Our Sense of Problem: Rethinking China Studies in the United States

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Abstract

This article begins by reviewing the past three generations of postwar U.S.-based China research in terms of the central problematique of the most influential scholarship of each generation, and then goes on to place those into the larger context of the past three centuries of Western thought about China. The purpose is to demonstrate how the either/or binary of the West versus China has governed the questions asked and not asked by those influential scholars, and how it has shaped the main answers proffered, sometimes even when they violate available empirical evidence. The article argues that the interpenetration of the Chinese and the Western, with reinterpretations and syncretizing no less than tensions and contradictions, is in fact the basic given reality of a modern China; an either/or choice between the two is not possible in reality, only in theoretical construction. An insistence on the latter is what has given rise to violations of empirical evidence. A truly China-centered approach is not to swing from the extreme of Western-centrism to Chinese-centrism, but rather to make the real problems of modern China our own, namely, to search for a viable mix of the Chinese and the Western, anchored in empirical evidence. The either/or binary mode of thinking, moreover, is evidenced in a host of other similar binaries, including modernity versus tradition, industry versus agriculture, cities versus countryside, market versus population, market versus the state, formal-rational law versus substantive law, the universal versus the

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particular, and so on. A historical approach requires that we set the either/or, mutually exclusive mode of thinking aside and focus instead on their interrelationship and interaction. The article provides concrete illustrations, mainly about rural development and the justice system.

Keywords
the problematique of research, "Communist China" versus China, modernization versus revolution, neoconservatism and postmodernism, Western-centrism versus China-centrism, postmodern marketism

Our sense of problem—the central question we ask in our research—is arguably the most important and determinative part of any work of scholarship. It sets the agenda for what we want to know and determines what we ask and do not ask. It points our searchlight in a particular direction, and hence determines to a great extent what we will find.

This is all the more so in American research, given its emphasis on a fairly standardized format in almost all publications: of stating first the problem, often derived from existing theory, then presenting a sharply focused thesis or argument with factual evidence in support. That format is distinct from, for example, some other formats or styles of Western/European research (e.g., the more empirically oriented British tradition) and a good deal of contemporary Chinese research, which is only beginning to imitate the more standardized American style. The substance of the problem, of course, is more important than the style or formatting of it. It is what frequently characterizes the theoretical-ideological context of an entire generation of researchers, or distinguishes the preoccupation of one nation from another.

This article begins with an outline discussion, from 50-plus years of active participation and personal experience, of what I see as the three successive organizing problematiques (problematics) in postwar American China research. The purpose is not to argue that all American scholarship on China may be grouped under one or another of these problematics, but rather that those were what the most influential scholars of each generation undertook to answer/solve. The intention is not to do a comprehensive "review of the literature," only to illustrate the theme argued here with material drawn mainly from the sub-areas of study I know best. It is also not to deny that the more empirically oriented and more purely truth-seeking scholars rarely address theoretical-ideological issues. They may form something of a "silent majority," but I believe it is important that we address critically the works that have been the most influential, because they are often at the crest of a theoretical

current or ideological tide, the better to understand the intellectual environment in which we work and/or to separate our own work from the sometimes misguided "mainstream."

An important subsidiary point here is that, depending on the degree to which the influential scholars of each generation were ideologically driven, some might violate intentionally or unintentionally the available empirical evidence because of their determination to arrive at particular types of answers. By contrast, when genuine truth-seeking research is done, albeit framed by particular kinds of questions, there can still be lasting scholarly contributions. When driven mainly by ideologized concerns, however, the value of the works fades quickly with the passing of particular ideological tides or theoretical fads.

My review of the past problematics are then placed into a larger framework of Western thinking about China. They have been in my view part and parcel of a persistent conceptual frame that sharply juxtaposes the West and China into an either/or binary, such that the dominant themes have been either the superiority of the West, with China as its opposite "other" or, in the most recent generation, the reverse, of a China equivalent to, superior to, or just like the West, still according to the West's standards and still in an either/or binary framework. Both of those arguments have been born mainly of theoretical influences and problematics that are Western in origin. Both have seriously violated the fundamental reality of modern-contemporary China: namely, the necessary mixing of the past with the present, and the Chinese with the Western.

This has been a problem not only within American (and much of Western) research on China but also in contemporary Chinese research on China, perhaps even more so. Much of the latter has been deeply influenced by Western constructs and problematics. For example, earlier Chinese Marxist scholarship attempted to apply a Western-derived analytical framework to understanding China. So too has its successor, the neoliberalism-dominated Chinese scholarship of the past 30 some years. Each provoked in turn opposite arguments that insist on understanding China only in "indigenous" terms, along with a rejection of Western theories and frameworks. This article argues that we need to set this either/or binary opposition aside, and proceed instead from the basic reality of the necessary interpenetration of the Chinese and the Western in modern-contemporary China. A clear recognition of that fundamental reality would be the first step toward studying China without starting from oversimplified Western-derived problems and theories as in the past, problems and theories that sometimes led to grave misunderstandings of China and false projections onto China of imagined or exaggerated realities. It would also finally lend the study of China the theoretical autonomy that the

best China scholars have long called for. Only thus would China studies, in China no less than in the West, be able to accord more fully with Chinese realities and place China into a truly global perspective.

The West-versus-China either/or binary mode of thinking, moreover, is evidenced also in a host of other related binaries, such as modernity versus tradition, industry versus agriculture, cities versus countryside, market versus population, market versus the state, formal-rational law versus substantive law, the universal versus the particular, and so on. This article suggests that, like the West-versus-China binary, these dualities too need to be seen not in either/or opposition but in terms of their interrelationship and interaction. The article provides some concrete illustrations of the kinds of approaches I have in mind.

Communist China versus Chinese China

At the time I was a graduate student (1960–1966) at the University of Washington (UW), the big issue was how to think about the new "Communist China." Many China scholars ("Sinologists") had gone into Chinese studies out of a love of and identification with Chinese culture, especially its "great tradition." But the People's Republic of China had clearly turned away from and rejected that tradition and embraced instead Marxism-Leninism (Communism), in the context of the worldwide Cold War. How was one to deal with that vast gap between a beloved China and a hateful China, between the old and friendly to the U.S. China (of Chiang Kai-shek), albeit a weak China, and the new Communist enemy? Those issues were concretized at that historical stage around the issue of whether the United States should recognize China (reject the Chiang government in Taiwan) and support its admission to the UN or, as rightist U.S. public opinion of the time (fueled and expanded by the Korean War) insisted, remain true to its ally the Guomindang (Kuomintang) and support instead its continued membership in the UN.

At UW, the "rightist" center for Chinese studies at the time, the answer, led by the work of its directors George Taylor and Franz Michael, was to insist that "Communism" was alien to China, imposed by an international Communist conspiracy directed from Moscow. Michael and Taylor expressed their ideological views most especially through their textbook *The Far East in the Modern World*, in which Mao Zedong was depicted as just a follower of Stalin and Stalinism, with no theoretical originality whatsoever, who somehow managed to acquire complete control of the army and the party, and thereby succeeded in the "military conquest" of China (Michael and Taylor, 1964 [1956]: see, e.g., 412, 413, 430, 432). I remember well the experience of serving as a teaching assistant for the course based on that text.

Of course, that was not all that UW's Far Eastern and Russian Institute did. It also wisely gathered some of the outstanding China scholars (and Chinese scholars from China) of the time, and pursued research of genuine substance, at the center of which was my advisor, Hsiao Kung-ch'üan, a world-class scholar by any definition. The institute's scholarly contributions included most importantly the two volumes on the Chinese "gentry" by Chang Chung-li 张仲礼 (Zhang Zhongli) (Chang, 1955, 1962), Hsiao's study of *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (more an encyclopedic work and a basic reference text than an ideologized study) (Hsiao, 1960), and Franz Michael and Chang Chung-li's two volumes on *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents* (Michael and Chang, 1966, 1971), all of them important scholarly contributions.

Another dimension of UW's China studies of that time was Karl A. Wittfogel, who came to UW (from Columbia) for one semester each year to teach his course and pursue his research on "Oriental despotism." Unlike many of the other faculty at UW, Wittfogel was not so much a Sinophile as someone who harbored a deep hatred of despotic/authoritarian regimes, for whom Nazism (under which he had suffered personally), Communism (he had earlier been a party member), and "Oriental despotism" were all somehow fused into one and the same common enemy of "total power" (Wittfogel, 1957).

The other side was John Fairbank's center at Harvard. Less "right wing" and more "liberal," their major work was Benjamin Schwartz's *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* which, directly counter to the UW view, found much in Maoism that was Chinese. For Schwartz, "Chinese Communism" was above all a Chinese adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to a peasant society and peasant revolution, rather than an ideology based on the industrial proletariat for which it was intended. The Chinese Communist Revolution was therefore no mere import of an international conspiracy directed from Moscow, but rather the result of a growing severance from Moscow under Mao Zedong (Schwartz, 1951). Those views were echoed in the Harvard school's textbooks, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*, which termed the whole thing "Sinification" (Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, 1965 [1960]: 851, 855), and *The United States and China* (Fairbank, 1972 [1948]).

This central preoccupation with America's "China problem" was most certainly *the* issue of the 1950s and 1960s, even while much more purely historical and scholarly studies were done, and even as both sides set to raising the level of sophistication of knowledge, enlarging and deepening library holdings, and training a new generation of younger scholars who would have the requisite language skills (both Chinese and Japanese). They also

competed for funding from the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (as well as the Ford Foundation) for institutional support and for foreign language study and field research fellowships.

In different ways and to different degrees this "China problem" of the age shaped scholarship of the time not just in the obvious ways summarized above, but also in not so obvious ways. With respect to the "Chinese gentry," for example, the theme of UW's scholarly research was that it was an elite based on performance of functions as intermediaries between state and society, and not a "ruling class" based on ownership and control of the means of production (landownership), as Marxist class theory would have it. That argument followed quite naturally from K. A. Wittfogel's thesis of "Oriental despotism" as originating from the management of hydraulic projects (water control), and dovetailed well also with those who identified closely with the Chinese literati, China's "scholar-official" class, and its great tradition. There was also substantial empirical evidence in support of the theme, even though these works could never quite disprove the importance of landownership.

The same problematic had still subtler influences in the sphere of intellectual history. In Schwartz's second major book, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen [Yan] Fu and the West* (1964), we see the continuation of the earlier method to search out distinctively Chinese interpretations and reinterpretations of Western ideas: Schwartz demonstrated that Yan Fu's readings and translations of some of the classics of Western liberalism were infused with a concern not for the liberty of the individual vis-à-vis the state, the central concern of Western classical liberalism, but rather more for the "wealth and power" of the state through the release and gathering together of individual energies. Schwartz went on to argue that in Yan Fu's perceptions we might see something of a de Tocqueville phenomenon, in which the traveler-outsider perceives with greater clarity an underlying concern (the "Faustian" character) of the West more clearly than those within. It is one of those rare books that show not just the influence of the sense of problem of its time, but also the validity of its approach even today, a half century later.

By contrast, Joseph Levenson, the star in intellectual history (based at the University of California, Berkeley), who also addressed the very broad issue of Chinese civilization versus modern Western civilization, did so in a much starker East-versus-West binary opposition than Schwartz. Levenson's study of Liang Qichao, his first book, was based fundamentally on the formula that Liang was "intellectually alienated from his tradition, but still emotionally tied to it," and that Liang's central concern was "to smother the conflict between history and value" (Levenson, 1959 [1953]: 1–2, 34–51). In his later trilogy on *Confucianism and Its Modern Fate*, Levenson attempted to redefine and modify this theme as a matter not just of emotion versus intellect, but

of "subjective significance" versus "objective significance": Confucianism had become "objectively" insignificant even if it remained "subjectively" significant, given its unraveling as a system of values and institutions (Levenson, 1972 [1958, 1964, 1965]: x–xii).

What Levenson's more conceptual-theoretical than empirically anchored research reflected was in fact the age-old either/or binary juxtaposition between the West and the non-West—a theme that runs throughout Western thinking about China since the Enlightenment (more below). The rise of Marxism-Leninism in China marked the exit of Confucianism from history; "value" would henceforth belong to the West, not to Chinese tradition. If Schwartz's work on Yan Fu told about attempts to see beyond such simple either/or dichotomizing of China and "the West," and Communism and Western liberal democracy, Levenson's told about the continued power and hold of that either/or binary opposition in U.S. studies of China, something that would become clearer still in the second and third postwar generations. More influential and widely read at the time than Schwartz's work, Levenson's was not nearly as lasting in its scholarly contribution.

These works tell also about the gradual fading of the highly politicized "China problem," which would finally be laid to rest with the replacement of Taiwan's "Republic of China" by the mainland's People's Republic of China in the United Nations in 1971, marking the end to an ideological denial of the reality of the triumph of the Chinese Communist Party. That was followed by the reopening of Sino-American relations in 1972 (Shanghai communiqué) and the normalization of relations between the United States and China in 1979. Those events marked the passing of the problem with which the leaders of the first generation of postwar American China research were centrally preoccupied. With that most immediate issue removed, deeper issues about how to think about China's past and present would come to the fore.

Revolution versus Modernization

Even before the waning of the recognition question, it had been clear that American China scholarship shared a deep attachment to the "paradigm" of "modernization," understood mainly as capitalist economic development cum liberal democracy. That was in fact the main theory/ideology employed in the Cold War to battle against the "socialist revolution" that was being called for by the Soviet Union and China. The problems posed by that opposition would now come to dominate American scholarship.

The modernization paradigm had already been evident in a variety of studies. First, in the sphere of foreign relations, there was the juxtaposition between the modern ideal of equal relations among nation-states (even

though in the context of imperialism and unequal treaties extracted by invasion and war) versus imperial Chinese "ethnocentrism," "Sinocentrism," or "tributary relations," as employed by John Fairbank. It was a framework that would be used by a host of studies under Fairbank's influence: for example, Hsin-Pao Chang's study of the Opium War, which argues that the "clash of cultures" was far more important and fundamental than the issue of opium (Chang, 1964), Immanuel Hsü's study of China's struggle to adapt to the new world order, under the title *China's Entrance into the Family of Nations* (Hsü, 1960), and others. In both Chang's and Hsü's studies, the Chinese "tributary" view of foreign relations was juxtaposed against the modernist view of international relations.

Modernizationism had been evident also in the central problematic of other major works, such as Mary C. Wright's study of the *T'ung-Chih [Tongzhi] Restoration* (1966 [1957]) and Albert Feuerwerker's study of Sheng Hsuan-huai (Sheng Xuanhuai) and "mandarin enterprise" (1958), both of which focused on the question of why China had "failed to modernize." As Mary Wright wrote, it was because "the requirements of modernization ran counter to the requirements of Confucian stability" (Wright, 1966 [1957]: 9). Even so, Wright's work was so solidly researched that it remains a lasting contribution in scholarship, even given the limitations of its organizing problematic.

What was new in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the coming of challenges to that modernization paradigm. They were closely associated with the anti–Vietnam War movement: was the United States really fighting in Vietnam on the side of modernization and democracy, as represented in official rhetoric, or was it representing imperialism in its battle against revolution and people's war of liberation (or, for some, Wilsonian "self-determination")? This was, for the new generation, including some of Fairbank's students at Harvard, of course also a question that pertained to the Chinese Revolution: was it not more than just a Sinified Marxism-Leninism imposed from above, but even more a popular revolution against imperialism and capitalism? Those perspectives came with new Marxist or Marxist-influenced theories in the West to become the major challenge to modernizationism. No influential work on modern-contemporary China for the next two decades could avoid addressing the Marxist challenge to the prevailing paradigm of modernization.

On the side of modernization, the early theoretical formulations were based on assumptions that the West's development experience represented or ought to represent a universal process of change from the "traditional" to the "modern." It was characterized by (capitalist) industrialization, liberal democracy, urbanization, specialization, rationality, efficiency, dynamism,

and so on. (Eisenstadt, 1974, is a good summary overview.) That was the paradigm that guided or at least influenced all of the China scholarship of the first generation as outlined above. It remained the guiding paradigm for "mainstream" scholarship in the second generation.

In addition, among those of special relevance to China were two influential economists who would later, in 1979, be awarded the Nobel Prize in economics at the same time. First was Theodore Schultz, whose work talked about India rather than China, but who may be seen as the theorist of the "green revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s, which emphasized individual enterprise and technological inputs as the correct path to agricultural development, rather than Soviet and Chinese collective agriculture (Schultz, 1964). While Schultz made a special point of denying the existence of population pressure and surplus labor (which he set up as a straw man meaning labor of zero value, without regard to relative population pressure and hidden unemployment), W. Arthur Lewis focused his analysis on "dual economies" in the developing world, in which the traditional sector (as opposed to its modern, fully employed sector) was characterized by "unlimited supplies of labor." Nevertheless, Lewis shared Schultz's vision in that he too believed that, with individual enterprise, technological advances, and market mechanisms, there would come a "turning point" at which the dual economy would become a single, integrated modern economy with optimal allocation of labor (as well as other resources) (Lewis, 1954, 1955). Thus, while Schultz theorized away China's problem of scarcity of land relative to labor, Lewis acknowledged it at the outset, but saw it as something that "modernization" would surely overcome. Thus did he join, in the end, with universalist modernization theory. Both, in effect, theorized away what China itself has long termed its "basic national condition" 基本国情, to the disregard of the research accumulated by three generations of fine American scholars since the 1930s (from John Lossing Buck to Ping-ti Ho to Dwight Perkins). The point here, of course, is not to argue for the determinative influence of population, only that markets do not, cannot, erase the issue of population; the two are interactive, not mutually exclusive—as we will see more clearly later.

The above package of theoretical formulations was now challenged from the left along with the opposition to the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. In addition to the classical works of Marx and Lenin, there were the new works of a host of leftist and left-leaning theorists and historians, mainly from outside the China field. Among them were economists like Andre Gunder Frank and his "dependency theory," which argued that capitalism and aid and interventions of the United States in Latin America had wrought not modernizing development but rather its opposite, dependency and underdevelopment (Frank, 1967). It was influential perhaps not only because it was obviously true in part but also because of its extra clarity from overstatement.

There were also major scholarly contributions from historians like E. P. Thompson, whose work on English labor and the cultural dimension of the process of class formation, came to shape a generation of labor studies and beyond (Thompson, 1991 [1963, 1968]). And there were studies of the French Annales school, by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (Le Roy Ladurie, 1974) and others, whose works were representative of the turn from elitist political and intellectual history to the new social history "from below" of the "little people."

For China studies, the historical sociologist Charles Tilly was perhaps the most influential theorist, for his use of both Marxist and "substantivist" (more below) theory to criticize modernizationism, for his creative uses of Marxist theory (e.g., "class coalition" and "collective action"), and for his analyses of the origins and nature of "modern state-making" (Tilly, 1975a, b, c). One important theoretical "debate" of this period, of special relevance to China, was set up by the "rational choice" theorist Samuel Popkin's (Popkin, 1979) critique of James Scott (Scott, 1976) over the question of what drove popular (peasant) collective action: "rational self-interest" or peasant community resistance (for the "right to subsistence" against the intrusions of capitalism and the modern capitalist state). Scott represented the substantivist (e.g., A. V. Chayanov and Karl Polanyi) "third" view, after modernizationism and Marxism. Each represented an important theoretical current in the growing numbers of studies of popular movements and of the Chinese Revolution. Those new tendencies came as part of the larger tide of the turn from political and intellectual history to social history, as well as the broadening of Chinese studies into the social sciences, including sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics, such that most major centers came to include China specialists in those disciplines. Those new tendencies enriched significantly American China studies.

The concrete issue of greatest immediacy was of course the U.S.' role in Vietnam. The antiwar movement of the late 1960s and the 1970s politicized an entire generation of younger scholars and led to a distinct leftward turn in American scholarship in general and China scholarship in particular. In that larger theoretical-ideological shift, along with the rise of social science-based area studies as well as social history, the big issue was revolution versus modernization (and imperialism). It came to engage the main attention of the leaders of the younger generation, like Mark Selden and his historical-sociological study of the *Yenan Way* (Selden, 1971), which captured well how the Chinese Communist Party was able in a backward rural area to mobilize peasants and forge a new egalitarian society and government of high morale that would prove to be a tremendously effective entity for people's war and revolution, and Joseph Esherick and his similar

local (Annales) "total history" (local history) approach to China (Esherick, 1976), which sought to define the social bases of (late Qing) reform and (the 1911) revolution, finding them principally in the Westernizing urban elites that had little or nothing to do with rural peasants. These studies heralded the coming of a generation of the "new social history," a deliberate turn away from studies of foreign relations, intellectual history, and leading political figures to studies of the basic levels of society. They would greatly enrich American China studies.

Quite a number among that generation were political activists as well as scholars. They gathered to form the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS) with the avowed purpose of opposing the war in Vietnam and criticizing American imperialism in Asia. Their ranks included leaders from almost all the major centers of China and Asian studies that had arisen in the 1960s and 1970s. They published the journal *Bulletin of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars*, which provided radical, often Marxist, statements and research on the war, on U.S. policy in Asia, on the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions, and so on.

The central problem of "revolution" versus "modernization" coalesced around the debate surrounding the presence of CIA personnel in the Asian studies program at Harvard: as researchers, as students, and as occasional recruiters for the CIA. That fact was almost the inevitable result of a field of study born in the Cold War and funded for the purpose of "National Defense." The debate led off with a letter from graduate student Jim Peck to Ezra Vogel (who would later become director of the center after Fairbank), questioning the relationship between Harvard's program and the CIA and the complicity of Harvard's program with U.S. government policies in the Vietnam War. Fairbank's response to that was that scholarly inquiry must come with "inclusiveness and openness," and that tolerance of the CIA presence should be viewed as similar to the center's intention to "invite certain European scholars who are avowed members of the Communist Party" (a reference presumably to Jean Chesneaux, well known for his scholarship on the Chinese labor movement), but that to his knowledge CIA personnel had not undertaken active recruitment.[1] This was followed by Jon Livingston's letter citing specific instances known to him of CIA personnel recruiting students in the program. Livingston then raised pointedly the question of the moral responsibility of scholars in the "genocidal war in Vietnam and the perpetuation of the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek," and referred also to the issue of the draft, which had made the war issue that much more personal. Ezra Vogel responded by arguing that he did not think that "emotion is a substitute for reason" and that it may be better to "work within the government" and "to attempt to change policy" than to be "morally pure."[2]

There was talk from both sides of efforts to channel the dispute into a periodic forum and a sustained inquiry of the relations between the centers of scholarship and government funding and agencies, but nothing came of it. Overall, the exchange remained polarized much as it had begun. Against that background, the either/or polarization of revolution versus modernization was inevitable, not just as theoretical differences but also as political action and ideology. Some of the leaders of the CCAS would later leave academic studies. Others remained, some writing as avowed Marxists, though their Marxism was more often academic theory rather than ideological doctrine, and others as progressive or critical scholars. Many went on to make significant scholarly contributions. But none could avoid some degree of influence of the polarized division over the war.

Critical Asian Studies, as the *Bulletin* would later be renamed, would remain as an important publication to this day, though more and more focused on studies of other countries in Asia than China. For contemporary China, *The China Quarterly*, established in 1960 and widely known to have been funded (through the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Farfield Foundation) by the CIA in the early years, would remain the mainstream and most influential publication on contemporary China (MacFarquhar, 1995: esp. 692, 696).[3]

Against that institutional and ideological background, an either/or polarizing of the issues was unavoidable. The "revolution" challenge to modernizationism, in the United States no less than from China, was as totalizing and universalist in its claims as its declared enemy. Each was unavoidably more than just academic-theoretical, but also ideological-political. The polarized clash between them, in a U.S. context, took center stage over problems that we on hindsight can see were more pressing for China itself, such as: the widening gap between city and countryside, given more than two decades (1952–1979) of industrial (output) growth at 11% per year, as opposed to agricultural (output) growth of a mere 2.3% per year (and that against a population growth of 2%). And, the problem that after more than two decades of revolution-making, the standard of living of the people had not advanced significantly. How, in other words, was China to achieve both the goals of revolution and of modernization (especially in the sense of higher incomes for the people), and not just one or the other?

Western-centrism versus China-centrism

Neoconservatism

The 1980s saw a new turn in the United States both in political ideology and scholarly inquiry. Politically, we saw the rise of "neoconservatism," a

reconfiguring and rejuvenation of the earlier modernizationism. The ideological content was if anything even more fundamentalist in its advocacy of capitalism + liberal democracy. It would accompany the rise to predominance of globalizing capitalism and its use of cheaper foreign labor worldwide, and it would lead the United States to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the 1990s, it was no longer held in check by the challenge of the Soviet bloc, but was rather goaded on by the triumphalism that accompanied the collapse of Communist party-states in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe.

Academically, there was first of all the revival of the free marketism of classical-liberal economics. That revival was represented most especially by Friedrich von Hayek (1899–1992), who became the favorite economist of Ronald Reagan (U.S. president from 1981 to 1989) and Margaret Thatcher (U.K. prime minister from 1979 to 1990). Already in 1948, Hayek, in his *Individualism and Economic Order*, had begun by presenting first a powerful critique of conventional (textbook) neoclassical economics: it had postulated an overly perfect rational individual with perfect information and a purely competitive market, when real individual persons and real markets were far from perfect. That amounted to a "false individualism," according to Hayek. It also relied far too much on mathematical models, (supply and demand) equilibrium analyses, constructed theories, and imitations of the physical sciences. Those tendencies had led finally to the extreme of scientism, most especially the embracing of scientistic central planning by the Communist states. What needs to be recognized instead is that imperfect as individual choices and market price signals are, they still make up the best possible economic guides the human world had seen—a view that Hayek termed "true individualism" (Hayek, 1980 [1948]).

Awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 1974 (at that time alongside the Swedish "leftist" economist Gunnar Myrdal), Hayek did not reach the height of his influence until the 1980s, on the tide of the new neoconservatism, when he was singled out by both Thatcher and Reagan. Thatcher, reportedly at a meeting in 1975 of the Conservative Party discussing the possible adoption of a "middle way" as the party's position on the economy, took out of her briefcase a copy of Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty* and slapped it down on the table saying, "This is what we believe" (Ranelagh, 1991: ix). As for Reagan, he actually named Hayek as among the two or three thinkers who had influenced him the most (Anderson, 1988: 164). Hayek's classical-liberal free market economics was what set him sharply apart from the interventionist Keynesianism that had been favored by many economists. In the market-versus-state binary, Hayek insisted on letting market mechanisms operate on their own without state interference. That was what lent him special appeal to Reagan and Thatcher.

What Hayek did through his anti-scientism arguments was to help rescue neoclassical textbook economics from the mounting criticisms against its strong scientistic and positivistic tendencies, by deflecting them onto Communist central planning. He himself identified unequivocally with "classical liberalism" that juxtaposed the individual sharply against the state, which was why fundamentalist marketeers and conservatives like Reagan and Thatcher found him so appealing. It was what gave philosophical substance to "Reaganomics" and made up the core of neoconservatism.

Hayek's influence on Reagan and Thatcher exceeded even that of his colleague at Chicago Milton Friedman, who insisted that economics is as scientific a pursuit as any natural science (see, for example, his Nobel Prize lecture—Friedman, 1976). Awarded the Nobel Prize in 1976, Friedman served on the Reagan administration's Economic Policy Advisory Board and was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1988 by Reagan. Between Hayek and Friedman, mainstream textbook classical and neoclassical economics (neoliberalism) seems to have been able to have its cake and eat it too, appearing highly critical of scientism/positivism and yet continuing to rely greatly on scientistic mathematical models and quantification.

To that mix of textbook neoliberalism was further added the so-called new institutional economics, which Hayek had anticipated early on when he taught law and economics at the University of Chicago. That new theoretical tendency in economics inherited from classical and neoclassical economics the premise of market-driven efficient allocation of resources, adding now the special singling out of private property rights as the necessary precondition for economic development. Both Ronald Coase (who, like Hayek, taught law and economics at Chicago) and Douglass North began in Hayek style with ostensible criticisms of neoclassical economics, one for its neglect of firms and "transaction costs," the other for its neglect of political institutions and law (Coase, 1990 [1988]); and North, 1981), together to argue for the all importance of secure private property rights. Coase would be awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 1991, and North, in 1993, which helped to ensure their preeminent positions in economics theorizing of the neoconservative era. Together, the package makes up the core ideology behind the globalization of multinational corporations. Private enterprise + market transactions is seen as the key to all economic development. In Chinese studies, their influence is evidenced in the new economic history based almost entirely on free marketism, in sharp contrast to the leading works of the preceding generation, which had focused on population, most especially in the important contributions of Ho Ping-ti (Ho, 1959) and Dwight Perkins (Perkins, 1969). The new neoconservative marketism would erase the consideration of population altogether, in the manner Theodore Schultz had argued.

Postmodernism

The powerful academic-political-ideological tide of neoconservatism has been paralleled, rather ironically, by the tide of "radical" postmodernism, which is first and foremost an epistemological challenge to the positivism (scientism) of the preceding era with its faith in "objective," "scientific" knowledge and research. An earlier era of belief in revealed truth had been replaced by faith in Reason and Science, traceable to the Enlightenment; the new critical turn has been at bottom the consequence of an "epistemological crisis" in Western thought, questioning the very foundations of modern knowledge, and raising basic issues about how we come to know. In its clearest and most powerful forms, postmodernism has taken the position that "objective truth" is but a discursive construct, and history but constructed "texts" that need to be deconstructed. Discursive constructions, not supposedly objective truth, make up what are truly basic in history and in human knowledge. Leading postmodernist theorists, like Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) and his "deconstruction" of ordered binary oppositions, and Michel Foucault (1926–1984) and his highlighting of the autonomy and fundamental importance of discourse, presented powerful critiques of the "Enlightenment modernism" that had led directly to modernizationism.

A second major theme of postmodernism is the "decentering of the West." Among the most influential theorists, for studies of the non-Western world, has been Edward Said, for whom what is needed in academic research above all else is critical analyses of modernist discourse, especially Western (imperialist) discourse vis-à-vis "the Orient" (Said, 1978), and Clifford Geertz, who argued that the target of scholarship should be the search (not for supposedly objective or universalist truth as it had been under the modernization paradigm but rather) for subjective, particularist truths revealed in the "web of meaning" of non-Western, indigenous cultures (Geertz, 1983). The two men are close in their intent and message, and praise and cite one another. For both of them, the universalism of modernism should be replaced by the new universalism of particularism, and positivistic research by discourse/web-of-meaning analysis. Which is to say, their particularism is intended to be universalist, a view that stems fundamentally from the either/or binary juxtaposition of the universal versus the particular; the new universalism of postmodernist particularism is meant to replace the old universalism of modernism.

But the crux of genuine truth-seeking scholarship, it seems to me, consists above all in the interrelations and interactions between the universal and the particular, not one or the other. Reality most surely comprises both the universal and the particular, and both discourse and practice. Scholarly research,

in fact, is above all about finding in empirical evidence qualifications, delimitations, or reconfigurations of the possible partial validities of universalist theory, as well as about finding larger meanings for particular facts by joining them to properly delimited theoretical insights. It is not about just universalizing or just particularizing, but rather about the interrelationship between them (Huang and Gao, 2015).

Extreme postmodernist theoretical currents of thought, however, came to have powerful influence in academe, even if much less so among the public. "Reflexive" critiques ("critical scholarship") became the vogue, not just among a new and younger generation of scholars but also among some older erstwhile materialist and scientistic scholars of the left. Joining the tide also were older-style intellectual historians who see in the attack on "objectivism" the potential for revival of the influence of their "subjectivist" studies of thought, and captivated also by the new analytical categories of "discourse" and textual "deconstruction." The current became a tide, reaching Chinese studies somewhat belatedly in the 1980s and after, but enough to extend, through new and newly converted postmodernists, to an entire generation of younger scholars—such that annual conference programs of the Association for Asian Studies of the past two decades have come to look more and more like a listing of postmodernist topics and categories.

The parallel rise of neoconservatism and postmodernism put both in conflict with the earlier leftists, who unavoidably came to be associated with oppressive and failed "Communist regimes" (even those who had long been severely critical of Stalinism and Maoism). For some postmodernists, Hayek's brand of economics seemed less objectionable than Communist scientism. More important, postmodernism and neoconservatism shared an oppositionist position in academe: the leftists and progressives (e.g., the social historians) of the earlier period, middle aged by the 1980s, had come to hold power in many departments and fields; neoconservatives and postmodernists were more the upstarts still on the outs. And, to each other, they seemed to claim a separate and even segmented academic sphere of interest: one in economics mainly and the other the humanities mainly, and hence not as all-encompassing an enemy as Marxism. In that triangular configuration, postmodernists often ended up on the same side with neoconservatives against the old leftists and progressives.

In China studies in the United States, the representative postmodernist work came first with Paul Cohen's *Discovering History in China* (Cohen, 1984), which sought to turn Fairbank's Western-centric "impact-response" model on its head, arguing instead for the "China-centered" primacy of the internal dynamics of Chinese history. It was, of course, a theme that struck chords also with those non-postmodernist China scholars in the West who

identified closely with Chinese culture and tradition, and with Chinese scholars in China only too eager to see China placed once more at the center of things. Propelled by those sentiments, the simple and obvious reality that modern Chinese history cannot simply be the consequence of just one or the other, but must in fact be a result of interactions between them, seems not to matter. The exaggerated overstatement of Cohen, however, lent his argument a certain extra force of clarity.

Postmodern Marketism

More important from the point of view of trends in scholarship, there came the rise of an influential hybrid scholarship that combined neoconservative with postmodernist precepts. This new scholarship makes its main theme the ostensible decentering of the West, by calling not only on the postmodernist critiques of Western-centric modernism, but also on the new fundamentalist free marketist globalism of the neoconservatives.

Andre Gunder Frank had earlier (in the late 1960s) risen to prominence by turning modernizationism on its head. Now, in the 1990s, with an almost uncanny sense of the rising academic tides, he attempted to do a similar thing: to turn Western-centrism on its head by arguing Chinese-centrism in the world economy, on the basis of a scheme based fundamentally on free marketism and monetarism, but with a radical message to decenter the West (Frank, 1998). His book *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* from the University of California Press in 1998 was remarkable for going through four printings by 2002.[4] Like Frank's earlier work, this one too is characterized by its ideologized simplicity.

The empirical core of Frank's argument is the fact that world silver flowed from the West to China from roughly 1400 to 1800. Frank himself, in his scattershot writing style, does not provide a coherent account and argument in one place for this, but the historical picture is clear enough: European (Spanish especially) abundance in silver from about 1400, followed by discoveries of silver in the New World (Peru and Mexico, especially) in the sixteenth century, meant that silver was more abundant and therefore cheaper in the West than in China. Its price relative to gold in the sixteenth century was 12:1 in Europe, compared with 6:1 in China, where it rose in the seventeenth century to 7–8:1, and then to 10:1, the differential with Europe not disappearing until after the 1750s (Chen, 2012: table on pp. 7–9). That in itself was a propellant for the movement of silver to China (from the New World via Manila or Europe to China), as a commodity itself even if not as the medium of exchange. When coupled with the fact that Chinese silk goods, and cotton, hemp, tea, porcelain, and so on, were better (because of China's

earlier development of them) and cheaper than those elsewhere (silk goods in China were just a third the price of silk goods in Europe and in Mexico—Chen, 2012: 3), it meant that Western merchants profited not only from the cheaper price of the goods but also from the higher value of the silver used to pay for those goods. Each enhanced the profits to be gained from the other. The result was the inflow of substantial amounts of silver into China throughout the period, which according to Frank amounted to 60,000 tons total in the period 1550–1800, or an average of 240 tons per year during the period (Frank, 1998: 149). For Frank, this flow of silver to China is the key fact that supposedly demonstrates that China was the richest and most developed economy of the world at that time and the very center of "the world economy/system" (Frank, 1998: esp. 34–38).

It is from this empirical core that Frank builds first his argument of a China-centered world system for the period 1400 to 1800, from which he then builds the theoretical scheme of an integrated world economic system that has existed for fully five (or seven) thousand years, with identifiable "long cycles," of which the most recent are the China-centered cycle of 1400–1800, which was replaced by the Western-centered cycle since 1800, but likely soon to be replaced by an Asia-centered long cycle. (Frank, 1998: chap. 5) Thus does he lay claim to a truly "global perspective" and criticize just about all previous scholarship for being Western-centric, including Immanuel Wallerstein's "world capitalist system" analysis, because it only focuses on the rise of the West from about 1500. Frank would decenter that by showing that that was just one cycle of many in the world economy system that had been in place for thousands of years.

Frank does not explain why Chinese silk and cotton goods were generally cheaper than in the West, and not just because of the relative worth of silver. But those reasons are actually readily apparent, as I have demonstrated at some length: intense population-to-land pressures compelled many peasants to rely on subsidiary handicraft production (by the cheaper labor of the women, elderly, and children), especially of cotton cloth and silk, to help sustain their livelihood. That entwining of farming with handicrafts would prove to be far more powerful and lasting than in Europe, where "protoindustrialization" would lead to the separating out of handicrafts from farming, in which one became an urban occupation while the other remained rural, each a separate economic pursuit sufficient for making a living. That contrasted sharply with the Chinese phenomenon in which neither farming nor handicrafts could alone furnish the full means of subsistence. They therefore remained inseparably interlocked in China down through to its contemporary period after 1949 (Huang, 2011b, 2002, 1990; also Huang, 1985, and Huang Zongzhi, 2014). That is what made cotton and silk goods cheaper in China than in Europe.

It was the combination of the relatively high price of Western silver in China and the relatively low labor costs of high quality silk and cotton goods and such in China, as well as the sheer size of China and its population, that propelled more export of Chinese goods than imports of foreign goods, to result in the flow of silver to China to pay for those goods. What it shows is by no means that China was the richest and most advanced economy of the time, but actually that it had a relatively low per capita income. Angus Maddison has estimated sensibly the relative per capita incomes in England and China: US$1,405 compared with US$600 in 1700, and US$2,121 compared with US$600 in 1820 (in 1990 "international dollars"—Maddison, 2001: 90, table 2-22a).

It was a phenomenon with some similarities to the flow of dollars to China in the past three decades of our contemporary world. Cheaper and well-disciplined Chinese labor has made for cheaper Chinese production costs and goods, and the greater abundance of U.S. dollars has made for cheaper U.S. dollars in the West than in China, especially since the supply of U.S. dollars, now the standard medium for valuation and currency reserves in international exchange, is a simple matter of the U.S. Treasury's printing more paper money. The combination of the two has made for the great flow of U.S. dollars to China, with current Chinese accumulations of U.S. currency reaching no less than four trillion dollars. This does not mean the concentration of global wealth in China, but rather that U.S. multinational firms have benefited greatly from "outsourcing," retaining the higher-profit margins of the design and sale ends, while using cheap Chinese labor for the lower-profit margins in the middle of the production process. This is something for which Apple and Foxconn (of Taiwan, hiring one million workers in mainland China, mainly for Apple) provide a telling illustration, with profit margins for Apple as high as 30% at the two ends, giving Apple one of highest profit rates of all firms in the United States, and just 7% or less for Foxconn in the outsourced middle stages of production (Feng, 2015). In terms of per capita incomes, according to the World Bank figures for 2014: the U.S.' is $55,200, and China's $7,380, a difference of 7.5:1 (World Bank, 2014, by the "Atlas Method").[5] If we focus on the incomes of the peasant migrant workers of the informal economy (i.e., with no legal protection and little or no benefits), who have furnished most of the cheap labor for outsourced U.S. production, the differential would be much greater (Huang Zongzhi, 2014: esp. chaps. 11 and 12). That does not make China the richest and most advanced economy as per Frank, only potentially the largest.

But for Frank, in his narrowly marketist and monetarist view, trade and the flow of money provide conclusive proof of China's more advanced development. It was on the evidence of such flows of global trade that his

entire scheme of "long cycles" of the "world system" across seven thousand years of history was constructed.[6] For him, it proves that China was the most developed and richest economy in the world at that time, supplanted by the West only in the two centuries following, but is now about to resume its place once more at the center of the world economy. Thus does he seek to decenter the West.

The problem with this theorizing is the vastly different scales and nature of the earlier trade system and the contemporary one. The total flow of silver in the 1400–1800 period of which Frank writes amounted to no more than just a tiny percentage of China's economy of the time, as is obvious even if we consider nothing more than the premodern logistical limitations and China's vastly greater population. By Frank's figure of 240 tons of silver a year, it amounted to just 0.4% of the value of total Chinese grain output in 1750, according to our best available guesstimates.[7] That is in sharp contrast to contemporary China, in which total foreign trade (exports + imports) has amounted to more than 60% of Chinese GDP (Huang Zongzhi, 2014: chap. 12; cf. Naughton, 2007: 377). One was trivial; the other decisive (though by no means singly determinative). To equate the two is to engage in an indefensible projection of the contemporary global economy back into a preindustrial historical past that was vastly different. It is to grossly exaggerate the importance of global trade in the premodern world. What the earlier trade showed was just that: limited trade connections among the different economies of the world, but by no means an integrated world economic system obeying the same logics as the current globalized economy, complete with "cycles."

Frank's rather fantastic scheme, however, has been followed by a number of like-minded works. The most influential is perhaps Kenneth Pomeranz's *The Great Divergence*, which echoes Frank's by arguing that until the end of the eighteenth century, Chinese (and its most advanced Yangzi delta region's) living standards and labor incomes were as high or higher than those in the West (and its most advanced country, England). According to Pomeranz, the two economies were alike in their levels of market development, in private property rights, resource endowments, and even in the degree of population pressure on land. The great divergence between England and China, therefore, came only later, in nineteenth-century industrial development, and that was mainly because of the coincidental abundance of coal resources in England and its access to colonies (Pomeranz, 2000; Huang, 2002).

The basic theoretical logic of Pomeranz's argument, it should be made clear, is that given roughly equal (free) market conditions, preindustrial economies would reach comparably efficient allocations of resources and comparable development. Thus, if Chinese markets (and property rights) could be

shown to be comparable to or better developed than those in the West, all else would logically also be roughly similar. Labor would be just as efficiently allocated—as Theodore Schultz had claimed in his argument against the existence of any kind of surplus labor or population pressure in a marketized economy. By extension, per capita incomes and consumption would also be roughly equivalent. And all that would be needed to modernize agriculture would be new technical inputs, whether in the West or in China. That was why China and the West were basically equivalent until the end of the eighteenth century. That is why "the great divergence" would come only with Western industrialization in the nineteenth century (Pomeranz, 2000: see especially the introduction).

By extension, there is the unspoken implication that the Chinese Communist Revolution steered China off the proper course of market-forces-based development.[8] Once China re-marketized, as in its Reform period, development has resumed with a vengeance, perhaps soon to overtake the United States. This is the argument that Frank, who proudly associated himself with the so-called California school of Pomeranz et al., actually made (Frank, 2001).

Thus was Hayek's neoconservative, fundamentalist classical-liberal marketism, placing the free market at the determinative core of economy, and to the exclusion of other factors like population and the state, combined with the "radical" postmodernist purpose to decenter the West into a single argument. Thus was the neoconservative, universalist belief in marketism (and private property-ism à la North and Coase) globalized to encompass China, erasing the huge (historical and present) differences between China and the West. In such an argument, differences in population-to-land relations, social relations (e.g., landlord-tenant, merchant-peasant, the formation of an urban bourgeoisie), rural-urban relations, colonizer-colonized relations, capital-investing and labor-supplying nations' relations, and so on, no longer figure at all.

Aside from its theoretical-ideological underpinnings, the problem with the argument is, just as in the case of Frank, the failure to grasp certain basic realities about the Chinese economy. The average farm size in China in the eighteenth century was only about 1/100 of its contemporary English farm, which means that the economy labored under a far more unfavorable population-to-land pressure. That was what caused handicrafts to remain tied to the family farm as a subsidiary source of income for survival, its burden being carried mainly by the family's subsidiary labor, and the two together forming something like a pair of crutches on which the farm family depended for its livelihood, whereas England was already witnessing the rise and separation of urban protoindustrial production from family farming. The far stronger population-to-land pressures in China were what

drove wages so low as to preclude the separation of handicrafts from farming, as well as to almost completely preclude labor-saving investments for either farming or protoindustry.

The whole difference, completely ignored by Pomeranz, can be illustrated by his gross factual error of imagining that peasants of eighteenth-century China produced and consumed per capita (he simply equates the two, without considering the large proportion of output, much of it as land rent, that went from the ruralities of the Yangzi delta to towns and cities and other regions of China) enough cotton and silk for ten cotton outfits and almost two of silk each year (14.5 pounds of ginned cotton and 2 pounds of silk—Pomeranz, 2000: 138, 140–141),[9] apparently ignorant of the fact that silk was only worn by the upper classes, and that Chinese peasants typically managed with just two cotton outfits at a time (Huang, 2002: 522–23; Huang, 1985, 1990). For the preindustrial world, that was a very large difference, between poverty and plenty, and bare subsistence and relatively high income. Pomeranz's work makes this kind of basic factual error because it lacks any original research and is based entirely on highly selective use and interpretation of secondary works.

Pomeranz's faulty picture of the eighteenth-century Yangzi delta can also be illustrated by his mistaken argument that cotton handicrafts had come to pay more than farming. He mistakenly assumes that cloth production consisted exclusively or mainly of relatively high-paying weaving (Pomeranz, 2000: 102, 322–23), when weaving in fact took up only one of the seven days required for one person to produce a bolt of cloth. Low-paying spinning took up the most time, four days, and paid only a third to a half as much as farming (the remaining two days were taken up by fluffing and sizing) (Huang, 2002: 513). That is what caused him to completely miss the gigantic reality of what in Chinese has long been characterized as lower-paying "subsidiary [handicraft] production" 副业, done mainly by the women, the elderly, and the children, as opposed to higher-paying farming, the "main activity" 主业.[10] This is basic and essential knowledge for anyone studying Chinese economic history.

As for England, several decades of social-economic and demographic history research on the eighteenth century has demonstrated that protoindustrialization there led, in turn, to earlier and more universal marriage, now that young men and women could make a living in town independently of waiting to inherit the family farm (Levine, 1977; Schofield, 1994). Nothing of the sort happened in China. Protoindustrialization also led to what Jan de Vries termed "early urbanization" (of towns and small cities, not of major large cities) (de Vries, 1984), as well as consumption changes associated with what he called an "industrious revolution" (which, by implication, meant also

enhanced rural-urban trade) (de Vries, 1993, 1994; Weatherill, 1993).[11] In China, by contrast, the flow of goods was mainly unidirectional, from the impoverished countryside to towns and cities, and not the reverse. Peasants supplied the towns and cities with luxury goods ("fine grains," meat-poultry-fish, fine cotton, silk [thread], and so on) but were too poor to purchase urban-produced goods. Their trade was limited mainly to exchanges with other peasants of subsistence goods—cloth for grain and vice versa (Huang, 1990: chaps. 5, 6). The nature of the market economies of eighteenth-century England–Northwest Europe and China was in fact vastly different. But those contrasts between eighteenth-century England and China were ignored by Pomeranz in his preoccupation with drawing an equation between the two, all for the purpose to "decenter the West" (Huang, 2002).

Such basic errors of fact and research have not seemed to matter in our postmodernist age, which maintains that all facts are but constructions, nor in our neoconservative age, which maintains that the fundamentalist truths of free marketism are self-evident axioms that do not require verification or critical examination. Given the overabundance of information through the new technology, fewer and fewer people these days pay much attention to empirical judgments based on factual evidence, preferring to trust in big organizing ideas that are more often than not just passing theoretical and ideological fads without empirical foundation.

Another important part of Pomeranz's argument is the work of James Lee and his co-authors, who also attempt to decenter the West by arguing that China too had rational preventive checks against population growth that served the same purpose as delayed marriage in northwestern Europe. For Lee, this was through the ingenious if disingenuous construction of the concept of "postnatal abortion," which allows him to turn female infanticide into a "rational" "preventive check" against population pressure comparable to the delayed marriage of the West. More specifically, that construction has allowed Lee to set aside the statistics that he had gathered with considerable rigor, which show in fact much higher fertility as well as mortality rates (and lower life expectancy) in Qing China than its contemporary West, because "postnatal abortions" allows him to remove/discount the girls killed (as high as 25% by Lee's own data) from his computations of Chinese fertility rates as well as mortality rates (Lee and Campbell, 1997: 70; Lee and Wang, 1999: 61). This was the argument that Pomeranz reproduced in whole (Pomeranz, 2000: 38). That is what has allowed Lee and Pomeranz to argue that Chinese fertility, life expectancy, and mortality rates were much more nearly comparable to the early modern West's than earlier scholarship had shown. It does not matter to them that the great majority of female infanticides were dictated by abject poverty that in itself tells about the severe

pressures of population on land in China, far exceeding anything imaginable in the West. That was what set the background to China's poverty and social crisis in the two centuries after about 1750, and it remains a huge burden for rural China even today (Huang, 2002: 524–31). Their arguments, in effect, erase completely what most Chinese continue to refer to as the most "basic national condition" of China.

As for the Chinese scholar Li Bozhong, whose research has furnished a good deal of the empirical information for Pomeranz and Lee, he went on to argue that Chinese birth control methods in the Jiangnan region in the Song-Yuan-Ming-Qing period were more advanced than anything in the contemporary West, and that abortion was already quite widely practiced (Li, 2000). The same argument has been echoed by Lee (Lee and Wang, 1999: 88, 90–91, 92). All of the evidence that Li Bozhong, and Lee and Wang, adduced in support of their arguments has now been systematically reexamined by Matthew Sommer, who demonstrated that they in fact have given *not one single actual case* in support of their argument, that they have based themselves entirely on inferences drawn from select passages in select medical treatises—theoretical and imagined possibilities rather than empirical cases. Sommer, by contrast, has on the basis of legal case records identified 24 instances of documented abortions and attempted abortions: of those, 17 of the women died, and the others became severely ill or the outcome is unknown (Sommer, 2010: 130). On the basis of such evidence from the Qing period, as well as of the more abundant evidence of China's Republican and contemporary 1950s periods, when abortion by traditional methods still remained a dangerous, life-threatening procedure resorted to only in crisis, far from anything that could have been widely practiced, Sommer has demonstrated conclusively that Li, Lee, and Pomeranz have projected onto the Qing something that did not exist in reality. However, in this postmodernist period of ours, Sommer's article has gone largely unnoticed, certainly not by economic historians outside the China field, nor by those historians who are only too eager to echo such imagined superiority of China to the West. The uncritical acceptance of the above arguments and assumptions has seriously marred some of the otherwise worthy and important endeavors in the recently vogue studies of "world history."

Once again, neoconservative and postmodernist arguments, as well as their hybrid postmodern marketism (postmodern neoconservatism), are at bottom theoretical-ideological arguments of the West, with little practical meaning for China itself. If we were to start from the real, practical problems of China, we would be more concerned with such issues as: in the past 30 plus years China has changed from one of the most socially equal nations on earth to one of the most unequal; the 270 million peasant workers who now

make up the overwhelming majority of the urban labor force still work as second-class subjects without legal protection and little or no benefits—under conditions reminiscent of colonialism (and they are unable to afford to stay in the cities long term, but their home village environments are severely polluted and their village communities are rapidly disintegrating); after 30 some years of very strict birth control, the huge population-to-land pressures have been alleviated somewhat, but the one-child policy has also created unsustainable families of single-child couples who need to help support four parents.[12] Clearly, the argument that China has no real population problem is not going to help understand and resolve any of these issues, only obfuscate them. We might also ask: now that China has made itself into a country that combines Western capitalism with Chinese revolutionary socialism (and government by the Chinese Communist Party), how is it to develop a viable combination of the two? The ideology of postmodern marketism (postmodern neoconservatism) to decenter the West and to center China/East Asia/Asia, it should be obvious, does not begin to address any of these issues, only obscures them.

Toward a Different Sense of Problem

But arguments that ride ideological-theoretical tides cannot be undermined by the mustering of empirical evidence alone, not in this anti-empirical postmodernist and neoconservative age of ours. What we need here is more searching analysis of the intellectual roots and "theoretical" origins of these still influential arguments. We turn below to examine postmodernism and neoconservatism, as well as their hybrid in postmodern neoconservativism, from the angle of their sense of problem.

The West-versus-China Binary Opposition

Before the Enlightenment, knowledge about China had come mainly through the Jesuits, and their concern had been mainly to find in China (and in Confucianism) elements that were compatible with Christianity, for it was their hope that China could be converted to Christianity peaceably. Beginning in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, however, as the West began to embark on its Age of Reason, a strong sense of Western distinctiveness from all other world civilizations took hold and, as Reason and Science advanced, to be followed by capitalist industrialization, there came a stronger and stronger sense of the West's superiority and universal validity. In that process, a China that "failed to modernize" became a leading "other" for demonstrating Western superiority, and also for showing how China must modernize/Westernize.

To mention just two major examples, first Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), who regularly gave lectures on China during the final years of his life, beginning in 1825. He articulated some of the most abiding criticisms of China and Chinese civilization, always in the framework of a binary juxtaposition with the West. To him, philosophy was the all-important sphere of learning, but China had no philosophy to speak of, only the rudiments of abstraction, and nothing of the sustained "speculative" thinking that characterized classical Western philosophy. China's major thinkers, most especially Confucius, had not the ability to engage in sustained reflection; only the West had true philosophy. This is a view that has remained powerfully influential to this day among many academic scholars of philosophy, such that philosophy taught in leading philosophy departments of American universities is usually exclusively Western philosophy, while Chinese, Indic, and Islamic "thought" are relegated to departments of their respective languages and cultures (East Asian, South Asian, Near Eastern, formerly lumped together under "Oriental studies"—something that has been critically examined by Edward Said under the category "Orientalism"). By extension, Hegel argued that China had no law to speak of, only "substantial" morals or rules—an argument still repeated by some today—because it was not anchored in reason, freedom, will, and self-consciousness. And China had the most despotic of governments. Lacking free will and self-consciousness ("Spirit") and "subjectivity," China lacked even any genuine religion to speak of, Confucianism being only prescriptions of customs and norms of behavior (Hegel, n.d., "Hegel's Philosophy of History"; Hegel, n.d., "Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy"; Kim, 1978; Zhang, 2006).

Hegel's modernist views found later and more systematic expression and development in many others, most influentially Max Weber (1864–1920). For Weber, modern law must needs be unified by "formal rationality," in which all abstract and rationally/logically derived legal principles could be applied consistently and logically to all fact situations. China lacked such a legal system, and hence could only be "substantivist" in its laws—that is, concrete rather than abstract, moral rather than rational, and particular rather than universal. Chinese law, moreover, was subject always to the arbitrary interference of the "patrimonial" ruler, whether by whim or by particularist morality, and hence was "irrational." By contrast, the West saw the long-term evolution of formal-rational law, its roots evidenced already in Roman law as well as Christian canonical law, giving rise in the end to modern (Continental law's) German law of Weber's time, more formal-rational than Anglo-Saxon common law, which mistakenly entrusted law to juries of commoners untrained in specialized legal knowledge and logic (Weber, 1978: esp. 654–58, 845, 889–91; Huang, 2015a; and Huang, 1996: chap. 9). Important also

for Weber was religion: it was the West where the spirit of Calvinism flourished, distinct from all other religions and civilizations, and led to the rise of capitalism (Weber, 1930 [1905]). Whether on law or on religion, Weber's purpose was to get to the core of modern Western civilization and capitalism; China was only the foil, "the other."

Weber's views remain powerfully influential today in virtually all studies of comparative law and Chinese law. This has been so not only because of the power of his ideal-types and the range of his analysis, but perhaps finally and most importantly because of the impressive development of capitalism and industrialization in the modern West, with its dominance in military and economic power, and also in the sweeping universality of its scientific and technological development.

On a deeper level, but one seldom discussed explicitly, is the pervasive sense that the West's early development of deductive logic (as exemplified by Euclidean geometry) lent itself particularly well to the development of universalist science and jurisprudence, making it unique among all civilizations in the world. Christopher Columbus Langdell (1826–1906), dean of Harvard Law School from 1870 to 1895, and the founder of the "classical orthodoxy" in American jurisprudence, was the one who most strongly and consistently harped on this theme (Grey, 2014: chap. 3; Langdell, 1880; Huang and Gao, 2015). He advocated that law and jurisprudence begin with certain given (self-evidently true) axioms, proceed thereby to employ deductive logic to arrive at a host of theorems, and thus produce a logically integrated system. That was precisely the kind of thinking that underlies an almost necessary formulation of the West versus the non-West as opposites. If the West's laws formed logically consistent and interconnected wholes, they have to be accepted in total as a unified system, and other civilizations' laws that are different could only be the "other." If deductive logic alone can bring us to rational and universal truths, civilizations lacking in such logical consistency can only be irrational entities that are fundamentally different and opposed to the West. By extension, modernization must mean wholesale adoption of the entirety of modern Western laws and also of modern Western civilization.

We can see elements of this theme throughout the past three generations of China studies in the United States. There was first the "China problem" posed by non-capitalist, undemocratic, and irrational Communism. Between that "other" and the West, the superiority of Western modernization could never be in doubt. At that deeper level, it did not really matter whether Chinese Communism had been imported and was fundamentally non-Chinese, as per the UW school, or Sinified and different from Soviet Communism, as per the Harvard school. Regardless, it never quite added up to true Westernizing modernization. That was something on which both

sides agreed, be they of the "liberal" Harvard school or the "rightist" UW school. From such a point of view, the difference between the two was really only a matter of degree of rejection. The underlying modernizationism/Westernizationism was never questioned by either of the two schools. Whether all the basic tenets of modernizationism were valid for the non-Western world was a question that was not asked. The universal validity of the modern West was simply taken for granted.

It was only in the second generation that modernizationism itself was challenged, but then only in the still very Western terms of Marxism. Western modernizationism was not challenged for its poor fit with historical realities in non-Western countries, nor for inspirations from thinkers of the developing world, nor from the point of view of a different non-Western vision for "modernity," but rather mainly in terms of a Western revolutionary socialism that postulated a still more advanced West that would replace capitalism with socialism, the class-based democracy and legal institutions of capitalism with the classless democracy of socialism, and the withering away of the state in Communism. The central ideas were never that Western civilization could or would be modified or advanced by interaction with non-Western nations and civilizations, and vice versa, but rather that the present of Western capitalism + liberal democracy would progress further to the future of Western classless socialism, in a universally valid pattern. And that argument came not just from the West's studies of China, but also from "Maoist" China's own study of its own past and its own present through the imported doctrine of Western Marxism. Universalist modernizationism was to be replaced by equally universalist Marxism; Chinese particularities mattered not.

The inspirations for the leftist anti–Vietnam War movement always came more from Marxist theorists of the West than from Mao Zedong or other non-Western theorists' reinterpretations of Marxism. In actual scholarly works, they came from Marxist and progressive non-China studies historical sociologists/theorists like Barrington Moore, Charles Tilly, Jeffery Paige, and Theda Skocpol, and from other non-Chinese and non-China-studies theorists like A. V. Chayanov, Karl Polanyi, and James Scott. "Mao Zedong thought" was nothing if not marginal in the American context: as Fairbank's text asserted, Mao's thought was never original on the level of theory; rather, "his innovations had been mainly in the realm [merely] of practice, not theory" (Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig 1965: 855). It was a judgment that resonated curiously with that of Michael and Taylor's text of the UW school.

Among the few exceptions to that dominant current in Chinese studies we might count Franz Schurmann's penetrating analysis of "ideology and organization" in China under Mao—which distinguished powerfully between "pure ideology" (i.e., Marxism-Leninism) and "practical

ideology" (i.e., Mao Zedong thought) in Chinese Communism (Schurmann, 1970 [1966]). That analytical scheme of Schurmann can be likened to Immanuel Kant's usage of "practical reason" as the intermediator between "pure reason" and actions (Huang, 2015a). But that train of thought has been of little consequence in terms of intellectual inspiration for the CCAS opponents of John Fairbank, nor even for most of the scholarship on contemporary China.

Some younger American scholars, no doubt, were influenced also by the Chinese Cultural Revolution (and Mao's thought), but given the lack of access to China for American scholars of the time, it was more the rhetoric of that "mass movement" (but called for by the "supreme leader") than anything really happening on the ground. And that rhetoric (e.g., doing away with the "three great differences") struck strong chords among some of the new challengers of modernizationism mainly because of their own political experiences and understandings in the gathering momentum of the antiwar movement at home. China's and Vietnam's realities, after all, remained rather remote from the experiences and knowledge of American China scholars. Unrealistic imaginings about the Cultural Revolution, interpreted as futuristic visions for the United States itself, would later lead quite a number to severe disillusionment with the Chinese revolution and contemporary China as a whole, the more so when Chinese official rhetoric turned against its own recent past, often even more vehemently than in the West.

In its turn to postmodernism, the third generation was at once very different and yet also fundamentally similar to the two earlier generations. Postmodernism, it must be granted, has been a thoroughgoing Western challenge to Enlightenment modernism of the past three centuries, with fundamental questioning of the bases for knowledge and along with that, the fundamental questioning of science that had so easily become scientism for non-scientists who had little genuine firsthand knowledge of the problems and doubts of actual scientific research. And the new conceptual tool of discourse and discourse analysis seemed truly powerful and immediately appealing. Add to that the deeply disturbing realities of neoconservative extremism, taking very concrete form in the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and we can understand why and how even earlier leftists often joined with the postmodernist tide to express their radical dissatisfaction with the (seemingly ever more) conservative, and imperialistic, American present.

But there were also deep divides between the earlier leftism and the new postmodernism. To the reflexive postmodernist, critical of all modes of positivism and scientism, Marxism, and especially an officialized Communism, can seem a worse positivistic and scientistic offender than modernizationism or the new neoconservatism, Hayek style. At the same time, for some

Marxists, the postmodernists and the neoconservatives seem alike to some degree in their shared subjectivism, postmodernists for their denial of "objective" truth, and neoconservatives for their fundamentalist beliefs in Christian values, classical liberalism/individualism, and free market economics.[13] Perhaps most important, even for many postmodernists there seemed to be irrefutable evidence of the oppressive sides of Stalinist (as well as Maoist) rule, and of the failure and collapse of Marxism, given the disintegration of the party-states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Earlier leftists, even those who had long opposed Stalinism and its related permutations, could not escape the stigma of guilt by association.

While such considerations as the above might go part way toward explaining the coincidence of shared opposition among neoconservatives and postmodernists to the earlier leftists, there is something else very basic to the entire history of much of the West's thinking about China that lies deeper beneath the surface. We have seen how the juxtaposition of the West and China as two opposed and segmented entities has been the fundamental conceptual framework for Western thinking about China since the Enlightenment, exemplified in the writings of Hegel and of Weber. Given that basic either/or binary framework, logic seems to demand that if one were to try to make a case against Western-centrism, one must argue its opposite: from a very different China to a just-the-same or even better China. We have seen how Paul Cohen, Andre Gunder Frank, as well as Kenneth Pomeranz, James Lee, and Li Bozhong, proceeded precisely from such a framework and imperative: to decenter the West, they believe they have to argue for equivalence (or superiority) for China, by the same standards. Thus instead of seeing China as passively reacting to the Western impact, we must see China's internal dynamics as primary, as Paul Cohen argued. Or, by the universal standard of marketism (degree of market/trade development in a one-world economic system), China had been more advanced than the West and might yet be again, as Frank argued. Or, Chinese (Yangzi delta) incomes and living standards were as high as England's in the eighteenth century, as Pomeranz insisted. Or, China too had preventive checks against overpopulation, and was under no more population pressure than the West, as Lee (and Pomeranz) argued. Or, finally, that Chinese birth-control methods were actually more advanced than those of its contemporary West, as Li Bozhong tried to argue. The binary opposition framework is what dictates such lines of argument. To counter Western-centrism, it seems, one can only argue that China is just as Western, or better, by the same standards. Under that kind of imperative, empirical evidence could be ignored or even violated. So too with China's real, practical problems.

Beyond the Binary Opposition

A great deal of creative work has already been done to go beyond the simple binary view that has been so influential in past mainstream American (as well as Chinese) scholarship, not just to examine critically the neoconservative/neoliberal master narrative (of the universality of Western capitalism + liberal democracy + Science/Reason), nor just to assert a simplistic China-centered counter, but rather to search for a larger perspective that includes both and sees beyond both, to define alternative visions for modernity, for economy, for society, for political order, for philosophy, for literature, for scholarship, for art, and even for science. Instead of attempting to point to particular individuals' research or to bodies of scholarship with which I am only partly familiar, what I will attempt below is once more to stick to the specific areas I know best. The intent is certainly not to stake out territory or claim a unique contribution, but rather to illustrate with some concrete examples a different kind of understanding beyond the simple binary opposition. Where I have myself already done some exploratory work, those will be cited for readers who might be interested in reading further along such a train of thought.

To begin with, there can of course be no doubt about the reality of many of China's differences from the West, such as the sustained moralism in its mainstream Confucian thinking (and in Chinese Communist thinking too), its relative lack of development of deductive logic, its relative lack of emphasis on formalized and proceduralized law, its resistance to the Western path of capitalism cum liberal democracy, and so on. I myself have emphasized in addition, in society and economy, the very great difference in its population-to-land ratios and the great persistence of a peasant economy, that "basic national condition" of China, and, in law and jurisprudence, the very great reliance since the mid-Han on a morality-based informal civil justice system in preference to a more formalized one, though certainly not to the exclusion of the latter (Huang, 2016.; Huang, 2015a; Huang, 2010, 2002, 1996).

A fundamental reality about contemporary China is the persistence of these distinctively Chinese characteristics despite a host of imports from the modern West, including capitalist marketism, "formal-rational" laws, English language study, Euclidean geometry taught in schools, Western jurisprudence and social sciences taught in universities, not to speak of the standardized natural sciences. A basic reality of modern and contemporary China, in fact, consists in the unavoidable amalgamating and interpenetrating of persistent facets of China's past with imported facets of Western modernism. Even the contemporary Chinese language, with all its imports of Western (and Japanese)

vocabulary, concepts, terms and discourse, has become quite different from the past, though still maintaining fundamental continuities with it.

The empirical realities of China, in fact, are nothing if not paradoxical—that is, the coexistence of pairs of phenomena that are apparently contradictory when seen from the perspective of existing binary opposition theories of the West but are in fact both real and true. There was, in premodern China as well as contemporary China, the paradox of highly developed cities coupled with an impoverished countryside (urban development and rural involution), and a substantially marketized economy with subsistence-level peasant livelihood (Huang Zongzhi, 2015); in imperial China, of a moralistic Confucian legal order coupled with a rational Legalist order; in modern China, of imported modern Western laws with persistent Chinese social realities (Huang, 2016; Huang, 1996, 2002, 2010), of the form of democracy and a modern state with the persistence of old bureaucratic practices, of a capitalist (private enterprises and a market economy) with a socialist economy (state-owned enterprises and broad state control) in the more recent Reform era, and of a "socialist" Communist Party directing market reform and capitalist development, and so on (Huang, 2015b; Huang, 1991).

From a Chinese point of view today, in fact, there can be neither a completely Chinese nor a completely Western choice, such as that imagined and argued by some U.S. and Chinese scholars. The collisions, conflicts, and tugs of war between the two, as well as the reinterpreting, amalgamating, and syncretizing of the two, are simply given realities for contemporary China, realities that preclude a simplistic either/or choice. It is a denial of basic reality to think in terms only of either complete Westernization or complete Sinification. The reality can in fact only be the mixing and interacting of the Chinese and the Western, the past and the present. That is where both the modernist and antimodernist constructs of the West have run fundamentally counter to basic Chinese realities. The binary opposition and the either/or choices are possible and conceivable only as theoretical constructs in Western thinking about China. They make up a problematic that makes sense only in the context of the history and theories of Western thinking about China, not as a real problem and possibility that China is actually faced with.

Given the powerful influence of Western theories in contemporary China (as well as in Republican China), many Chinese scholars too have adopted the Western either/or formulation of the problem as their own. In economy and economics, there had been first complete rejections of (Western) capitalist modernizationism for (Western-derived) socialist Marxism, followed then in the Reform period by the embracing of (Western) neoliberalism, even as both gave rise also to their opposites in

reaction, in strongly nativist rejections of the West. Those extreme flip-flops and either/or formulations occurred when, for China, the truly important and fundamental question was and is not either/or, but rather how to reinterpret the modern West to adapt to Chinese concerns (e.g., as in Benjamin Schwartz's study of Yan Fu), how to put Western-originated theory to practical Chinese use (e.g., as in Franz Schurmann's analysis of Mao Zedong thought), how to construct therefrom Chinese theoretical formulations that accord with Chinese realities, and how to reconcile one with the other—not only how to deal with the evident contradictions and tensions, but more importantly, how to find ways to adapt one to the other, to amalgamate and syncretize, and even to go beyond both.

The violent flip-flops are nowhere better illustrated than in the history of modern Chinese lawmaking and jurisprudence, which first rejected traditional Chinese law in favor of modern Western law, then rejected the latter in favor of the societal mediation practices of China's informal (and semiformal) justice system, along with some importing of Soviet law, and then once more adopted wholesale importation from the West. It is time now to seek out a more realistic and lasting accommodation between the Chinese and the Western, and the past and the present, with a view toward selecting different facets from both, reinterpreting both, and even transcending both (Huang, 2016; Huang, 2010), in ways not unlike the past Chinese civilizational experiences with respect to Confucianism versus Legalism, Confucianism versus Buddhism, and the culture of a sedentary agricultural economy versus that of a nomadic steppes economy.

That kind of sense of problem, I submit, is what would finally free us of the long-standing conceptual bind China studies have been caught in, not just in the United States and the West but also within Western-influenced China itself. If we start instead from the reality of the necessary interpenetration of the Chinese and the Western, and seek solutions to that fundamental problematic, we would seek out ways to syncretize the two, and not swing from one extreme of Western centrism to the other of Chinese centrism, and not from one extreme of Western superiority to the other of simple Chinese equivalence or superiority. That is the problematic that might finally take Chinese studies out of the bind of being but a derivative of Western theories and problems, that might finally lend it the theoretical autonomy that some of the best China studies scholars have long called for. This of course does not mean the complete rejection of all (Western) theory, but rather more selective and critical use of existing theory, and to engage in dialogues with it in order to construct new theoretical formulations. On that kind of path, the biculturality of the China scholars of the West might finally become a true aid to making

distinctive contributions not only to the understanding of China but also of its place in our multi-civilizational world (Huang, 2000).

Some Implications for China Research

We have seen how the problematics of the most influential works in U.S.-based China studies have been conditioned by American problems more than Chinese problems, and shaped by the larger American political-intellectual context in which U.S. China scholars work more than by China the subject itself. And they have told more about political, ideological, and theoretical influences of the United States than about China itself. In the current generation, postmodernism and neoconservatism are alike in their either/or binary juxtaposition of the West versus China. That kind of framework was what led to some gross exaggerations and distortions of empirical realities. In spite of the great advances that have been made in the higher language proficiency of most American China scholars, the larger numbers of scholars and of centers, the ever-increasing firsthand access to China, and the growing theoretical sophistication of the field, U.S.-based China scholars have continued to be shaped to a considerable extent by larger political-ideological and theoretical forces that run counter to the realities of the subject of China itself.

The age-old China-versus-the West binary construction that has run through three centuries of Western thinking about China has profoundly shaped not just the Western-centrism that has dominated so much of past thinking but also the recent thoroughgoing critical reflections against it in China-centrism. When some of our most influential American China scholars reflected critically on Western-centrism, what they did was simply to argue its opposite, from modernization to revolution, from the Western-centric to the China-centric. So powerful has that binary conceptual structure been that those China scholars have overlooked the very simple given reality that modern China is of necessity a product of both its past and its present, and the Chinese and the Western, and not just one or the other. In the current generation, so preoccupied have some American China scholars been with postmodernist theories that they have neglected the fundamental reality that China seeks not just to be Chinese, but also Western-modern. "Modern China" is in actual fact almost by definition bicultural, and it is today even not just capitalist or socialist, but both capitalist and socialist. To truly decenter the West and to truly center China, we need to begin not with Western-derived problems, but China-derived problems.

As we saw above, the either/or West-versus-China binary mode of thought has been extended also to a host of other similar dualities, including modern versus traditional, industry versus agriculture, cities versus countryside,

market versus population, market versus the state, formal-rational law versus substantive law, the universal versus the particular, and so on. In each, the persistent habit of searching for logical consistency drives theoretical and ideological constructions toward a one-sided emphasis of a single factor to the exclusion of the other side of the binary, often without regard to empirical evidence and practical realities.

One concrete illustration, as I have argued in detail, is not to just reject China's small peasant economy and choose simply the modern Western model of capitalism and the industry-ization of agriculture, but rather to find a development path for small-scale peasant family farms. Earlier East Asian (Japan, Korea, Taiwan) experiences with agricultural cooperatives to provide the necessary "vertical integration" services (processing and marketing of agricultural goods) for "small producers" to deal with the "big market" are instructive. Those co-ops were born of a historical coincidence: of the legacy of late Meiji Japanese local administration (extended to Korea and Taiwan through Japanese occupation), which had made the modernization of agriculture their main task, followed by the coming of postwar American occupation (in Japan, or decisive American influence in South Korea and Taiwan), which saw to land reform that effectively established an economy of mainly smallholders, and turned over many of the local government agricultural assistance resources to democratically controlled peasant co-ops, thereby propelling the development of co-ops. Those in turn ensured sustained agricultural development (in the 1960s and 1970s in Japan, and somewhat later in Taiwan and South Korea) and also ensured a dignified livelihood for peasant-farmers. Those co-ops are good examples of what China could do today, instead of its present half-hearted promotion of co-ops while aggressively favoring large-scale agricultural enterprises (Huang Zongzhi, 2015; Huang, 2014; Huang Zongzhi, 2014: chap. 10). Genuine co-ops would go a long way toward resolving the present problem of gross social inequalities between peasants and urbanites, as well as the disintegration of rural communities.

The point here is not to emphasize population to the exclusion of the market, or the reverse, but rather that each must be considered in conjunction with the other. Heavy population-to-land pressure is what has caused the great persistence of the small peasant economy, despite a fairly high degree of marketization in the imperial and Republican past, as well as the Reform period present. And the fact of impoverished small peasants under heavy population-to-land pressures has profoundly shaped the nature of the market for agricultural goods in China, placing the weak "small peasants" at the mercy of large-scale commercial capital—hence the need for the cooperative alternative for processing and marketing to equalize relations with the "big market" and retain more of the market profit for the small peasant. Market

mechanisms alone do not remove the population problem, as neoliberal and postmodern marketist theory would have it; rather, each shapes the other. Market trade in the Qing, we have seen, was mainly unidirectional, in which impoverished peasants supplied urbanites with fine goods but could not afford to purchase goods in the reverse direction—nothing like the spiraling two-way rural-urban trade conceptualized by Adam Smith, nor the dramatic consumption changes in what de Vries calls an "industrious revolution." There can be no understanding of the nature of the market without considering China's distinctive population-to-land factor endowment; the same goes for the reverse. There can be no either/or choice of one or the other when it comes to the realities of China, unlike in neoliberal theoretical construction (Huang Zongzhi, 2014: see esp. introduction and chap. 10).

Then there is the gigantic reality today of China's informal economy of 270 million peasant workers. Contrary to Theodore Schultz's theorizing, there can be no mistaking the realities of the existence of huge quantities of (relative) surplus labor and underemployment in the countryside, past and present, China's well-developed market economy notwithstanding. Contrary also to W. Arthur Lewis's dual economy thesis, the rise of a modern sector has not resulted unavoidably in the integration of rural surplus labor into the modern sector, but rather in the explosion of the informal economy lying outside that modern sector, midway between the traditional and the modern sectors. Here too there can be no understanding of the realities of China's labor factor market without consideration of the interactive relationship between population and market (Huang, 2009, 2011a; see also Huang Zongzhi, 2014: chaps. 11 and 12).

So too with the market-versus-state binary opposition postulated by neoconservative marketism. Neoliberal economic theory attributes Chinese economic successes of the recent decades entirely to marketization and privatization, often while criticizing the continued state interference in the market. But the history of that development shows in fact the decisive role played by the Chinese Communist party-state: how it has taken great advantage of the state's claim to ownership of all land to raise capital (what is called local governments' "land financing"); how it has deliberately used cheap peasant (surplus) labor and other state-provided incentives to draw in capital investments; how it has actively promoted trade and supported state-owned enterprises, and so on. An either/or market-versus-state binary construction simply misses the point in terms of understanding how the Chinese economy has been able to develop so rapidly (Huang, 2015b).

When it comes to the justice system, what is needed is not simply to reject the traditional Chinese justice system, most especially its informal justice system anchored in societal mediation, in favor of a highly formalized, completely

Westernized legal system, but rather to meld the two into something that is at once modern and Chinese, and unavoidably both. The favoring of societal mediation over court adjudication had made up the very core of the "Sinitic legal tradition" in place since the mid-Han with the full Confucianization of Legalist law. That mediation system was what dealt with the majority of civil disputes among the people and explains why codified law could be mainly criminal law. That Confucianized justice system influenced profoundly other countries of the "East Asian civilization" (especially Japan and Korea). Today, societal mediations 民间调解 still resolve one of every two recorded civil disputes at the most basic community levels, and court mediations 法庭调解 one of every three civil court cases. Mediation also continues to play a prominent role today in Korea and in Japan as well. That is what crucially differentiates these East Asian justice systems from the typical modern Western justice system today. This is something that the recent efforts to develop globalized measurements in a "rule of law index" have not yet understood, starting as they have from mainly modern Western standards (Huang, 2016). In this sphere, the categories "Sinitic legal tradition" and "East Asia" still have genuine contemporary relevance.

In fact, both the successes and the failings of contemporary China need to be seen in terms not of either one or the other of our past juxtaposed oppositions, but of their combination or interaction. China's successes, like the leadership by the Chinese Communist Party of capitalistic and marketized economic development in the past three and a half decades of reform, have been born of the combination of the two (Huang, 2015b). So too has its problems, like the combining of the totalistic state (born of revolution, rural collectivism, and urban socialism, and a planned economy) with a profit-seeking state apparatus (and self-seeking officials), both central and local, that have unabashedly exploited cheap peasant labor for attracting capitalist (foreign and domestic) investments, which has led to gross social inequality (Huang, 2015b). Or, in law, the continued use of informal justice (societal mediation), which has made for large numbers of mediatory resolutions of disputes and reduced the numbers of litigated court cases, is in fact among the best aspects of the present-day justice system; the worst has been the persistence of arbitrary traditional methods ("coercive interrogation" 刑讯逼供) in the name of efficiency and practicality in solving crime, alongside a formal court system that is intended to be highly imitative of the West's (Huang, 2016; Huang Zongzhi, 2010). All, successes as well as failures, have resulted from the combining of the Chinese (imperial and/or revolutionary) past with the modern Western, not just one or the other.

In agriculture, China, unlike other East Asian countries, had not been able to achieve through the green revolution the modernization of agriculture and

peasant livelihood, because the gains from modern inputs had been eaten away by the continual rise in population. The raising of farm incomes had to await a later revolution of an entirely different sort: namely, the rapid development of a "small but fine" "new agriculture" of capital and labor dual intensifying small farming (of high-value-added products like vegetables, fruits, meats, fish, milk, and eggs), driving a rise in the value of agricultural output between 1980 and 2010 of 590% (in comparable prices), or a rate of 6% increase per year, dwarfing the scale of earlier agricultural revolutions in history (Huang Zongzhi, 2014: chap. 6). This has resulted in (what I term) a "hidden agricultural revolution" ("hidden" because it is fundamentally different from earlier agricultural revolutions in history—based on increased yield of certain key crops—and therefore easy to overlook) stemming from the confluence of three historic tendencies: first and foremost, a basic restructuring of Chinese food consumption patterns as a result of the rise in incomes, from a 8:1:1 ratio of grain:vegetables:meat toward a 4:3:3 ratio (such as that of the urban upper middle class and of Taiwan); a reduction in the size of new additions to the labor force as a result of stringent birth control policies enforced since about 1980; and the massive migration of peasants into urban employment. The combination of the latter two has made possible significant increases in cultivated area per farm labor unit (to about 10 mu, or 1.67 acres), though still very much small-scale farming (Huang Zongzhi, 2014: chap. 5). The government, however, continues to follow a policy of mainly supporting large-scale (enterprise) farming, on account of the faulty assumptions of neoliberal as well as Marxist thinking. Scholars have likewise largely overlooked this historic change, for the same reasons (Huang, 2014; Huang Zongzhi, 2015).

Looking back on the past three generations of American China scholarship, the first generation's simplistic ideological problem should be dismissed for what it was. But the second generation's, of revolution versus modernization, remains useful for understanding modern-contemporary China, but only if it is not conceptualized as an either/or binary, such that scholars waste much time and energy trying either to condemn revolution in the name of modernization or the reverse, but rather to see just how much contemporary China has struggled to have both, in the search for a kind of revolutionary modernization. There is nothing wrong with the Reform period's borrowing energy from world markets and global investment to drive Chinese development; what is wrong are the horrendous social inequalities that the party-state has allowed to exist for the exigency of development. What China needs today is social(ist) reforms, but certainly not a(nother) violent revolution (the people could not bear it!). So too with the third generation's preoccupation with Western-centrism versus China-centrism: China's real issue today is not

how to overturn Western-centrism with Chinese-centrism, not the either/or choice between wholesale Westernization and wholesale Sinification, but rather the merging of the Western with the Chinese. What needs to be done is not to let ourselves fall into the conceptual trap of choosing just one or the other, but rather to reinterpret both to arrive at a realistic and viable combination, in a new vision for a new Chinese modernity.

Blindly following faddish Western theories and the problems that preoccupy them needs to be discarded. For example, the question raised by postmodernist theory of whether discourse is the final or most important reality should be replaced with the realistic perception that both discourse and practice have played major roles in history, and that the really important problem is not either/or but how they have related to one another and interacted. One way to reach beneath the discursive surface of Chinese realities is to ask about disjunctions as well as consistencies between discourse/representation and practice, not to insist on the primacy of one or the other, and to appreciate that reality in fact comprises both. Legal practice, past and present, has in fact more often than not been an effort to mediate between codified law and social reality and change. I have suggested that one useful approach is to look to practical inventions and innovations that have gone beyond simple disjunctions and binaries, and to build therefrom new theoretical formulations, not to focus on just one dimension or insist on its primacy, as some Chinese as well as Western scholars have done under the influence of postmodernist theory (Huang, 2016; Huang, 1996, 2002, 2010).

Setting aside the either/or binary, and framing our questions in terms of how dualities interrelate and interpenetrate, of course, does not dictate just what spheres of historical or contemporary reality we study, nor what themes we choose to emphasize. There will always be those who will do very nearly purely empirical work and make lasting and even powerful contributions. There will also be those who pursue one or another topic of interest because that is what they can do best, or because that is what interests them the most, for reasons personal or professional. And there will always be those who choose their topics of study, as well their emphases in subject matter and argumentation, on account of certain value commitments: for example, whether to study and identify with the elites or the populace, thought and high culture or society-economy and popular culture, and so on. Indeed, the most important scholarly contributions of the past three generations have arguably come not from the theoretically and ideologically influential leaders of the field, but rather from those who have simply set about their work with strict standards of truth-seeking. What we need is a sensible combination of that kind of research with theoretical awareness and conceptual creativity.

All who study China, whether U.S.-based or China-based, should dispense with problematics that are formed entirely in the context of the West and projected from the West and are unrelated or opposed to the realities of China. Our choices of problem, topic, and theme must not be limited by the problems and fads that originate in the West. So long as we do that, China studies will always be intellectually an appendage to the political and intellectual currents of the West, and there will always be large gaps between the constructed arguments and the empirical evidence. We need to break loose from the either/or West-versus-China binary that has so profoundly shaped China studies in the past. It is time for studies of China to return to the realities of the subject itself for our sense of problem for research.

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Notes

1. There was a difference over whether to call the CIA personnel "operatives" or "analysts."
2. Vogel himself did indeed later serve for two years in 1993–1995 as National Intelligence Officer. For the original letters, see Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, 1968.
3. The journal *Modern China*, which I founded in 1975 and continue to edit today, may be seen as falling somewhere in between the two other journals.
4. According to Frank's website: www.rrojasdatabank.info/agfrank/pubs_new.html.
5. The World Bank's "Atlas Method" is based on a country's average exchange rate, adjusted for inflation, as opposed to the "purchasing power parity" (PPP) method, adjusted for purchasing power. By the PPP method, the figures are $55,860 for the United States and $13,130 for China, or 4.25:1.
6. Zhang and Wu, 2002, is a sensible and representative Chinese review of Frank's book.
7. We have no usable GDP figures for 1750, but we do have fairly reliable grain output estimate figures for that year from Dwight Perkins. Perkins employs a per capita grain output/consumption range of 400 to 700 catties, and works mainly

within a range of 500–600 catties for his guesstimate (Perkins, 1969: 14–15). If we use the figure of 550 catties and his figure of 270 million population for 1750 (p. 16), we get a total of 148,500 million catties of total grain output for that year (or 7,425 million tons). Using Wang Yeh-chien's figure of 1.64 taels of silver per shi of rice in 1750 (Wang, 1992: table 1, pp. 40–47), or just about 1 tael per 100 catties (at 160 catties of [unhusked] rice per shi), we get a total silver value of 1,485 million taels. (Rice prices can serve as an approximate indicator of the average prices of grains, including wheat, barley, millet, corn, and gaoliang—see Perkins, 1969: 288.) Using a rough conversion rate of 27 taels per kilogram of silver, we get 55 million kilograms, or 55,000 tons of silver. Frank's 240 tons of silver inflow into China per year, therefore, amounted in 1750 to just 0.4% of the value of total grain output that year. Angus Maddison uses a higher per capita grain output figure (644 catties) but a lower population figure (230 million) (Maddison, 2001: table 1.6), which works out to 74 million tons of grain, basically the same as Perkins' estimate.

8. Some readers may need to be reminded here of the fact that Chinese industrial output grew in the Maoist period by no less than 11% a year between 1952 and 1979 (in contrast to growth of just 2.3% a year in agriculture), as Dwight Perkins among others has shown (Perkins and Yusuf, 1984: chap. 2). That earlier industrial development built the foundations for the later, Reform period marketized development to come.
9. It takes 1.3 catties (jin), or 1.43 pounds, of ginned cotton to produce one outfit of clothing.
10. Of course, after the 1980s, because of a host of changes in rural production, those terms came to be used less and less.
11. The term "industrious revolution," unfortunately, has actually come to obfuscate more than clarify. Originally intended by Akira Hayami (see Hayami, 2105) to refer to the combining of handicrafts and farming in the small peasant household, it was appropriated by Jan de Vries to characterize what was actually quite a different phenomenon in England and northwest Europe, namely, the increase in consumption that came as a consequence of more hours worked by more household members. That was actually something that accompanied the rise of market-oriented (protoindustrial) production, which came more and more to be urban rather than rural based, hence very different from what was occurring in China. The term was later further employed by Kaoru Sugihara to characterize labor-intensive agricultural and industrial production in East Asia as a whole (as opposed to capital- and resource-intensive production in the United States and the West), thereby obscuring major differences between China and Japan (Sugihara, 2003). In Japan, the agricultural population remained largely constant when modern industrial inputs came to agriculture early in the twentieth century, thereby permitting a rapid agricultural revolution, the rise of farm incomes, and the separation of farming and handicrafts, unlike China in the 1960s and 1970s, where the gains from modern inputs were largely eaten up by population growth and farming and handicrafts remained tightly bound together in village collectives until the 1980s (with rural industrialization). That subject needs separate

discussion from this article—for a brief examination of the differences between China and Japan in these respects, see Huang Zongzhi, 2014: 6, 113–16.

12. On October 29, 2015, China announced an end to the one-child policy and that couples would be allowed to have two children.
13. Indeed, the march to the second Iraq War was powered by ideological conviction far more than any genuine concern for evidence about imagined weapons of mass destruction.

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Philip C. C. Huang has just published (in 2014) an enlarged and updated edition of his three-volume study of civil justice from the Qing to the present, and completed the third volume of his study of rural society and economy from the Ming and Qing, now published with an expanded and updated edition of his earlier two volumes in a new three-volume edition. In addition, a collection of his methodological and theoretical articles has just been published (in October 2015). All of the above are published by the Law Press (Falü chubanshe) in Beijing, in Chinese. Readers can access most of his recent writings in Chinese, many of which are also available in English, at www.lishiyushehui.cn.