CHINA'S NEW LEFT AND ITS IMPACT ON POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION

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Executive Summary

1. China's New Left is a loose grouping of intellectuals who are increasingly capturing the public mood and setting the tone of political debates through their articles in journals and cyberspace. Many New Leftists received their higher education in the West or are based outside mainland China. They are not dissidents or political exiles and call for reforming the system "within the system".

2. Unlike "establishment intellectuals" who were mainly state servants under Mao, today's New Left scholars are "critical intellectuals." In Western parlance, they could be called public intellectuals, intellectuals who speak out publicly on political issues.

3. The New Left believes that the problems of injustice and other negative effects of privatization, marketization, and globalization could be redressed by state power.

4. New Leftism has tremendous appeal to Chinese youth. However, ordinary peasants and lay-off workers have also become natural allies in the New Left's struggle against prevalent neoliberal practices in the name of market efficiency and globalization.

5. Hu-Wen's emphasis on harmonious society echoed New Leftists' concerns for peasants, social justice, and welfare issues. A 2005 report found that President Hu Jintao and his team were tacitly supporting the New Left and using it to attack former President Jiang Zemin and his Three Represents theory, which was widely blamed for many of the deep inequalities gripping China today.

6. The Chinese intellectuals in the 1990s could be broadly divided into two camps – the Liberals and the New Left. The debates between the liberals and the New Left, which broke out in the middle of the 1990s, have been a phenomenon rarely seen among mainland Chinese intellectuals since 1949.

They raised questions on outcomes and orientation of China's economic reform.

7. It is true that ideological diversity could be a challenge to the Party. However, so far, the intellectual debates between the liberals and the New Left have generated positive effects on the reform.

8. First, the discourse increased public awareness of the consequences of some major policy changes. Further, the debates introduced new ways of thinking for decision makers, and expanded the ranges of their policy options. Although Beijing endorses neither the New Leftism nor liberalism, their intellectual discourse generated ideas, insight, and approaches that the Chinese leadership can cherry pick.

9. Last but not least, the intellectual discourse has broadened horizons for the decision makers. Several liberal and New Left arguments have filtered into the official discourse. For instance, the term "social justice," which has been much debated since the 1990s, is now a regular feature of the Party rhetoric.

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1.1 As the Chinese Communist Party prepares to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its reform and opening policy, China's state ideology is confronted with challenges from various schools of thought. One of them is the "New Left." [1] The New Left is characterized by an emphasis on the state power to redress the problems of injustice and other negative effects of privatization, marketization, and globalization.

1.2 The New Left is a loose grouping of intellectuals who are increasingly capturing the public mood and setting the tone of political debates through their articles in journals and cyberspace. A large number of the New Left received their higher education in the West. Some of them are still based outside mainland China. They are not dissidents or political exiles and call for reforming the system "within the system". Unlike "establishment intellectuals" who were mainly state servants under Mao,[2] today's New Left scholars are "critical intellectuals." In Western parlance, they could be called public intellectuals, intellectuals who speak out publicly on political issues.

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[1] According to *Social Sciences Frontier Studies in China, 2006–2007* (Blue Book of Social Science), other schools of thought include neoliberalism, democratic socialism, postmodernism, new cultural conservatism, and nationalism.

[2] "Establishment intellectual" is a term coined by Carol Hamrin and Timothy Cheek. For details, see Carol Lee Hamrin and Timothy Cheek eds. *China's Establishment Intellectuals* (Armonk, NY: M E Sharpe, 1986).

1.3 New Leftism has tremendous appeal to Chinese youth,[3] while ordinary peasants and lay-off workers have become natural allies in the New Left's struggle against prevalent neoliberal practices in the name of market efficiency and globalization.[4]

1.4 The New Left has become popular with the increasing visibility of the websites. *Utopia* (乌有之乡), a premier left-wing website, has been accessed 47 million times since its establishment in 2003.[5] When one searches for "New Left" (新左派) in Baidu.com (a top search engine in China), one can get over 150,000 results.

1.5 Hu-Wen's emphasis on harmonious society echoed New Leftists' concerns for peasants, social justice, and welfare issues. A 2005 report found that President Hu Jintao and his team were tacitly supporting the New Left and using it to attack former President Jiang Zemin and his Three Represents theory, which was widely blamed for many of the deep inequalities gripping China today.[6]

1.6 The policy of the current Beijing leadership reflected the influence of the New Left. At the end of 2005, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao published the "11th five-year plan," their blueprint for a "harmonious society." For the first time since the reform era began in 1978, economic growth was not described as the overriding goal of the Chinese state. Instead, they talked about introducing some aspects of a welfare state and the promise of a 20 percent year-on-year

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[3] Sun Yi-Xian, Chen Ai-Sheng, Li Yun-Li, and Fang Hong-Yan, "Guanyu xinzuopai sicaho zui daxueshen yinxian zhuankuan de diaocha baogao" [The Investigation Report of the Trend of New Left Thought's Influence on Undergraduate Students] *Nanchang hangkonggongye xueyuan xuebao shehuikehuipan* [Journal of Nanchang Institute of Aeronautical Technology, Social Science Edition], 8, no. 1 (January 2006), pp. 30–33.

[4] In the words of Wang Hui (汪晖), a prominent New Left scholar, "Today we are no longer an isolated group of intellectuals. We have become a broad-based movement with real support from the people that gives us clout." Cited in Pallavi Aiyar, "The Ideological Debate in China," 25 April 2006, http://www.thehindu.com/2006/04/25/stories/2006042505010900.htm.

[5] This number is shown at the middle of *Utopia* (Wuyou zhi xiang) at www.wyzxsx.com as of 18 August 2008.

[6] Jehangir S. Pocha, "China's Inequities Energize New Left," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 June 2005.

increase in the funds for pensions, unemployment benefit, health insurance and maternity leave. For rural China, they promised an end to arbitrary taxes and to improve on health and education. They also pledged to reduce energy consumption by 20 percent.

1.7 In contrast to the dominance of a single ideology during the Mao years, China's intellectuals had opened up a public space and filled it with a variety of ideals and vigorous debates by the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century.[7] This undermines the Communist Party's role as the only source of ideological authority.

The Making of the New Left

2.1 Prior to 4 June 1989, Chinese intellectuals had provided the main social support for the reformers of this period within the Party, while the conservatives were mainly concentrated in the state bureaucracy. During the 1980s China's political scene was conventionally divided into two categories, namely reformers and conservatives.

TABLE 1 LEFT OR RIGHT?

Categories	West	China (1978–1989)	China (since 1990)
Left	Liberal	Conservatives (mainly in state bureaucracy)	New Left Representing the lower strata
Right	Conservative	Reformers (supported by vast majority of intellectuals)	Liberal (also known as "New Right") representing the middle class

2.2 Most intellectuals in the 1980s held identical views – support reform and opening up, and identify with values of freedom, democracy, rule of law, believing that they were in the spirit of the May 4th Movement. During the

[7] Edward Gu and Merle Goldman, *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 13.

"first round of reform" from 1979 to 1989, a vast majority of Chinese intellectuals united in support of the reform.

2.3 A series of events caused the split of the intelligentsia in the 1990s. In 1997, the Asian financial crisis broke out. Naturally, this dramatically demonstrated the risks of globalization. Suddenly capitalism did not seem such a sure-fire guarantee of growth and prosperity. Furthermore, in 1999, with the NATO's "accidental bombing" of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, there was a wave of indignation among ordinary Chinese and demonstration by students. China's New Left took a strong nationalistic stance, while the liberals worried deeply about the impact of rising nationalism.

TABLE 2 KEY REPRESENTATIVES OF CHINA'S NEW LEFT

Leading Figures	Education	Overseas Experience	Position	Activities
Wang Hui (汪晖) (1959–)	Ph.D. CASS (1988), MA, U. of Nanking	Harvard, UCLA, U of Washington, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Chinese University of H.K. Berlin Institute for Advanced Study	Prof. of Chinese Literature at Tsinghua U.	Co-editor of *Dushu* (1996–2007)
Cui Zhiyuan (崔之元) (1963–)	Ph.D. U. of Chicago (1995), MA, U. of Chicago (1989)	MIT, East Asian Institute (EAI), Singapore, Harvard, Berlin Institute for Advanced Study	Prof. of Political Science at Tsinghua U.	Emphasize economic democratization
Gan Yang (甘 阳) (1952–)	U. of Chicago, MA, Peking U. (1985)	University of Chicago	Research Fellow at U. of Hong Kong	Editor of influential book series *Culture: China and the World*
Wang Shaoguang (王绍光)[8] (1954–)	Ph.D. Cornell U. (1990), BA Peking U. (1985)	Yale University	Prof. of Political Science at Chinese U. of Hong Kong	Stress on the need for a strong central government

Source: Adapted from Gan Yang, "The Origin of the Chinese Liberal Left" [Zhongguo ziyou zuopai de youlai] in Gong Yang ed. *Si chao: Zhongguo "xin zuopai" ji qi yingxiang* [Trend of Thought: China's "New Left" and Its Impact] (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2003) pp. 116–120 and Hu Andy Yinan, *Swimming Against the Tide: Tracing and Locating Chinese Leftism Online*, MA Thesis. Simon Fraser University, 2006, p. 104.

[8] Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew met Wang Shaoguang at the 10th anniversary of the EAI in 2007.

2.4 The inequalities that came with the market-oriented reform triggered increasing tension within the intellectual circles. The New Left was shocked by the polarization, and decided to defend the interests of the poor and asked for a change in the direction of the reforms, advocating a strong state capable of defending the poor.

2.5 The Chinese New Left is a term used to distinguish it from the Old Left, who are diehard Maoists. Many New Left scholars refused to be designated as "New Left." They prefer to be called the "liberal left," since the left has a notorious reputation in China because it reminds people of the Left during the Cultural Revolution.

2.6 Wang Hui, Cui Zhiyuan, Gan Yang, and Wang Shaoguang are among the leading New Left scholars. As shown in Table 2, they are middle-aged intellectuals who have been educated or have spent time in the West.[9] It is not surprising that they have used latest Western critique of capitalism and imperialism such as neo-Marxism, postmodernism, dependency, and world system theory to criticize issues in China's modernization. Nonetheless, the New Left is a diverse group: some emphasize the role of the state, nationalism, while others social justice, and still others Maoist experiment.

Debates between the Liberals and New Left

3.1 The Chinese intellectuals in the 1990s were broadly divided into two camps – the Liberals and the New Left. The debates between the liberals and the New Left, which broke out in the middle of the 1990s, have been a phenomenon rarely seen among mainland Chinese intellectuals since 1949.[10] They provoked challenging questions regarding the outcomes and orientation of China's economic reform.

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[9] For a detailed discussion on this subject, see Li He, "Returned Students and Political Change in China," *Asian Perspective*, 30, no. 2 (summer 2006), pp. 5–29.

[10] Xu Youyu, "The Debates between Liberalism and the New Left in China since the 1990s," *Contemporary Chinese Thought*, 34, no. 3 (2003), p. 6.

3.2 The major issue of the debates is on the role of the state. Since Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour in 1992, there has been a significant retreat of the state. While the liberals believe the state must shrink in order to facilitate a growing market economy, Wang Shaoguang and Hu Angang from the New Left camp believe otherwise. In 1993 they published *A Study of China State Capacity*,[11] in which they argued that a strong state is necessary for market reform. Most liberals rejected the idea that the Chinese state could really be as weak as what Wang and Hu had claimed, and maintained that in any case the government should withdraw from the economy in favor of an unfettered market. The government did not treat Wang and Hu's report lightly. Wang and Hu's report prompted the taxation reform of January 1994, which split revenues and responsibility between the central and provincial authorities, with social consequences that are still unfolding.[12]

3.3 It should be pointed out that among the New Left scholars there is not even a desire to eliminate the market and return to the Soviet style of economy. They mainly want a state-regulated market economy with a social safety net that could reduce inequality and protect the environment. Gan Yang called the New Left the "New Deal Liberalism."[13] On the other hand, the liberals maintain that freedom will only come when the public sector is privatized and a new, politically active middle class emerges.

3.4 Since the 1990s globalization has been one of the most important discourses within the Chinese academic circles.[14] The debates drew scholars from both the New Left and liberal camps. The discourse helped transform the top leaders' thinking regarding globalization. The scholars from the liberal camp

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[11] Wang Shaoguang and Hu Angang, *Zhongguo guojia nengli baogao* [A Study of the State Capacity of China] (Liaoning People's publisher, 1993).

[12] Hu Angang "Equity and Efficiency," in Chaohua Wang ed. *One China, Many Paths* (London: Verso, 2003), pp. 225–226.

[13] Ren Ze, "Is China's 'New Left' 'Liberal Left?'" in Gong Yang, ed. *Si chao: Zhongguo "xin zuopai" ji qi yingxiang* [Trend of Thought: China's "New Left" and Its Impact] (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2003), p. 313.

[14] For detailed study on the subject, see Zheng Yongnian, *Globalization and State Transformation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

consider that it is in the Chinese interests to embrace globalization in spite of some negative effects it might bring about.

TABLE 3 DEBATES ON ECONOMIC REFORMS

Criteria	New Left	Liberals
Role of the state	Primary	Minimal government interference
Role of the market	Promotes growth but generate income gaps between the rich and the poor	Promotes growth, efficiency, and countervails arbitrary state power
State reform	Change to regulatory	Privatization
Macroeconomic policy	Neo-Keynesian	Neoclassical
Globalization	Challenge	Benefit
Origin of income inequality	Negative social consequences of the market reform	Corruption, exchange of power and money, and dictatorship

3.5 The New Left holds that China's involvement in "globalization" has resulted in the unchecked spread of capitalism in China. They contend that China's social problems are nothing but "Western epidemic" or "market epidemic" as experienced by the capitalist countries. Liberals maintain that the source of these problems is predominantly internal and that the way to resolve them should be to go for further reforms, particularly by promoting economic and political reforms hand in hand. In contrast, the New Left believes that the source of these problems is mainly external, rooted in globalization, international capital, and the market economy.[15] Some New Leftists joined forces with nationalists on the subject of globalization.[16]

3.6 The growing gap between the rich and the poor has also become an issue of contention in recent years. From the perspective of the liberals, market is not

[15] Xu Youyu, "Contemporary Chinese Society's Ideological Splits," http://en.chinaelections.org /newsinfo.asp?newsid=13310.

[16] From the perspective of the New Left, neo-nationalism in China is not anti-Western, xenophobic and aggressive, but is more assertive and open to the outside world than China's earlier forms of nationalism. For details, see Gao Mobo Changfan, "The Rise of Neo-Nationalism and the New Left: A Post-Colonial and Postmodernism Perspective," in Leong Liew and Shaoguang Wang, eds., *Nationalism, Democracy and National Integration in China* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2004), pp. 44–62.

the cause of income inequality. Increasing inequality is a result of corruption, exchange of power and money; the real reason for income inequality is dictatorship. The New Left emphasizes economic justice, not just economic growth at any price, and views the complete divorce from the redistributionist ideals of Marxist communism as callous and immoral.

3.7 The controversy over property ownership reform also generated debates between the liberals and the New Left. While the drain on state assets that accompanies privatization has been regarded as problematic for a long time, Lang Xianping (郎咸平), Professor of Finance at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, provides new food for thought when he presented the huge losses of state-owned assets using accounting methods and data from such well-known companies as Haier, TCL, and Greencool Technology. Several New Left economists quickly wrote a letter to the leadership calling for an investigation into Lang's charges; eventually the China Security Regulatory Commission found that wrongdoing had been committed.

3.8 Liberal economists (also known as mainstream economists) maintain that the drain on state assets may lead to social inequity; however, both inequality and inefficiency may prevail if economic transition were to slacken, thus making it necessary for the acceleration rather than suspension of reforms such as privatization. In addition, liberal economists warn that raising objections to the siphoning off of state-owned assets to individual entrepreneurs could lead to a deceleration in ownership reforms and worsen the investment environment. They argue that entrepreneurs who have made great contributions to China's economic development should be given more respect and appreciation.

3.9 Although liberal economists defended management buy-outs, public opinion strongly supported Lang. Ironically, in China, which calls itself a socialist country, the government's thinking on this issue is closer to that of the neoliberals, who advocate free market capitalism, than that of the New Leftists, who are critical of marketization and privatization.

3.10 Another contentious debate was over the issue of the Property Law. In 2004 the Constitution of the PRC was amended to provide that "private property is inviolable." To give practical definition to this, a full-fledged Property Law was required. In 2005, Gong Xiantian (巩献田), a law professor of Peking University and a New Left scholar, published a letter on the Internet that accuses the Property Law of violating China's Constitution and betraying the socialist system. He claimed that the draft Property Law was "unconstitutional" in stipulating the equal status of the state, collective, and private ownership. Gong Xiantian argued that the draft law would "accelerate the loss of state-owned assets and worsen social polarization and antagonism."

3.11 Gong's letter aroused huge debates in jurisprudential circles and became a nationwide discussion. The legislation process was then delayed. Obviously, with their slogans of "people first" and "harmonious society," China's leaders are aware of the social and political risk resulting from the huge gap between the new rich and the poor. They have to take into consideration the views and suggestions from left-wing academics. The New Left was very critical of the government's efforts to clarify property rights and sell off inefficient state-owned enterprises. They argue such policies could benefit a small group of the rich.

3.12 Supporters of the bill, mainly neoliberal economists in China's key institutions, say the affirmation of property rights, especially private property rights, protects the material interests of millions of working people and entrepreneurs in the private sector. It encourages more people to create wealth for themselves and for the nation. It would also protect private companies against economic crimes, such as embezzlement by their own staff.

3.13 The law was originally scheduled for adoption in 2005, but was removed from the legislative agenda following these objections. The final form of the law contains a number of additions to address these objections. Although revised

and later passed, this was the first time in China's legislative history that a proposed law had been derailed by a rising tide of public opinion.[17]

3.14 In sum, in the dichotomy of market/state, foreign/national, West/East, the liberals tend to argue in favor of the former, while the New Left tends to favor the latter.[18] The liberals believe the free market would in the long run support the growth and the rise of the Chinese middle class and its access to political power, while radical leftists declare in no uncertain terms that they are on the side of the dispossessed and the exploited lower strata of the Chinese society.[19] Though scholars from the two camps occupy positions at top academic institutions, the liberals hold considerably more influence, and their voices have been much more prominent than the New Left.

Party-State and the New Left

4.1 Party propaganda machine runs counter both to the New Leftists, who are in favor of state intervention, and the liberals who advocate market forces. The government has sponsored widely publicized attacks on neoliberalism.[20] In July 2007, Wang Hui and Huang Ping, long serving co-editors of *Dushu*, were relieved of their co-editorship. The move was preceded by a series of attacks on the editors in other official mass media.

4.2 In spite of their uneasy relationship with the Party-state, the liberals and New Leftists publish their own journals. *Dushu* (读书), *Tianya* (天涯), *Ershi yi shiji* (二十一世纪), *Res Publica* (公共论丛), *Yanhuang Chunqiu* (炎黄春秋) and

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17 Joseph Fewsmith, "China in 2007: The Politics of Leadership Transition," *Asian Survey*, 48, no. 1 (January–February 2008), p. 84.

18 Au Loong-Yu, "Chinese Nationalism and the 'New Left'," *Socialist Outlook*, no. 10 (Summer 2006).

19 Xu Jilin, "The Fate of an Enlightenment: Twenty Years in the Chinese Intellectual Sphere (1978–1998)," in Merle Goldman and Edward Gu, eds., *Chinese Intellectuals Between State and Market* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 199.

20 See, for example, He Bingmeng ed. *xinziyouzhuyi pingxi* [Analysis of Neoliberalism] (Beijing, Social Science Documentation Publishing House, 2004).

Nanfang Zhuomo (南方周末) are the major outlets of their intellectual debates. The emergence of scholarly journals enables scholars to share insight, debate critical issues among themselves and influence policy.

4.3 Freedom of information has always been considered essential in liberalizing China, and the Internet has disseminated chunks of information once unthinkable.[21] The widespread use of the Internet makes it harder for the government to maintain a monopoly over information resources. In addition, unofficial journals, study groups, and seminars organized by private think tanks all help in the diffusion of their ideas.

4.4 The Beijing leadership has become increasingly tolerant of intellectual discourse on a number of seemingly sensitive issues and is likely to continue to do so in the foreseeable future. This can be explained by several factors. First of all, due to the complexity and uniqueness of the Chinese reform, China is undergoing massive transformation without a sufficient theoretical basis or guideline. To generate more ideas and policy options to achieve the goal of modernization, the Party is likely to maintain its policy of encouraging public discourse on economic reform so long as it does not challenge the party's dominance in the existing system.

4.5 Second, to achieve the Chinese leadership's goal of modernizing the country, it must learn from the West without allowing Western ideas to ferment dissention at home. Third, liberals and conservatives within the leadership are attempting to checkmate each other's ability to develop a theoretically consistent framework to support their policy position. Peter Moody pointed out correctly that the direction of Chinese politics is shaped by the play of power, and ideas are tools in this contest.[22]

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[21] Jim Yardley, "China's Leaders Are Resilient in Face of Change," *New York Times*, 6 August 2008.

[22] Peter Moody, *Conservative Thought in Contemporary China* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2007), p. 9.

Impact of the Debates

5.1 The past decade has witnessed significant changes in the landscape of intellectual discourse. First of all, when the debates between liberalism and the New Left started in the mid-1990s, the discourse was among a few elite intellectuals in Beijing and Shanghai and their articles were often criticized as too difficult or obscure.[23] Now, their debates not only attracted attention from intellectuals and state bureaucrats but also an increasing number of ordinary workers and netizens.

5.2 Second, the focus of the debates has shifted from theoretical concerns to issues closely related to ordinary people's life (such as protection of rights of the "vulnerable" groups). Third, the debates on the direction and strategy of the reform have intensified among Chinese intellectuals. Their debate is no longer the "storm in a teacup." In fact, "to gain control of the discourse" is now the buzz phrase in China's media world. [24]

5.3 Furthermore, there are multiple venues to spread the Liberal's and New Left's thinking. The discourse appears not only in traditional printed format, but more importantly, in the digital world. Frequently, sensitive topics are posted on the Internet since it is easier and much quicker to spread one's belief online. It is true that ideological diversity could be a challenge for the Party.[25] However, so far, the intellectual debates between the liberals and New Left have generated positive effects on the reform.

5.4 First, the discourse increased public awareness of the consequences of some major policy change. For instance, left-leaning intellectuals in China have increasingly made use of *Utopia* (乌有之乡) as a platform to challenge

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[23] Wang Hui, "The New Criticism," in Chaohua Wang ed. *One China, Many Paths* (London: Verso, 2003), p. 55.

[24] For details, see Pan Wei, "*Ganyu yu xifang zhangkai zhengzhi guannaian jingzhen*," [Dare to Compete with the West in Political Discourse] *Huanqiu Shibao* [The Global Times] 25 January 2008.

[25] For a good summary of the argument, see Merle Goldman, *From Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), especially Chapter 4.

Beijing's overall pro-business agenda. They highlighted the negative social consequences of Beijing's course and generated waves of debates on the way forward for China. Before *Dushu* printed a piece about the *sannong* problems (three rural problems) [referring to agriculture, peasants, and the countryside] in 1999, the government did not even admit to the existence of the three rural problems; but two years later it was on the agenda of the National People's Congress.[26] In the past few years, the leadership has highlighted its shift from growth-centered to more balanced development-centered policies.

5.5 Second, the debates introduced new ways of thinking for decision makers, which expanded the ranges of policy options. Some of their proposals, commended by the top leaders, became official policies. Since the late 1970s, the policy process has become more open and accessible to influence from outside the bureaucracy. Under such circumstances, public discourse debates on the effectiveness of the policy, influencing public opinion, and in some cases, bringing policy change. Wang Shaoguang-Hu Angang's report on the state capacity in 1993 is considered as an important contribution to the economic reform and proves to be helpful in building a strong central government.

5.6 Cui Zhiyuan's views on shareholding-cooperative system (SCS) have also made a political impact. In 1994, Cui wrote an article arguing for the preservation of the SCS, a kind of labor-capital partnership. A leading official in the government read the article and decided to allow the SCS to prevail in rural China. The centralized decision-making of the one-party state has many disadvantages, but one advantage is that it may be easier to implement radical (but defensible) ideas if the top leadership is convinced.[27]

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[26] Leslie Hook, "The Rise of China's New Left," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 170, no. 3 (2007), p. 12.

[27] Cui Zhiyuan is a well-known New Left thinker. For details, see Daniel Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 193.

5.7 Third, although Beijing endorses neither the New Leftism nor liberalism, their intellectual discourse generated a lot new ideas, insight, and approaches that the Chinese leadership can *cherry pick*. The 11th five-year plan is a template for a new Chinese model. From the liberals, the Chinese leadership borrows the idea of permanent experimentation – a gradualist reform process rather than a shock therapy. It also accepts that the market will drive economic growth. The New Left draws the Chinese leadership to the issues of inequality and environment and to a quest for new institutions that can marry co-operation with competition.[28] In the words of Wang Hui, "in the past, policies were made from inside the government, but now more of those [policies initiatives] are coming from the society."[29]

5.8 Last but not least, the intellectual discourse has broadened horizons for the decision makers. Several liberal and New Left arguments have filtered into the official discourse. For instance, the term "social justice," which has been much debated since the 1990s, is now a regular feature of Party rhetoric.[30] The Chinese like to argue about whether it is the intellectuals who influence decision makers, or the latter who use intellectuals as mouthpieces to advance their own views. Either way, these debates have become part of the political process, and are used to expand the options available to the Chinese authorities.

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[28] Mark Leonard, "China's New Intelligentsia," *Prospect*, no. 144 (March 2008).

[29] Leslie Hook, "The Rise of China's New Left," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 170, no. 3 (2007), p. 13.

[30] Gloria Davies, *Worrying about China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 102.