinese scholars but an incorrect policy failing to put that knowledge into practice.

The Confucian/Traditional framework acted as a primary means for Xi to establish and ingrain a specifically tailored ethical system across the PRC. Xi presented these ethical principles as deeply rooted in Chinese culture, stretching back thousands of years. Furthermore, he argued that embracing this morality, both among cadres and the general population, would resolve issues of corrosive corruption and promote national rejuvenation. He spelled out his intention for cultivating this virtue in a 2013 speech on China's soft power:

To this end, efforts should be made to sort out traditional cultural resources and bring back to life relics sleeping in closed palaces, legacies of the vast land of China and records in ancient books. We should convince the people with reason and morality, improve cultural communication with other countries and intensify our system of cultural and educational exchanges, blaze new trails, and use various means, such as mass media, group dissemination and interpersonal communication.⁸⁸⁷

Xi made clear that he viewed China's traditional culture as a viable resource to mine, for purposes such as promoting morality among the population. To further his argument, Xi pointed to role models to serve as exemplars to generate virtue among the Chinese population.

⁸⁸⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 133. Qing understanding of the global geography increased substantially during the 18th century as Odd Arne Westad notes, "In 1794 the geographer Zhuang Tingfu printed a scroll that not only gave an exact account of Europe's geography but discussed the countries there and the relationships between them." Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*, page 32.

⁸⁸⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 184.

The power of role models is infinite. You should take them as examples in pursuing virtues. Confucius said, "When we see men of virtue, we should think of equaling them; when we see men of a contrary character, we should examine ourselves."⁸⁸⁸

Xi understood the power of idealized role models, including from China's vast stores of historical memory, to provide guides for behavior and used Confucius to add legitimacy to the technique.

Xi portrayed virtue as fundamental to Chinese ethics. At the 20th Party Congress, Xi made clear that the Chinese national character elevated virtue and expanded on the particulars he perceived within that tradition. He declared:

With a history stretching back to antiquity, China's fine traditional culture is extensive and profound; it is the crystallization of the wisdom of Chinese civilization. Our traditional culture espouses many important principles and concepts, including pursuing common good for all; regarding the people as the foundation of the state; governing by virtue; discarding the outdated in favor of the new; selecting officials on the basis of merit; promoting harmony between humanity and nature; ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement; embracing the world with virtue; acting in good faith and being friendly to others; and fostering neighborliness. These maxims, which have taken shape over centuries of work and life, reflect the Chinese people's way of viewing the universe, the world, society, and morality and are highly consistent with the values and propositions of scientific socialism.⁸⁸⁹

In addition to virtue and harmony informing the contemporary government, Xi argued that this virtue predisposed China to interact with the international community on a basis of good neighborliness. This argument provided Xi with a tool to dismiss any accusations of duplicitous conduct as impossible as such actions stood as antithetical to Chinese culture.

Pushing back against corruption, especially within the Party, remained a consistent and overriding objective for Xi. He found the Confucian/Traditional framework, particularly a focus on ethics, as a primary resource in this struggle. He made clear that corruption was not merely a matter of efficiency, but directly tied to the stability of the regime itself. Xi warned:

We should keep in mind the ancient warning that "hedonism and extravagance lead to decline and demise," and launch full-scale examinations, overhauls and clean-ups to eliminate defects and misconduct from the Party, and address the people's most pressing concerns.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 203. *The Analects*, Li Ren, 17, “見賢思齊焉，見不賢而內自省也” James Legge Translation, “When we see men of worth, we should think of equaling them; when we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves.” <https://ctext.org/analects/li-ren>

⁸⁸⁹ Xi Jinping, “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects,” *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-10/26/c_824626.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁸⁹⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 379. Source identified page 380, note 13.

Xi's admonition was clear, failure to address corruption could lead to the decline and collapse of the CPC, reinforced by a reference to the *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (新唐書). To forestall this outcome, Xi stressed the need to have a government as free from corruption as possible. One area where Xi identified a vulnerability was family members of officials taking advantage of their positions. He chided such behavior using several quotes from a Northern Song Dynasty (960 – 1127) figure:

Here I would like to emphasize the issue of educating and restraining one's family members. From the cases of corruption investigated in recent years, we can see that family was an important factor in inciting officials to commit serious violations of Party discipline and the law. Many officials were not only involved in trading power for money themselves, but also connived at bribe-taking by their family. Using the parental influence, helped by the parental connections and status, their children benefited from businesses with illegal gains. The harm this does cannot be underestimated. The ancient Chinese said, "He who would govern the country must first run his family well and discipline himself." "Give close kin official posts and lose your job and ruin your family." "One must not violate the law of Heaven and Earth, and must set a good example for the offspring."⁸⁹¹

Xi viewed corruption through familial relations as a major problem for the CPC and noted that an injunction against it had long existed in Chinese historical memory, as did the potential for dire ramifications if it was allowed to fester.

Xi recognized the role of various cultural endeavors to convey this historical memory more easily. These cultural works could distill the desired meaning that Xi sought to extract and tie them more directly to the political objectives he pursued. Xi presumably viewed the Confucian/Traditional framework as particularly well suited to fostering desirable ethical traits. He expanded on the role of traditional Chinese culture developing what he termed core socialist values:

To cultivate and disseminate the core socialist values we must take traditional Chinese culture as the base. All concrete core values are deeply rooted. So, to renounce such values is tantamount to severing our cultural lifeline. The extensive, profound and outstanding traditional Chinese culture is the foundation for us to stand firm upon in the global mingling and clashing of cultures.⁸⁹²

Rather than something to be cleaved away as occurred during the Cultural Revolution, Xi asserted that Chinese traditional culture was an invaluable resource, and he gave instructions to exploit it to its

⁸⁹¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 180. Zhang Xiang (959-993), "The Nature of Essays," page 184, note 4.

⁸⁹² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 186.

maximum effect.⁸⁹³ He argued further for the role of traditional culture to foster ethics, and the resulting benefits to social stability, in a 2014 text titled, “Promote Socialist Rule of Law.”

To ensure the role of ethics in shaping the mind, we must nurture the rule of law with ethics and strengthen the role ethics play in fostering a culture of rule of law. No matter how many laws we make, or how good those laws are, people will only genuinely abide by them once they have become ingrained in their subconscious. As the saying goes, “A person without shame knows no limits.” Without the nutrition that virtue provides, the culture of rule of law will have nothing to sustain itself, and we will lack a solid social foundation on which to enforce our laws . . . By raising the moral integrity of our people as a whole, we will create a favorable humanistic environment to underpin the rule of law in China.⁸⁹⁴

Xi suggested that generating moral integrity was necessary to promote rule of law. Furthermore, Xi specified that cultural creators, such as artists and writers, should be directed to accomplish this task. He admonished:

Strengthening cultural confidence is nothing but empty talk without perceiving and applying the history of the Chinese nation. History is a mirror, through which we can better see the world and life and understand ourselves; history is also a sage whose admonition can help us better understand the past, grasp the present, and face the future. There is a Chinese verse: “Our imagination expressed in literary and artistic creation can reach any point in time throughout history and every corner of the whole world in the blink of an eye.” Writers and artists struggling in search of inspiration and profound ideas should seek them in historical materials.⁸⁹⁵

Xi instructed artists to strengthen China’s cultural confidence and noted that history served as both the best method for instruction and was uniquely suited for artists to express their works to buttress Xi’s governing philosophy.

As implied by Xi’s notation above, another facet of the Confucian/Traditional framework that he utilized is the concept of history as a mirror to help understand the present. However, Xi showed some distinction in exactly how that mirror operated within his discourse, offering slightly different articulations based on his audience and the political objectives he was pursuing. For example, in a domestically aimed speech on boosting traditional culture, Xi presented using history as a mirror in an instrumental manner to advance contemporary policy objectives. He stated:

We should make the past serve the present, taking the past as a mirror for today, distinguishing what can be used, and what cannot, and carrying forward while assimilating, instead of esteeming the past over the present

⁸⁹³ “Slogans condemning traditional Chinese culture reached their apex during the Cultural Revolution. Any ideology or perception associated with traditional Chinese values was dismissed as a product of the ‘four olds’ (old ideology, old culture, old customs, and old habits) and replaced with an ideology or perception associated with the ‘four news’ (new ideology, new culture, new customs, and new habits).” Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication*, page 61.

⁸⁹⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 124. Source of quote from page 135, note 2, Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072), *A Collection of Ancient Works*.

⁸⁹⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 380. Source of quote from page 381, note 1, Lu Ji (261-303), *The Art of Writing*.

and using the past to negate the present. We should learn to transform and boost traditional culture in a creative way, to integrate old and new, and let both of them serve our current mission of cultivating the people.⁸⁹⁶ In this instance, historical memory should be mined with an eye to utilize only that which is useful and not allowing the past to dictate present policy. However, Xi took a different approach with foreign audiences. In a speech to the United Nations, he explained that history should serve as a warning to avoid past mistakes and a guide to promote a better future.

History is a mirror. Only by drawing lessons from history can the world avoid repeating past calamity. We should view history with awe and through the prism of human conscience. The past cannot be changed, but the future can be shaped.⁸⁹⁷ Xi adjusted his view as to history serving as a mirror, based upon his audience and political objectives. In one case it served as a tool for selective exploitation domestically and with others to ingratiate China to international audiences.

A final area of the Confucian/Traditional framework's orientation on historical memory that Xi utilized is the conception of the dynastic cycle, or the inevitable rise and fall of dynasties. According to Xi, the forces compelling the rise and fall of states, specifically corruption and lethargy among the ruling elite, remained in effect within China, with only the absolute rule of the CPC applying Socialism with Chinese Characteristics holding it at bay. He explained:

The people resent corruption most; and corruption is the greatest threat our Party faces. We must have the resolve and tenacity to persevere in the never-ending fight against corruption. Only by intensifying efforts to address both the symptoms and root causes of corruption – by making sure that officials are honest, government is clean, and political affairs are handled with integrity – can we avoid history's cycle of rise and fall and ensure the long-term stability of the Party and the country.⁸⁹⁸ Xi expanded this argument, noting that the CPC could not allow stagnation to set in, as failure to grow inevitably led to eventual decline and collapse. In 2019 he stated:

Third, upholding and improving Chinese socialism and modernizing the state governance system and capacity will guarantee that we can seize the initiative in addressing risks and challenges. "If a dynasty cannot continue to rise, it will fall; if a country cannot improve its governance, the state of order will deteriorate."⁸⁹⁹ He continued in an address to the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) a few months later:

⁸⁹⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 341.

⁸⁹⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 570.

⁸⁹⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 72.

⁸⁹⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 138. Source of quote page 142, note 3, Lü Zuqian (1137-1181), *Essays on Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, we have sought out a path to resolve problems rooted in the Party's long-term governance so as to avoid the historical cycle of rise and fall, and we have built a set of effective systems for scrutinizing the exercise of power and for enforcing Party discipline and state law.⁹⁰⁰ Xi framed the greatest danger to the stability of the CPC rule as a failure to adequately resolve problems of governance. Failing to do so would result in the resumption of the stalled historical process of the dynastic cycle for Chinese regimes and cause the Party-State to collapse.

Despite his reliance on the Confucian/Traditional framework and enhancing its memory, Xi remains an apparently committed Marxist and continues to rely on this framework to legitimize his status as core leader. Any core leader of the CPC must advance an independent governing philosophy to establish their authority as a Marxist theoretician. Although other frameworks can and are used, any internal Party debates must be conducted in a manner which includes this framework and in such a manner as to appear as an evolution of previously held doctrine without directly invalidating core assumptions necessary to perpetuate the system. First, Xi anchored his governing philosophy to the essential Marxist theoreticians as defined by previous core leaders. Furthermore, he made substantial use of Mao, and to a lesser extent Deng, to position Xi Jinping Thought as emerging from these governing philosophies and as a natural evolution brought on by shifts in China's historical conditions. Next, to address these shifts, and avoid the fate of the Soviet Union, Xi stressed the need to rekindle what he termed the founding spirit of the CPC and use it as a motivating principle to carry forward the work of the party in its purest aspirations. To aid in this endeavor, he relied on memory of previous efforts to discipline the Party, especially through rectification movements. Finally, Xi stressed that only through the CPC and its application of Socialism with Chinese characteristics could China hope to achieve the dream of national rejuvenation.

A first step to establishing his Marxist credentials was to show he was conversant with the works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and selectively use memory associated with both figures. The dual purpose was to show his acumen as a theoretician by critically engaging with their theories and to add

⁹⁰⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 633.

legitimacy for his preferred policies with those who remained true believers in Marxism. For example, Xi used Marx to argue that Chinese people were predisposed to accept Marxism based on centuries of history, evidenced by the numerous peasant uprisings. He asserted:

Since the introduction of Marxism to China, scientific socialism has become widely accepted by the Chinese people. It has gone on to take root in this country and delivered impressive results. This is clearly not accidental. It is consistent with the culture and values that our people have taken up and passed on for several thousand years. Karl Marx made a shrewd observation on the slogans of ancient Chinese peasant uprisings that had some socialist content. He said, "Now Chinese socialism may admittedly be the same in relation to European socialism as Chinese philosophy in relation to Hegelian philosophy."⁹⁰¹

In Xi's retelling, China readily accepted Marxism due to historical factors and philosophical consonance, with none other than Marx to support this observation. In a reference to Engels, Xi explored the danger of disunity and indecisiveness for the CPC in a 2014 speech titled, "Promote Socialist Rule of Law." He instructed:

Frederick Engels once said, "[A] new program is after all a banner planted in public, and the outside world judges the party by it." In any initiative we introduce, the public will stand behind the CPC as long as it has a clear-cut stand and the whole Party is in full action. The worst mistake a ruling party can commit is to show indecisiveness on matters of extreme importance, encouraging arguments to rage and division to grow.⁹⁰²

The implication appears to be that the CPC must unite around Xi under his governing philosophy. Xi instrumentally used both Marx and Engels within his discourse to display that his governing philosophy drew sustenance from the very foundations of Marxism.

Although Xi made substantial use of Marx and Engels to bolster his Marxist credentials, he remained cognizant of the need to maintain some distance from them, lest he be accused of dogmatism. Another danger lay in allowing others with sharper Marxist credentials to seize the ideological high ground and use the memory of Marx and Engels as a cudgel against Xi's governing philosophy. Xi could use Marx and Engels, but he could never allow their works to emerge as an overriding source that usurped his position as ultimate ideological arbiter. To assist in this effort, Xi highlighted some areas of limitation

⁹⁰¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 145. Source of quote, page 156, note 3, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: "Review [January-February 1850]", *Karl Marx & Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Eng. Ed., 1979, page 267.

⁹⁰² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 119. Source of quote, page 135, note 1, Frederick Engels: "Engels to August Bebel", *Karl Marx & Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 45, Eng. Ed., 1991, page 65.

within their philosophy and how they could not be applied to China's conditions haphazardly. For example, Xi observed that Marx and Engels had no experience in governing a socialist country:

Actually, how to govern a socialist society, a completely new society, has not been clearly addressed by world socialism so far. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had no practical experience in the comprehensive governance of a socialist country, as their theories about a future society were mostly predictive.⁹⁰³

In this case, Xi posited the experience gained by the CPC governing China for decades offered insights

beyond the theory of Marx and Engels alone. Another example of Xi setting their limitations related to the existence of a market economy operating in a socialist country. He explained, "Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did not envisage the possibility of a market economy under socialism. Thus, they could not anticipate how socialist countries should treat capital."⁹⁰⁴ Although Xi certainly used memory associated with Marx and Engels, he also ensured that he placed boundaries on that utility, preserving his prerogatives as core leader.

Xi appears to use Lenin instrumentally in a similar vein to Marx and Engels. For example, during a 2014 address regarding Literature and Art, Xi referenced Lenin on the importance of keeping cultural endeavors grounded within the experience of the common people. He iterated:

Works that are divorced from the people are rootless, senseless and soulless. Vladimir Lenin exhorted: "Art belongs to the people. It must have its deepest roots in the broad mass of workers. It must be understood and loved by them. It must be rooted in and grow with their feelings, thoughts, and desires. It must arouse and develop the artists in them."⁹⁰⁵

In addition, Xi used the example of Lenin's methodology, along with Mao's and Marx's, on the benefit of applying statistical analysis in formulating public policy and as a means of separating the PRC's style from Western methods. He instructed:

Capital by Marx, *On Imperialism* by Vladimir Lenin and the series of investigative reports on rural China by Mao Zedong all contain a large volume of statistics and information collected through field studies. We must stand by the Chinese worldview and Chinese methodology when solving domestic problems and proposing to address issues concerning all humanity. Blindly worshipping foreign thoughts and methods without due analysis will deprive us of originality, as will drawing the same conclusions as foreign researchers by employing their methods. To achieve original results, Chinese researchers must ground themselves in the reality of China, cleave to the practical, historical, dialectic and developmental perspectives, and discover, test and advance truth through practice.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 105.

⁹⁰⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 243.

⁹⁰⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 345. Source of quote, page 350, note 6, Clara Zetkin, "In Commemoration of Lenin", *Lenin on Literature and Art*, Chin, ed., 1960, page 912.

⁹⁰⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 370.

Xi invoked Lenin and Marx as examples for Chinese scholars to emulate, as well as stressing what he terms a dialectic perspective and ensuring that truth is advanced through practice. Furthermore, Xi appears to have found it necessary to produce an independent Chinese methodology, grounded in Marxism, opposed to the systems conceived and adopted in the West.

Despite these endorsements of Lenin, Xi remained careful not to go too far in his admiration and found some fault with him as well, much as he did with Marx and Engels. Immediately following his statements regarding the limits of Marx and Engels on market economy in socialist systems, Xi argued, “Though Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin led socialist development in the Soviet Union under a highly centralized planned economy they did not encounter significant problems caused by capital.”⁹⁰⁷ Xi instrumentally used memory towards Lenin as a valuable resource but one which had confines in its application, avoiding the danger of ceding any ultimate ideological authority away from himself as core leader.

Xi spent a considerable amount of time within his discourse elevating the memory of Mao Zedong and his associated governing philosophy, Mao Zedong Thought. This instrumental use of Mao served to advance several political objectives for Xi. Much like the other Marxist figures already discussed, it showed that Xi’s governing philosophy emerged from an unbroken line in the development of Socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, Mao also represented a greater concentration of authority as core leader. Presumably, Xi sought to break with the general trajectory of declining power since Deng and, by pointing to Mao’s previous level of authority, he reestablished a precedent to justify his assumption of more authority. In addition, using Mao highlighted earlier CPC activities and rule, invoking the perception of a period of purer aspirations that Xi portrayed as slipping away from the contemporary CPC. Xi elevated certain elements of Party memory, such as the Rectification Movement

⁹⁰⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 243.

(1942 - 1945) and its methods to discipline cadres, to legitimize Xi's efforts to tackle corruption.⁹⁰⁸ In pursuit of these objectives, Xi instrumentally used Mao to focus on the importance of unifying thinking within the party as a requirement to progress.

Second, to remain true to our original aspiration and founding mission, we must unify our thinking, will and action with the latest theoretical development of Marxism in the Chinese context. The progressive nature of a Marxist party manifests itself first and foremost in its theory. It is our Party's distinctive feature, and one of its finest traditions, to highlight its theoretical development. Mao Zedong once said, "Therefore ideological education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles." The original aspiration of Communists is based on their concern for the people, their perseverance in pursuit of truth, and more importantly, on scientific theories of Marxism. Only by improving Party members' theoretical understanding can we stay true to our original aspiration and shoulder our founding mission more conscientiously and more firmly.⁹⁰⁹

Xi argued that, based on the historical example of Mao, for the Party to achieve its aspirations it must have a unified ideology. In addition, he used Mao to describe a proposed major asset for the CPC, namely its ability to conduct self-criticism to correct errors. In a 2021 speech titled, "Self-Reform: The Second Answer to Breaking the Cycle of Rise and Fall," whose name itself implies the gravity of the subject matter, Xi relied on Mao to express the value and uniqueness of self-criticism as a method of reform for the CPC. He declared:

The courage to engage in self-reform is a distinctive feature that differentiates our Party from other political parties. Mao Zedong said, "Conscientious practice of self-criticism is still another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties."⁹¹⁰

Xi associated the practice of self-criticism as a method for Party discipline as not only being a courageous act, but also one that distinguished the CPC above other political organizations.

Although Mao featured prominently, Deng remained a key figure within Xi's discourse as well. The usage of Deng included aspects from both the Liberal and Marxist frameworks, with the former associated with the R&OU policy and the progress born from it. However, Xi made clear that, in his estimation, Deng remained a committed Marxist and a core leader who advanced the theory of socialism

⁹⁰⁸ Gao Hua argues that Mao's purpose for the wider Rectification Campaign was primarily oriented towards securing his personal power. "Mao's fundamental objective in bringing the upper-level revolution to the middle and lower levels was to destroy the foundation that Wang Ming and the others enjoyed in the Party, and, through a Party-wide purge of the Russified Marxism-Leninism of Wang Ming and the others, to establish the exalted status of his own 'new interpretation.'" Gao, Hua. *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan 'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, page 362.

⁹⁰⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 625. The Mao quote comes from a speech, "On Coalition Government" delivered April 1945, consistent with the observation of Xi favoring Mao quotes from this period.

⁹¹⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 629. Another quote from, "On Coalition Government."

applied to China. This assertion was necessary to prevent any opening towards allowing Xi's opponents to use Deng's memory to advocate for political reform that Xi did not wish to implement. He explained:

The year 2013 is the 31st year since Deng Xiaoping put forward the concept of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. He provided for the first time clear systematic answers to several basic questions about how to build, consolidate and develop socialism in China, an economically and culturally underdeveloped country. His answers brought a new perspective to Marxism, opened up new realms, and raised the understanding of socialism to a new scientific level.⁹¹¹

In this recollection, Deng developed and advanced Marxism for China's benefit, rather than setting any conditions for undermining the application of Socialism in China. Furthermore, he made clear that Deng rejected any hint of embracing Western democratic institutions in China. He observed:

Deng Xiaoping once said, "The democracy in capitalist societies is bourgeois democracy - in fact, it is the democracy of monopoly capitalists . . . Ours is the system of people's congresses and people's democracy under the leadership of the Communist Party . . ."⁹¹²

Xi made sure to portray Deng as a committed Marxist and used him to solidify confidence in maintaining the existing political system, which is a prerequisite for Xi's continued core leadership.

One of the major objectives within Xi's governing philosophy was to combat corruption within the Party and shake the CPC out of what he portrayed as a deadly lethargy that could undermine its stability. To address these concerns, Xi sought to revitalize what he termed the CPC founding spirit, celebrating the sacrifices and successes of the founding generation to motivate contemporary cadres and instill a sense of morality based on historical memory. As such, Xi's China Dream was not merely a reflection of contemporary desires, but rather a fulfillment of the CPC's founding mission. Pivotal to that foundation was the debt owed by the CPC to the October Revolution (1917). Xi explained the direct causal line from the October Revolution to the founding of the CPC during his report to the 19th Party Congress:

A hundred years ago, the salvoes of the October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to China. In the scientific truth of Marxism-Leninism, Chinese progressives saw a solution to China's problems. With the advent of modern times, Chinese society became embroiled in intense upheavals; this was a time of fierce struggle as the Chinese people resisted feudal rule and foreign aggression. It was in the midst of this, in 1921, as Marxism-Leninism was integrated with the Chinese workers' movement, that the Communist Party of China was born. From that moment on, the Chinese people have had in the Party a backbone for their pursuit of

⁹¹¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 43. For more on Deng's expression on socialism with Chinese characteristics during the 12th NPC in 1982 see, Alexander V. Pantsov; Steven I Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, pages 382-383.

⁹¹² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 299. Deng Xiaoping, "We Shall Speed Up Reform," *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol III, Eng ed., pages 237-238. In another address in 2021 Xi remarked, "Our party was born in response to the call of history when socialism gained momentum following the victory of Russia's October revolution." Xi, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 594.

national independence and liberation, of a stronger and more prosperous country, and of their own happiness; and the mindset of the Chinese people has changed, from passivity to taking the initiative.⁹¹³ CPC National Congress reports represent one of the largest venues available to a core leader to reach the widest possible audience. Within that speech, Xi made it clear that the CPC retained its debt to Marxism and that the October Revolution acted as the Party's ideological inspiration.

The other key event identified by Xi that facilitated the CPC founding was the May 4th Movement (M4M hereafter). Specifically, Xi portrayed the M4M as providing an animating spirit spurring the CPC's creation, an essence which Xi attributes as the cause of what he describes as the Party's miraculous successes. He sought to imbue this same spirit into the contemporary youth population to fulfill national rejuvenation. He reinforced the importance of youth spirit in a speech titled, "Carry On the Legacy of the May 4th Movement, and Be Worthy of the New Era." He declared to this younger generation:

Youth is the most active and energetic element among all forces in society. You are the hope and future of our country. Today, in the most promising period of the Chinese nation, young Chinese are endowed with rare opportunities to achieve things, and the mission to shoulder great responsibilities. In this new era, you should continue to carry forward the spirit of the May 4th Movement and take on your mission to realize national rejuvenation. You should meet the expectations of our Party and our people, be worthy of the trust of the nation, and live up to the demands of this great era.⁹¹⁴

For Xi, the youth appear as the most able to carry forward national rejuvenation and he sought to instrumentally use the memory of M4M to motivate China's youth to enthusiastically support his governing philosophy to achieve national rejuvenation.

As Xi emphasized the spirit of the CPC founding, he also endeavored to shape that memory and to foster it within both the Party and the wider population. Xi recalled the CPC's birth in a time of great turmoil, which lasted until the PRC's establishment.

Nearly 100 years ago, the CPC was born when China was in turmoil. One of its founding missions was to put an end to the dire plight in which China had suffered from frequent wars and the Chinese people from destitution since the mid-19th century. From 1921 to 1949, in order to achieve peace and stability in China and enable its people to live and work in peace, the CPC rallied the Chinese people and led them in an armed struggle for 28 years, and made huge sacrifices.⁹¹⁵

⁹¹³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 14. For a similar use by Mao regarding the October Revolution inspiring the CPC see Chapter 1 page 93 of this paper.

⁹¹⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 387.

⁹¹⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 507. For more on the founding of the CPC, and Mao's role in it, see Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 98-106.

Just as the CPC overcame even greater challenges in the past, so too could present issues be resolved, so long as faith in the Party and Xi's vision remained. Finally, Xi asserted that what allowed the party to overcome these early hardships was faith in, and the application of, their lofty ideals to realize their dream for China. During his remarks celebrating the 100th anniversary of the CPC founding 2021, Xi declared:

Since its founding a hundred years ago, the CPC has always possessed lofty ideals and firm convictions. These are its belief in Marxism, in the long-term goal of communism, and in the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics.⁹¹⁶

Xi glorified the establishment of the CPC within this address and asserted that the party's adherence to its ideals and the conviction to fulfill those dreams should inspire present generations to fulfill the work of past generations.

Xi relied on other key events within the Marxist framework of CPC historical memory. One such other example is The Long March (长征) (1934 - 1935), as it provided an episode to exemplify the spirit Xi sought to cultivate, namely one of endurance, sacrifice, and faith in the CPC institutions to lead the way to ultimate success.⁹¹⁷ Xi spelled out the value of the Long March as an example of fervent belief in the CPC's founding ideals ultimately culminating in success.

The victory of the Long March proved that belief in our hearts gives strength to our legs. Without their indomitable ideals and beliefs to sustain them, the Red Army's victory in the Long March would simply have been inconceivable. Deng Xiaoping once said, "In the past, no matter how small and weak our Party was, and no matter what difficulties it faced, we always maintained great combat effectiveness thanks to our faith in Marxism and communism. Because we shared common ideals, we had strict discipline. That is our real strength today as it has been in the past and will be in the future."⁹¹⁸

Xi further used Deng Xiaoping's statement tying faith in Marxism, enforced through strict discipline, as the source of victory, not only during the Long March, but during numerous trying times in the Party's history.

In addition to the Long March as an overall narrative, the Zunyi Conference (1935) as a stand-alone incident featured substantially in Xi's discourse as well. He emphasized the importance of the

⁹¹⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 606.

⁹¹⁷ For more on the Long March see, Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, pages 275-288.

⁹¹⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 51. Deng Xiaoping, "Speech at the National Conference of the Communist Party of China," *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol III, Eng ed., page 367.

Zunyi Conference within Party history as he advanced the theory that it was at this point that the effective practice of unifying collective leadership underneath the core leader began to take shape.⁹¹⁹ Specifically this unification occurred with Mao Zedong achieving this status. In his 2021 address regarding the CPC history education campaign, Xi explicitly stated the value and purpose of the Zunyi Conference.

The Zunyi Meeting in 1935 marked a turning point in the Party's history . . . At the meeting, Mao Zedong was affirmed as the leader of the Central Committee and the Red Army. The meeting also laid the groundwork for establishing the leading position within the Central Committee of the correct Marxist line chiefly represented by Mao Zedong, as well as for the formation of the first generation of the central collective leadership with Mao Zedong as the core.⁹²⁰

To sustain the institution of core leadership, Xi promoted the memory of Zunyi and Mao's ascendancy and credited it as the turning point in Party history which enabled the CPC's future successes.

Accordingly, to meet any present challenges, the system of core leadership must be maintained. In another party speech that same year titled, "Reinforce our Party's Political Foundations for Unity and Solidarity," Xi further explained the function of core leadership as essential to achieving unity within the party. He argued:

Unity and solidarity are our Party's lifelines and the keys to our historical achievements over the past century . . . The Zunyi Meeting in 1935 laid the groundwork for establishing the leading position within the Central Committee of the correct Marxist line chiefly represented by Mao Zedong.⁹²¹

Zunyi is an important historical episode for Xi as he associated its memory with the institution of core leadership and its function for unifying the Party.

The Yan'an Rectification Movement also featured prominently within Xi's discourse. His instrumental use of this memory illuminated the importance of ideological unification within the Party through the rectification of cadres. Xi described the value of the Yan'an example, recalling his official visit to the site in a 2022 address:

⁹¹⁹ For more on Mao's ascendancy to power within the CPC during and immediately following the Zunyi conference see, Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 115-126.

⁹²⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 600.

⁹²¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 56.

After the 20th CPC National Congress, my colleagues and I visited Yan'an. We were there to relive the inspiring episode in which the Party's central leadership overcame extraordinary difficulties in the 1930s and 1940s, and to draw on the spiritual strength of the older generation of CPC members.⁹²²

Xi depicted his direct engagement with the memory of Yan'an as a source of spiritual strength to nourish his colleagues and himself. Xi expounded on the role of the Yan'an Rectification to serve as an inspiration for correcting mistakes, discussing the role of self-criticism in these efforts.

Criticism and self-criticism is a good Party tradition, and an effective weapon for enhancing the capacity of Party organizations in their effort to maintain unity and solidarity inside the Party. Why do we need to follow the spirit of the Rectification Movement and engage in criticism and self-criticism? Because various problems afflicting the people inside the Party . . . are chronic and persistent conditions that need to be addressed with courage.⁹²³

Xi attempted to rekindle the practice of criticism and self-criticism as a means for Party discipline and offset potential opposition by publicizing past perceived successes to justify contemporary implementation.

Xi avoided direct discussion involving the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, yet the subject forms an important element of his redefined narrative of Party and national history.⁹²⁴ Specifically, it serves as a ready example for how quickly the stability of CPC rule can erode and how close the Party-State came to collapsing in a similar fashion to the Soviet Union.⁹²⁵ Discussing that collapse, Xi credited disunity and corruption within the CPSU as the main engines for its disintegration.

The Soviet Union was the world's first socialist country and once enjoyed spectacular success. Ultimately, however, it collapsed. One main reason for its failure was that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union became

⁹²² Xi Jinping, "2023 New Year Address by President Xi Jinping," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-12/31/c_844898.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

Gao Hua describes the Yan'an Rectification Movement as centered on the internal political struggles within the CPC, especially with Mao eliminating any threat from Wang Ming. For a discussion of Mao's objectives and its basic outline see Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945*, pages 357–373.

⁹²³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 385.

⁹²⁴ Louisa Lim summarizes not only the efforts at suppressing memory of the incident by CPC authorities but also the willful act of forgetting among the Chinese collective memory. "The 'forgetting' that has engulfed China is not just enforced from above; the people themselves have colluded in this amnesia and embraced it. Forgetting is a survival mechanism, almost second nature. China's people have learned to avert their eyes and minds from anything unpleasant, allowing their brains to be imprinted with false memories— or allowing the real memories to be erased— for the sake of convenience." Lim, Louisa. *The People's Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen Revisited*, page 211.

⁹²⁵ David Marples locates the primary cause for the collapse of the Soviet Union as the conflict between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, page 110, but also discusses the observation of endemic corruption eroding support within the CPSU. "Gorbachev was outspoken about the problems facing Soviet society, believing firmly that the country could not continue under recent political and economic policies. It was necessary for a break with the past, for the acceleration of the economy, and an end to parochialism, nepotism, corruption, and a ruling elite that appeared to be distanced from the general population other than on national holidays and ceremonies during which they decorated themselves with medals to assuage their vanity." Marples, David R. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union, 1985–1991*, page 13.

detached from the people and turned into a group of privileged bureaucrats who only served their own interests.⁹²⁶

Xi perceived the same rot within the CPSU prior to its collapse that he detected within the CPC, arguing that only through his policies to discipline the Party could they avoid the same fate. However, Xi noted that at that time, the CPC weathered the storm, despite pressure from the West, maintaining Marxism within China despite its failure elsewhere. In a 2021 speech titled, “Be Prepared for the Great Struggle,” Xi described the instability within China during the spring of 1989.

Political disturbance also occurred in our country in the late spring and early summer of 1989. In response, our Party relied on the people and took resolute measures to win a life-and-death battle, showing strong resolve and historic commitment. We withstood the sanctions of the West, and kept to the correct path of reform and development and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Deng Xiaoping said, “So long as socialism does not collapse in China, it will always hold its ground in the world.”⁹²⁷

As Xi faced increasing tensions with the West, particularly the United States, he invoked memory of the fall of the Soviet Union and Tiananmen Square, tying the two together as a warning of what fate awaited the PRC should it cave to Western pressure. Despite an apparent lingering sensitivity to the subject matter, the instability of the Spring of 1989 served as a warning signal which Xi wielded to stiffen resistance to any pressure to reform China’s institutions beyond his intended course.

Central to Xi’s governing philosophy was the concept that only the CPC could effectively govern China. In his estimation, no other institution could manage the affairs of China as well, and any diminishment of its supreme authority would only end in instability and ruin for the PRC. As justification for this assertion, Xi relied upon the memory of CPC historical memory for evidence of its success in governing China. Xi posited the Party’s indispensable role in the PRC developing after its founding. He commented,

The fundamental reason that the Chinese nation has stood up, become better off and grown in strength over the seven decades since the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949 is that the CPC has led the people in establishing and improving the Chinese socialist system, in forming and developing systems for Party leadership, the economy, politics, culture, society, eco-civilization, the military, and foreign affairs, and in enhancing state governance.⁹²⁸

⁹²⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 197.

⁹²⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 93. Deng Xiaoping, “We Must Adhere to Socialism and Prevent Peaceful Evolution to Capitalism,” *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol III, Eng ed., page 334.

⁹²⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 144.

Xi framed the achievements of the PRC as due primarily to CPC leadership of the Chinese people in all facets. Furthermore, he extended this project to the CPC founding, linking his objective of national rejuvenation as a continuous project since the Party was first established in 1921. In 2022 he stated:

After its founding, the CPC, pressing ahead against all odds, has united and led the Chinese people through arduous struggles. Staying committed to the guidance of Marxism, the Party has found the right path to realizing the national rejuvenation. Through tireless efforts in different historical periods of revolution, socialist construction, reform and opening up, the Chinese nation has achieved the transformation from standing up to growing rich and becoming strong, writing the most magnificent chapter in the development of the Chinese nation.⁹²⁹

According to Xi, the Party, guided by Marxism, led the Chinese people through its achievements on the path to national rejuvenation. All of Xi's authority flowed from the CPC and he made clear through the instrumental use of the Marxist framework that Party rule was the only viable path for China.

The mantra that only the CPC can save China is only half of the refrain, as Xi also posited that the Party must retain socialism with Chinese characteristics as its guiding principle. According to Xi, if the Party abandoned socialism, then it would lose its connection with the population and consign itself to inevitable ruin. Xi summarized his position as follows:

Socialism with Chinese characteristics is socialism and nothing else. The basic principles of scientific socialism must not be abandoned; otherwise it is not socialism. What doctrine a country may choose is based on whether it can resolve the historical problems that confront that country. Both history and reality have shown us that only socialism can save China and only socialism with Chinese characteristics can bring development to China. This conclusion is the result of historical exploration, and the choice of the people.⁹³⁰

Xi invoked historical memory as proof of his claim and further expanded on the notion that socialism with Chinese characteristics is not merely a political theory, but a system forged through practice governing China across decades. Xi explained:

Chinese socialism did not drop from the sky, but has stemmed from 40 years of reform and opening up and nearly 70 years of exploration since the founding of the PRC in 1949. It is the result of the Chinese people's experiences during 97 years of great social revolutions under the leadership of the CPC founded in 1921.⁹³¹

Chinese socialism had the benefit of decades of historical experience and, according to Xi, had a track record of accomplishment. Furthermore, Xi posited that only Chinese socialism could deliver national rejuvenation. He declared in 2022, “. . . socialism with Chinese characteristics is the only path to national

⁹²⁹ Xi Jinping, “Forging Ahead on the Journey to National Rejuvenation-Foreword to the Revitalization Library,” *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-09/28/c_816229.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹³⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 43.

⁹³¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 92.

rejuvenation.”⁹³² According to Xi, Chinese socialism was not only the best system for China, but it was also the only system that could reasonably complete national rejuvenation.

The third framework that Xi utilized within his discourse was the Nationalist. Appeals to a common Chinese identity served as a source of political power for Xi, especially as delivering consistent rapid economic growth and ever improving living standards as a source for regime legitimacy appeared increasingly out of reach. He framed his aspirations under the China Dream as the fulfillment of the country’s national destiny. Xi’s enunciation for national rejuvenation included the reversal of the Century of Humiliation (CoH hereafter). In fact, the CoH, initiated by the first Opium War (1839-1842), marked the point of decline and exploitation of China, with Xi’s goal of national rejuvenation purported to reverse any lingering vestiges from that period. In addition, Xi celebrated China’s military successes, especially the defeat of the Japanese and the reunification of mainland China as two major achievements accomplished by the efforts of the whole nation. Furthermore, Xi wielded Korean War memory both as an additional source of national pride and as a method to paint the United States as a menacing, yet defeatable, antagonist. Xi used the triumphs of Chinese civilization to generate national pride, as well as underscoring modern national achievements won under the auspices of CPC leadership to raise confidence in the nation. Xi also relied on the Nationalist framework as a point of connection with foreign nations, such as the role of positive relations during China’s dynastic history as justification for revitalizing those relationships through Xi’s New Silk Road initiative. Another use in foreign affairs involved appeals to common historical experiences, especially related to anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. Finally, Xi argued for a unifying national identity binding the entire Chinese nation and as a historical force impelling a reunification with Taiwan. The instrumental use of the Nationalist framework provided Xi with a potent tool to build domestic support for his rule, investing his governing philosophy with an animating spirit of nationalism, and as a shield and sword to advance China’s foreign relations.

⁹³² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 41.

According to Xi, the CoH marked an aberration in history as China lost its position of dignity, forced to suffer exploitation by foreign imperialists coupled with incompetent and corrupt rule under the Qing dynasty (1644 - 1912). The initiating event ushering in this era was the First Opium War (1839 - 1842), and this event, and the negative impacts to follow, featured prominently within Xi's discourse.⁹³³ Recalling memory of this period allowed Xi to cultivate a universal feeling of bitterness towards those foreign imperial powers that played the role of antagonists and made the achievements of the CPC ending this condition more palpable, in turn enhancing the legitimacy of the regime for this accomplishment. Xi synopsized both the experience and its lasting impact on collective memory:

In the 100 years from the Opium War in 1840 to the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, China was ravaged by wars, turmoil and foreign aggression. To the average Chinese, it was a period of ordeal too bitter to recall . . . These atrocities remain fresh in our memory.⁹³⁴

Xi framed the impacts of China's historical experience during the CoH as simultaneously deeply felt and highly negative, as well as ever present and commonly felt across the Chinese population. In addition to the enduring psychological wounds, Xi referenced the material impacts of the CoH, particularly falling behind the West as it industrialized. He explained:

Unfortunately we fell behind after the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when Western countries began to rise. After the Opium War (1840-1842), China's self-sufficient economy began to disintegrate, and the country failed to seize the opportunity of the Industrial Revolution. Although progress was made in our industry, and some foreign capital entered China – for instance the concessions in Shanghai, Tianjin's industry, and Wuhan's military industry – China was as a whole an impoverished, backward and war-torn country, falling way behind. This remained the situation for more than 100 years.⁹³⁵

Xi nurtured an understanding of the powerful and immediate impact of the CoH on Chinese collective memory as an episode of deep trauma shared by the entire nation. This elevation in turn served to heighten the impacts of Xi's instrumental usage as he tied ending the CoH to a legitimating accomplishment by the CPC, and even further as he tethered his vision for China as the reversal of this shameful memory.

Fundamental to Xi's instrumental use of CoH memory was a focus on foreign powers engaging in imperialism to the detriment of China. Although Qing misrule had left China open to exploitation, Xi

⁹³³ For more on the impacts of the first Opium War see Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*, pages 44-54.

⁹³⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 276.

⁹³⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 269.

firmly blamed these colonial actors as the group primarily responsible for China's sorry state during this period. This assignment of fault used the Nationalist framework to position the Chinese nation as a victim at the hands of foreign adversaries. Xi stated:

Before the Opium War, China was isolated from the world market and global industrialization. After that, during the wars against Western aggression, China suffered repeated defeats and fell to the status of a poor and weak country.⁹³⁶

According to Xi, China's defeats at the hands of the West compounded as the Chinese vainly attempted to push against imperialism. One of the most visible and long-lasting impacts of this colonialism included territorial concessions, with Xi citing their reversal as a prerequisite for national rejuvenation. At the 25th anniversary celebrating the retrocession of Hong Kong, Xi recalled the humiliation of ceding Hong Kong to the British.

In the history of modern China after the Opium War in 1840, the humiliation of ceding Hong Kong is a page of pain, and also included is the Chinese people's fight for the survival of our country.⁹³⁷

Although regaining Hong Kong had reversed one aspect of the CoH, until Taiwan was returned, national rejuvenation remained incomplete. Although Taiwan was ceded to Japan following the First Sino-Japanese War (1894 - 1895), Xi connected what he termed the wars of aggression by the West as the direct cause of the separation.⁹³⁸

It has been 70 years since Taiwan and the mainland were separated. Since China entered the modern era, the emergence and evolution of the Taiwan question has been inextricably interwoven with the history of the Chinese nation. The Opium War of 1840 and ensuing wars of aggression launched by Western powers plunged China into a state of anguished turmoil, with its lands torn apart. And Taiwan fell under a foreign occupation that lasted for half a century.⁹³⁹

This linkage of Taiwan's loss to the CoH made it clear that its recovery was necessary to fulfill the undoing of China's humiliation and thus a national aspiration for all patriotic Chinese. Xi's instrumental use of the CoH enabled Xi to position the West as a former adversary responsible for China's past plight, implying that its interference in places like Hong Kong and Taiwan was a remnant of that imperialist past.

⁹³⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 233.

⁹³⁷ Xi Jinping, "Address at the meeting celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland and the inaugural ceremony of the sixth-term government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-07/02/c_786009.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹³⁸ For more on Taiwan's cession to Japan see, Leonard H. D. Gordon, *Confrontation over Taiwan: Nineteenth Century China and the Powers*, pages 171-188.

⁹³⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 468.

Xi concurred with past core leaders that only the CPC could reverse the CoH. To bolster this argument, Xi catalogued the many efforts, including by well-meaning and patriotic actors, that valiantly but unsuccessfully tried to reverse China's misfortunes. As these many efforts failed, where only the CPC succeeded, Xi argued that history dictated that only the CPC could save China. However, these examples from among the Chinese population could still be celebrated to generate national pride and unify the nation behind Xi as he postulated that his China Dream for national rejuvenation was the fulfillment of the aspirations of these figures and movements as well.

Since the advent of modern times, our nation has gone through untold tribulations and faced its greatest perils. Countless people with lofty ideals rose up for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, but each time they failed.⁹⁴⁰

During his report to the 19th Party Congress, Xi further explained that the failure of these efforts stemmed not from a lack of patriotism or zeal, but due to an inability to shift the fundamental conditions facing China, namely the semi-colonial and semi-feudal status. He declared:

With tenacity and heroism, countless dedicated patriots fought, pressed ahead against the odds, and tried every possible means to seek the nation's salvation. But despite their efforts, they were powerless to change the nature of society in old China and the plight of the Chinese people.⁹⁴¹

Xi sharpened his instrumental use of this historical memory to push back against critics of CPC rule, claiming that, however well intentioned, reforming the PRC governing structures had been tried in the past in China and proved insufficient.

Facing increasing political and national challenges, countless progressives struggled in search of ways to create a better future for the nation. They pioneered new state and governance systems, and experimented with various solutions such as constitutional monarchy, parliamentary systems, multiparty politics, and presidential government. But all these efforts ended in failure.⁹⁴²

According to Xi, only the CPC managed to properly address the underlying issues plaguing China where all others had failed.

One reform figure that featured prominently within Xi's discourse was Sun Yat-sen. Xi conflated Sun's aspirations for China as being fulfilled by the CPC's past and present efforts and fitting neatly into Xi's expression of national rejuvenation. For example, in a 2014 speech aimed at improving relations

⁹⁴⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 28.

⁹⁴¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 15.

⁹⁴² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 146.

with the Republic of China (ROC) government, Xi invoked Sun's memory as shared between both parties as Sun remained an important figure in historical memory for the ruling GMD.⁹⁴³ Addressing this commonality, he stated:

Fourth, the people of the two sides should work hand in hand towards the Chinese Dream, the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. These were the long-cherished wishes of Dr Sun Yat-sen: to achieve the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, to realize the greatness and prosperity of China, and to ensure the happiness of the Chinese people. These have also been the long-cherished wishes of all CPC members and all the Chinese people since the advent of modern times. The Chinese Dream is a vivid expression of this wish.⁹⁴⁴

Xi characterized Sun's wish for China as the same as Xi's expression of the China Dream. Presumably, Xi hoped to strengthen the connection of the shared memory towards Sun to facilitate reconciliation and eventual reunification. However, he did place limits on the use of Sun's memory, pointing out what he described as faults in his prescriptions for reforming China. Regarding the inadequacy of Sun's plans for national reconstruction, Xi explained:

The plan for national reconstruction written by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the late 1920s was China's first blueprint for modernization, but the drive ended in failure as it was simply impossible to modernize a semicolonial and semi-feudal society.⁹⁴⁵

Xi postulated that although Sun was well meaning, his policy proposals fell short in modernizing China. Therefore, he restrained any potential use of Sun's memory to criticize his governing philosophy. Xi instrumentally used Sun's memory as a unifying figure but made sure to avoid a potentially dangerous full-throated endorsement.

As has already been mentioned, a key component in Xi's structuring of historical memory is that only the CPC guided by Chinese socialism could save China. However, imbedded within this construction is an orientation in which the object for salvation is China. According to Xi, although the Party retains its Marxist character, it is firmly entrenched within the Chinese nation. As such, a key

⁹⁴³ "To a considerable degree, Chiang based his claim to legitimacy on Sun. His claim to leadership of "Free China" was based on the perception that he was Sun's legitimate political heir. This was partly confirmed by his leadership of the KMT and solidified by his occupation of the presidency of the ROC. But more important was his claim to be the political and intellectual, and not just institutional, heir of the founder. To be the true leader of China meant to be a leader in Sun's mold: revolutionary, ascetic, transformational, jealous of China's place in the world, optimistic about China's future, and a democrat." Lorenzo, David J. *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-Zen, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Chiang Ching-Kuo*, page 91.

⁹⁴⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 254.

⁹⁴⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 175.

element justifying the continued rule for the CPC is its achievements advancing the interests of the nation, particularly what Xi describes as ending the CoH. During his address celebrating the PRC's 70th anniversary, Xi proclaimed that its establishment ended the CoH. Recalling Mao's declarations seventy years prior, Xi exclaimed:

Seventy years ago on this day, Mao Zedong solemnly declared here to the world that the People's Republic of China was founded and the Chinese people had stood up. This great event put an end to China's misery born of poverty, weakness, oppression and humiliation over more than 100 years since the advent of modern times. The Chinese nation has since embarked on the path of realizing its great rejuvenation.⁹⁴⁶

Xi credited the PRC establishment as ending the national tragedy of the CoH and claimed that its efforts since, including his own policies, were aimed at undoing the damage done to the nation.

Xi depicted China's resistance to Japan, and its general contributions to the Allies during World War II, as another major national accomplishment and one which Xi used to generate a unifying national pride. Xi argued that China's sacrifices during the war justified its place in the global order born out of that conflict's ashes. Rana Mitter wrote in, *China's Good War*, "China has used its World War II history for particular purposes in international relations."⁹⁴⁷ For example, in his national address celebrating the 70th anniversary of victory in World War II, Xi proclaimed:

The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and World War II were a decisive battle between justice and evil, between light and darkness, and between progress and reaction. In that devastating war, the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression started first and lasted longest. In defiance of aggression, the unyielding Chinese people fought gallantly and finally won total victory over the Japanese militarist aggressors, thus preserving the achievements of China's 5,000-year-old civilization and defending the cause of peace for mankind.⁹⁴⁸

For Xi, the Chinese contributions should be a source of pride for all Chinese, unifying the populace in celebration of their collective triumphs. Xi continued in the same speech, outlining the substantial contributions of China to the allies. He explained, "During the war, through enormous national sacrifice, the Chinese people held their ground in the main Eastern theater of World War II, thus making a major

⁹⁴⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 100.

⁹⁴⁷ Rana Mitter, *China's Good War: How World War II Is Shaping a New Nationalism*, page 224.

⁹⁴⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 484.

contribution to overall victory.”⁹⁴⁹ In addition, Xi used the memory of the common struggle against Japan, when the GMD and CPC were allies, to foster cross-strait relations. In fact, he cited the cultivation of cooperative historical work on this subject as an important avenue to facilitate reconciliation.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of China's fight against Japanese aggression, a victory won with tremendous sacrifice on the part of the whole nation. The two sides across the Straits should encourage cooperation between historians to share materials and jointly draft books, in order to carry forward that spirit and defend national dignity and honor. The people across the Straits should remember history, commemorate the revolutionary martyrs, cherish peace, unite as one, and join hands in advancing the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations.⁹⁵⁰

Xi outlined his intent for instrumentally using, and even creating historical memory to advance his political objective of improving relations with Taiwan to advance towards reunification. Xi's instrumental use of China's participation in World War II aimed to generate a unifying feeling of pride across what he conceived as the full body of the nation.

Xi's instrumental use extended to Korean War memory. This conflict provided a useful symbol for Xi as tensions with the United States grew. Within the PRC's historical memory of this conflict, not only was the United States an enemy with imperial ambitions aimed at China, but despite the US material superiority, it could not defeat what he described as the Chinese indomitable spirit. In fact, Xi attempted to harness this Korean War spirit and direct it towards fulfilling his policies. He detailed his stance:

I have always emphasized that the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will be no easy task. It will not be achieved by simply beating drums and gongs. We cannot overcome all the risks and challenges we face on the way forward without a true fighting spirit. Chairman Mao summarized the key to our victory in resisting US aggression and aiding Korea: The enemies have more steel than morale, while we have less steel but higher morale. We Party members and officials of central Party and government departments should stay true to our principles, be prepared for adversity, maintain our fighting spirit, and be adept at foreseeing developing trends and detecting potential risks and challenges.⁹⁵¹

Xi found Korean War memory, particularly the narrative of a staunch fighting spirit carrying through in the face of overwhelming odds, as pivotal in motivating the population. In addition, Xi argued that the

⁹⁴⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 485. Rana Mitter describes the Chinese contribution to the war and subsequent suffering, “China remains the forgotten ally, its contribution only slowly being remembered as its experience fades out of living memory. Its involvement in the war was not as harrowing as that of the Soviet Union, which was engaged in a struggle to the death, a fight about race and power. But the suffering endured by China was still unimaginably great: the war against Japan left 15 million to 20 million dead, and 80 million to 100 million refugees. The flawed but real economic development that the Nationalists had begun in 1928 was destroyed. For eight years brutal death was an everyday possibility for ordinary Chinese, whether from the swords in Nanjing or the bombs dropping on Chongqing, or even the dams, destroyed in desperation by their own government.” Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II: 1937-1945*, page 538.

⁹⁵⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 470.

⁹⁵¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 126.

PRC response to the war was predicated on countering the imperialist aims of the United States which directly threatened China. Despite the imbalance in forces, Xi claimed the PRC was compelled to resist the US.

In the 1950s, under provocation and the threat of force from the imperialist US, the richest and most powerful country in the world, the Party's central leadership faced a critical choice . . . Determined to "throw one hard punch now to avoid taking a hundred punches in the future," the central leadership made the historic decision to aid Korea against US aggression and defend the new-born PRC, even though it would hamper domestic reconstruction. By making this necessary move, China stopped the foreign aggressors at its doorstep and secured its national borders.⁹⁵²

Xi framed the war as more than merely aiding a beleaguered ally, but fundamentally protecting the future of the PRC and ensuring its territorial integrity against the designs of the aggressive United States.

Furthermore, fears of material inferiority, while recognized, did not curtail the PRC response. The implied lesson was that any concerns regarding the military or economic imbalance between the US and China should not cow any response to perceived infringements by the US towards China's sovereignty.

Reveling in achievements to generate pride was another facet of Xi's instrumental use of the Nationalist framework. Celebrations of past achievements allowed for the whole nation to participate, generating positive and unifying sentiments. Furthermore, it sustained confidence in the Chinese civilization. This practice acted as a counterpoint against conceding to any foreign governing systems wholesale and reforming the political institutions of the PRC in ways that would undermine both Xi's and the CPC's authority.⁹⁵³ One of the most prevalent methods for Xi to produce this pride was to recognize the sheer length of uninterrupted Chinese civilization. Xi described its unifying impact in 2013:

The Chinese nation has an unbroken history of more than 5,000 years of civilization. It has created a rich and profound culture and has made an unforgettable contribution to the progress of human civilization. Over the course of several thousand years, what have closely bound us together, the 56 ethnic groups of China's 1.3-billion-plus people, are our indomitable struggles, the beautiful homeland we have built together and the national spirit we have nurtured together. Running through this history, most importantly, are the ideals and vision that we share and hold dear.⁹⁵⁴

⁹⁵² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 93. Chen Jian described Mao's reasoning for endorsing intervention, "Mao summarized the reasons for this decision, emphasizing that even though China's intervention might cause a war between China and the United States, it was necessary for the sake of the Korean and Eastern revolutions." Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, page 56.

⁹⁵³ "By portraying the party as an indispensable guarantor of China's ascendancy over a fading West, Xi hopes to secure his own power, and entrench Communist rule for generations to come." Chun Han Wong, *Party of One: The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's Superpower Future*, page 152.

⁹⁵⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 56.

Xi posited that this common shared identity built across five millennia not only exerted a coalescing influence across the entire Chinese nation, but it also ingrained deep seated core values and ideals driving the vision for the nation. He further argued that these core values were essential for any development by giving the people confidence in their nation.

The cultural progress of a nation and the development of a country require continuous efforts of generations and various driving forces. Among these forces, core values are the deepest and most everlasting. The Chinese nation boasts a long history and splendid culture of over 5,000 years, and our civilization has developed in an unbroken line from ancient to modern times.⁹⁵⁵

Xi portrayed core values as essential to realizing any developmental goal, including his plan for national rejuvenation.

Beyond its impressive uninterrupted length of existence, Xi also emphasized China's more concrete contributions to the advancement of world civilization. He described these contributions not only as a source of confidence for the Chinese population, but also to illustrate China's capacity to contribute to the world by resuming its proper position via rejuvenation. For example, in 2016 Xi outlined the many scientific and technological contributions across the centuries. He explained in some detail:

China has the motivation and the skills required for successful innovation. China's development and the historical achievements I have mentioned previously can be attributed to its scientific inventions and innovation. Ancient China's achievements in astronomy, calendar, mathematics, agriculture, medicine, and geography were remarkable. These inventions were closely related to economic activity, providing forceful support to the development of agriculture and the craft industries. The British philosopher Francis Bacon once said that printing, gunpowder, and the magnet had changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world, and that no empire, no sect, no star seemed to have exerted greater power and influence in human affairs than these mechanical discoveries. Records show that China has 173 items among the world's most important 300 inventions and discoveries made before the 16th century, far surpassing Europe in the same historical period. China led the world for a long time, and China's culture and thought, social system, economic progress, science, and technology motivated and led its neighboring countries and regions. Since the advent of modern times China has lagged behind, mainly because we missed the great development opportunities brought by the scientific and industrial revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.⁹⁵⁶

According to Xi, China only lagged for a relatively brief period because it fell behind in the scientific and industrial fields, with the implication that to avoid a repeat the PRC needed to keep pace, or even assume its traditional leading role, in these fields. In addition to scientific discoveries and inventions, he also catalogued the many cultural triumphs of China over the centuries.

The Chinese people are highly creative. Throughout thousands of years of history, they have always been ready to labor, to innovate, and to create with diligence. Our country has been the birthplace of world-renowned thinkers such as Lao Zi, Confucius, Zhuang Zi, Mencius, Mo Zi, Sun Zi and Han Fei Zi. The Chinese people's

⁹⁵⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 202.

⁹⁵⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 223.

great scientific achievements such as papermaking, gunpowder, printing, and the compass have profoundly influenced the progress of human civilization. We created such great literary works as the Book of Songs, Songs of Chu, fu poetry of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), poetry of the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties, operas of the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368) and the novels of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1616-1911) dynasties. We have passed down the powerful epics – King Gesar, Manas and Jangar. We have built mighty projects – the Great Wall, the Dujiangyan flood control and irrigation system, the Grand Canal, the Forbidden City, and the Potala Palace.⁹⁵⁷

Xi aimed to give the population confidence to strive towards national rejuvenation, portraying China's natural condition as bursting with scientific and cultural achievements historically.

Not to be outdone, Xi made sure to enumerate many of the accomplishments achieved under PRC rule as well. These pronouncements displayed that the PRC had delivered major progress and implied that it would continue to do so if the current system, under Xi's core leadership, was maintained. For example, Xi discussed how the PRC had harnessed the civilizational core value of hard work to deliver major progress on advancing living standards in its seven-decade history. He described this achievement in 2017 at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos:

China's outstanding achievements and the vastly improved living standards of the Chinese people are a blessing to both China and the rest of the world. The achievements through development over the past decades are owed to the hard work and perseverance of the Chinese people, a quality that has defined the Chinese nation for several thousand years. We Chinese know only too well that no one in the world will give us a free ride. For a big country with over 1.3 billion people, development can be achieved only with the dedication and tireless efforts of its own people. We cannot expect others to deliver development to China, and no one is in a position to do so.⁹⁵⁸

Besides raising living standards, Xi also discussed the PRC's success in bringing general prosperity to China. During his address commemorating the 70th anniversary of the PRC founding, Xi proclaimed:

Over the past seven decades, through concerted efforts and arduous struggle, the Chinese people's great achievements have amazed the world. Today, a socialist China is standing firm in the East. No force can ever undermine our great motherland's status, or stop the Chinese people and the Chinese nation from marching forward . . . China's past made its mark on human history; China's present is being created by the hands of hundreds of millions of Chinese people; China's future will be even brighter.⁹⁵⁹

Xi argued that China made great strides towards regaining its proper historical status thanks specifically to the PRC shepherded by the CPC, and it would continue to proceed to even greater heights if the nation kept the faith with Xi's governing philosophy.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 166.

⁹⁵⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 527.

⁹⁵⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 101.

⁹⁶⁰ "For Xi, the choice has been dictated not by the present or the future, but by the past: his leadership has always been obliged to deliver the great dream – the promise made decades before the Party even existed, let alone came to power. The hope had always been to deliver a strong, rich, powerful country." Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 126.

One area of progress that Xi emphasized was poverty alleviation. He presented this feat as significant both in eliminating a historical scourge on the Chinese population and as unprecedented in scale. In his 2018 speech, “Win the Battle Against Poverty,” Xi outlined both the goal and historical significance for eliminating what he termed as extreme poverty in China:

In three years' time, when we have defeated poverty in this generation, we will have brought to an end, once and for all, the extreme poverty that has shackled the Chinese nation for millennia. This will be a source of great pride. Let us work together to achieve this goal, one of great significance to the Chinese nation and to the whole of humanity.⁹⁶¹

Xi presented both the problem and solution as a national one across centuries of Chinese history, and its elimination should become a source of national pride. As part of his report to the 20th Party Congress, Xi celebrated the elimination of extreme poverty the year prior. He proclaimed, “By galvanizing the entire nation to carry out targeted poverty alleviation, we have won the largest battle against poverty in human history.”⁹⁶² Not only was poverty alleviation a major achievement in defeating a centuries-long problem, but Xi portrayed it as exceptional in human history for its scale.

One of Xi’s major foreign policy initiatives is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Xi borrowed substantially from the historical memory of the ancient Silk Road to illustrate his policy and build support for it. For example, Xi described the value of the ancient Silk Road bringing together civilizations, with the hope that this same spirit could animate cooperation towards implementing his Belt and Road Initiative.

Over 2,000 years ago, our ancestors, trekking across vast steppes and deserts, opened the transcontinental passage connecting Asia, Europe and Africa, known today as the Silk Road. Our ancestors, navigating rough seas, created sea routes linking the East with the West, namely, the Maritime Silk Road . . . Spanning thousands of miles and years, the ancient Silk Road embodies the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. The Silk Road spirit has become a great heritage of human civilization.⁹⁶³

Xi presumably sought to engender this spirit of international cooperation under the auspices of the BRI and dispel any concerns of duplicitous intentions on the part of the PRC. By elevating this specific

⁹⁶¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 187.

⁹⁶² Xi Jinping, “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects,” *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-10/26/c_824626.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹⁶³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 553. For a brief summary of early Chinese interactions see, Christopher I. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*, pages 78-79 & 86-89.

representation of ancient Silk Road memory and associating it with current policy, Xi presumably hoped his policy appeared as a return to a benign and longstanding historical orientation and not a retread of Western inspired exploitation. In another example, taking the opportunity to make use of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting's venue in 2022, he posited:

Samarkand, renowned as the pearl on the Silk Road, witnessed the glory of the ancient Silk Road, a route that greatly boosted the flow of goods, spread of science and technology, interaction of ideas, and integration of diverse cultures on the Eurasian continent. Indeed, the ancient Silk Road has remained a historical source of inspiration for us SCO member states as we pursue peace and development.⁹⁶⁴

Xi instrumentally used the ancient Silk Road memory to facilitate friendly relations with other nations and international organizations and advance the Belt and Road Initiative.

The reunification of Taiwan to the mainland is a major plank for Xi's vision for national rejuvenation and the final obstacle to undoing the legacy of the CoH. To assist in this endeavor, Xi highlighted the common heritage between the mainland and Taiwan, further arguing that they share a common national destiny. Xi described the two entities as belonging to the same family, with any disagreements between them amounting to a matter between blood relatives. In a 2014 meeting with a Taiwanese delegation, he suggested:

Due to history and present circumstances, there are many thorny problems for the moment between our two sides, but this will pass, for we are both doing our best to solve them, and to ensure that they do not adversely affect our relationship, our cooperation, or our exchanges. Meanwhile, the people on both sides of the Straits are one family with shared blood, culture, bonds, and aspirations, all of which serve as an important force for promoting our mutual understanding and common progress.⁹⁶⁵

At this juncture, with a friendly government in Taipei under Ma Ying-jeou, Xi phrased current disagreements as the result of historical forces that would pass in time, while the cultural and familial bonds between the two sides would facilitate reconciliation. Xi maintained this stance in his 2019 speech titled, "Strive for China's National Rejuvenation and Peaceful Reunification," the name of which links national rejuvenation to reunification with Taiwan. Xi claimed that not only did reunification represent the true aspirations for all loyal Chinese, but that this reversal of the last reminder of the CoH was an irresistible historical trend:

⁹⁶⁴ Xi Jinping, "Ride on the Trend of the Times and Enhance Solidarity and Cooperation to Embrace a Better Future," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-09/17/c_813000.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹⁶⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 251.

As the evolution of cross-Straits relations attests, no force or people can ever change the historical fact and principle that Taiwan is part of China and that the two sides belong to one and the same China. We people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits are Chinese and share a natural affinity and national identity built of kinship and mutual assistance, a fact that can never be altered by any force or any people. The tide of our times – cross-Straits relations moving towards peace and stability and continuing to move forward – is a tide that cannot be stopped by any force or any people. The historical trend towards a stronger China, national rejuvenation, and reunification cannot be stopped by any force or any people.⁹⁶⁶

Xi appears to imply that regardless of any outside interference, such as by the United States or independence-minded political forces within Taiwan, reunification is inevitable and should therefore be embraced by all concerned parties. Xi framed his approach towards reunification with Taiwan using both a common national identity as well as a final and complete correction to the insults inflicted on China during the CoH using the Nationalist framework.

Contrary to my initial assumptions, Xi seems to have fully embraced the Liberal Framework throughout his discourse. Although Xi placed additional emphasis on the Liberal framework with foreign audiences, it remained present in discourse aimed at domestic and party audiences as well. To those audiences, Xi stressed the value of maintaining the R&OU policies initiated to drive China's economic growth. However, the main target remained foreign audiences, where Xi continued to stress China's desire to embrace the system of the Liberal International Order, albeit with the understanding that respect for China's sovereignty remained sacrosanct. Xi portrayed this desire for participation as emerging from several factors, including China's negative historical experience enduring conflict as well as aspects of its culture derived from its civilization predisposing it to desiring peace and stability. In addition, he argued that only through international cooperation and interdependent relations, especially with the acceleration of developments in science and technology, could China hope to keep pace with its developmental needs. Furthermore, he asserted that China was committed to advancing the Liberal International Order and had consistently done so in the past. On the other hand, Xi departed from his predecessors, eventually abandoning the refrain that the general trend of history continued to progress unimpeded. Instead, he found major forces challenging this trend, such as protectionism and unilateralism, emerging in geopolitics. Although outside of the Liberal narrative framework, such observations are connected to it,

⁹⁶⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 470.

and may represent a new emerging historical framework in Xi's discourse related to international relations. Xi made substantial instrumental use of the Liberal framework as he sought to build space for China in the global community, advancing China's developmental goals in line with his vision for national rejuvenation while preserving the political prerogatives essential to preserving the existing political system.

Xi maintained the long-established position that China's contemporary success, especially economic, emerged from the R&OU policies initiated under Deng Xiaoping and carried forward by his successors. This historical viewpoint fits neatly into the Liberal framework, with the notion that market reforms and engagement with the international community increase prosperity. In addition, Xi explained that economic development is necessary to carry out any other policy objectives. In a 2015 speech aimed at the party, he iterated:

Economic development is the foundation; without it, nothing is possible. Since the introduction of reform and opening up in 1978, we have been focusing on development, with outstanding success. To complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, we still need to make development our top priority and bring it to a new level. We should stick to the strategy that development alone can make the difference . . .⁹⁶⁷

Xi credited the R&OU policies as producing substantial economic development for China and called for carrying on those policies, with some adjustments under his guidance, to complete the first centennial goal by 2021. He further argued that market reforms producing economic growth coupled with opening to the capitalist world formed a positive feedback loop creating even higher levels of development.

Only a strong and prosperous country can open itself to the outside world with confidence, and openness in turn promotes further prosperity. China's achievements since the beginning of reform and opening up in 1978 have proved that openness is an important driver of its economic and social development. As China becomes the world's second largest economy and its economy enters the new normal, to maintain sustainable and healthy economic growth we must have a global vision, take a holistic approach to the situation both at home and abroad, and develop a grand and comprehensive opening-up strategy. We must embrace the world in a more proactive manner.⁹⁶⁸

Once more, Xi praised the results gained since the 1978 reforms while simultaneously calling for maintaining engagement with the global community.

⁹⁶⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 77.

⁹⁶⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 550.

The ever-accelerating development of science and technology served as an additional element of the Liberal framework which Xi adopted within his discourse. In recognition of this stance, Xi advocated for increasing investments and capabilities within the Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) fields, ensuring that China's economy was postured to retain its dynamism in a world of increasingly rapid change. He described the state of global technological development:

The 21st century heralds a new round of scientific, technological and industrial revolution. Global scientific and technological innovation has exhibited new trends and features. Cross-disciplinary integration is accelerating, new disciplines continue to emerge, and scientific frontiers keep spreading.⁹⁶⁹ Facing these rapid and interconnected developments, Xi argued that the PRC must be ready and able to adapt to such shifts. He expanded on the needed shift to keep pace with these changes in his 2017 speech entitled, "China's Economy: From High-Speed Growth to High-Quality Development."

China has reached a critical stage in transforming the growth model, and is faced with prominent problems such as rising labor costs, increased constraints imposed by resources and the environment, unsustainable models of extensive development, and impediments in the flows of the economy. At the same time, a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is gaining momentum, and multiple breakthroughs are being made all around the world. We must promote high-quality development if we are to adapt to new technological changes and new needs of the people, and we must form a high-quality, efficient and diversified supply system to provide more quality products and services.⁹⁷⁰ According to Xi, only by staying ahead of the curve of the rapid shifts in science and technology could China maintain a sustainable model for development, which he posited as foundational for any efforts towards achieving national rejuvenation.

Another pillar of the Liberal framework that Xi adopted was the need for peace and stability, both internally and externally, to allow for economic development to flourish. Xi portrayed these concepts as simultaneously desirable and inevitable as the general trend of history. For example, Xi described the value of peace and stability in Asia and committed China to upholding it during the 2013 APEC summit.

China will firmly uphold regional peace and stability, and help cement the foundations for a mutually beneficial situation in the Asia Pacific region . . . Without peace, development is out of the question, like water without a source and a tree without roots. We Chinese often say, "A family in harmony prospers." As a member of the Asia Pacific family, China is ready to live in amity with other family members, which help each other.⁹⁷¹ Xi made clear that, in his estimation, peace and stability were necessary prerequisites for any economic development and must therefore be maintained to set the stage for China's national rejuvenation.

⁹⁶⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 128.

⁹⁷⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 277.

⁹⁷¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 360.

Furthermore, Xi contrasted the current trend towards peace and stability against the previous historical period dominated by imperialism and power blocs. That same year, he asserted:

It is a world where peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit have become the trend of the times. The old colonial system has long since disintegrated, and confrontations between blocs as during the Cold War have long gone.⁹⁷²

Not only were peace and stability the trend of the times, but Xi suggested the very nature of international relations had shifted from previous models after the end of the Cold War.

In Xi's articulation, the main drivers for economic development, scientific and technological advancement, and ensuring peace and stability were the interrelated concepts of globalization and multipolarity. These concepts remained essential to the Liberal framework, with Xi praising an increasingly interconnected global economy and international community and suggesting they remained necessary for China to achieve national rejuvenation. Xi expounded on his views to the United Nations in 2015, when he declared:

The world is going through a historical process of accelerated evolution. The light of peace, development, and progress will be powerful enough to dispel the clouds of war, poverty and backwardness. The movement towards a multipolar world and the rise of emerging markets and developing countries have become an irresistible trend of history. Economic globalization and the advent of an information age have greatly unleashed and boosted productive forces.⁹⁷³

In addition, Xi noted that nations and economies were increasingly interconnected and therefore it was necessary to continue to reform systems of global governance to keep pace.

The world is going through a new round of major development, transformation and adjustment. The economic and social wellbeing of all countries is increasingly interconnected. Reform of the global governance system and the international order is picking up speed.⁹⁷⁴

As a result, Xi argued that China must take an active role in shaping reforms of global institutions. In fact, he posited that China must orient its national security strategy based on an accurate reading of trends in the international landscape and should guide the global order's shape to account for these trends. During a party speech on national security, he instructed:

To have an accurate assessment of China's security situation and maintain our national security, we need to follow the laws of development in light of tremendous changes in the international landscape, make overall plans for national security on the basis of guarding against risks, and by taking advantage of the current period of strategic opportunities. The overall global trend towards multipolarity, economic globalization and

⁹⁷² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 280.

⁹⁷³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 570.

⁹⁷⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 412.

democratic international relations remains unchanged. We should help guide the international community to establish a truly just and equitable world order.⁹⁷⁵

Xi envisioned a more active role for the PRC in shaping the world order and aimed to orient Chinese national security policy to maximize benefits from what he describes as the trends toward multipolarity and globalization.

For Xi, the United Nations provided the ideal organization to pursue his vision for China's role in the global order. It facilitated his concept of multipolarity with international cooperation including all nations, minimizing the role of power blocs potentially arranged against the PRC, while still preserving China's veto power through the Security Council if its vital interests were threatened. Xi relied on historical memory associated with the United Nations, especially its Charter, to articulate his vision for global governance. Xi expressed his views on the current international order:

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, we have worked proactively to uphold the international order that is based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and safeguard the fruits of victory in World War II that the Chinese people won at the expense of great national sacrifice.⁹⁷⁶

He presented his policy orientation as upholding the principles of the UN Charter which was established as a direct result of the sacrifices made for victory in World War II. Furthermore, by tying the national sacrifices of Chinese people specifically to the United Nations and the new world order, it served two intertwined goals. It attempted to sanctify that system in the eyes of the Chinese population and displayed the investment in blood made by China to establish that very system, justifying the PRC's right to an inviolable voice within it. Xi expanded on the major diplomatic touchstones underlying the Global Order using the Liberal framework in another UN speech in 2017.

As modern history shows, to establish a fair and equitable international order is the goal for which humanity has always striven. From the principles of equality and sovereignty established in the Peace of Westphalia over 360 years ago to international humanitarianism affirmed in the Geneva Convention more than 150 years ago; from the four purposes and seven principles enshrined in the UN Charter more than 70 years ago to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence championed by the Bandung Conference over 60 years ago, many principles have emerged in the evolution of international relations and have been widely accepted. These principles should guide us in building a community of shared future for mankind.⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 412.

⁹⁷⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 487.

⁹⁷⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 590.

Xi constructed the history of the current international system being formed originally from Westphalia, through the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter, and including the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. By including the final item, Xi implied that China was not merely a participant in the system but had taken an active role in advancing those core values which underwrite the Liberal International Order.

Xi represented his foreign policy as more than a crude calculation on the best course for China, nor based upon only adhering to the general trend of history, ready to switch if the tides shifted. Rather, he embraced a moral dimension common in the Liberal framework, namely adopting the stance that Xi was on the “right side of history.” For example, at his 2021 address to the United Nations marking the 50th anniversary of the PRC acquiring UN representation, Xi declared, “Let us join hands, stand on the right side of history and the side of human progress, and work tirelessly for the lasting peaceful development of the world and for the global community of shared future.”⁹⁷⁸ Xi expanded on this view as part of his report to the 20th Party Congress, claiming that the PRC remained dedicated to a peaceful course and would not follow the example of past colonial powers.

In pursuing modernization, China will not tread the old path of war, colonization, and plunder taken by some countries. That brutal and blood-stained path of enrichment at the expense of others caused great suffering for the people of developing countries. We will stand firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress.⁹⁷⁹

However, Xi appears to have adjusted his view on the general trend of history. He did not abandon the Liberal interpretation of general progress but noted that now it faced significant obstacles. In the face of these challenges, he positioned the PRC as a defender of the rules-based international order. At an APEC summit in 2022, he explained:

To follow the path of peaceful development is a strategic choice made by us in the fundamental interests of the Chinese people. We will stand firmly on the right side of history. We will stay committed to peace, development, cooperation, and delivering mutual benefit. We will strive to safeguard world peace and

⁹⁷⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 554. Chen Jian describes the value of the PRC regaining the UN seat, “The simple fact that the PRC, after being excluded from the United Nations for over two decades, gained its position at the UN in October 1971 proves the enormous strategic value of the Sino-American rapprochement to Beijing.” Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, page 239.

⁹⁷⁹ Xi Jinping, “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects,” *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-10/26/c_824626.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

development as we pursue our own development, and we will make greater contribution to world peace and development through our own development.⁹⁸⁰ Xi increasingly portrayed the PRC as a guarantor for the International Order and presented its efforts as moral actions, standing on the right side of history.

The view of the trend of history flowing in a progressive direction remained a hallmark within core leader discourse from Deng to Xi. However, shortly after the 19th Party Congress, there appeared a substantial shift in how Xi discussed this issue. Certainly, there had been acknowledgements of challenges in the past by previous core leaders, but Xi painted a far direr picture that threatened one of the key assumptions underlying the previous governing philosophies, that assumption being that the world was moving forward in a progressive fashion according to Liberal international relations theory. Discussion and instrumental usage on this topic falls outside my definition of the Liberal framework but remains tethered to it within Xi's discourse. Xi argued that the emergence of this countercurrent had come on so rapidly and with such force as to be unique in recent history, made even worse by the impacts of COVID-19. At a 2022 BRICS meeting, Xi explained the dilemma:

Right now, our world is facing drastic changes and a pandemic both unseen in a century. Various security challenges keep emerging. The world economy still faces strong headwinds on its path toward recovery, and global development has suffered major setbacks. Where is the world headed: Peace or war? Progress or regression? Openness or isolation? Cooperation or confrontation? These are choices of the times that we are confronted with.⁹⁸¹

These major changes facing the world required an adjustment in policy. As such, Xi had to adjust his governing philosophy regarding the trend of history to properly account for these shifts. He posited, "We should be fully aware of this complexity and these challenges, and we should pursue the goal of national rejuvenation in the context of a world facing a scale of change unseen in a century."⁹⁸² In Xi's presentation, decades of underlying assumptions were now confronted with unprecedented forces unseen in a century, justifying further adjustments under Xi's leadership to meet these new challenges while preserving the goal of national rejuvenation.

⁹⁸⁰ Xi Jinping, "Staying Committed to and Jointly Promoting Development to Bring Asia-Pacific Cooperation to New Heights," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-11/18/c_832249.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹⁸¹ Xi Jinping, "Chinese President Xi Jinping's address at the conference of the 70th anniversary of CCPIT and Global Trade and Investment Promotion Summit," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-05/19/c_754005.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹⁸² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 582.

Xi described the forces opposing the beneficial trend of history as headwinds taking the form of protectionism, unilateralism, and hegemonism. According to Xi, these forces, catalyzed by COVID-19, require robust opposition from the PRC and the international community. At the 2021 International Import Expo, Xi explained the new challenges facing China and the world, “As we speak, the world is experiencing the combined impact of major changes and a pandemic, both on a scale unseen in a century. Unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, and economic globalization is facing headwinds.”⁹⁸³ Xi’s use of the headwinds metaphor matched the notion that the general course remained correct, but some adjustment in policy was needed to keep the ship of state on course. Protectionism and unilateralism served as inverses of globalization and multilateralism. Xi’s rhetoric became even more stark during a December 2023 address in Vietnam.

In today's world, changes on a scale unseen in a century are unfolding at an accelerated pace. Hegemonism, unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise. Peace and development in the region are confronted with fairly grave challenges of instability and uncertainty.⁹⁸⁴

Xi adjusted his governing philosophy, positing that powerful forces threatened to undermine the steady course of the trend of history outlined in the Liberal framework.

Xi insisted that the PRC remain committed to his interpretation of the Liberal framework but contrasted it with an opposing outlook. Xi categorized this opposing approach to international relations using concepts such as Cold War mentality, zero-sum competition, and especially a Clash of Civilizations. In this construction, opponents for the PRC’s continued development were blinded by outmoded approaches that predisposed them, unnecessarily and counterproductively, to view the PRC antagonistically.⁹⁸⁵ On the other hand, like-minded partners, such as fellow Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) members, were united in their rejection of such outmoded thinking, according to Xi. For example, addressing an SCO meeting in 2018, he espoused:

⁹⁸³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 271.

⁹⁸⁴ Xi Jinping, “Building a China-Vietnam Community with a Shared Future That Carries Strategic Significance and Writing Together a New Chapter in Our Modernization Drive,” *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-12/12/c_946730.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹⁸⁵ Although not referenced explicitly, Xi appears to retain previous core leaders’ disagreement with the argument in Samuel Huntington’s 1996, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, because the arguments of competition along civilizational lines were retrograde to the PRC’s interests.

The Shanghai Spirit, transcending outdated concepts such as the clash of civilizations, Cold War thinking, and zero-sum mentality, has turned a new page in the history of international relations and is winning increasing support from the international community.⁹⁸⁶

Xi extended this enlightened world view to other players on the world stage as well. During his 2022 visit to Saudi Arabia, he ascribed these same principles to the Arab world.

The Arab civilization advocates the middle way and moderation, encourages inclusiveness and mutual learning, opposes clash of civilizations, and is deeply rooted in its rich culture and history. Be it on the world political, economic or cultural map, Arab states always claim an important place.⁹⁸⁷

Xi claimed that the deep civilizational heritage of both the Arab and Chinese nations provided them with keen insight to pursue a more enlightened path. The implication appears to be that those states that take what he describes as the more short-sighted realist viewpoint adopted this stance because they lacked the historical perspective of those states with a rich civilization, like China and the Arab world. Xi presented China's role as a defender of the Liberal order against threats from realist powers as a natural outgrowth of its civilization and attempted to gain allies by attributing the same civilizational foresight to other states and organizations.

All four major frameworks of historical memory appeared within Xi's discourse, and he made instrumental use of them to pursue his political objectives and solidify his core leadership status. Concurrently, each of the four frameworks provided Xi with tools necessary to redefine historical memory to sustain his core leadership and aid in crafting and recounting his approved narratives of historical memory. The Confucian/Traditional framework bolstered confidence in the Chinese civilization as a bulwark against undesirable western influence. In addition, it acted as a basis for establishing an ethical core to both inspire the general population and facilitate disciplining corrupt cadres. Likewise, the Marxist framework, with a focus on the founding of the CPC and its early history, especially memory related to the rectification movement, aided Xi's anti-corruption efforts. This lionization of the early history of the CPC glorified the Party's past and tied Xi's goals for national rejuvenation to fulfillment of the Party's original aspirations. Furthermore, the Nationalist framework, especially related to the CoH,

⁹⁸⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume III*, page 511.

⁹⁸⁷ Xi Jinping, "Carrying Forward Our Millennia-old Friendship and Jointly Creating a Better Future," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-12/08/c_837573.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

operated as a marker for China's decline, with the CPC reversing this trend and its current policy goals set to complete the undoing of those indignations through national rejuvenation accomplished by the two centennial goals. In addition, the Nationalist framework was meant to give the Chinese people confidence in their civilization and bolster their ability to resist infatuation with Western-styled governance. Finally, Xi used the Liberal framework to create space for his foreign policy to expand the PRC's influence in the international order while preserving the PRC's core interests. On the other hand, Xi acknowledged that the fundamental assumptions for the continuation of positive trends faced substantial opposition from nations reverting to what he termed unilateralism and protectionism. Xi's instrumental use of historical memory relied heavily on the four frameworks of historical memory, all of which provided essential elements to aid in his quest for core leadership.

Illustrative Texts

Although all four frameworks provided Xi with indispensable implements as he constructed his governing philosophy, like his predecessors, he did not use them in isolation. In fact, Xi appeared to combine the four frameworks within his discourse at a higher rate than any of the previous core leaders. As in the previous cases, I have selected four texts to better illustrate how this interaction functions and to provide some additional examples for how Xi tied his instrumental use to specific political objectives. The texts have been selected to provide a sampling across all three major periods in Xi's discourse as well as to all three primary audiences.

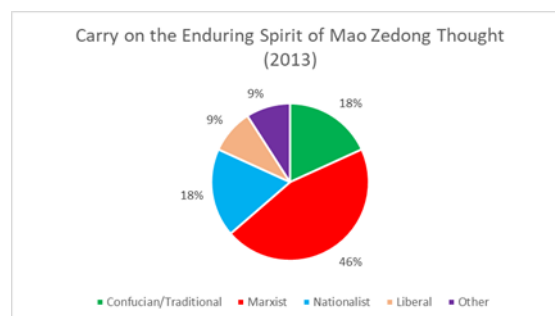


Figure 6.8 References by category for text titled, "Carry on the Enduring Spirit of Mao Zedong Thought" (2013)

The first text I examined is, "Carry on the Enduring Spirit of Mao Zedong Thought," delivered early in Xi's tenure in December 2013. The primary audience for this text was the Party, as it consisted of

remarks made by Xi at a symposium commemorating Mao's 120th birthday. At this point, Xi had secured all three major positions of authority but was still solidifying his ideological preeminence over the Party and had initiated his anti-corruption campaign.⁹⁸⁸ I detected a total of eight instrumental uses of historical memory, including all four major frameworks.

The main objective for Xi appears to have been to bolster his legitimacy as core leader by selectively associating his governing philosophy with Mao Zedong Thought. In pursuit of this main objective, Xi instrumentally used historical memory of Mao Zedong Thought in three main ways. The first was to embrace tenets from Mao's governing philosophy, such as seeking truth from facts and Marxism as an evolutionary process rather than a stagnant orthodoxy.⁹⁸⁹ Another facet of Mao Zedong Thought that Xi borrowed from was the conception of the mass line.⁹⁹⁰ The final item was the importance of the PRC retaining its socialist orientation in the face of calls for reform along Western-inspired lines. Xi relied on the instrumental usage in this text to enhance his ideological profile by linking his ideology to Mao's.

Xi instrumentally used the Marxist framework as he expounded on the value of Mao Zedong Thought and the need to carry forward elements of it within his governing philosophy. One facet that Xi borrowed was the versatile concept of seeking truth from facts. This clause enabled Xi to adjust any policies he needed so long as he could reasonably justify that the change was needed to account for an alteration in China's material circumstances without invalidating past ideological assertions. Xi maintained that this tenet remained at the heart of Marxism applied to China's conditions.

As a fundamental tenet of Marxism, seeking truth from facts is a basic requirement for Chinese Communists to understand and transform the world. It is also our Party's basic thinking, working and leading approach. We have upheld and should continue to uphold the principle of proceeding from reality in everything we do,

⁹⁸⁸ For a brief description of these early anti-corrupt efforts and their mixed results see Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, pages 66-70.

⁹⁸⁹ See Chapter 1 page 90 of this paper on Mao's articulation of seeking truth from facts.

⁹⁹⁰ Xing Lu describes the value of the mass line in Mao's rhetoric: "One of the reasons the CCP (CPC) succeeded, particularly in comparison with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, was the 'mass line,' the action of integrating party members with ordinary people. During this integration party members were directed to learn the people's concerns and help people solve problems while educating them by raising their so-called "proletarian consciousness" through propaganda work about Mao and the party. Mao's use of nature metaphor had been effective in linking and strengthening the relationship between the party and the Chinese people." Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*, page 77.

integrating theory with practice, and testing and developing truth in practice. Mao Zedong once said, "'Facts' are all the things that exist objectively, 'truth' means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and 'to seek' means to study." He also used the metaphor "shooting the arrow at the target," that is, we should shoot the "arrow" of Marxism at the "target" of China's revolution, modernization drive and reform.⁹⁹¹

Although exact form and policy orientation may shift, Xi viewed what he described as the Marxist idea of seeking truth from facts as the starting point for formulating any policy decision. Another related facet of Mao Zedong Thought that Xi borrowed from was the view of Marxism realized through practice rather than dogmatic application of theory. Xi explained:

In seeking truth from facts, we should promote theoretical innovation based on practice. The basic tenets of Marxism are universal truth with eternal ideological value. Nevertheless, the classical Marxist authors did not exhaust truth but blazed a trail to seek and develop truth. Today, new problems will arise while we adhere to and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, drive reform to a deeper level, and deal effectively with foreseeable and unpredictable difficulties and risks on our way ahead. All these things are crying out for new and appropriate theoretical solutions. We should review the fresh experience gained by the people under the leadership of the Party, constantly adapt Marxism to Chinese conditions and make contemporary Marxism shine brighter in China.⁹⁹²

Xi asserted that his governing philosophy pushed forward the necessary reforms under Marxism applied to China's conditions. Xi instrumentally used core tenets of Mao Zedong Thought to justify adopting a new ruling ideology under his authority as core leader to meet new challenges.

The mass line was another facet from Mao Zedong Thought that Xi associated with his governing philosophy to engender legitimacy. In his discussions of the mass line concept, Xi instrumentally used both the Confucian/Traditional and Marxist frameworks, attempting to show both a Marxist and Chinese expression for the concept. He borrowed Mao's authority on the value of the mass line and the need to maintain it as a guiding principle under Xi's governing philosophy.

The mass line is the Party's lifeline and fundamental work principle. It is a cherished tradition that enables our Party to maintain its vitality and combat capability . . . The mass line in essence encapsulates the basic tenet of Marxism that the people are the creators of history . . . History has time and again proved that the people are the major force behind historical development and social progress. As Mao Zedong said, "Once China's destiny is in the hands of the people, China, like the sun rising in the east, will illuminate every corner of the land with a brilliant flame."⁹⁹³

⁹⁹¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 47. Source for quote, Mao Zedong: "Reform Our Study," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. III, Eng. ed, page 22.

⁹⁹² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 48.

⁹⁹³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 48. Source for quote, Mao Zedong: "Address to the Preparatory Meeting of the New Political Consultative Conference," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. IV, Eng. ed., page 408.

However, Xi did not rely solely on Mao to justify his position. For example, borrowing from a reference in the *Guanzi* (管子), he stated:

“Decrees may be followed if they are in accordance with the aspirations of the people; they may be ineffective if they are against the aspirations of the people.” Serving the people wholeheartedly is the fundamental purpose and outcome of all the work of the Party, and a symbol that distinguishes our Party from all other parties.⁹⁹⁴

As Xi integrated the mass line concept into his governing philosophy, he relied on both the Marxist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks to illustrate his use of the concept and justify its inclusion.

The third subsidiary objective for Xi was to demand a continuation of independence in Chinese political culture. He located this independence as a valuable legacy from Mao Zedong Thought. This assertion for independence was necessary as Xi built support for his governing philosophy and parried attacks against his policies and Chinese socialism generally. First, using the Marxist framework, Xi associated retaining the system of socialism as equivalent to maintaining China’s political independence, but cautioned against repeating past errors of retreating to a closed-door policy.

Adhering to independence means that we will firmly take the socialist path with Chinese characteristics. We will not take the old path of a rigid closed-door policy, nor an erroneous path by abandoning socialism. We should enhance our political faith and our confidence in the path, theories and systems of Chinese socialism . . . We must not blindly copy the development models of other countries nor accept their dictation.⁹⁹⁵

Xi presented his course as taking a middle path, avoiding returning to the closed-door policies that had disastrous results, but he also pushed back against copying other nations’ institutions recklessly. In addition, Xi argued that maintaining the current system was a matter of national pride, and further argued that the Chinese had much to be proud of as a country and should therefore have confidence in their system.

Boasting a vast land of 9.6 million sq km, a rich cultural heritage and a strong bond among the 1.3 billion Chinese people, we are resolved to go our own way. We have a big stage to display our advantages on, a long and rich history to draw benefit from, and a powerful impetus to push us ahead. We Chinese people – every single one of us – should draw confidence from this.⁹⁹⁶

⁹⁹⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 49. For a brief summary of the *Guanzi* text see, Ulrich Theobald, <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Diverse/guanzi.html>, Accessed 3/11/2024.

⁹⁹⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 50.

⁹⁹⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 50.

Xi claimed that China should also maintain an independent foreign policy consistent with the Liberal international relations orientation. Using the historical memory of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, he advocated:

Adhering to independence requires us to uphold our independent foreign policy of peace, and follow the path of peaceful development. We should hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation and benefit for all, maintain friendly relations with other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, conduct exchanges and cooperation with other countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, staunchly safeguard world peace, and promote common development.⁹⁹⁷

As Xi mined the memory of Mao Zedong Thought to enhance his governing philosophy, he placed special emphasis on solidifying faith in the independence of Chinese policy, both foreign and domestic, from undesirable intrusion of Western institutions. If Xi failed to retain this confidence in the existing system, the authority of his governing philosophy and power as core leader would diminish precipitously.

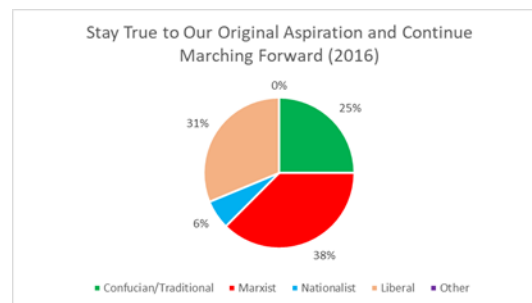


Figure 6.9 References by category for text titled, “Stay True to Our Original Aspiration and Continue Marching Forward” (2016)

The second text I look at is, “Stay True to Our Original Aspiration and Continue Marching Forward,” delivered at a ceremony marking the 95th anniversary of the founding of the CPC in July 2016. By this point, Xi had secured substantial authority both ideologically and politically as core leader and further sought to enshrine his influence ahead of the 19th Party Congress occurring the following year. The ceremony was primarily a CPC affair thus indicating a Party primary audience. I discerned a total of sixteen instrumental uses of historical memory, once more across all four of the main narrative frameworks.

The main objective for Xi appears to be to use the opportunity of the anniversary to focus attention on the CPC founding as an impactful and immediately recallable event in cadres’ collective

⁹⁹⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume I*, page 51.

memory. Presumably, Xi hoped that by conjuring this memory, he could simultaneously enshrine the Party as an essential institution in Chinese political culture, both in form and function, and associate himself as the inheritor of this legacy. In fact, this speech served as a chance for Xi to expound on the particulars of his governing philosophy. While pursuing this objective, Xi instrumentally used historical memory to advance subordinate and supporting goals using multiple narrative frameworks. First, he advanced the theory of history as instructive while also interpreting it as progressive. Second, he glorified the founding of the CPC, crediting its ideological character as responsible for the PRC's successes. Next, Xi called on Party members to retain the necessary resolve to see through the project started by the CPC founders. Fourth, Xi credited Deng Xiaoping and his R&OU policies for the recent progress and called for generally maintaining this orientation in constructing policy. Finally, Xi expressed his view on the correct posture for the PRC's foreign policy. The four frameworks intermingled together to advance these goals as Xi pursued them within his address.

To amplify his further instrumental uses of historical memory, Xi asserted that history provided an invaluable tool not merely for understanding the past but to guide contemporary policy. To support this position, Xi relied on China's long tradition of drawing on historical works to inform the political decision-making process. Xi quoted from the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* to demonstrate his position:

"Looking at the mirror we know about ourselves; reflecting on the past we know what to do now." Today we review our history not to take comfort in our successes, and not to look for excuses for evading the difficulties we currently face, but for the purpose of summing up experience, learning the laws of history, and giving ourselves the power and courage to move forward.⁹⁹⁸

Xi identified the value of studying history for political purposes as being able to discern and properly interpret the historical forces actively at play and to give the necessary confidence to enact the necessary policies. Furthermore, Xi argued that the march of history was relentless and Party leaders must keep pace or be left behind. "History will move forward. It will not wait for the hesitant, the bystanders, slackers or the weak. Only by marching forward with history will we be able to have a bright future."⁹⁹⁹ Xi laid the

⁹⁹⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 32.

⁹⁹⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 32.

groundwork for the rest of the speech on the need to pay heed to historical memory, or at least Xi's invocation of it.

As may be expected during a speech commemorating the CPC's establishment, Xi leaned heavily into the Marxist framework as he discussed that legacy and how to make use of the heritage to benefit the current generation. First, he exhorted cadres to carry forward the founding spirit:

Our Party has stood the test of time for 95 years, but we should always retain the spirit of the Communists at the time of the founding of our Party. We should always have a heart for the people. We shall move forward, but we shall not forget the path we have taken in the past. No matter how far we go towards a bright future, we should not forget why we set out in the first place. Facing the future and challenges, all Party members should never forget why we started out and continue marching forward.¹⁰⁰⁰

After reflecting on the CPC's endurance for the past century and demanding that Party members keep their original aspirations in mind, he depicted the Party's Marxist character as the reason for its endurance.

The guiding philosophy is the spiritual beacon of a party. Over the past 95 years, the CPC has accomplished so many tasks which were thought to be impossible by other political forces. The reason for this has been precisely attributed to our adoption of Marxism as our guide of action, while the theories of Marxism have then been further developed.¹⁰⁰¹

According to Xi, although Marxism had enabled the CPC to succeed despite monumental odds, Marxism could not be taken as pure theory, but needed to be applied to China's actual, and evolving, conditions. To justify this position, Xi relied on the memory of Marxists whose theoretical standing was beyond reproach, namely Marx and Engels.

At the same time, facing the new characteristics of our era and the demands of new realities, Marxism also needs to be better integrated with the realities of China, keep abreast with the times, and respond to the need of the Chinese people. Marxism does not put a lid on truth but opens a path to truth. Frederick Engels has said, "Marx's whole way of thinking [Auffassungsweise] is not so much a doctrine as a method. It provides, not so much ready-made dogmas, as aids to further investigation and the method for such investigation."¹⁰⁰²

As he portrayed Marxism as a method rather than a doctrine Xi, like previous core leaders, was able to adjust policy positions as he deemed necessary without the danger that comes with invalidation. As core leader, Xi used the Marxist framework to embed his governing philosophy into the legacy of the CPC founding and validate Chinese socialism by pointing to the long history of the CPC overcoming adversity.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 32.

¹⁰⁰¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 33.

¹⁰⁰² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, pages 33-34. Source for Quote, Frederick Engels, "Engels to Werner Sombart," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 50, Eng, ed., page 461.

However, to carry forward the CPC founding spirit, Xi contended that both resolve and confidence in his articulation of Socialism with Chinese characteristics were necessary. Regarding resolve, Xi noted the need to remain steady in the face of adversity, and not allow temporary setbacks to cause cadres to lose faith in the collective leadership. He used the Confucian/Traditional by quoting a Ming era (1368 – 1644) philosopher, “‘Without resolve, one can accomplish nothing.’ The wavering of one's faith and ideals is the most dangerous risk. The decline of a party often begins with its members' loss of faith and ideals.”¹⁰⁰³ Xi had diagnosed the collapse of the Soviet Union occurring primarily because the CPSU lost faith in their core values and warned that a similar lack of resolve could lead the CPC down the same doomed path. To help cement that faith, Xi pointed to the indomitable spirit of Revolutionary martyrs, calling on members to remember their sacrifice as a source to bolster their resolve.

Whether our Party is strong or not depends on whether our members' faith and ideals are strong or not. In the past 95 years, communist ideals have encouraged one generation of Communists after another to work hard, and many have even lost their lives in the process . . . Bearing in mind the faith of our revolutionary martyrs, we will never forget the ideals they fought for and lost their lives for.¹⁰⁰⁴

In addition to utilizing the memory of martyrs, Xi also aimed to increase confidence in both the overall system and his vision. In fact, he argued that Party history displayed absolute proof for this confidence:

The whole Party should be confident in our path, theory, system and culture. In today's world, if any party, nation or people deserves to be confident, it is the CPC, the PRC and the Chinese nation. "I'm sure to live for 200 years, and will swim for 3,000 li." We shall have such courage and confidence so that we can overcome any challenges we meet, open up new horizons and create new miracles.¹⁰⁰⁵

Another font for confidence, derived from the Nationalist framework, was China's 5,000-year-old cultural tradition.

The confidence in our culture is a more fundamental, broader and more profound faith in the development of China. It derives from our splendid 5,000-year history and is embedded in decades of a revolutionary struggle that embodies the deep-rooted spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation, and represents the unique cultural identity of the Chinese people.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 34. From page 47, note 3, The reference is to scholar Wang Yangming (1472-1529), “Rules for Students at Longchang.”

¹⁰⁰⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 35.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 36.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 36.

Xi apparently hoped to translate confidence in China's cultural heritage into a patriotic spirit that motivated citizens to carry out his desired reform program. Xi instrumentally used memory from a diverse set of narrative frameworks as he labored to instill confidence and resolve among cadres to keep faith with the Party and with Xi's core leadership.

As part of his governing philosophy, Xi continued to rely on the legitimating power of economic development tied to the continuation of Party rule. He recalled Deng's R&OU policy as the primary driver for the PRC's rapid growth in recent decades. Xi attempted to associate his governing philosophy as its obvious sequel. He leveraged the memory of Deng's 1992 Southern Tour and outlined how he would continue and advance these effective programs:

Deng Xiaoping once said, "We should adhere to the basic line for a hundred years, with no vacillation. That is the only way to win the trust and support of the people. Any one who attempted to change the line, principles and policies adopted since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee would not be countenanced by the people; he would be toppled." The basic line of our Party is the lifeline of the state and a guarantee for the people's happiness. We should place economic development at the center of our nation's invigoration, use the Four Cardinal Principles as the bedrock of our nation and reform and opening up as our path to prosperity, and hold on to our beliefs.¹⁰⁰⁷

Despite China approaching a new era, which Xi's governing philosophy was meant to address, R&OU remained essential to generating economic growth and raising living standards, thereby winning the support of the people. Xi additionally stressed the importance of sustaining popular support by delivering prosperity, referencing the *Book of Rites* (禮記):

Prosperity for the people is the basic political position of the CPC, and it is the prominent feature that distinguishes Marxist parties from other parties. Our Party and people stand together through storm and stress, go through thick and thin together, and keep flesh-and-blood ties, which is the basic guarantee of the Party in overcoming all difficulties and risks. "Win popular support, and you win the country; lose it, and you will lose the country."¹⁰⁰⁸

In this case, Xi relied on a mixture of the Liberal framework focusing on Deng's R&OU policies delivering prosperity with an added dash from the Confucian/Traditional to advocate for a continuation of those policies that had proven successful in the past.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 37. Deng Xiaoping, "Excerpts from Talks Given in Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shanghai," *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. III, Eng. Ed., pages 358-359.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 40. *Book of Rites*, Da Xue, 13, "道得眾則得國，失眾則失國" James Legge Translation, "This shows that, by gaining the people, the kingdom is gained, and, by losing the people, the kingdom is lost." <https://ctext.org/liji/da-xue>

The final area in which Xi instrumentally utilized historical memory was to enunciate his approach to foreign policy. He maintained his general stance of upholding long-standing strategies while nodding to the need to account for the prevailing trend of the times. Consistent with the Liberal framework and the estimations of his predecessors, Xi viewed the forces of peace and stability as deepening. He suggested the world and China should abide by the Liberal international relations theory as their guiding principle to safeguard positive results for all.

Today's mankind is better qualified than ever before to achieve the goal of peace and development together. China advocates that people of all countries make concerted efforts, turn pressure into impetus, turn crises into opportunities, replace confrontation with cooperation, and replace monopoly with "benefits for all". What kind of international order and governance system best suits the world, and best suits the people of all countries? This is something that should be decided by all countries through consultation, and not by a single country or a minority of countries. Together with people from all other countries, China will actively participate in the construction of a global governance system, trying to contribute China's wisdom to implementing global governance and push global order and governance to develop in a fairer and more reasonable way.¹⁰⁰⁹ Furthermore, Xi intimated that his foreign policy was oriented towards the advancement of the Liberal order and that this position had remained consistent throughout the PRC's history.

The purpose of China's diplomatic policy is to safeguard world peace and promote common development. China is always a builder of world peace, contributor of global development, and maintainer of global order.¹⁰¹⁰ Finally, Xi returned to invoking the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the best manifestation of the PRC's, and Xi's, approach to international relations.

China is committed to an independent foreign policy of peace and developing friendly cooperation with all other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. China follows the basic state policy of opening up, developing its economy with the door open to the outside world. Through major international cooperation projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, we work to create a more comprehensive, diversified and deeper opening-up structure.¹⁰¹¹ Xi rendered his BRI as an exhibition of the Five Principles in operation under his auspices. The instrumental use of historical memory also presumably allowed Xi to express his foreign policy in a fashion more attractive to many, especially Western audiences.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 42.

¹⁰¹⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 42.

¹⁰¹¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume II*, page 42.

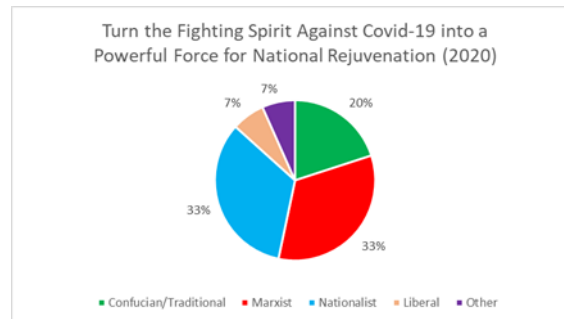


Figure 6.10 References by category for text titled, "Turn the Fighting Spirit Against Covid-19 into a Powerful Force for National Rejuvenation" (2020).

The third text I explored is, "Turn the Fighting Spirit Against Covid-19 into a Powerful Force for National Rejuvenation," delivered to a national audience in September 2020 to celebrate figures identified as having made outstanding contributions in the fight against the Covid pandemic. As such, the primary audience for this address was domestic. Xi had secured substantial authority in the wake of the 19th Party Congress.¹⁰¹² Furthermore, his Xi Jinping Thought had been elevated as not merely the prevailing ideology of a core leader but rivaled Deng's and Mao's in its prevalence and scope.¹⁰¹³ The ultimate objective for Xi's governing philosophy was the realization of national rejuvenation by the second centennial goal. However, COVID-19 threatened to derail Xi's plans, including his prestige as core leader. On the other hand, by the time of this address, Xi believed that the PRC had turned a corner and sought to capitalize on this assumed victory. I discerned a total of fifteen instrumental uses of historical memory, once more across all four main narrative frameworks.

¹⁰¹² "The consensus from around the world on this congress was that it had finally consolidated Xi's power. He was master now of all he surveyed. Since his appointment in 2012, he had come to dominate the Party via its anti-corruption struggle and a series of personnel moves he had spearheaded. But his reach seemed far beyond this. His visits abroad to 50 countries during his period in power have demonstrated that he is speaking not just to China, but to the whole world. In October 2017, during congress proceedings, The Economist magazine's front cover carried the simple image of Xi with the statement 'The World's Most Powerful Man'." Kerry Brown, *The World According to Xi: Everything You Need to Know About the New China*, page 2. Brown does go on to argue that there are limits on Xi's power tied to his need to deliver on his promises, see page 127.

¹⁰¹³ Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter-Reformation: The Reassertion of Ideological Governance in Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 132 (2021): page 879.

As noted above, Xi used this address as an opportunity to declare “a great strategic success” over the COVID-19 pandemic and to harness that perceived victory to fuel efforts to regain lost ground towards achieving the second centennial goal.¹⁰¹⁴ Not only did Xi seek to portray the CPC-led government as responsible for leading the people to defeating the pandemic, but claimed the causes for that success were reflected in his governing philosophy. To aid in transforming associated success against Covid to credit for Xi as core leader, he pursued four subsidiary threads. First, Xi presented the scale of the victory as unprecedented while simultaneously partly crediting China’s national characteristics and its socialist system for the triumph. Next, he described how the CPC, implementing the socialist system in China, allowed the PRC to achieve this victory. Third, Xi stressed the need to cooperate across the international community and arrest any backsliding towards what he described as protectionism and unilateralism. Finally, Xi nodded to the reality that additional challenges awaited China in the future, but that if it stayed true to the current course and had confidence in its civilization, it could weather any storm. Xi used a mixture of all four of the narrative frameworks in pursuit of these objectives.

First, Xi raised the profile for the nation’s accomplishment over Covid and claimed it was the largest and most successful government intervention in the nation’s history. Presumably, Xi attempted to increase the victory’s value, which in turn would raise his profile and prestige as the leader who charted China’s course through this crisis. Xi characterized the response, “We have launched the most-wide ranging and intense emergency humanitarian assistance campaign since the founding of the PRC in 1949 . . .”¹⁰¹⁵ Xi presumably desired to cultivate this triumph over Covid into a new artefact, a spirit like the CPC founding or the Resist America Aid Korea campaign. Furthermore, this victory belonged to Xi, and could be translated into rechargeable political capital. He credited this victory as being an expression of the Chinese national character, “The great spirit that we forged in the battle against COVID-19 is deeply

¹⁰¹⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 112.

¹⁰¹⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 115.

rooted in the character of the Chinese nation and our cultural genes.”¹⁰¹⁶ Xi hoped to instrumentalize the Covid response into a political tool and used the Nationalist framework in his attempt to forge it into such a device.

Next, Xi described the factors which led to this success, namely Xi Jinping Thought. The first portion of that equation was the positive role of socialist ideology guiding policy formulation. Fundamentally that ideology tied the CPC to the people, with the Party serving as the vanguard for their interests. Xi explained, “Our Party comes from the people and has its roots among them. Everything it does is for the people, and it relies on the people in everything it does.”¹⁰¹⁷ By remaining affixed to the people, Xi argued that the Party was able to unify its ideology, and through its integrated efforts, overcame the pandemic. He explained:

History and our experience show that as long as we uphold and strengthen the Party's overall leadership, and reinforce its ability to provide political leadership and theoretical guidance, to organize and inspire the people, we will create a powerful synergy that enables us to deal with all complexities, risks and challenges.¹⁰¹⁸

Relying on appeals to CPC history through the Marxist framework, Xi concluded that China defeated the pandemic because it remained a unified force under his rule.

In addition, Xi returned to the themes of resilience and endurance as necessary elements that enabled PRC success. He found the sources of these characteristics as emerging from both the Chinese national character and the socialist governing system. Xi described the Chinese people as renowned for their resilience, among other positive attributes, throughout history, “For centuries, the Chinese people have been known for resilience, cohesiveness, tenacity, and creativity, and we are all proud to be called Chinese.”¹⁰¹⁹ Xi argued that these traits played a crucial role facilitating China’s response to the pandemic. In addition, Xi pointed to CPC historical memory and its conduct during Covid as evidence

¹⁰¹⁶ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 115.

¹⁰¹⁷ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 116.

¹⁰¹⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 116.

¹⁰¹⁹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 116.

that the socialist system provided the necessary tools not only to meet challenges but also to learn from them and grow stronger.

History and our experience have shown that as long as we uphold and improve China's socialist system . . . we will be able to withstand the trials we face, turn challenges into opportunities, and emerge stronger time and time again.¹⁰²⁰

Xi used both the Nationalist and Marxist frameworks to explain those characteristics which he attributed to combating the pandemic.

As a global catastrophe, Xi suggested that Covid necessitated a global response, reliant on international cooperation and mutual support. According to Xi, as all states shared a common destiny, all must cooperate to realize the best result. He proposed, “In a way, Covid-19 is a wakeup call for the world, reminding us that our destinies are intertwined and that no country can afford to go it alone in the face of such a major crisis.”¹⁰²¹ However, according to Xi, despite this event which should serve as a clarion call to embrace the Liberal outlook, there were accelerating changes in the world not seen in a century, making the realization of China’s national rejuvenation more precarious. He observed, “Changes on a scale unseen in a century are gripping the world at an accelerating pace, and the tasks of advancing reform, promoting development, and maintaining stability are arduous.”¹⁰²² Xi attempted to leverage the pandemic to advance China’s standing within the international order while acknowledging the potential for new difficulties emerging.

On the other hand, Xi also argued that regardless of these challenges, if the people retained confidence with both him and the PRC’s governing institutions, then just like with Covid, any difficulty could be overcome. However, to do so, constant vigilance was required, as well as unremitting efforts at self-improvement. To illustrate his point, Xi referenced the *Book of Changes* (易經), “Just as Heaven maintains vigor through movement, a gentleman makes unremitting efforts to perfect himself. A nation is

¹⁰²⁰ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 117.

¹⁰²¹ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 119.

¹⁰²² Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 119.

great because it never gives up, never retreats, and never stops moving forward.”¹⁰²³ Furthermore, Xi pointed to Chinese history to display that the nation, despite all the hardships over its 5,000-year history, had endured.

The Chinese people have experienced both hardship and glory in our 5,000 years of civilization, and we will continue to forge ahead on our great journey in the new era. No force or individual can stop the Chinese people from seeking a better life.¹⁰²⁴

Xi opined that ups and downs would continue, as they had done throughout Chinese history, but that no entity or crisis could discourage the realization of the China Dream. So long as China kept its eyes on progress, and did not allow setbacks to discourage it, but rather took them as opportunities to improve, that dream would be realized. As such, the response to the pandemic should serve future generations as both an inspiration to endure troubles and guidance to overcome them, presumably along with appreciation of Xi’s core leadership that enabled this outcome.



Figure 6.11 References by category for text titled, “Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship” (2023).

The final text I looked at is, “Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship,” delivered in San Francisco during Xi’s state visit to the United States as part of the APEC conference in November 2023. As a result, the primary audience for the speech is foreign, specifically the United States. By this point in time, Xi had assumed his third term and accrued even more

¹⁰²³ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 122. Book of Changes, Feng, 1, “天地盈虛，與時消息，而況人於人乎？況於鬼神乎？” James Legge Translation, “The (interaction of) heaven and earth is now vigorous and abundant, now dull and scanty, growing and diminishing according to the seasons. How much more must it be so with (the operations of) men! How much more also with the spiritual agency!” <https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/feng>

¹⁰²⁴ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume IV*, page 122.

political power to himself. On the other hand, Xi faced many challenges, including lingering economic difficulties slowing PRC growth, and concerns of an increasingly hostile international environment, including rising tensions with the United States. Given this fragile atmosphere, Xi appeared eager to mend relations with the United States, although not at the expense of any of the PRC's core interests. I detected a total of sixteen instrumental uses of historical memory, consisting of the narrative frameworks of Confucian/Traditional, Nationalist, and especially Liberal. Unsurprisingly, Xi avoided any invocation of the Marxist framework with this audience.

The primary objective for Xi appeared to be to portray the PRC as a nation dedicated to the rules-based international order and one which could serve as a partner not only for strengthening global stability, but also for encouraging development for both the United States and China. Therefore, Xi argued that China and the United States should seek cooperation and better relations, with the American side respecting the independence of China's political institutions and not interfering in what Xi defined as its internal affairs. To engineer this rapprochement, Xi instrumentally utilized historical memory to aid in his endeavor. He capitalized on the setting, using the San Francisco backdrop to show positive Sino-US exchanges in the past and to remind the audience of China's role in the UN's creation. Next, he catalogued various periods of cooperation and mutual benefit in Sino-US relations generally. Third, Xi affirmed the positive development of the trend of the times while preserving the PRC's right to pursue its own development path without interference. Finally, Xi purported China's predisposition to support the Liberal world order based on the PRC's historical experiences.

Making use of the setting, Xi instrumentally employed historical memory of positive Sino-US exchanges tied to the city. Recalling that heritage of positive encounters, Xi observed:

San Francisco has borne witness to exchanges between the Chinese and American peoples for over a century. A hundred and fifty-eight years ago, a large number of Chinese workers came all the way to the United States to build the first transcontinental railroad, and established in San Francisco the oldest Chinatown in the Western Hemisphere. From here, China and the United States have made many achievements . . . These extraordinary accomplishments were made jointly by our peoples accounting for nearly one quarter of the global population.¹⁰²⁵

¹⁰²⁵ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

Presumably, Xi hoped to fire the collective memories of his American audience on the positive results that came from cooperation both historically and more recently. In addition to highlighting past positive relations with the US, Xi also used the location of San Francisco as an opportunity to underscore China's support to international institutions, especially the United Nations.

San Francisco has also borne witness to the efforts by China and the United States in building a better world. Seventy-eight years ago, after jointly defeating fascism and militarism, our two countries initiated together with others the San Francisco Conference, which helped found the United Nations, and China was the first country to sign the U.N. Charter. Starting from San Francisco, the postwar international order was established. Over 100 countries have gained independence one after another. Several billion people have eventually shaken off poverty. The forces for world peace, development and progress have grown stronger. This has been the main fruit jointly achieved by people of all countries and the international community.¹⁰²⁶

Xi emphasized the joint efforts between China and the United States in securing victory in World War II and founding the United Nations, guided by the principles of the UN Charter. He credited their joint efforts in creating the international order, with resulting monumental advancements as the result. Xi further implied that maintaining, or even deepening, the Sino-US cooperation within the international order could yield even greater progress.

Xi did not restrict his use of historical memory of amicable relations between the United States and China merely to interactions related to San Francisco. Instead, he relied on other instances of cooperation and common interests, such as the abovementioned World War II alliance. In fact, Xi made a specific reference to the Flying Tigers and aid to the pilots of the Doolittle raid, among others.

The foundation of China-U.S. relations was laid by our peoples. During World War II, our two countries fought side by side for peace and justice. Headed by General Claire Lee Chennault, a group of American volunteers, known as the Flying Tigers, went to the battlefield in China. They not only engaged in direct combats fighting Japanese aggressors, but also created "The Hump" airlift to transport much-needed supplies to China. More than 1,000 Chinese and American airmen lost their lives on this air route. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States sent 16 B-25 bombers on an air raid to Japan in 1942. Running low on fuel after completing their mission, Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle and his fellow pilots parachuted in China. They were rescued by Chinese troops and local civilians. But some 250,000 civilian Chinese were killed by Japanese aggressors in retaliation. The Chinese people never forget the Flying Tigers. We built a Flying Tigers museum in Chongqing, and invited over 1,000 Flying Tigers veterans and their families to visit China . . . These stories fill me with firm confidence that the friendship between our two peoples, which has stood the test of blood and fire, will be passed on from generation to generation.¹⁰²⁷

¹⁰²⁶ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

¹⁰²⁷ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024. For a brief summary of Chennault and the Flying Tigers contribution to the War in China see, Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945*, page 254. Although Xi noted the Chinese forces support to the Doolittle raid in a positive light, Rana Mitter paints a starker picture, describing the Japanese reprisals against Chinese forces in response to the raid, page 362.

Both the length and specificity with which he discussed this mutual support during the war showed Xi's apparent investment in this memory and the importance he attached to it as a tool to sustain friendly relations. In addition, Xi discussed the history of reopening relations with the United States in the 1970s, offering it as an example for the capacity for the two nations to overcome disagreements.

The door of China-U.S. relations was opened by our peoples. For 22 years, there were estrangement and antagonism between our two countries. But the trend of the times brought us together, converging interests enabled us to rise above differences, and the people's longing broke the ice between the two countries. In 1971, the U.S. table tennis team visited Beijing--a small ball moved the globe.¹⁰²⁸

A vital component of this instrumental usage was the Liberal construction that the trend of the times contributed to the thawing of relations, alongside converging geopolitical interests. As Xi argued that because the trend of the times, despite headwinds, still moved forward towards peace and stability, the US should embrace Xi's overtures for better relations.

Xi reasoned that despite challenges from rising protectionism and unilateralism, the general trend of history remained bent towards progress. However, he made sure to reiterate that China's current political system was beyond reproach and that it was informed by its millennia-old political culture and therefore could not be changed.

Just as mutual respect is a basic code of behavior for individuals, it is fundamental for China-U.S. relations. The United States is unique in its history, culture and geographical position, which have shaped its distinct development path and social system. We fully respect all this. The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics has been found under the guidance of the theory of scientific socialism, and is rooted in the tradition of the Chinese civilization with an uninterrupted history of more than 5,000 years. We are proud of our choice, just as you are proud of yours. Our paths are different, but both are the choice by our peoples, and both lead to the realization of the common values of humanity. They should be both respected.¹⁰²⁹

Xi framed his demand for acquiescence on this point as a matter of cultural and historical respect and offered to extend the same courtesy to his American counterparts. Despite this remonstrance, Xi did retain his view that the trend of the times remained positive and should be embraced by both the PRC and the US to advance their relations for mutual benefit.

Peaceful coexistence is a basic norm for international relations, and is even more of a baseline that China and the United States should hold on to as two major countries. It is wrong to view China, which is committed to peaceful development, as a threat and thus play a zero-sum game against it. China never bets against the United States, and never interferes in its internal affairs. China has no intention to challenge the United States or to

¹⁰²⁸ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

¹⁰²⁹ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

unseat it. Instead, we will be glad to see a confident, open, ever-growing and prosperous United States. Likewise, the United States should not bet against China, or interfere in China's internal affairs. It should instead welcome a peaceful, stable and prosperous China.¹⁰³⁰

Xi utilized the Liberal framework's construction of history to argue that the United States and China would profit from deepening ties and reducing tensions, so long as that included discontinuing criticism of the PRC's political system.

Finally, Xi proposed that China's inclination towards the Liberal order was not merely grounded on base calculations but emerged from historical and cultural dynamics. Xi underlined China's philosophical legacy to suggest that China valued peace and friendship in its foreign relations. He declared, "We are committed to peaceful development to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Peace, amity and harmony are values embedded in Chinese civilization. Aggression and expansion are not in our genes."¹⁰³¹ Xi implied that the United States had nothing to fear from engagement with China as the structural DNA of the Chinese civilization shunned expansionism and therefore would not be a threat to the interests of the US. He expanded on this point, noting that more recent memory, specifically related to the costs of military conflict and exploitation, likewise remained at the forefront of Chinese collective memory. These bitter collective memories predisposed China to try and avoid a repeat of such catastrophes, let alone inflicting such injustices on other nations as had been done to them.

The Chinese people have bitter and deep memories of the turmoils and sufferings inflicted upon them in modern times. I often say that what the Chinese people oppose is war, what they want is stability, and what they hope for is enduring world peace. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation cannot be achieved without a peaceful and stable international environment. In pursuing modernization, we will never revert to the beaten path of war, colonization, plundering or coercion.¹⁰³²

In this case, Xi invoked the Nationalist framework with a subtle reference to the CoH. He also noted that only with a stable international order, characterized by his presentation of the Liberal framework, could

¹⁰³⁰ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

¹⁰³¹ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

¹⁰³² Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

rejuvenation be possible. Finally, Xi recalled PRC diplomatic history, claiming a consistent and unflinching adherence to the principles of peace and stability:

Throughout the 70 years and more since the founding of the People's Republic, China has not provoked a conflict or war, or occupied a single inch of foreign land. China is the only major country that has written peaceful development into the Constitution of the country and the Constitution of the governing party, thus making peaceful development a commitment of the nation. It benefits from and safeguards the current international order. We remain firm in safeguarding the international system with the U.N. at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter. Whatever stage of development it may reach, China will never pursue hegemony or expansion, and will never impose its will on others.¹⁰³³

In addition to the impacts on Chinese culture from its Confucian/Traditional roots and the Nationalist memory of the CoH, Xi asserted China's adherence to the Liberal order goes beyond mere theory and has been proven over the past seventy years. Furthermore, he professed that China's interests are inextricably linked to the international order underlined by the principles of the UN Charter, and that regardless of its development, it will retain this orientation. Xi instrumentally used historical memory in an attempt to drive home his view that China was no threat to the current international order.

Xi substantially intermingled his instrumental uses of historical memory using all four frameworks. The four examined texts offer some illustrations for how Xi amalgamated different strands to mutually reinforce their respective salience and further his political objectives. In the case of both his speeches on Mao Zedong Thought and the CPC founding, Xi sought to increase his standing in the Party as core leader. He associated his governing philosophy with both Mao's ideology and the CPC founding, with his vision for the China Dream for national rejuvenation as a completion of their original aspirations. His address regarding the PRC response to the COVID-19 pandemic attempted to capitalize on the perceived early success against the virus and to transform those efforts into an animating spirit. Finally, Xi attempted to assuage American concerns with China's rising power and presented it as a nation dedicated to upholding the current international order based on its cultural heritage, recent historical memory, and the general trend of history itself. Xi combined various aspects in his instrumental use of historical memory to have a greater cumulative impact on his intended audiences. Furthermore, his

¹⁰³³ Xi Jinping, "Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship," *Qiushi*, http://en.qstheory.cn/2023-11/17/c_939782.htm, Accessed 3/11/2024.

recontextualization of historical memory served not only to advance his immediate political interests, but also to solidify his control as core leader and sole authoritative interpreter of the nation's sanctioned historical memory.

Conclusions

At the time of this writing, Xi Jinping's position as the PRC's paramount leader appears secure, but his work remains unfinished. Therefore, making any final conclusions on the sum-total of his instrumental use of historical memory as core leader is premature. Xi has not only gained core leader status but has pursued, and achieved, levels of authority not seen since at least Deng's tenure, and perhaps not since Mao.¹⁰³⁴ Like his predecessors, Xi managed this accomplishment through the promulgation of his own governing philosophy in the form of Xi Jinping Thought as the primary ideological foundation for all government policy. To justify the adoption of this Thought, Xi redefined historical memory, placing his vision for the China Dream as the realization of all the valid and well-meaning aspirations for China's future. Xi took an active role in drafting the Resolution of CPC Central Committee on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century, even including his drafting notes within his collection of published works.¹⁰³⁵ Furthermore, he tied the goal of his policies through the two centennial goals as a reversal of China's past humiliations and the restoration of its proper historical position among the community of nations. In addition, Xi instrumentally used historical memory to aid in his pursuit of subsidiary political objectives that aided both his position as core leader and the advancement of policies outlined in his governing philosophy, both domestically and internationally. Xi

¹⁰³⁴ Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter-Reformation: The Reassertion of Ideological Governance in Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 132 (2021): 875.

¹⁰³⁵ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, Volume IV, pages 21 & 33. Xi summarized the purpose of the resolution as, "... we need to relive the glories of the Party and appreciate how it has succeeded in rallying the Chinese people and leading them to so many magnificent achievements. We need to take stock of the invaluable experience the Party has gained in carrying out revolution, construction, and reform, and summarize the theories and practices that have proved successful in advancing the cause of the Party and the country since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012." He continued later in the text, "It calls on the whole Party, the military and all our people to bear in mind the glories and hardships of yesterday, rise to the mission of today, and live up to the great dreams of tomorrow. It also calls on us to learn from history, work hard, forge ahead for a better future, and make tireless efforts to realize the Second Centenary Goal and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation."

Jinping bucked the trend of ever diminishing influence in the institution of core leadership, instead relying heavily on the instrumental use of historical memory to arrest that diminishment and assume greater power and influence as paramount leader.

Xi's discourse displayed a relatively stable level of instrumental use of historical memory from 2012 through 2023. It appears that Xi has pursued higher authority as core leader through this instrumental usage consistently throughout this entire period. He does not appear to have ever yielded substantial authority to the collective leadership at his own expense, nor felt confident enough to settle into a lower level of usage after having gained dominance. Rather, Xi seems to be in a never-ending battle, needing to retain higher levels of control over the ideological discourse to keep the Party-State on his desired course. There were some dips in his usage, often corresponding to events which challenged his underlying assumptions for the general trends of history, such as the election of President Tsai, the 2018 Sino-US trade war, and the Covid-19 pandemic. However, each time Xi did regain his footing, with the rate of his instrumental usage rising to its previous levels.

Xi employed all four narrative frameworks, Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal, within his discourse and had a generally even distribution throughout his tenure. However, there was substantial difference in Xi's focus depending on his specific audience. Xi used the Marxist framework proportionally more when targeted towards a Party audience, while the Nationalist grew with a wider domestic audience. The Liberal framework increased substantially when aimed at foreign audiences, while the Confucian/Traditional remained relatively constant across all three major audiences. The distinctions in the instrumental usage of historical memory by Xi depended on his audience and the political environment, indicating a deliberative approach to its employment within his discourse.

The four frameworks each provided Xi with necessary tools to redefine and then perpetuate historical memory as core leader in discrete ways. Additionally, he instrumentally used memory from each narrative framework to pursue subsidiary political objectives. The Confucian/Traditional framework, with its vast stores of salient artefacts of historical memory, aided Xi as illustrative tools for his policies while adding luster to his governing policies by associating them with storied philosophers, political

leaders, and historians from China's ancient and dynastic past. In addition, Xi used this framework to bolster confidence in the Chinese civilization against intrusion by unwelcome foreign ideologies while also providing an ethical framework to combat corrosive corruption within the CPC. Likewise, the Marxist framework, with a focus on the CPC's founding spirit and revolutionary martyrs, provided another method for Xi to combat corruption with paradigms of behavior to model. Furthermore, the Marxist framework remained the primary means to legitimize Xi's position in the eyes of the Party, requiring him to display an ideology that advanced Marxism applied to China's conditions through his governing philosophy. His enunciation of the China Dream of national rejuvenation was tied specifically to completing the work initiated with the founding of the CPC and the PRC. Xi also used the Nationalist framework to support this endeavor as he portrayed current efforts to permanently remove the last vestiges of the CoH and fulfill the desires of centuries of patriots that sought the restoration of China. It also aimed to generate a unifying pride in the accomplishments of the Chinese nation and as a device to seek the reclamation of Taiwan. The Liberal framework afforded Xi a method to ingratiate the PRC with foreign powers and better integrate it into the global community as a supporter of the rules-based international order. As such, Xi presumably hoped that the PRC's increasing influence and power would not be seen as a threat and would allow China to maximize the potential benefits, without compromising on its internal political structures. However, Xi adjusted his rhetoric regarding the trend of the times moving in a positive, progressive direction and instead articulated that this trend of history faced increasing countervailing currents such as protectionism and unilateralism. Xi did not use the frameworks in isolation, but rather often used them in combination to amplify their impact. Xi's instrumental use of historical memory conformed to the four major frameworks, and he utilized them robustly within his discourse to increase his influence as core leader.

Forecasting the future core leader status of Xi Jinping for the remainder of his tenure is well beyond my capabilities. The best that this study may offer is potentially some clue as to his influence based on shifts in his instrumental use of historical memory. At the time of this writing in early 2024, Xi's power seems secure, although he still faces many challenges, both internally and externally. These trials

likely will require him to retain his current level of usage and not allow him to move into a lower level that could simply sustain his clout. It may be the case that in the future he does retreat, shedding authority to the collective leadership, in which case we would also see a lessening in his instrumental usage, but that has not been his practice up to this point. Continuing to evaluate his discourse, including how much and in what manner he instrumentally uses historical memory, may provide some insight into his authority as core leader in the coming years.

So long as death and taxes remain the inscrutable laws of human existence, at some point Xi Jinping must exit the stage one way or another. Predicting who or even what kind of leader may emerge in his wake is an even more perilous enterprise. However, it may be possible to venture some guesses as to how some plausible outcomes will emerge. It may be that Xi's increased authority of core leadership was a fluke and that the sixth generation, or seventh at this rate, of collective leadership will disperse power more widely amongst themselves and rely less on a single core leader to unify and guide policy. In this case, whoever does occupy the senior positions of authority, if it is even a single person, will likely not see a significant increase in their instrumental usage. On the other hand, the core of the next generation may find a need, like Xi, to assert the maximum amount of authority possible to achieve their policy ends, in which case we would see a similarly elevated level of instrumental usage.

Of course, that all assumes a smooth transition, which may be a difficult prospect for Xi. As he has modelled his level of authority closer to Mao and Deng as opposed to Jiang and Hu, he also may inherit their difficulties in succession. Both those past leaders went through several heirs apparent, causing incidents of instability in the twilight of their rule. If Xi appoints a successor and retreats towards the second line, as Deng did after finally settling on Jiang, then Xi may likely retain some stabilizing authority as core leader. However, as with Jiang, this will restrain the capacity for this new leader to seize core leadership and chart their own policy course while Xi remains alive. On the other hand, if like Mao, Xi holds on to power until his death, this may lead to another destabilizing battle for leadership as occurred in the wake of Mao's death. In that case, although Hua Guofeng had received Mao's blessing as heir, he could not hold on to power and was soon displaced by Deng, who better wielded historical

memory to justify his assumption of core leadership. It could be again that even if Xi chooses a successor, that individual may not emerge victorious in the potential intraparty struggles that may result after Xi's death. Like Mao, it could be that another leader emerges, undoing much of Xi's work and governing philosophy in pursuit of their own vision. In this case, Xi, his accomplishments, and his Xi Jinping Thought, may be reduced to a mere instrument, another artefact of historical memory to be employed by future core leaders as they see fit.

Chapter 7 - Final Conclusions

All five paramount leaders engaged in the instrumental use of historical memory within their discourse. Their usage was far more than mere rhetorical device, but rather an important element in their efforts to secure and maintain their status as core leader. However, it is important to keep in mind that the level of instrumental usage can only be used to describe shifts in individual paramount leaders' rhetoric, indicating shifts in core status, and cannot be used as a proxy to judge relative status across multiple leaders. Core leaders redefined historical memory to justify their position at the pinnacle of political and ideological power within the Party-State structure. This redefinition was necessary to maintain the foundational authority of the CPC and past leaders while leaving room for the current core to elevate themselves and their governing philosophies into the reconstructed grand narratives. By advancing their individual governing philosophies, grounded by the reinterpretation of necessary historical memory, core leaders gained a monopoly over elucidating the ruling ideology for which all others had to conform. They became the supreme authority with the capacity to adjust previously held dogmas as they deemed necessary. Furthermore, the instrumental use of historical memory also provided added support both for their governing philosophy as well as individual policy proposals, aiding the core leaders' immediate and longer-term political goals. However, if events transpired which contradicted the core leaders' narrative, they were often forced to cede authority back to the collective leadership. This shedding of authority meant they had to rely on the wider collective leadership to buttress regime stability, and therefore they could no longer unilaterally dictate ideology for the Party. This decline in sole authority in turn lessened the core leaders' capacity to instrumentally use historical memory, at least until sufficient ideological stability had been reestablished and an opportunity presented itself for them to reassert their authority if they wished. On the other hand, at times the core leaders had managed to secure ideological supremacy to such a degree that they no longer needed to actively shape historical memory and could lessen their usage to a lower level sufficient to maintain their dominance and sustain support for their policy programs.

Paramount leaders relied on instrumental use to support their status as core leader and calibrated it based upon their relative authority vis-à-vis the collective leadership.

The instrumental use of historical memory varied within core leaders' discourse in more ways than merely shifts in frequency. Rather, core leaders adjusted the type of instrumental usage over time and especially depending on the audience and political objectives they were pursuing. This calibration in usage attuned to political objectives indicates that instrumental use of historical memory was more than a mere habit applied reflexively within their rhetoric but was purposefully included for specific political aims. As core leaders, they had three main audiences for their political discourse: the Party, the wider Chinese domestic audience, and the international community. As they interacted with these three audiences, paramount leaders generally conformed their instrumental uses to four narrative frameworks: Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, Nationalist, and Liberal.

The Confucian/Traditional framework provided an ethical system to act as a foundation for the core leaders' governing philosophy. In addition, this framework acted to grow confidence in Chinese culture and thereby guard against acquiescence to foreign sources of ideological authority. Although not exclusively, the Marxist framework featured prominently in instrumental uses aimed at the Party, as core leaders had to perpetuate a governing philosophy that ostensibly advanced socialism with Chinese characteristics and maintained the underlying foundations that guaranteed the CPC's ruling position. It was also through this framework that interparty battles, such as denunciations of opponents and restorations of allies, were carried out. The Nationalist framework, especially when aimed at the wider domestic Chinese audience, assisted as a unifying force to direct the energies of all Chinese towards a singular purpose, often using a national redemptive narrative. This narrative made room for the notion that only the CPC implementing socialism with Chinese characteristics could save the nation, although acknowledging the efforts of other national figures and movements to generate wider support for the core leader. Finally, the Liberal framework, first substantially introduced by Deng, acted as a method to allow China to integrate into the international community, while still preserving the principal interests of the CPC and the existing political structures in the PRC. It also operated as a legitimating force, recognizing

the economic and development progress of the PRC since the implementation of the Reform and Opening Up policy as justification for maintenance of the existing political system and continued stewardship by the core leaders.

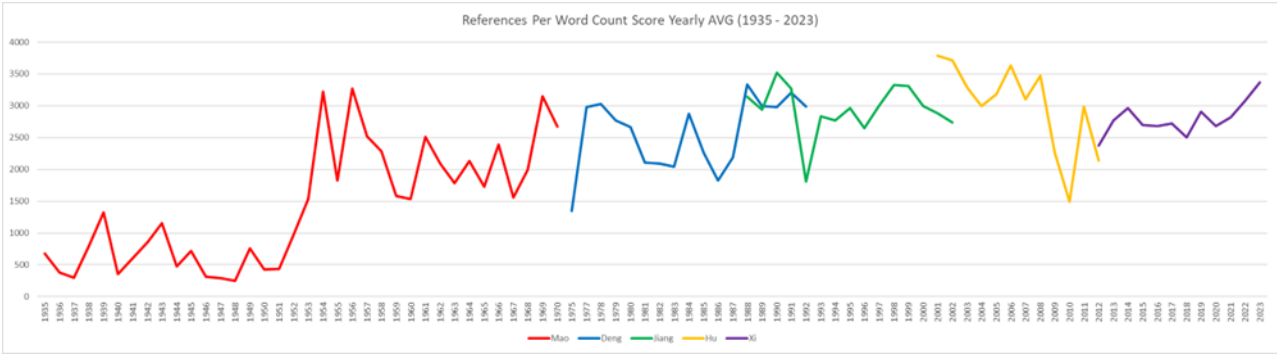


Figure 7.1 References per Word Count Score yearly average across the full dataset. The Reference Per Word Count Score represents the total historical references dedicated against the total word count for the speech. The count is then subtracted from a ceiling (4,000) to account for observed articles without historical references.

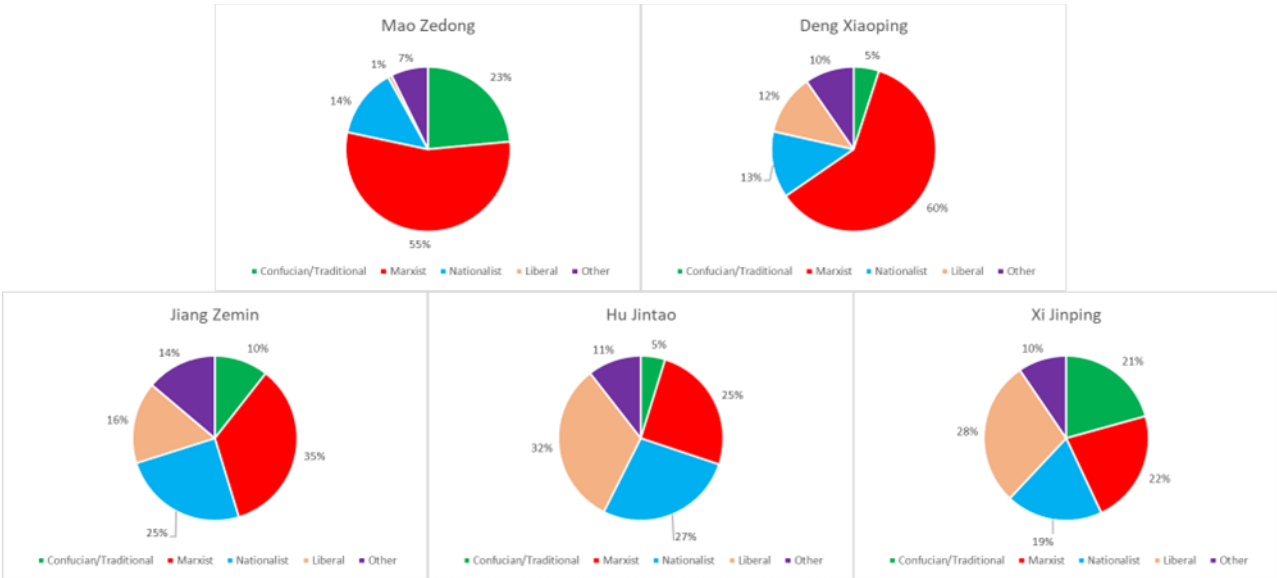


Figure 7.2 References by category percentage across the full dataset for each leader.

Mao Zedong was not only the first core leader, shaping its contours for all that followed, but also held more influence than any of his successors. Although he had competed for central leadership previously, it was only after the Zunyi Conference that he began the long work of consolidating power that propelled him as the core. A key portion of that maneuvering encompassed offering up his own ideological program, eventually coalescing into Mao Zedong Thought. Mao relied on instrumental use of historical memory to frame his governing philosophy as sufficiently Marxist while also preserving his

independence and authority in its application to China's conditions. Through the Rectification Movement, Mao decisively defeated all internal opponents, solidifying power by redefining Party history to cement his status as core leader. Both his political and ideological power over the Party became enshrined at the 7th Party Congress in July 1945. Despite these successes, and even his assumption of national leadership with the founding of the PRC in 1949, it was not until the death of Stalin that the last potential source that could challenge him ideologically was removed. However, he still found a need to rely on the collective leadership and Party elite to manage national policy, alternating between ceding some authority to others and then reclaiming it when they diverged too far from his intended course, such as during the Great Leap Forward and later the Cultural Revolution. Mao instrumentally wielded historical memory to both redeem and excommunicate various figures in turns to maintain his power throughout the latter part of his tenure.

Mao substantially used three of the four main frameworks within his discourse, namely the Confucian/Traditional, Marxist, and Nationalist. The Marxist framework was the most prevalent with uses of this narrative essential for Mao as he navigated both internal and external relations. As he crafted and advanced his governing philosophy, Mao relied on the Marxist framework to display his credentials as a theoretician. As he seized and solidified power during the Yan'an period, Mao ensured a reconstruction and then codification of party history, crediting himself and his ideas with bringing success while associating his opponents and their theories with failures and setbacks. In future internal Party struggles, Mao used this same memory, either through direct reference or association, to denigrate adversaries and enforce compliance with his policy preferences. In foreign relations, Mao relied heavily on the Marxist framework to curry favor with ideologically aligned nations and movements, especially the Soviet Union. As relations with the Soviet Union soured, he further relied on this framework to attack his former patron and portray the PRC under Mao as the true revolutionary force following the Sino-Soviet Split. Both the Confucian/Traditional and Nationalist frameworks allowed Mao to argue for a Chinese-specific approach to his ideology and prevented him from being beholden to foreign-originated dictates outside his control. He also relished furnishing his discourse with Confucian/Traditional references, often using them as a point of connection with his Chinese audience. The Nationalist

framework aided Mao cajoling fellow Chinese towards common national projects, as well as a means for building legitimacy by ushering in the end the Century of Humiliation through the twin achievements of defeating the Japanese and then unifying the nation under the PRC.

Although Deng followed Mao as the next core leader, his succession was hardly assured, and he faced numerous hurdles until he finally managed to gain control over Party leadership. In fact, Deng ran afoul of Mao again even after having been rehabilitated, and it was only after Mao's death that Deng was able to overcome Mao's chosen successor, Hua Guofeng. One of Deng's main advantages in this fight was that Hua relied on Mao's memory for his authority, while Deng used that memory to support his own governing philosophy, which Deng had absolute authority over. Deng's governing philosophy included his Reform and Opening Up program, implementing market reforms and normalization of relations with the capitalist world, alongside the Four Cardinal Principles, ensuring the unimpeachable authority of the Party-state. A key signal of Deng's advance to core leadership was the issuance of a second resolution on Party history, dictating the official stance towards Mao's memory and rehabilitating many of Deng's allies who had been denounced in the previous tumultuous decades. However, once Deng had achieved core leadership, he yielded authority to subordinate leaders, allowing them to run the normal operations of the government and Party while he provided overarching guidance, although never yielding his supreme ideological authority. Unfortunately for Deng, despite his advanced age he had to reassert his political and ideological control on three occasions during his tenure. The first occurred when he removed Hu Yaobang and elevated Zhao Ziyang. The second occurred when he removed Zhao Ziyang and elevated Jiang Zemin amid the Tiananmen Square incident. The final came when Deng, concerned that his economic reforms were in danger of being rolled back, set out on his Southern Tour in 1992, enshrining Deng's ideology, anointed as Deng Xiaoping Theory, as the guiding ideology of the Party. Despite Jiang taking a leading position starting in 1989, his efforts to establish his own governing philosophy was hamstrung until Deng's death in 1997. Throughout these advances and retreats in influence as core leader, Deng reasserted his authority through the deliberate application of instrumental uses of historical memory,

relying on his authority over relevant memory to redirect the policy orientation of the Party-State when it wandered too far from his vision.

Deng was the first core leader to substantially use all four major narrative frameworks, including the Liberal. The Marxist framework remained the most substantial within Deng's discourse, indicating its continued importance within internal Party dialogue. While Hua clung to the authority of Mao absolutely, Deng deftly pointed to Mao's own words in which Mao stated that he had made past errors, placing Hua's slavish adherence to Mao's words and examples on unstable ground. Furthermore, Deng pointed towards Mao's proposition that material conditions must dictate policy, as it had been a key proposition that allowed him to selectively distance his governing philosophy from the absolute authority of Moscow and what he termed "dogmatists" within the CPC. Deng used that same logic to suggest that China needed a new course, one guided by his Reform and Opening Up policy, which he maintained was a recognition that China was not sufficiently developed to move beyond the stage of socialism, and that past attempts to do so prematurely had ended in costly failure. As Deng secured his ideological authority, he took the important step of shaping a second resolution on Party history, offering an official interpretation which preserved Mao's foundational role but highlighted his faults, especially in the later decades of his rule. This formula maintained the authority of the core leader which Mao had set up, but also allowed Deng to take his style of rule in new directions and rehabilitate needed allies as he pursued those new policies. Deng did not utilize the Confucian/Traditional framework substantially but did show a willingness to use it as a tool for fostering ethics, as corruption among cadres emerged as an increasing concern. Deng relied on the Nationalist framework to advocate for the reclamation of Chinese territories still beyond the PRC's control, as well as push back against any foreign interference in Chinese internal affairs, especially following the Tiananmen Square incident. Finally, Deng pioneered the deliberate and sustained usage of the Liberal framework, and it became inextricably linked to his Reform and Opening Up program. From an international perspective, Deng proposed that China sought to integrate into the wider global community, gaining access to its markets and technology to aid in China's development, while shunning any hint of imperialist or hegemonic ambitions. On the domestic front, Deng offered up the successful

delivery of economic development and rising living standards of the general populace as a new justification for maintaining the Party-State in power, with Deng as its core leader.

Jiang Zemin was not Deng's first choice for successor, in fact he wasn't even his second choice, but he did assume paramount leadership next. Deng's Southern Tour, and the release of Deng's third volume of his *Selected Works* a few years later, ushered in Deng Xiaoping Theory as the operative ideology for the PRC. This helped stabilize the PRC in the tumultuous environment following the collapse of the Soviet Union, while Jiang faced his own major test facing the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis (1994 – 1995). Jiang relied on instrumental use of historical memory to bolster the confidence of the Chinese public in their governing system and civilization in the face of these momentous changes and challenges. So long as Deng remained alive and cognizant, Jiang could not make any substantive moves to establish his own governing philosophy and achieve core status. However, as Deng's health failed and he eventually passed away in 1997, Jiang had the opportunity to advance his own governing philosophy, the Three Represents, and place himself as the core leader of the third generation of collective leadership. Although Jiang did not reinterpret Party history through an official resolution like his predecessors, he did locate himself as the successor to both Mao and Deng. However, there were strict limits, installed by Deng, which impaired Jiang's ability to retain his power in the long term. Although Jiang attempted to retain some authority as chairman of the CMC after he relinquished other key posts to Hu Jintao, Jiang could not maintain the same level of control after his tenure ended that Deng had formally exercised. Although Jiang reached for it, his capacity to act as core leader was a far cry from that of Mao and Deng, despite Jiang's robust instrumental use of historical memory.

Jiang in large part followed Deng in the way he utilized the four narrative frameworks, although with some noteworthy deviations. His more relaxed approach to rhetoric for example can be seen in his higher percentage of instrumental uses that did not conform to the four categorized frameworks. Jiang also made a habit of relying on personal anecdotes, especially referring to the revolutionary period, that conformed to the Marxist and Nationalist frameworks, as he had less obvious revolutionary credentials compared to Mao and Deng. Jiang also appeared more comfortable utilizing the Confucian/Traditional

framework to combat Party corruption. Both the Marxist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks also came into play as he attempted to address uneven national economic development as a key plank within his governing philosophy. Jiang relied substantially on the Nationalist framework, especially during the Taiwan crisis, to push back against perceived US interference by attempting to foster confidence in the Chinese military through recalling past successful military exploits, such as during the Korean War. Jiang maintained substantial reliance on the Liberal framework to support China's development and integration into the wider global community, aided by the Confucian/Traditional to imply a deep-seated political culture that predisposed China to peaceful relations with its neighboring states. On the other hand, Jiang asserted that the same ingrained political culture, displayed through his use of the Nationalist and Confucian/Traditional frameworks, precluded the wholesale adoption of Western-styled political institutions. In addition, he employed the Liberal framework to celebrate progress since Reform and Opening Up, and the resultant improved economic development served as justification for maintaining the existing state structure under his leadership.

The transition between Jiang and Hu was relatively smooth, although Jiang attempted to retain some authority, which ultimately proved untenable. However, Hu Jintao's status as core leader of the collective leadership was the weakest of all the five paramount leaders, and it may be that he never truly achieved the status despite his apparent efforts. Unlike Jiang, Hu's rhetoric was highly formulaic and controlled. During the early years of Hu's tenure, China continued to develop at a rapid pace and deepened its integration into the global community, expressed by Hu through rhetoric heralding China's peaceful rise and development. Unlike Jiang, Hu advanced his governing philosophy, the Scientific Outlook on Development, relatively early within his tenure. This governing philosophy continued to rely heavily on Deng's original formulation, and in fact placed additional emphasis on scientific and technological development as essential to maintain China's economic growth, with added emphasis on sustainability. The 2008 Beijing Olympics was meant to serve as a showcase for China's progress, but this was spoiled by the 2008 Financial Crisis. This crisis not only throttled China's growth but shook confidence in the underlying assumptions of Hu's governing philosophy that such growth rates could be

sustained into the future through greater participation in international institutions and deeper global economic integration. As Hu's second term came to an end and Xi emerged as the clear successor, Hu made no attempt to retain any authority as core leader beyond the end of his second term.

Hu also retained a very similar implementation of the four narrative frameworks as Deng and Jiang, although often clinging closer to Deng's orientation. For example, Hu avoided substantial use of the Confucian/Traditional framework towards domestic and Party audiences, although did retain it to a higher degree with foreign audiences, where it continued to serve as evidence for supposed long-standing Chinese political culture's proclivity for peaceful and mutually beneficial foreign relations. Hu amplified his usage of the Liberal framework for all audiences, relying on it heavily to promote China's growing international role and highlight economic progress as a source of legitimacy. Hu maintained the Marxist framework mostly for Party speeches, ensuring never to stray too far from Deng's Four Cardinal Principles, although he curtailed it with domestic audiences and absolutely avoided it with international audiences. The Nationalist framework provided Hu with a unifying tool, especially towards domestic audiences, and especially to push back against any hint of separatism in places like Tibet and Taiwan.

Xi Jinping reversed the general trend of diminishing power of the core leader, assuming far greater authority for himself to enact his governing philosophy, and likewise relying heavily on the instrumental use of historical memory to accomplish this project. Xi faced no substantial challenge to his core leadership from his predecessor, instead quickly asserting his authority. He placed substantial emphasis on combating corruption and cadre lethargy. His governing philosophy, Xi Jinping Thought, rapidly emerged and was quickly enshrined as the guiding ideology by the 19th Party Congress. His China Dream construct acted as a common unifying aspiration for all Chinese, while the two centenary goals offered medium- and long-term goals that would result in what he described as national rejuvenation. Xi portrayed his policy as more than merely managing China's affairs, but rather as nothing short of returning China to its proper historical position in the world. After the first few years in office, it appeared that Xi was making substantial progress along this path, developing a more robust presence internationally through his Belt and Road Initiative. However, difficulties emerged which threatened to

derail China's improvement, and challenged the underlying assumptions of Xi's proposition for historical progress. On the domestic front, China's growth began to slow, with Xi recognizing that the PRC needed to switch to a new economic model to sustain growth, even at a lower level. This recognition of shifts in China's economic prospects put into question the reliance on increasing living standards as a viable method to engender acquiescence for absolute Party rule. In addition, Xi faced several foreign policy challenges, including the election of a more pro-independence inclined government in Taiwan and the rise of anti-globalist political movements and governments in key western countries, threatening the PRC's ability to leverage its access to these markets to sustain its growth. However, by far the biggest challenge for Xi came in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it further disrupted the global economy and cast doubt on his leadership both domestically and internationally. Amid these challenges, Xi has not yielded authority to the collective leadership, but rather has further increased his authority, displayed by his increasing domination over the Party apparatus and his increasing reliance on instrumental use of historical memory to define memory and bolster support for his governing philosophy. As part of his efforts, he directed the drafting of a third resolution on Party history, joining the ranks of Mao and Deng as core leaders who applied such a definitive stamp for interpreting Party memory, as well as elevating his role within it. He also assumed even greater authority, breaking with the tradition of his two predecessors, remaining as paramount leader into a third term as PRC President and other key positions, as well as further solidifying his control over the key organs of power within the Party-State. Moving past the 20th Party Congress, Xi showed no signs of retreating from core leadership, continuing to rely on the instrumental use of historical memory to sustain his position.

Xi maintained several aspects from his predecessors in his use of the four frameworks, but he did depart in some key ways. Although he continued to rely on the Confucian/Traditional framework to combat corruption, he also increasingly relied on the Marxist as well, calling for an adherence to what he termed as the founding spirit of the CPC to motivate cadres to improve their ethical behavior. Xi also elevated early Party history to justify efforts to discipline cadres, such as recollection of the Yan'an Rectification movement. Mao also received increased attention likely to soften any opposition to Xi's

accumulation of additional influence as core leader by highlighting Mao's precedent. Xi also utilized the Marxist framework as a method to portray his policies as fulfillment of longstanding efforts, most clearly through the two centenary goals. He reiterated his view that only the CPC guided by socialism with Chinese characteristics could save China, and any other system would lead to decline and chaos. Using the Nationalist framework, Xi pointed to the Century of Humiliation as the starting point from which national rejuvenation sought to restore China to its proper standing. As reliance on robust economic development and rising living standards to generate legitimacy appeared increasingly less viable, the Nationalist rhetoric acted as an ever more important force to unite and motivate the general Chinese population. Xi also utilized the Confucian/Traditional Framework to build confidence in Chinese civilization. This confidence was meant to act as a bulwark against infiltration of Western ideologies and institutions infecting Chinese political culture. Xi's use of the Liberal framework, especially when expressed through projects such as the BRI, as well as international institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and especially the UN, remained consistent with his predecessors. However, Xi acknowledged increasing headwinds against the underlying assumptions of the Liberal framework and noted that these difficulties posed an increasing challenge for China to reach its goal for national rejuvenation. Xi described these negative forces as protectionism, unilateralism, and hegemony, and argued that the COVID-19 pandemic amplified their proliferation. In his most recent rhetoric, Xi has maintained the PRC's adherence to the underlying assumptions of the Liberal framework and has even suggested that China is positioned as a defender for the rules-based international order.

Each of the core leaders instrumentally used historical memory as an integral part of their efforts to secure and retain core leadership, as well as to aid in the dissemination of their governing philosophy as the leading ideology for the Party-State and to assist in implementing their policy preferences. They all calibrated their approach towards this usage based on their relative power with regards to the collective leadership, increasing instrumental use as they sought to improve their position, and decreasing their usage either when they felt confident in their current level of influence or needed additional support from the collective leadership to maintain regime stability. All five paramount leaders conformed generally to

the main narrative frameworks, but they calibrated their usage to their personal inclinations and more importantly to maximize their effectiveness based on their political objectives and the intended audience for their rhetoric.

This study of the instrumental use of historical memory by PRC paramount leaders has sought to contribute to multiple fields including history and political science, as well as offering an additional tool to policy makers. Regarding history, it has attempted to trace the development of instrumental use of historical memory by core leaders throughout the political history of the PRC. The discourse of these leaders, especially that related to their governing philosophies, has a profound impact on the course of historical development for mainland China, and instrumental usage is a key component of that rhetoric. From a political science perspective, the instrumental use of historical memory is key to the function of core leadership within the PRC and its exploration contributes to furthering the understanding of the internal power dynamics within the Party-State. Furthermore, it displays that political discourse, specifically through instrumental usage, is a political act within the mainland Chinese political culture, and not merely a flourish of style or rhetorical habit. From a policy perspective, observing trends in instrumental usage by core leaders can aid in determining their relative power vis-à-vis the collective leadership. In addition, careful examination of the political objectives reasonably associated with the instrumental uses of historical memory can assist in discerning the policy goals of core leaders and what they perceive as the winning coalition necessary to see those policies fulfilled.

There are several opportunities to build off this study to further advance scholarship in the study of Chinese political culture, especially related to core leadership. So long as core leadership continues to be a feature of Chinese political culture within the PRC, instrumental use of historical memory is likely to continue and can be available for further observation and analysis. Slightly further afield, the same methodology for this study might be applied to the political culture of the Republic of China prior to its democratization. Guo Xuezhi argues that core leadership was a phenomenon existing solely within the Chinese political culture. He briefly surveyed other Marxist countries and states influenced by Chinese Confucian political philosophy and determined that core leadership did not operate in those nations as it

did in the PRC.¹⁰³⁶ Although core leadership may not operate in the same manner, instrumental use of historical memory is still observable in other political cultures. A wider survey might yield greater insights as to whether aspects of core leadership might operate in some fashion in political cultures that share some similarities with the PRC's. Finally, this study only analyzed the political objectives and intent, but did not measure the audience reaction and the relative effectiveness for the core leader's instrumental uses of historical memory. Tracing reaction or narrative shifts as a result of these instrumental uses within respective audiences may yield more insight into the give and take between the core leader and their audience. Such a study may offer further insight into how paramount leaders adapt their usage based on reactions to their employment.

To return to the fortune teller and the Soviet apparatchik, I am woefully unqualified to make any predictions on the future use of instrumental use of historical memory in Chinese political culture. Reviewing the history of the five paramount leaders, although they differed in their usage, all five relied on it as they attempted to seize and, if successful, retain core leadership. They all took to heart Mao's injunction to make the past serve the present. As with the Soviet radio host, as the present continues to change, and the future remains fixed, a reinterpretation of the past remains the only viable option for these core leaders. On the other hand, each is also in turn doomed to be reduced to mere objects for reference themselves, merely to be used by future leaders to feed their objectives, regardless of how they might wish for themselves or their theories to be remembered.

¹⁰³⁶ Guo Xuezhi, *The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power*, pages 16-20.

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From the site description, "The Chinese Text Project is an online open-access digital library that makes pre-modern Chinese texts available to readers and researchers all around the world. The site attempts to make use of the digital medium to explore new ways of interacting with these texts that are not possible in print. With over thirty thousand titles and more than five billion characters, the Chinese Text Project is also the largest database of pre-modern Chinese texts in existence."

The website allowed for the easy and rapid search across a wide array of Chinese texts for the origin quotes and references by paramount leaders. The database also allowed for the comparison of repeated use of references across multiple texts in Chinese and often accompanied by English translations. This aided me in not only discovering the original source of references but also locating the original context and any deviations in their use by paramount leaders.