

**Symbolic Capital, Existential Insecurity, and Industrial Policies: A Neo-Bourdieuian**

**Theory of the Leninist State in China (1927-1982)**

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## **Dedication**

This study is dedicated to my mentors: Prof. George Steinmetz, Prof. Andrei S. Markovits, Prof. Krisztina Fehervary, and Prof. Qixuan Huang. Thank you for the guidance, strength, and skills.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Intercontinental ballistic missiles – ICBM

The Central Military Commission – CMC [中央军事委员会]

The Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry – CDAI (It was a subordinate unit of the First Ministry of Machine Building till 1982) [汽车总局]

The Chinese Communist Party – CCP [中国共产党]

The Chinese State Automobile Corporation – CSAC (The successor agency of the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry since 1982) [中国汽车工业总公司]

The Chinese State Shipbuilding Corporation – CSSC (The successor agency of the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building) [中国船舶工业总公司]

The First Ministry of Machine Building – FMMB (it was the umbrella agency of civilian manufacturing) [第一机械工业部]

The Ministry of Oil Industry – MOI [石油工业部]

The Ministry of Railways – MOR [铁道部]

The Sixth Ministry of Machine Building – The Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry (for the sake of simplicity: MSI) [第六机械工业部]

The People's Liberation Army – PLA (it is the name of the armed forces) [中国人民解放军]

The People's Republic of China – PRC [中华人民共和国]

The Railway Corps – RC [铁道兵]

The State Capital Construction Commission – SCCC [国家基本建设委员会]

The State Economic Commission – SEC [国家经济委员会]

The State Planning Commission – SPC [国家计划委员会]

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## Acknowledgments

Raised as a Marxist in a family of retired military officers, party apparatchiks, and red engineers, I have tried in writing this thesis to come to terms with my upbringings.

Intellectually, I rebelled. Today, I contend that the actually existing socialist project is a tragic failure directly responsible for many of the horrifying nightmares my grandparents witnessed. But the passion I still feel for emancipation—for the dream of a classless society of total transparency and equality in which “a better, warmer, more meaningful life” (Halfin 2000, xi) can be pursued—remains with me. It is in this sense that I am interested in the rise and fall of the socialist project.

I remain loyal to the tradition of the socialist intelligentsia in yet another way: “I sought—and still seek—to engage not an abstract reader who would speak through this or that virtual device but an intellectual circle I will into being, a group of concrete individuals who respond to me, agreeing or objecting but never remaining indifferent” (Halfin 2000, xi). I was fortunate to be accepted by such people. My original debt is to my friends in Shanghai. Without them I would not be where I am now. Many of them have shared their friendship and intellectual curiosity over the years. Many of them have helped me obtain materials and reflected on the meanings of everyday life in and after state socialism. I am grateful in particular to Jiang Li, Zhenqian Huang, Hongye Yan, Jiayi Yan, Yiyang Xu, Minqi Wang and Yue Yao for their valor, intelligence, camaraderie, and creative experimentations with Bolshevik ideals; and especially to my institutional boss Yu Peng—the master of the absurd, whose everyday aesthetics and dark sense of humor refined my views of the socialist bureaucracy. Special thanks to Chenyang Li: he helped me to polish the initial ideas. I am continually grateful to Professor Qixuan Huang at Shanghai Jiao Tong University: he

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### **Abstract**

What led the post-1978 Chinese Leninist elites to allocate state-owned economic capital in radically different ways, ranging from centrally planned import-substitution to market-building efforts to attract foreign investment? In the railway sector, the Ministry of Railways maintained its authority to operate the entire industry till 2013; in the shipbuilding sector, the minister of shipbuilding industry pursued a program of vertical integration for export-oriented industrialization since 1978; and in the automobile sector, the central government moved from designing coherent industrial upgrading policies at national level to the control of foreign direct investment for domestic market-building in 1986. This thesis discloses a neo-Bourdieuian state theory to explain this empirical puzzle by establishing existential insecurity (both as structurally induced material forces—the collective efforts to deal with credible threats backed by capabilities to perform symbolic and physical violence and subjective experiences of state actors—the fear of enemy) as a cause of variations in state strategy of industrialization. The divided socialist elites competed inside the meta-field of party-state—the Central Committee of the Party for a specific form of symbolic capital: the statecraft of socialist modernization. This involved exhibiting an alleged expertise for articulating the most effective strategy of industrialization, and a capacity to balance national defense and improvement of living standards. Moreover, military merits—the abilities to prepare, fight, and win battles—formed in revolutionary warfare was central to socialist statecraft which resulted in a military logic of industrialization in the geopolitical space of the global Cold War. Between 1964 and 1978, this military logic of practice critically affected the developmental trajectories of these three industrial sectors which then gave rise to state capital differentiation in the post-1978 reform. Competitions among the divided socialist



elites decisively shaped the ongoing production of industrial policy. Policy formation was also influenced by geopolitical changes, responses by the firm managers, and the dominant actor's final authority in appointing and dismissing policymakers. The effects of these additional mechanisms were typically mediated by the two general mechanisms: (1) (dis)alignment of policy preferences between constituents in the central committee members and (2) the subfield bureaucrats' articulation of industrial policies to the constituents.

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### **Introduction**

The state is the *culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital*: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural capital or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital. It is this concentration as such constitute the state as the holder of a sort of metal-capital granting power over other species of capital and over their holders.

– Bourdieu 1999, 57 (emphasis in original)

### **The Puzzle**

Few organizations in the People's Republic touched more people than the Ministry of Railways. Whenever an ordinary citizen wanted to reunify with her family or take a business trip to another city by train throughout the sixty-four years of the ministry's existence, her travel was operated by the civil servants of the Ministry of Railways. This ministry was not only responsible for the construction of national railway networks, the development and maintenance of locomotives, and the management of railway traffic; it even had its own hospital, school, police force, prosecutor office, and court system. In post-1978 China, this "state within a state" sounds like a gigantic relic from the Stalinist big push industrialization. Yet, unlike other ministerial organizations that also took over control of production, accumulation of economic capital, and management of industrial sectors under central planning, the Ministry of Railways was not dissolved until 2013. Put it differently, this market-oriented industrial reform was "delayed" for more than three decades after the dissolution of similar agencies: The Sixth Ministry of Machine Building (or simply the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry) and the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry were respectively reconfigured into the Chinese State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC) and Chinese State Automobile Corporation (CSAC) in 1982.

Since 1982, the socioeconomic afterlives of these three industrial giants differed to an even greater extent: the CSSC, organized as a "pyramidal business group" in 1982, exists in

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2020 as the largest shipbuilding conglomerate across the globe<sup>1</sup>: Today, the CCSC is “account for half of new orders and repair contracts from Chinese shipowners, along with the bulk of China’s naval shipyard activity” (the Maritime Executive 2019). Currently, the CSSC employs 347 thousand personnel, and it holds assets value of approximately 126 billion U.S. dollars<sup>2</sup> (CSSC 2020). In contrast, the CSAC’s natural monopoly was stripped by the central government in 1985; more importantly, at the same time, its most valuable and competitive subordinate companies were restructured as separate state-owned enterprises controlled by the central government. In addition, its remaining administrative functions for industrial regulation were transferred to a newly established industrial association in 1987. In 2007, the CSAC went bankrupt. When the Ministry of Railways was “finally” dissolved in 2013, its administrative functions were then transferred to the Ministry of Transport, and its economic roles were succeeded by the China Railway<sup>3</sup> at the same time.

How did the central government decide to introduce differentiated industrial policies for reforming these three state sectors with such radical differences in the designs, paths, and speeds? And what explains the state’s contrasting manners in arranging state-owned economic capital’s allocation, accumulation, and managerial forms in these three industries? I argue that *the ways that the ministerial subfield elites connected to different constituencies (i.e., the political actors of the meta-field of the party-state: the members of the Central Committee of the Party) during the Third Front (ca. 1964-80)—the militarized big push*

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<sup>1</sup> It was split into two separate entities in 1998 to boost competition, the hierarchical arrangements of corporate structure remained unchanged and in 2019 a re-merger was completed.

<sup>2</sup> The numbers are calculated from the CSSC’s official website, it states that it holds 840 billion RMB.

<sup>3</sup> Its full name for now is China State Railway Group Company, Ltd (CR).

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*industrialization program—critically affected their ability to transform economic performance into symbolic capital. This variation in extent and type of political-symbolic capital is what allowed these subfield actors to set the terms of their own restructuring of the ministerial subfields, or that left them at the mercy of reform initiatives issued by the dominant actors inside the main overarching field of power.*

The empirical purpose of explaining why these three powerful ministries experienced radically different outcomes in the historic processes of economic reform is to develop an explanation of the mode of operation of all industrial state-owned enterprises in post-1978 China. In addition to this substantive contribution, my project also illustrates the explanatory payoff of the neo-Bourdieuian field-theoretic analysis: without specifying the political-symbolic leverages of the ministerial subfield actors we cannot properly understand the political origins of industrial policy in the non-liberal democratic states; without specifying the definition of the field- and competition-specific symbolic capital governing conflicts within the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) we cannot explain how the divided socialist elites created and recreated the national system of industrial economy, and without analyzing those conflicts internal to the socialist state we cannot properly situate the encasing effects of existential insecurity of the global Cold War on the trajectory of national industrialization.

#### Misplaced Concreteness: Previous Explanations

By conducting this field-theoretic analysis, I intend to make several theoretical contributions as well. The formation and transformation of the national system of political economy in China can be conceived as a part of the larger history of state-led industrialization (Kohli 2004; Aiginger and Rodrik 2020; Hirata 2020). While the theorists of

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comparative political economy have made great strides in explaining the effects of different types of incentive structures (Acemoglu et al. 2020; Jiang 2018; Chen 2018) within state bureaucracy on various outcomes, prior studies have not theorized why different types of incentive structures emerge in the first place. The literature on war, conversely, has predominantly sought to explain the occurrence, dynamics, and resolution of conflict (for example, Copeland 2015; Toft and Zhukov 2015; Zhukov 2017), while the existential insecurity (i.e., the collective efforts to deal with credible threats backed by capabilities to perform symbolic and physical violence motivated by the subjective experiences of state actors—the fear of enemy) created by perceived threats to political survival as a producer of political outcomes other than state formation (Tilly 1985; Kiser and Baer 2005) and political order (Huntington and Fukuyama 2006; Slater and Smith 2016) has been neglected.

This thesis brings together these disjoint literatures and establishes existential insecurity as a cause of policy formation. Before these three industries were differently restructured in the post-1978 reform, they had been constructed under a *military* logic of industrialization (Zedong [1964a] 2014; Zhengcao [1964a] 2014; Military Administration Committee of the First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014; State Council and Central Military Commission [1970] 2014). Between 1964 and 1971, Chinese generals under Mao replaced the purged statesmen to design and implement this state strategy of industrialization (Li 2007) to secure the survival of the socialist state in the bipolar space of the global Cold War via massive military buildup (Naughton 1991). Building on the “founding struggle” paradigm (see Levitsky and Way 2012; Slater and Smith 2016), my point to discuss the roles of the military in the politics of industrialization is to illustrate the symbolic importance of *military*

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*merits* (see Finer and Stanley 2002) in socialist statecraft. The fear of (imagined) enemies (Evrigenis 2008) incentivized the divided elites' collective action for thwarting perceived dangers.

In brief, I argue existential insecurity formed in revolutionary warfare can result in the *militarization* of the socialist state. This militarized state strategy of industrialization for combat capabilities development was *the* priority of the central government (Naughton, 1991). This power structure in which generals replaced statesmen for designing state-led industrialization was the outcome of Chinese party elites' collective encounter with organized mass death in revolutionary war and counterrevolutionary state-sanctioned mass murder before they took national power in 1949. Moreover, their existential insecurity was reinforced by geopolitical changes of the global Cold War (Li and Xia 2018). Geopolitical changes of the global Cold War and the collective encounter with mass death both contributed to the militarization of the socialist state in China (for the historical accounts of militarization in socialist China, see Naughton 1988; Lewis and Xue 1991; Zedong and Qiuli [1965] 2014; Meyskens 2015; Meyskens 2020; Hou 2018). Conversely, because the Soviet civilian party elites had much less operational experience and stayed in major cities rather than fought side-by-side with the former Tsarist officers of the Red Army to defeat the counterrevolutionary "Whites", the bureaucratization of the Soviet state was less militarized (Zhou 2019). Moreover, the Soviet armed forces relied on army-to-army strategies for national defense (Glantz 2013). These military strategies required a professional state bureaucracy (Sokolovsky and Garthoff 1963; Priestland 2010) in which party elites lacked the military expertise to exercise command-and-control authority for conducting combined arms

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operation (for a detailed account of Soviet military-party conflict, see Nichols 1993). As a result, geopolitical changes reinforced this separate pattern of party-army dynamics.

This militarization is one key aspect of Chinese state socialism that departs from Marx and Engels' envision of socialism (Engels 1877; Joas and Knöbl 2013). When Deng Xiaoping was rehabilitated in 1975, his first orders ([1975] 2014, 282; [1981] 2014, 284) were to replace the militarized strategy of industrial development with an emphasis on production of consumptive goods. In this sense, the beginning of post-1978 economic reform cannot be properly addressed without paying attention to the rise and fall of military merits in socialist statecraft.

This thesis also refines the literature on state-led industrialization (for example, Kohli 1994; Kohli 2004; Woo-Cumings 1999; Haggard 2015) which has tended to lump together competing policy-planning agencies of all kinds as an autonomous apparatus that determines effective policymaking, invoking problematic conceptualizations to the relative autonomy of administrative subfields. In addition, the Weberian theorists of bureaucratic autonomy (for example, see Evans 1995) tended to conceptualize relative autonomy as a binary category: the policy planning agencies' autonomy in respect to constituents' political agendas and suburbanites' action-orientations is constructed as a twofold concept. First, bureaucrats at the top positions of policy-planning agencies are characterized as "depolitized" actors who can craft long term developmental strategy without intervention from above. Second, professionalized "policy implementers" in the administrative subfields (i.e., the administrative subordinates) are depicted as robotic actors who cannot defy or challenge their

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institutional bosses (i.e., the leaders of planning agencies ). If one of the two conditions fails to occur, then autonomy does not exist.

This “Weberian” theorization based on capitalist states in Continental Europe (Dunlavy 1994), North America (Carpenter 2001), and East Asia (for example, Carpenter 2001 and Kohli 2004) fails to capture the socio-political realities of early socialist states which systematically recruited peasant boys, revolutionary soldiers, and urban workers into the poorly bureaucratized, patron-client based, and ideologically rifted state apparatuses: the literature on the formation of socialist states has pointed out this flaw but lacks a theoretical explanation to the encasing effects of bureaucratization on the socialist political economy (for excellent studies of the bureaucratization of socialist states, see Easter 1996; U 2007; Walder 1986; Kligman and Verdery 2011; Hou 2018; Andreas 2019).

Moreover, the literature on the politics of policymaking within non-democratic states exaggerated the administrative control of the dominant actors (for example, Lü and Landry 2014). According to the foundational texts of the politics of economic development in post-1978 China, the ministers and provincial officials who make economic policies are characterized as autonomous actors whose decisions can only be challenged by bargaining between them (Shirk 1993; Mertha 2009) and contingent interventions from their institutional boss (Baum 1994)—the dominant actor and position in the meta-field. While such a dichotomous conceptualization offers clear measurement advantages, “policy kingdom” problematically defines the irrelevance of power struggles in the meta-field as the conceptual benchmark and neglects ways in which dominant state actors exert political power by



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creating and recreating incentive structures for bureaucrats in the policy planning and implementation subfields (for example, Bendix 1973; Hintze et al. 1975; Gorski 2013).

In this thesis, I propose to reexamine these theoretical assumptions of ministerial autonomy in respect to political constituents' action-orientations and bureaucratic subordinates' policy preferences. The presence of competition in the meta-field is not necessarily a cause of fragmentation (Lieberthal 1992); rather, it may indicate the emergence of the attempts at restructuring the incentives within the state-structured institutional order (for example, see Johnson 1982, 74-5; Kandil 2016). Political competition in the meta-field also frequently involves policy preferences of one faction (i.e., a vertical alliance between administrative bureaucrats and political constituents) outcompeting the ones of another, rather than the promotion of the dominated actors (i.e., the subordinate bureaucrats who design and implement the policies) who achieved the best performance in the views of the outcompeted elites. In other words, theorists cannot assume the presence of competition always increases the likelihood of the formation of persistent incentive schemes. In the political context of non-democratic party-states, the rationalization of bureaucracies is conditioned by the power struggles within the party-state fields (Stark and Bruszt 1998; Eyal, Széleányi, and Townsley 1998; Eyal 2003; Zhang 2020).

Most relevant to this study is Yeling Tan' recent attempt to specify the variations in state strategies (2020). Tan defines a state strategy as “a set of policy instruments, rooted in a particular mode of state–market relations, that is adopted to further a state’s economic objectives” (2020, 2121). This thesis’s definition of state strategy builds on Tan’s one because it makes the task of delineating the historic processes of state capital differentiation

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analytically manageable. However, my definition differs from Tan's one in a crucial way: her theory does not include an explanation of why and how these political agendas of exceeding and distinctive durability emerge in the first place.

According to Tan's machine-learning-based text analysis, three competing state strategies existed in post-1978 China. First, "the regulatory strategy involves an arms-length relationship between state and business, where the role of the state is to facilitate the functioning of market mechanisms and address market failures" (Tan, 2020, 2122). In this case, "regulatory policies therefore involve a redeployment (rather than reduction) of state activity toward market-enhancing measures to strengthen price signals and establish a level playing field for competition" (Tan 2020, 2122). Second, "the developmental strategy in its 'classic' sense is associated with a depoliticized bureaucracy that mixes intervention with market mechanisms to drive a nation's industrialization (Tan 2020, 2123). Third, "the directive strategy refers to policies drawn from methods used in the Mao-era planned economy and which derive from command and control governance approaches used by the Soviet Union" (Tan 2020, 2123). Her theory-generating exercise shows how multiple agendas of industrialization can coexist in the Leninist state; but her theory does not provide an explanation to how and why these state strategies of exceeding and distinctive durability emerged in the first place. In this sense, the aim of this thesis is to explain the historical origins of these state strategies inside the post-1978 CCP party-state.

In so doing, central to my neo-Bourdieuian state theory is the proposal to study state capital in terms of practices of policymaking as *modus operandi* rather than in terms of policies as *opus operatum* (see Bourdieu 1977, 79). As I will explicate in chapter 1, state

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strategies are subjected to the political competition in the meta-field of power; and state strategies are weaponized by political actors to obtain and hold power. In this sense, the state strategy—a set of policy instruments that is adopted by the members the meta-field of power—is weaponized by state actors for advancing industrial development (as the universal interests) and holding political power (as the particular interests).

Henceforth, building on the literature on state strategies of economic development (Katzenstein 1981; Prasad 2006; Hsueh 2016; Ang 2016; Tan 2020), this thesis represents an initial effort to correct these polarized and problematic imaginations of state competition. By development I refer to the socioeconomic “transformation of agrarian societies into industrial ones” (Kohli 2020, 7). The divided Chinese Leninist state elites in the post-Mao era embraced market economy not because they intentionally betrayed socialist theodicy formed in the founding struggles, but because they consciously competed for the power of defining the most effective state strategy of economic and industrial development. In the late Mao era (ca. 1964-76), the Chinese mass-mobilizing party elites within the central government defined the rapid construction of decentralized military buildup as the *only* priority of industrial policy (Naughton, 1991), and the Chinese socialist state was more militarized than other socialist states for defending national sovereignty (Meyskens 2015; Meyskens 2020), and these structures in which mass-mobilizing elites carried out waves of purges to their colleagues who prioritized consumption investment and central planning proved fragile.

### An Overview of the Thesis

In what follows, I offer a state theory of two general mechanisms that mediate existential insecurity and changes in industrial policies. First, existential insecurity conditions the possibilities of political alignment in the meta-field. Existential insecurity is the collective

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efforts to deal with credible threats motivated by the subjective experience of organized mass death—the fear of enemies (see Evrigenis 2008). My definition is expansive but intentionally so. I conceptually separate existential insecurity from “war” because existential insecurity includes: (1) the military-industrial bureaucracy’s autonomous yet insecure operational experience of fighting armed conflicts and (2) the military-industrial measures taken by the state actors for thwarting perceived dangers during peacetime. I find it useful to conceptualize insecurity in wider rather than narrower terms because I seek a concept that can travel cross space and time, even though I fully expect that insecurities will play out in informatively different ways in different events of social transformations. Second, the political (dis)alignment of policy preferences between constituents in the meta-field, as the external force on administrative subfields, decisively shapes the degree of relative autonomy enjoyed by subfield policymakers. The relative autonomy of ministerial bureaucrats is subjected to the political competition in the meta-field: the struggles over the agenda-setting power of defining the “best” means to fulfill the universal interest—national strivings in the bipolar universe of the global Cold War.

In chapter 1, an overview of the argument is provided. In chapter 2, a comparative historical analysis of the two socialist revolutions in Russia and China elaborates the effects revolutionary military merits have on the post-revolutionary states’ strategies of industrialization. The basic method I employ to establish a linkage between the lived experience of organized mass death and the procedural context of state formation is to use the Millian method of difference to compare these two socialist revolutions for establishing Leninist elites’ existential insecurity formed in regional insurgencies as a cause of the

militarization of the Chinese socialist state. In chapter 3, I analyze the becoming of the Third Front as a historical turning point in which state competitions resulted in the military logic of Mao's last big push industrialization. In chapter 4, a comparative historical analysis of state capital differentiation in the railways, automobile, and shipbuilding sectors elaborates the institutional mechanisms through which the competitive dynamics of policymaking can result in radical differences in paths, designs, and speeds of industrial reforms of state sectors. This theory-generating exercise shows how state competitions within the Central Committee of the CCP can give rise to durable, although not unchangeable, socioeconomic orders.

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## **Chapter1 The Games of Old Bolsheviks**

### **The Argument**

An effective theory of state capital must begin by explaining how state capital functioned to the mode of operation of the national system of political economy (see Hsueh 2016; Lee 2017). In this thesis, stateness in state capital refers to the capacities of state actors (backed by material and symbolic forces) to accumulate, manage and control economic capital. Economic capital here refers to the means of economic existence (Tilly 1992; Easter 2012, 1). It can be physical assets, cash, and credit. While the general mechanisms I posit is novel, the institution I see underpinning state-structured socioeconomic order should be familiar—the meta-field of socialist states—the Central Committee of the Party. And, in a political culture where elites in the Central Committee share the collective intention to build an industrialized national economy but disagree and compete with each other about the methods, these competitive dynamics inside the meta-field of the Leninist state (i.e., the Central Committee), I argue, decisively shape the transformation of the mode of operation of national economy in post-1978 China in which state-owned enterprises—the institutions of controlling, creating, and accumulating economic capital owned by the state (Lee 2017)—have been designed to perform differentiated and active roles in different industrial sectors for developing a state-regulated market economy.

In the actually existing socialist project, the Central Committee of the Party holds the final authority of making claims of economic capital. For materializing the Leninist party-state's claims of economic capital, the state-owned enterprises are tasked to build a socialist economy at national scale. "SOEs in Maoist China, like their counterparts in other socialist regimes, were embedded into the state bureaucracy as the core parts of the socialist planned

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economy” (Hirata 2020, 876). However, the conflicts over the design and implementation of state strategies are at the center of ceaseless power struggles (for cases other than Soviet-type socialist states, see Kandil 2016, 2–4) inside the top echelons of state bureaucracies. In short, the dynamics of the power struggles in the Leninist meta-field can be defined in the following terms: *the collective intention to build an industrialized national economy was shared by socialist state elites who disagreed and competed with each other about the methods*. The symbolic parameters, structured by the formal institutions of the party-state, compromise the procedural contexts of power struggle and political articulation<sup>4</sup>.

#### Militarization and State Strategies of Industrialization: From Revolutionary Warfare to Post-Revolutionary Political Competition

My central analytical ambition is agenda correcting and, potentially, agenda setting. In doing so, two threads of argument entwine each other in this thesis. First, a neo-Bourdieusian state theory offers sustained mediation on the historic processes between the development of state elites’ understandings of state strategies of industrialization as formed and transformed in political competition and the changes of economic institutions created and recreated by their action<sup>5</sup>. More, it lays out in detail the competitive dynamics through which these historic processes operate.

Its particular claim is that existential insecurity—that is, the collective efforts to deal with credible threats to the post-revolutionary state motivated by the fear of enemies in the geopolitical space of the global Cold War across time—plays a central role in these

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<sup>4</sup> This survey serves as a guide to explain macro-structural changes’ encasing effects on shaping the explicit and implicit rules of political competition which in turn conditions the possibilities of strategic choices in the state field.

<sup>5</sup> This argument is also inspired by Machiavelli’s theory of state.

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competitive dynamics of the formation of state strategy of industrialization. The field of power in socialist China was permeated with this air of fear. Consequently, during the pivotal era of the global Cold War, the Chinese socialist statesmen regarded *military* merits forged in their collective experience of revolutionary warfare—the abilities to prepare, fight, and win battles as the centerpiece of socialist statecraft. This military merit transformed into the *habitus* of the state actors (Bourdieu 1977, 78-9): this is reflected in the languages (including speeches, letters, and instructions), practices (including decision-making processes), and structures (including party-army dynamics) within the field of power (for example, see Mao [1964a] 2014; Mao and Yu [1965] 2014; Zhou 2019; Hou 2018). Yet they disagreed on the means to accomplish national prosperity in this bipolar universe of nuclear standoffs that they agreed to be dangerous and hostile. Thus, I argue for a focus on processes of power struggles as an analytical angle from which the decisions of policy change can be comprehended. The power struggles in the meta-field critically affected the formation of incentive schemes and of institutional adaptiveness (Tsai 2006) in the post-1978 reform.

Second, a historical strand of argument offers a reinterpretation of the formation of the post-1978 national system of political economy in the People's Republic of China (PRC) by analyzing it as the renewed “attempt to perform a revolutionary self-fulfilling prophecy” (Glaeser 2011, xv). This perspective enables an empirical account of the eventful socioeconomic transformation from Maoist socialism to the post-1978 state-regulated market economy, which focuses on the party-state elites' collective efforts to resolve the catastrophes unleashed by Mao's grand strategy of decentralized military buildup (i.e., the Third Front construction). In this sense, we can gain a fuller understanding of the critical roles played by



fantasies, fears, and hopes in (re)stabilizing the economic and political systems (Beckert 2016, 114) in the PRC by analyzing the Third Front as a specific transformative event (Abbott 1992; Sewell 1996; Steinmetz 2005) in which socialist elites' collective fears of enemies induced nonlinear social changes. The comparative survey of these three centralized agencies of railways, automobile, and shipbuilding industries and their different forms and levels of involvement in the Third Front is intended to help us to identify the formation of differentiated state capital in post-1978 China as the political outcome of competition within the meta-field of the party-state—the Central Committee of the CCP.

Table 1.1: A Two-Dimensional Typology of the Differentiated State Strategy of Industrialization in Post-1978 Manufacturing Sectors at National Level

Industrial Upgrading Strategy Inter-firm Coordination Mechanism	<u>Imported-Substitution Industrialization</u>	<u>Export-Oriented Industrialization</u>
<u>A Unified State Bureaucracy at National Scale for Inter-firm Coordination and Competition through Hierarchical Relations (within the Industrial Sector)</u>	Railways Industry (state-owned enterprises controlled by the central government enjoy a natural monopoly and other institutional privileges in terms of finance and administrative rank; limited inter-firm competition in the same sector)	Shipbuilding Industry (central government controls the path of industrial upgrading through infant industry protection policies; and bureaucratic coordination between firms in allocating their shares of the domestic market)
<u>Market Competition between Firms with limited coordination at national scale: The Central Government designs Industrial Policy via Control of Inflow of Foreign Investment and Access to Global market</u>	Automobile Industry (central government controls foreign direct investment through the rules of access to the domestic market; for example, foreign firms must set joint ventures with Chinese state-owned enterprises which have a majority share)	Textile Industry (no state-owned enterprise directly controlled by the central government; they are either privatized or transferred to local authorities for regional development)

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For answering why and how these agencies would then be able to (or fail to) transform themselves in the years of post-1978 reform, industrial policy needs to be understood as a field- and competition-specific symbolic capital in the state (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2018; Steinmetz 2008; Zhang 2020). In this sense, I offer a new state theory of socioeconomic transformation in contrast to the currently prevalent variants of economic and political systems variants (for example, Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Solnick 1999; Dimitrov 2013). The point is not to say these are altogether invalid. Rather, I argue that properly addressing the symbolic dimensions of stateness enables comparative theorists to develop an analytical angle from which the competitive dynamics of institutional changes (Kandil 2016) can be comprehended.

#### Between Cause and Effect: Political Competition in the Making of State Strategies

To explain the links between existential insecurity and variations in industrial policies at sectoral level which then gave rise to the differentiated state capital in post-1978 China, I emphasize two competitive dynamics of institutions: (1) the political articulations (Jessop 1982, 155; De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2009; Mudge 2018) of policy preferences between the divided elites in the meta-field and (2) the patterns of connections between ministers and constituents in the meta-field. By focusing on these two dimensions of the power struggle, I show that cultural schemas, as William Sewell Jr. has pointed out (1996), is an intrinsic part of the transformative events in which party elites' action created and recreated economic institutions.

Central to this neo-Bourdieuian state theory is the proposal to study state capital in terms of acts of policymaking as *modus operandi* rather than in terms of policies as *opus operatum*. Henceforth, two sets of hypotheses are tested in this thesis. These hypotheses seek

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to explain variations in both (1) strategic goals of industrialization, which refer to the ends of industrial development defined by the Central Committee, and (2) types of post-1978 industrial policies, which capture radical differences in state's manners of controlling, accumulating, and managing economic capital.

First, civilian party elites' direct exposure to organized violence in the founding struggles increases the likelihood of militarization of post-revolutionary party-state. In this case, we can expect an "infused pattern of post-revolutionary party-army dynamics" (Zhou 2019, 197) in which generals hold decision-making power over policies that are irrelevant to the conduct of combat operations. Conversely, civilian party elites' limited exposure to organized violence in the founding struggles decreases the likelihood of militarization. In this case, we can expect "a separate pattern of post-revolutionary party-army dynamics" (Zhou 2019, 197) in which generals focus on military activities and professional technocrats hold decision-making power over industrial policies. The party elites' involvement in the founding struggles can be measured by identifying their positions during the revolutionary warfare (i.e., if they joined the armed forces as uniformed, active-duty officers or political commissars, then they should have more exposure to organized violence; if they stayed in cities and did not join the armed forces, they should have limited exposure to mass death through war).

Second, a coherent articulation of policy preferences based on the agreement of the necessity of military-industrial preparations in the meta-field (i.e., the collective strategy of political survival of dominant actors) increases the likelihood of high-powered incentives of a *unified* industrialization strategy at national level. Conversely, the disalignment of policy preferences between actors in the meta-field—increases the likelihood of *differentiated*

industrialization strategies at sectoral level. More generally, my conceptual emphasis on militarization (see Eibl, Hertog, and Slater 2019) – a term I derive from classic texts of state theory (for example, Hintze et al. 1975; Finer and Stanley 2002) – highlights the encasing effects of existential insecurity on the institutional foundations of national economy. I measure policy preferences and policy outcomes by analyzing central committee members’ speeches, briefing, governmental reports, meeting records, and decrees.

Table 1.2: The Predicted Effects of State Competition

Economic Institutions Articulated State Interests	Centralization (Central government formally controls the state-owned enterprises)	Decentralization (Central government no longer controls the state-owned enterprises)
Alignment of Policy Preferences in the meta-field (i.e., the Central Committee of the Party): well-defined strategic goal of industrialization	Centralized agency for import-substitution industrialization— <i>central planning</i> (Meta-field actors holds agenda setting power: they set the reform initiatives) Example: Ministry of Railways	Decentralized agency for <i>market competition</i> —state-owned enterprises are controlled by local authorities. (Meta-field actors holds agenda setting power: they set the reform initiatives) Example: automobile industry
Disalignment of Policy Preferences in the meta-field: competing agendas of industrialization	Centralized agency for export-oriented industrialization— <i>developmental state</i> in the “classic sense” (If the subfield actors successfully exhibit their alleged expertise of advancing socialist industrialization, they can set their own terms of industrial reform.) Example: Sixth Ministry of Machine Building (i.e., shipbuilding industry)	Decentralized agency for domestic market building— <i>regulatory policy</i> (If the subfield actors successfully exhibit their alleged expertise of advancing socialist industrialization, they can set their own terms of industrial reform.) Example: textile industry

The Logic of Inquiry

These deliberations about the importance of comparing different historical processes that are distinct in space and time for the building of state theory lead straight into considerations

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about method. The primary logic of inquiry of this thesis is counterfactual. By “mentally altering” the historical processes (De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2009, 201) in which each camp of the divided state actors (i.e., the mass mobilizers, the consumption investors, and the central planners) articulated a distinctive state strategy of industrialization, I show that without existential insecurity formed in revolutionary struggles, the bureaucratic structures of competitive policymaking in each case would fail to occur; and without power struggles inside the top echelons of post-revolutionary states, the strategic goals of socialist industrialization in each case would be altered.

By analyzing the competitive dynamics of policymaking during the transformative event—the Third Front (ca.1964-80), I show that the specific logic of each state strategy was context dependent rather than structurally overdetermined. By posing such historical counterfactuals, I am doing more than juxtaposing historical narratives (De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2009, 201) of political competitions. In particular, the within-case sequence of each historical case offers me multiple “data points” with which to evaluate the explanatory power of my state theory. Consequently, my comparative-historical analysis offers the three theory-generating tools identified by Rueschemeyer: “conceptual equivalencies across political, social, and cultural boundaries”, the “identification of universal or quite general problems that occur in varied historical contexts”, and “the development of highly focused theoretical frameworks” (2003, 328).

Embracing the time-tested principle of historical sociological research that comparative-historical analysis should be capable of telling the “large” processes and that of factors on the ground (Hintze et al. 1975; Weber, Roth, and Wittich 1978 Tilly 1992; Mudge 2018), I

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account for changes in state capital via an analysis of both large-scale institutional transformations and the trajectories, positions, and self-accounts of state actors who articulate state strategy of industrialization. In short, my counterfactual analysis involves the study of historical change centered on the formation, geopolitical contexts, and orientations of socialist statecraft. For operationalize this analytical task, I focus on generationally comparable socialist elites who occupied structurally similar locations in their respective universes and who become well-recognized decision-makers on matters of military strategy, industrialization, and economic management.

This analytical focus on constituents arises from a theoretical perspective (Mudge 2018) that takes the actually existing socialist projects as internally contested fields of power (Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley 1998; Eyal 2003; Zhang 2020) in which political actors do much more than seek revenues, policies, and offices. Key to the actually existing socialist project is a triple orientation: first, toward industrialization, education, socialization, and truth claiming; second, toward agitation, mobilization, and indoctrination; and third, toward political articulation, power-seeking and state security. Each orientation, in its own way, expressed the political claim that Marx-Leninism's higher insight into social reality can guide the construction of a better society. In this sense, the socialist party-states seek to neutralize themselves by shaping how the rank-and-file understand the world and their place in it (Gramsci, Buttigieg, and Callari 2011). In this effort, the constituents within the Central Committee plays a special role. For the present purpose, the distinguishing mark is in their *action-orientation*: they strive to formulate the socialist statecraft by which the state elites characterize the world, define programmatic priorities, and instruct the rank-and-file to

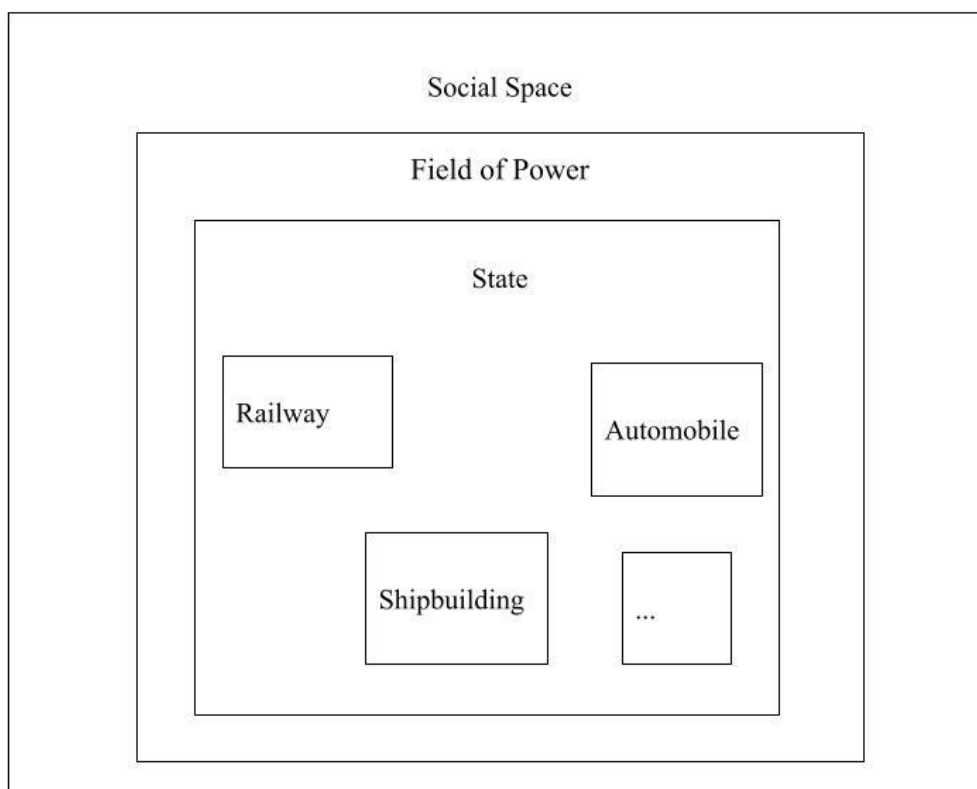
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actualize the revolutionary self-fulfilling prophecy. In so doing, they compete for the power of defining the “best” state strategy of industrialization.

This approach preempts overly strong assumptions about the priority of any particular unit of analysis—oligarchic organizations (for example, Michels et al. 1968), polarities of international politics (for example, Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001), nation-states (for example, Hall and Soskice 2001), and so forth. This analysis that traces the institutional locations and trajectories of Leninist policymakers make no assumptions, for instance, that their experiences, trajectories, and action-orientations are overdetermined by the power structure of international politics (Mearsheimer 2001). At the same time, by centering this analysis on similarly situated political actors across time periods and political spaces, my approach retains the advantages of a comparative perspective.

To measure changes in state strategies, I mostly rely on policy documents (for example, Chen, Xu, and Song 2014) to identify policy preferences, political articulation, and institutional outcomes. I also rely on party-commissioned historians’ writings based on archival sources (for example, Chen 2003) and published autobiographies written by historical actors (for example, Chen 1996). Below, I group my cases together into a two-part discussion: first, I specify the order-producing attributes of existential insecurity formed in revolutionary struggles and the variations in insecurity’s effects on post-revolutionary state formation through a comparative-historical analysis of two socialist revolutions in Russia and China and elaborate my state theory, and trace the sources of state capital differentiation at sectoral level in socialist China, and the competitive dynamics of policy formation in the becoming of state capital differentiation in railways, automobile, and shipbuilding industries.

Figure 1.1: A Basic Outline of the Relational Structure of Fields, Subfields, and Social Spaces



### The Structure of Arguments

In the core chapters of this thesis, both the principles of analysis and the neo-Bourdieuian state theory are employed in the analysis of state capital. My approach is to start with the theory but supplement it with ideas anticipated by the logic of inquiry.

In chapter 2, the link between existential insecurity and post-revolutionary statecraft are elaborated through a theory-building exercise based on the Millian method of difference for illustrating the encasing effects militarization has on the state strategy of industrialization. By comparing the Russian revolution (ca. 1917-22) and the Chinese revolution (ca. 1911-49) as the two most similar cases of socialist revolution, I establish existential insecurity formed in *regional insurgencies* in post-imperial China as the cause of the militarization (i.e., the military holds decision-making power over policies that are unrelated to the conduct of



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combat operations.) of the Chinese party-state. In the Chinese context, the counterrevolutionary warlords emerged from the fragmented post-imperial military field had so antagonized their junior officers, soldiers, and peasant boys that these radicalized actors joined the Party's regional insurgencies led by Marxist intellectuals (i.e., the civilian party leaders) to end counterrevolutionary elites' political order. The military merits (as the solution to insecurity) formed in these founding struggles between the mass-mobilizing CCP and elite-protecting counterrevolutionary warlords (ca. 1927-49) critically affected the post-revolutionary state elites' socialist statecraft.

In chapter 3, I analyze the becoming of the Third Front as a historical turning point in which state competitions resulted in the military logic of Mao's last big push industrialization. In particular, Mao's political articulation of the absolute necessity of rapid industrialization for defense led to a unified industrialization strategy of massive military buildup which became the priority of the central government between 1964 and 1976. Statesmen who opposed Mao's policy preferences were marginalized, purged, and replaced by generals to carry out Mao's grand strategy of preparing nuclear total war. The culmination of this militarization of the Chinese socialist state resulted in the Third Front construction—a unified military logic of industrialization in which the state strategy of military buildup decisively reshaped the national system of political economy.

In chapter 4, the theoretical arguments of state capital differentiation are elaborated through a comparative-historical analysis of the divergent developmental trajectories of railways, automobile, and shipbuilding sectors in socialist China. The developmental trajectories of these three sectors exemplify three distinctive patterns of industrial upgrading

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strategy that cover all state-owned enterprises in manufacturing sectors in post-1978 China. The differentiated patterns of involvement in the Third Front critically affected the post-1978 industrial policies of these three sectors. On the one hand, the restructured Sixth Ministry of Machine Building (i.e., the CSSC), as a state-owned industrial conglomerate, vertically integrated the shipbuilding industry for *export-oriented industrialization*. On the other hand, the Ministry of Railways continued to exist as a state bureaucracy for implementing *import-substitution industrialization* at national level; its successor agency—China Railways continued this mode of operation till today. In stark contrast to these two centralized agencies, the China State Automobile Company was dissolved by the central government for boosting *market competition* in 1986. As one part of the central government's strategy of market-building at national level, domestic market of automobiles was opened to foreign direct investment; and provincial state authorities became the primary actors for regulating, accumulating, and controlling state-run economic capital.

### The Analysis to Come

I delineate why and how the power dynamics inside the meta-field structures the variations in the institutional configurations of state capital across industrial sectors. In brief, the historic process of capital differentiation is conditioned by the power struggles over the collective strategy to accumulate, manage, and redistribute state-owned economic capital inside the Central Committee of the CCP. For explaining the political origins of differentiated state capital in post-1978 China, we need to consider policy formation in the ministerial subfields as the political consequence of power struggles inside the meta-field. An industrial policy, as a culturally constructed instrument (Dobbin, 1994) for regulating economic capital's accumulation, management, and circulation, often results from political competition

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between actors in the state field. For holding power, state actors seek symbolic capital specific to the field and competition as their capacities to influence political consequences (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2018; Steinmetz 2008). In practice, they compete for the agenda-setting power by presenting their specific goals as the best vehicle for actualizing certain universal interests (Bourdieu 2014; 2018, 33-6).

To illustrate the historical origins of these three industrialization strategies and their socio-political consequences of recasting the rules of competition for power in the state field which were central to the post-1978 reform, I delineate the installation of the meta-field of the post-revolutionary party-state when the socialist elites took national power in 1949 in which centrally planned industrialization would begin in the mid-1950s. Then I analyze the becoming of the Third Front (or simply the Front) as the transformative event (from 1964 to 1978) to illustrate how the differentiated strategic logics of industrialization came into their shapes and subsequently conditioned the political dynamics of post-1978 industrial and economic reform in different state sectors. The strategic goal of the Third Front is a well-defined universal interest—rapid development of defense capabilities. Yet, after Mao died in 1976, elites in the Central Committee abandoned Mao's agenda and outcompeted the supporters of the Third Front strategy (i.e., the mass mobilizers). This move then gave rise to the differentiation of state capital. In this sense, this comparative survey serves as a guide based on comparative-historical analysis for revealing the historic processes between political competition inside the meta-field and policy formation in the ministerial subfields. I argue that the Third Front and its sociopolitical outcomes can be explained by the power struggles over the state strategy of industrialization.

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To understand the relevance of procedural contexts of the power struggles to the emergence of the three subtypes of state capital in post-1978 China, I trace the interaction among collective strategy (i.e., the strategic goals of industrialization designated by the Central Committee of the Party), disalignment (i.e., the constituents' disagreements over political priorities inside the meta-field of power: the Central Committee), political articulation (i.e., the vertical bargaining between ministers and dominant actors within the Central Committee), and policy formation (as the political consequences).

In this conceptual framework, the existential insecurity of the Leninist party-state field (i.e., the fear of enemies shared by all political actors) is the independent variable, and policy formations in the ministerial subfields are the dependent variables. Insecurity's encasing effects on policy formations are conditioned by the patterns of how insecurity (that permeates the entire field of power) transforms into the rules of the games in the ministerial subfields. In this sense, political disalignment and political articulation are intervening variables, whose relative role in affecting policy formations depends on the types of validations (i.e., the transformation of existential insecurity into policy preferences) made<sup>6</sup> by constituents (i.e., the institutionalized choice made by the members of the Central Committee in the forms of directives) inside the meta-field (see Johnson 2001, 255). The temporal scope of the historical analysis covers the installation of the meta-field of the party-state in 1949 to the emergence of

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<sup>6</sup> However, the Bourdieusian approach adopted in this thesis differs from historical institutionalist explanation to institutional change in the sense that my conceptualization to institutional choice does not count it as a binary variable for changing institution or not; possible choice in the state field is more of a categorical variable depends on the procedural contexts of power struggle. This is because the logics of practices cannot be separated from choices which are structured by the symbolic parameters of the state. In contrast, the historical institutionalist account of choice is a softened utilitarian mode which does not address the symbolic dimension of decision-making.

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the three differentiated strategies of industrial upgrading across manufacturing sectors in the early 1980s.

Henceforth, to substantiate my theoretical claims, two political processes that mediate power dynamics (political competition) and policy outcomes (industrial policy at sectoral level) constitute the empirical focus of this thesis: First, depending on the degree, form, and path of involvement in the power struggle in the meta-field (i.e., in this case, the stake in the struggle is the strategy of industrialization), leaders of centralized agencies (of railroads, automobiles, and shipbuilding industries) can forge ties with central planning-oriented elites (or simply the central planners) in the Central Committee of the CCP which in turn condition the organizational trajectory of these three industrial agencies in post-1978 industrial reform. Second, the ties between ministers (i.e., the leaders of centralized agencies) and state planning officials in the Central Committee forged in the Third Front are vital for their capacities to transform industrial organizations' economic performances into symbolic capital in subsequent competitions for power.

Acquiring such a competition- and field-specific form of symbolic capital—as their credentials to participate in policy formation at national level—expand their autonomy in deciding the structural arrangements of economic capital<sup>7</sup> at sectoral level. If these ties are absent or successfully challenged by Central Committee members who opposed plan-based fast-track industrialization, the centralized agencies, as the vehicles of unitary strategy for the

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<sup>7</sup> This refers to the centralized agency's capacities to independently design and implement the trajectory of institutional change of the industrial sector at national scale.

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accumulation, circulation, and management of state-controlled economic capital at national scale, were more likely to be forced to decentralize in the post-1978 reform.

These competitive dynamics among socialist elites divisively shaped and reshaped the state strategies of industrialization. Each camp of the divided elite in the party-state constructed a distinct institutional logic of national industrialization for obtaining agenda-setting power in the meta-field. These competitions between elites subsequently condition the organizational trajectories of (economic) capital-intensive state-owned enterprises in the post-1978 reform period. The organizational trajectories of these three agencies under and after centrally planned industrialization mentioned above exemplify the lasting impacts of these competitive dynamics inside the socialist party-state. These three “structural arrangements” of state-controlled economic capital (in the form of the three ministerial agencies) at national level became the three dominant modes of operation for state-owned enterprises in all manufacturing sectors<sup>8</sup> in post-1978 China.

In these historic-political processes, policy formation was also influenced by geopolitical and economic interests and the dominant party-state actor’s final authority in appointing and dismissing ministerial officials. The effects of these additional mechanisms were typically mediated by the power struggles among the divided elites inside the meta-field of power—the Central Committee of the CCP

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<sup>8</sup> While a complete survey of the politics of industrialization in the People’s Republic will explode the intention of this project, this thesis focuses on reconstructing the historical contexts of the three institutional logics of fast-track industrialization and the oppositions to them in the meta-field.

## **Chapter 2 Existential Insecurity as the Producer of the Militarized Socialist State**

The army has become the main purpose of the state, and an end in itself; the peoples are there only to provide soldiers and feed them. Militarism dominates and is swallowing Europe. But this militarism also bears within itself the seed of its own destruction. Competition among the individual states forces them, on the one hand, to spend more money each year on the army and navy, artillery, etc., thus more and more hastening their financial collapse; and, on the other hand, to resort to universal compulsory military service more and more extensively, thus in the long run making the whole people familiar with the use of arms, and therefore enabling them at a given moment to make their will prevail against the warlords in command. And this moment will arrive as soon as the mass of the people—town and country workers and peasants—*will have* a will. At this point the armies of the princes become transformed into armies of the people; the machine refuses to work and militarism collapses by the dialectics of its own evolution. What the bourgeois democracy of 1848 could not accomplish, just because it was *bourgeois* and not proletarian, namely, to give the labouring masses a will whose content would be in accord with their class position—socialism will infallibly secure.

– Friedrich Engels 1877 (Emphasis in Original)

### **A Legacy of Founding Struggles**

In *Anti-Dühring*, two threads of arguments intertwined in Engels' theoretical account of the militarization of modern states in the historical context of nineteenth century European capitalism. First, the operational mode of war had “gone as far as it can *technologically*” (Joas and Knöbl 2013, 97; emphasis in original). For Engels, the development of armament program is “*mediated* by economic power, highly developed metallurgy, command of skilled technicians and highly productive coal-mines” (1877; emphasis in original). In fact, Engels “goes so far as to describe the history of war and warfare as fundamentally a history of technological innovation, which must itself be understood as dependent on the relations of production” (Joas and Knöbl 2013, 97). According to Engels, the wielding of the coercive forces in continental Europe was fueled by the fiscal capacities of the capitalist state which extracted monopolistic economic capital (with the full cooperation of the bourgeoisie) for building the military capabilities of its armed forces. Second, because of the invention of universal conscription, evermore workers and peasants would be armed. As a result, Engels

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considered European militarism to be rent “asunder from within” (1877). In this communist eschatology (Halfin 2000), once the unconscious subject of history—the working class acquired its omnipotent mind from the self-destructive militarism fueled by capitalism, its odyssey of class consciousness in the universal time of class warfare would lead to the becoming of the end of history (of capitalism). Then, the new emancipatory order without violence, exploitation, and antagonism—socialism could be built.

A field-theoretic analysis of the socialist state reveals that existential insecurity nonetheless was critical to the formation of the socialist state. At the heart of the matter is the tension between a totalizing dream of the coming of a non-violent, egalitarian, and emancipatory order and an empirical reality which always threatens to annihilate the socialist state due to the (imagined) hostilities of counterrevolutionary forces, or if you will, due to the state paranoia (Glaeser 2004) of being attacked by the (secret) alliance between domestic class enemies and foreign capitalist states. As a result, The Leninist state’s efforts of industrialization were geared toward *preventive intervention*—to build an industrial economy for enabling the party-state agents (including the military, the police, and the security apparatuses) to identify, deter, and defeat all enemies of the party-state.

Thus, the core purpose in this chapter is to establish existential insecurity—the collective efforts to deal with credible threats motivated by the collective experience of the large-scale taking of life through revolutionary war or counterrevolutionary state-sanctioned mass murder—as a sociopolitical force (Evrigenis 2008) which contributed to the formation of socialist statecraft in the geopolitical context of the global Cold War. My analysis here builds on the “founding struggle” paradigm (see Levitsky and Way 2012; Slater and Smith 2016;



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Zhou 2019). But it aims to shift out attention from the intensity of revolutionary violence to violent struggles' distinctive effects on the militarization of post-revolutionary party-states. It also transcends path dependence (for example, see Finer and Stanley 2002; Steinmetz 2005, 145) by considering how a post-revolutionary state's grand strategy may vary in response to geopolitical changes, types of war, and political competitions (Hintze et al. 1975). In particular, I illuminate the distinctive order-producing attributes of military merits emerged from the violent struggles between the mass-mobilizing Leninist party and elite-protecting counterrevolutionary warlords.

A comparative-historical analysis of the Russian Revolution (ca. 1917-22) and the Chinese Revolution (ca. 1911-49) elaborates the institutional mechanisms through which existential insecurity formed in regional insurgencies critically affects the militarization of post-revolutionary state. Building on Luyang Zhou's study of the party-army dynamics (2018), I offer a field-theoretic analysis of the formation of the Leninist field of power. To win the revolution, the dominant actors within the Central Committee of the CCP relied on institutional mechanisms of non-instrumental compliance to build the revolutionary political machine. In particular, political commissars (from party officials and Marxist intellectuals) fought side by side with military officers (from radicalized warlord troops and rebellious peasants) for winning regional insurgencies. However, this collective strategy of bureaucratization resulted in the militarization of Chinese party-state. In particular, military merits—the abilities to prepare and win battles—formed in the revolution became a central component of socialist statecraft in China.

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In contrast, the Bolshevik party elites had to rely on the tsarist officer corps to design and implement an army-to-army strategy for winning the Civil War. As a result, a separate pattern of party-army dynamics emerged. As a result, Soviet commissars would be outcompeted by generals who never replaced statesmen for designing state strategies of industrialization. In other words, the Soviet party-army dynamics was embedded in a separated organizational frame. Therefore, without specifying the roles of military merits in socialist statecraft, we fail to understand the kinds of bureaucratic structure in which competitive dynamics of policymaking take place. Inside the post-revolutionary states, political actors compete for creating, converting, and acquiring a field- and competition-specific form of symbolic capital—socialist statecraft based on these specific forms of bureaucratic rationalities (see Bourdieu 2014) formed in the revolution. This involved exhibiting an *alleged expertise* of designing and implementing the best approach to advance industrialization for defense under socialist principles, and a *capacity of balancing defense investment and improvement of living standards*. These competitive dynamics are intrinsic components of the political processes within the Leninist state (Stark and Bruszt 1998; Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley 1998; Eyal 2003; Zhang 2020).

Moreover, my theory offers an important correction to Marxist theories of state that downplay geopolitics. In contrast to Marx and Engels' Enlightenment-style expectation in which a nonviolent, egalitarian world order would eventually emerge from the proletarian revolution, existential insecurity continued to condition the developmental trajectories of actually existing socialism. It is in this sense that the socialist victory was fragile. Since we cannot properly understand preconceived notions without lived experiences, I attempt to

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analyze the complex interplay between experiences and assumptions about socialist revolution and socioeconomic realities. Thus, my goal is to outline the obstacles to and possibilities for a better understanding of the politics of industrialization.

In what follows, I identify the collective strategies of the socialist elites which was key to their political survival. In the case of Chinese Revolution, the creation of a unified structure of command and control of the military allowed the Central Committee of the CCP to firmly control its military subfield. Since the military officer and civilian party elites (who served in the military as commissars) fought brutal regional insurgencies for more than two decades, they shared the values and emotions formed in these infused party-army networks. The mechanisms of non-instrumental compliance based on military merits become a critical factor of socialist statecraft. This strategy of surviving waves of wars, in turns, shaped the political processes of post-revolutionary state formation in which centrally planned industrialization began.

#### Socialist Industrialization: Geopolitical Turning Points and the Competitive Dynamics of Policymaking

All socialist states claim that the accumulation of means of production under the “dictatorship of the proletariat” can be then transcended into better public life (measured by higher living standard, more equality, more social rights, etc.) through social redistribution guided by socialist principles (though to what extent such social transformation is actualized is another subject of debate) (Lenin 1917; Verdery 1996, 20-35; Konrad and Széleányi 1979, 145-84; Kornai 1992). While industrialization is prioritized by the Leninist state as its main task of socialist modernization, the strategic logics of its planning and implementation are not driven by the logics of accumulation for accumulation’s sake. “For socialism is merely the

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next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent *ceased to be capitalist monopoly*” (Lenin 1917; emphasis in original). In general, industrialization is set out by the socialist state for two goals: strengthening national defense and improving living standards (Meyskens 2020, 7-23; Mann 2013; Hirata 2020, 876-7).

In practice, the state’s interest in defense often dwarfs the quests of economic efficiency (this is not limited to the socialist state). Motivated by state actors’ assessment of international hostilities and internal threats, one of the central purposes of industrialization under state socialism is to strengthen defense capabilities (Naughton, 1988; Mann 2013, 219; Meyskens 2015; Meyskens 2020; Hou 2018). As a result, heavy industries such as railways, aviation, automobile, and shipbuilding are prioritized for potential military mobilization<sup>9</sup>. More often than not, such political calculations lead to self-contradictory puzzles within the Leninist party-state (see Kligman and Verdery 2011). For instance, as Verdery rightly points out, the accumulation of means of production seldom translates automatically into higher living standards (1996). This self-imposing dilemma originates from the self-understanding of socialist state elites: above all, they wanted rapid industrialization.

From this messianic viewpoint of socialist theodicy, the emancipatory new social order should not be produced by faceless state bureaucrats (Lenin 1917; Stalin [1938] 2013; Katsenelinboigen 1980). In particular, the collective intentionality of building such a society must be shared by all socialist citizens (Glaeser 2004). This state structured socioeconomic

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<sup>9</sup> To accumulate scarce economic capital for rapid industrialization, collectivization of agriculture is implemented. In addition, in the case of the People’s Republic of China, all industrial production was nationalized in the mid-1950s.

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order needs to be produced by the mass under the leadership of the party (Stalin [1938] 2013, 478-91). The socialist state elites never took the sociopolitical order of state socialism as a settled issue; in this view, the party-state is a producer of revolutionary transformation rather than a finished product (Hellbeck 2006, 7; Hamrin and Cheek 1986). According to Stalin's constitution, class difference with exploitation no longer existed in state socialism (this logic is also coded in the constitution of the People's Republic); the emancipatory order will be produced by a new subject of history—the socialist New Man (Halfin 2003). In the political practices of this “nation as a factory” mode of operation of the national economy, this sociopolitical balance between military mobilization for nuclear total war and rising living standards through expanding production of consumer goods is at the center of the political paradox for the socialist state to maintain its political survival and stability (Nee and Stark, 1989; Walder 1995; Mann 2013, 219). How bureaucratic and centralized planning can redistribute resources for the mass for whatever purposes at national level became the subject of power struggles in the meta-field of the party-state.

In the case of the Soviet state, historians considered the geopolitical conflicts between the two nuclear-armed great power made the balance between consumption and military-industrial production more difficult for the post-war Soviet state elites. In addition, Cold War insecurity was mediated by competitive dynamics inside the state field for shaping the state strategy of industrial development. According to Priestland, “tensions – between industrial and defense investment and consumption, and between technocracy and ideology – had dominated Soviet politics since 1928, during the Cold War period they were arguably more difficult to resolve than before the war” (2010, 445). The struggle over the “correct” approach

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to balance consumption and production was the central theme of the competitive dynamics in the Central Committee of the Soviet party in the post-war era. From 1945 to 1953 (i.e., the late Stalinist period) “1930s Stalinism was re-established after the war, but in a slightly more technocratic form” (Priestland 2010, 445). This can be interpreted as the political consequence of Stalin’s dominance in the Leninist meta-field of power.

The end of Stalin’s dominance in 1953 induced a new dynamics of power struggle inside the Soviet state. During the years immediately after Stalin’s death, “conflicts emerged within the leadership and Lavrentii Beria and Georgii Malenkov were condemned for an excessively technocratic and consumerist position” (Priestland 2010, 445). And, of course, this happened partly because Beria was Stalin’s head of secret police who was feared by all the other members of the Central Committee. The purges to Beria and Malenkov’s cliques marked the end of this competition inside the Central Committee. Khrushchev’s policy in the following years can be interpreted as the attempts to “establish a new equilibrium, combining a turn towards consumption with a new emphasis on ideology – one that proved to be highly unstable” (Priestland 2010, 445). As a result, new state competitions emerged in the Central Committee which ultimately led to the abdication of Khrushchev.

In contrast to the Soviet and Eastern European post-Stalinist states’ attempts at balancing economic necessities (which were closely linked to concerns to domestic unrests) and military buildup (see Dimitrov 2013), one camp from the divided elites in the Chinese party-state (i.e., the mass mobilizers) articulated the state’s interests in national defense as the most important task for industrialization while kept restraining consumption for accumulate

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economic capital (to heavy industry) during the late Mao period (ca. 1959-76)<sup>10</sup>. This move which altered the processes of state formation and political competition in itself was a response to changes in geopolitics (Naughton 1988, 353; Yang 2000). In this sense, the military-industrial bureaucracy of the Chinese socialist project from 1949 to 1976 is a Stalinist system which unconditionally favored military-industrial production over everyday consumption. In practice, the big push industrialization was understood collectively by the CCP central leadership as to be approached in the form of mass mobilization in combination with some degrees of central planning (Naughton, 1988, 352). However, how the laboring masses could be integrated into this collective strategy of central planning via state-led movements (i.e., mass mobilization in which operational networks of the regimes of production are decentralized) was contested; as political competition escalated, central planning was itself a contested subject (Mao 1964) in the meta-field.

Consequently, since 1964 these industrial programs and their managerial institutions also became the targets of intellectual-ideological debates among three camps of elites in the meta-field. Within the central planning agencies of the socialist state, technocratic-minded state planning commissioners favored central planning as the vehicle to guide the development of industrial society. (i.e., “central planners”). The central planners identified these industrial programs under central planning as the foundation of socialist modernization. When mass-mobilization replaced central planning as the main vehicle to achieve socialist modernization, they contested that mass mobilization alone lacked the political leverage for the central government to obtain macro-economic management.

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<sup>10</sup> This certainly does not mean it is the only priority of state interests.

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More importantly, according to their viewpoint, the industrial outputs of plan-based industrialization symbolized their collective efforts: this industrial modernity guided by central planning unified their political endeavors with the spirit of the movement. On the other hand, another group of fiscal technocrats inside the socialist state who dealt with the stagnation of living standards in rural areas was more inclined to point to the problems of the existing developmental approach (i.e., “consumption investors”). For them, the lack of economic efficiency, dysfunctional outcomes, and widespread corruption were built-in characters of the mass mobilization strategy of industrialization which could not be overcome through establishing appropriate socialist consciousness within central planning (The political epistemics can be traced to their collective efforts to save China’s national economy from the Great Leap Forward in 1962).

Moreover, the bureaucratic lines between political mobilization and plan were often blurred when the mass mobilizers (i.e., the members of the third camp who favored decentralized big push industrialization for rapid military buildup) took control of the planning agencies (This repeatedly happened from 1964 to 1978). This engendered self-contradictory dilemmas between decentralized networks of operation and centralized planning. Henceforth, for the mass mobilizers and consumption investors, central planning itself was the obstacle to achieve socialist modernization. This tension about how to develop an industrial economy was at the core of the political competition between elite groups for seizing the agenda-setting power in the central government. These competitive dynamics inside the Leninist party-state then gave rise to radical differences in the structural



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arrangement of state-controlled economic capital (in various forms of state-owned enterprises) across manufacturing sectors in post-1978 China.

In this sense, a field-theoretic analysis to the socialist state grants the opportunities to develop sustained meditations on the historic processes between existential insecurity as formed and transformed in geopolitics and the rise and decline of economic institutions created and recreated by state actors' actions with a careful reconsideration to the symbolic dimension of state power. For Bourdieu, the state is "the central bank of symbolic capital" (2015, 122). The state field is "the site where all the fiduciary currency circulating in the social world is produced and guaranteed, as well as all the realities we can designate as fetishes, whether an educational qualification, a legitimate culture, the nation, the notion of border, or spelling" (Bourdieu 2015, 122). For the state, as the meta-field of power, to exercise such functions of granting "power over other species of capital," including economic capital, and "especially over the rates of conversion between them (and thereby over the relations of force between their respective holders)" (Bourdieu 1999, 57-58; 2015, 345), the formation of state field depends on the formation of a unified social space. "The construction of the state as a relatively autonomous field exerting a power of centralization of physical force and symbolic force and constituted according as a stake of struggle, is inseparably accompanied by the construction of the unified space that is its foundation" (Bourdieu 2015, 123). Thus, the first step for developing a neo-Bourdieuian state theory to explain the political origins of policy formation is to identify the formation of the field- and competition-specific symbolic capital inside the state field at its moment of foundation.

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From Imperial Entanglements to Socialist Statecrafts: Non-Instrumental Compliance in the Making of Actually Existing Socialism

In this section, I disclose a neo-Bourdieuian theory of field, subfield, and symbolic-political capital at the scale of post-imperial spaces to explain the encasing effects existential insecurity has on socialist statecraft. Following the literature on the politics of the armed forces (see Eibl, Hertog, and Slater 2019; Thies 2005; Swed and Butler 2015; Finer and Stanley 2002), militarization means that the military holds key-decision making power over policies that are not directly related to the conduct of combat operations. Between 1949 and 1978, Chinese generals played critical roles in economic policymaking. I argue this militarized power structure is the outcome of socialist elites' collective experience in revolutionary warfare before they took national power in 1949. Moreover, their existential insecurity was reinforced by geopolitical changes of the global Cold War. Conversely, because the Soviet civilian party elites had much less operational experience during the Russian Revolution, the bureaucratization of Soviet state was less militarized (for Soviet party-army dynamics and security strategies, see Nichols 1993; Nichols 1993; Glantz 2013). As a result, subsequent geopolitical changes reinforced the separate pattern of party-army dynamics.

At the center of the politics of state formation in post-revolutionary China is an infused pattern of party-state-army relations. This infusion (see Zhou 2019) can be understood as a relational structure of exceeding and distinctive durability results from the revolutionary elites' agreement of resolving the post-imperial social crisis by violently inaugurating a Leninist party-state through a particular form of popular revolts—regional insurgencies to build an industrial society under socialist principles. In this view of the party-state actors,

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revolutionary violence was understood as a necessary means to accomplish this goal. “The field is sort of a game, one that all of its layers agree is worth playing” (Steinmetz 2014, 2). Therefore, the consensus on ending the post-imperial sociopolitical crisis through revolution was the *illusio* (i.e., the basic agreement that underpins all disagreements in a field) of the Leninist party field before the CCP took national political power in 1949.

From the 1920s to 1930s, this collective strategy of revolutionary change (as the solution to sociopolitical crisis in post-imperial China) became increasingly appealing to the junior officers who were exposed to Marxism. In contrast to the “separated” pattern in the Soviet Union, recurrent military defeats against foreign invaders and multiple intense civil wars radicalized the rank and file of the post-imperial armies in China (Zhou 2019). Unlike the legendary Soviet officers such as Mikhail Tukhachevsky, Boris Shaposhnikov, and Semen Budenny who joined the Red Army only after the Provisional Government had been overthrown (Zhou 2019), the Chinese experts in violence within the post-imperial military field often joined the Red Army due to ideological conversion when they were junior officers of the warlord troops.

This radicalization of the junior officers in post-imperial China needs to be thematized in the procedural contexts of the imperial state breakdown. The CCP field of power (including its military subfield subfield) emerged from a state of disorder—the Chinese Revolution. The existence of fields as separate spheres “have to be analyzed as a function of the struggles taking place in the spaces between them and of the mechanisms set up in the spaces between them” (Eyal 2013, 159). In contrast to the theoretical emphasis of the encasing effects of the interstate warfare on the formation of modern European state (Rosenberg 1966; Craig 1968;

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Hintze et al. 1975; Tilly 1985; Tilly 1992; Dincecco and Onorato 2018), internal rebellions and international threats both contributed to the collapse of the Qing imperium. “In Europe, political fragmentation was rampant. Thus, conflict tended to be external (i.e., interstate), and attack threats were multidirectional. Furthermore, exit ability was high in this context. Elites were therefore in a strong bargaining position to demand political representation in return for new tax revenue” (Dincecco and Wang 2018, 341). Imperial China, by contrast, structured the military as a police force for repressing rebellions. “Here, conflict tended to be internal, attack threats were unidirectional, and exit ability was low” (Dincecco and Wang 2018, 341). The military consequence of this political centralization accompanied with the limited resources extraction capacities was poor combat effectiveness. Rather than defeating foreign invasions, the priority of imperial armed forces was to prevent social disintegration.

Consequently, the imperial armed forces of Qing Dynasty were in decline since the 1790s (McCord 1993; Skocpol, 1976; Skocpol 2008). Since then, the Qing state army was neither able to fight off foreign invasions nor capable to successfully carry out counterinsurgency operations (Khun, 1970). In fact, the Qing imperial state had to relied on warlord troops organized by landed gentries to crackdown the Taiping Rebellion (from 1851 to 1872) which devastated the most economically developed regions of China. As a result, the fiscal capacity of the imperial state was ruined. This self-reinforcing dynamic of the structural fragmentation of Imperial state’s military, fiscal and ideological power was accompanied with military catastrophes in inter-state wars. The Qing Imperial navy suffered humiliating losses in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). In fact, since the 1850s, the imperial military never won any inter-state wars.

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In response to these military disasters, the imperial state tried to reconstruct its military subfield by recreating the force structure, armament, and doctrine. A Commission for Army Reorganization was established in late 1903 “to centralize military policies and to standardize the organization of the New Armies. In 1906 the commission unveiled a ten-year plan setting the size of Western-style New Armies in each province, and establishing a goal of thirty-six divisions for the entire nation” (McCord 1993, 34). The New Armies is the imperial state’s final attempt at strengthening its military might by installing a Prussian style military bureaucracy. “By 1911 considerable progress toward this goal had been made. Although few New Army units ever reached their full strength, seventeen New Army divisions and twenty independent infantry or mixed brigades were established” (McCord 1993, 34). Interestingly, The European-trained, professional officer corps of the New Armies was very politicized since the New Armies had to intervene domestic unrest.

After the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911, the post-imperial military field was plagued by the loss of unified logistic system, poor bureaucratization and decentralized authorities. After the death of the founder of New Armies (Yuan Shikai) in 1916, no one could exercise the command and control of the fragmented New Armies. Most senior officers of the New Armies became warlords who fought against each for access to national power. For obtaining national political power, rival warlords launched multiple civil wars from the 1910s to the late 1920s. “Because the New Armies were the Qing dynasty's best-trained and most effective troops, military commanders seeking to survive the civil warfare of the Republican period naturally attempted to organize their forces according to this standard” (McCord 1993, 44). Nonetheless, the primary restraint to this institutional isomorphism

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within warlord military subfields was their limited fiscal capacities. “In the context of this warfare, warlord commanders often found the implementation of the New Army model no easier than it had been for late Qing officials” (McCord 1993, 44). As a result, local warlords often relied on informal ties and bribes for exercising command and control authorities and recruited cadets from poor peasant family which, in turns, created political opportunities for the CCP to exploit. In exchange for funding and territory, the warlord officers aligned with militarized gentries to collect protection rent from peasants.

Beyond institutional isomorphism, a political change accompanied the fragmentation of the post-imperial military field was the radicalization of junior officers. The Marxist revolutionary ideology became increasingly attractive to the laboring masses who were victimized by civil wars and foreign invasions. The militarization of the Chinese post-imperial society forced many peasant boys into the warlord troops. Many of them became committed Marxists in warlords’ military schools. In the analytical terms of neo-Bourdieuian state theory, this can be understood as the precondition of the formation the Leninist field of power in China. “The resources various actors bring to a given field are rooted in the generic species of capital that exist in the social space as a whole, but they are transformed as a result of activity within the field” (Steinmetz 2014, 2).

As a result of the structural fragmentations of the post-imperial military field, the radicalized junior officers of the warlord troops were able to encourage their fellow comrades to willingly switch to the CCP side through their personal networks within the post-imperial military field. “The hierarchy and value of different generic species of capital in their local inflections (symbolic capital) varies by field and over time” (Steinmatz 2014, 2). In other

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words, without analyzing the fragmentation of the post-imperial military field, we fail to understand how and why the class interest of the junior officers metamorphosed into a potent force of revolution. For example, the CCP generals often had personal networks originated from their time in warlord troops. In a survey over 60 elites from this group, a number of these networks with clear centers were revealed, “such as Peng Dehuai’s networks in the Hunan Troops, Chen Geng’s network in Huangpu guard regiment, Zhang Yunyi’s network in Guangxi warlord troops, He Long’s network in his own guards, and Li Xiangjiu’s network in the Shanxi warlord troop” (Zhou 2019, 204). These networks which combined interpersonal trusts, political loyalties, and ideological commitments were a critical factor of the organization strength of the CCP political-military machine.

In this sense, the military subfield of the CCP emerged from the political competition between the post-imperial warlords who aligned with landed gentries, urban capitalists, and the counterrevolutionary state for resource extraction (Duara 1988). Although revolution “was clearly neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for bureaucratization” (Kiser and Baer 2005, 242), it was a necessary condition for *militarization* of the Chinese socialist state. “Most of its 60 generals who had old-army backgrounds were from lower class families, with only four exceptions (their fathers were officials and petty gentry)” (Zhou 2019, 204). In fact, few officers switched to the CCP side for the sake of personal securities. In stark contrast to the Chinese revolution, the Soviet General Staff was filled with (former) Tsarist officers who would join the Party in the mid-to late 1930s. In this sense, the relational configurations of Chinese post-revolutionary state actors—statesmen, generals and party elites inside the

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Leninist state field were decisively shaped by their collective efforts to end the organic crisis of the Chinese post-imperial society.

Another structural arrangement of the CCP originated from waves of wars was the interlaces of personal networks and formal institutions in the military-administrative subfields (i.e., the administrative bureaucracy of the party). This relational configuration (see Singh 2016) between the administrative subfield and the military subfield was an outcome of the revolutionary warfare as well. Between 1926 and 1928, the civilian party elites were brutally murdered by counterrevolutionary warlords, and then with the Guomindang's repression of urban uprisings, by state officials and gangsters. Through these counterrevolutionary state-sanctioned mass murders, many of the Marxist intellectuals met organized mass death for the first time face to face. In this sense, the history of that encounter is crucial to a better understanding of the political consequences of that confrontation.

The function of shared values within such revolutionary struggles came into sharpest focus in the face of organized mass death. The vanquished civilian party elites were forced to abandon their existing programs of labor movements (for example, see Perry 1993) and to flee the cities in the late 1920. To control the officer corps which originated from warlord troops, they installed the commissar system in 1927. In particular, the CCP transferred Marxist intellectuals within the Party to the military subfield as commissars. Prominent party elites such as Zhou Enlai<sup>11</sup>, Chen Yun, Deng Xiaoping, Bo Yibo, Li Xianian, and Hua

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<sup>11</sup> Zhou Enlai was the founding director of the CCP's security service when it was established in 1927; the security service (i.e., the Division of Special Operations of the Central Committee of the CCP [zhong guo gong chan dang zhong yang Te bie xing dong ke]) was also integrated into the Party. In the early 1930s, Chen Yun also briefly served as a prominent intelligence officer who was in charge of the operations of the Division of the Special Operations.



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Guofeng all served as political commissars during this period. (With the exception of the “Gang of Four”, I cannot think of anyone within the top echelons of the CCP from 1949 to 1978 was not in the Red Army during this period).

In sum, this operational experience of regional insurgencies decisively reshaped the civilian party elites’ detection of threats (for example, see Bates 1981). Moreover, this encounter with mass death led to a strengthening of the basic themes of selflessness, sacrifice, and salvation inside the Leninist field of power. This structural arrangement then gave birth to the personal networks between radical intellectuals and professional military officers inside the Leninist field of power. The lived experience of war embedded in the infused party-army dynamics conferred a concrete and enveloping socialist identity that reinforced the organizational linkages between officers and intellectuals.

#### The Missing Links: Socialists’ Encounter with Mass Death

I argue that the two institutional mechanisms of non-instrumental compliance developed in the course of regional insurgencies constitute the necessary conditions of the militarization of the post-revolutionary state. The dominant actors within the Central Committee of the CCP relied on both of the two institutional mechanisms of non-instrumental compliance identified by the cultural Weberian theorists (for example, Gorski 1993) to control its military-party bureaucracy for winning the revolution: “(1) by recruiting agents who already hold values or emotions consistent with the principle; or (2) by creating a situation in which agents acquire these values or emotions in training or job performance” (Kiser and Baer 2005, 234). These networks within party-state bureaucracy often lasted for decades.

In comparison, the Soviet state did not militarize to the extent of its Chinese counterpart because the October Revolution did not create the opportunities for the Bolshevik party elites

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to penetrate and control the Tsarist military bureaucracy. As a result, the organizational frames of Soviet party-army dynamics were structured in a separate pattern. “The consistent pattern of civil intrusions in military affairs, from the mayhem of Stalin to the political struggles of Gorbachev however, nonetheless created an environment of mistrust and competition between the Party and the Army that undermined the growth of attitudes conducive to objective control” (Nichols 1993, 32). Thus, the interlace of personal networks and formal institutions within the Chinese Leninist state field is another precondition to the possibilities of state competition. These persistent institutional structures of agency relations were the legacies of the regional insurgencies that contributed to militarization.

Therefore, the post-revolutionary Leninist state in China can be understood a militarized political machine geared to catch up with industrial modernity. In the Leninist meta-field, the militarized socialist elites agreed on the necessity of rapid industrialization for putting an end to the organic crisis of Chinese society since the 1840s. On March 5, 1949, Mao Zedong urged his comrades in his report to the Central Committee to “do our utmost to learn how to administer and build the cities” (1949). In so doing he proposed that the Party needed to “whole-heartedly rely on the working class, unite with the rest of the labouring masses, win over the intellectuals and win over to our side as many as possible of the national bourgeois elements and their representatives who can co-operate with us -- or neutralize them” (1949). So that the new party-state “can wage a determined struggle against the imperialists, the Kuomintang [Guomindang] and the bureaucrat-capitalist class and defeat these enemies step by step” (1949). From the founding moment of the PRC, the collective intentionality to

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rapidly industrialize the agrarian society devastated by civil wars, political chaos, and foreign invasions was shared by the socialist elites within the top echelons of the CCP.

#### From Military Merits to Post-Revolutionary Bureaucratization

The post-revolutionary state formation is the focus of this section, for here the encounter of large-scale taking of life—through revolutionary war or counterrevolutionary state-sanctioned mass murder—took on a new dimension, the political consequences of which vitally affected the politics of industrialization. In response to Mao's orders to develop state-led industrialization, many communist military officers became the leaders of industrial programs. After the CCP successfully overthrew the Guomindang party-state in China's mainland, this collective consensus about the political necessity of industrialization was the new *illusio* of the Leninist field of power. As a result, the administrative subfields of the Chinese socialist state were transformed from the revolutionary military-bureaucratic subfield which was the institutional pillar of the Party's power. This conversion of military elites into administrative official was ordered by the dominant actors of the state field—members of the Central Committee. During the transitional period between 1949 and 1952, the regional administrations of the socialist state was delegated to the field commanders who commanded the communist troops that had liberated the regions.

The entire administrative subfields at the foundational moment of the socialist state were directly transformed by the party leadership from the military subfields. In the postwar world that succeeded the Revolution, the beginning of this socialist project served to transform soldiering into an attainable and much admired merit in the Leninist field of power. "The first generation of the ministers in the Peoples' Republic generally came from the peasant backgrounds and had extensive military experience" (Hou 2018, 16). For example, the

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second minister of oil industry (who would be promoted by Mao to the de facto leader of the State Planning Commission in 1964 when the Third Front began)—Lieutenant-General<sup>12</sup>Yu Qiuli joined the Red Army in 1929 as a peasant boy and lost his left arm in battle. In 1970 he was formally appointed as the director of the State Planning Commission and remained in office till 1980. In 1975, he was promoted to vice prime minister. His ascendance continued after Mao died in 1976. In 1982, Yu entered the high command (i.e., the Central Military Commission of the CCP) as the deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces (i.e., the deputy secretary-general of the Central Military Commission; he also served as the Director of the General Political Department at the same time).

As a prominent figure of the central planners, Yu's career exemplified how the infused pattern of the party-army relations became an enduring relational structure of the post-revolutionary party-state. Committed peasant youths fought side by side with Marxist intellectuals whose ideals triumphed over their lack of military training, who entrusted the military officers with the task of building of the socialist project. This relational structure accounts in part for the institutionalization of this infused pattern of party-army dynamics. To this day, the armed forces of the People's Republic are the armed wing of the Party by constitution. The Chinese high command was integrated into the institutions of the Party—the Central Military Commission of the CCP (Fravel 2019) in 1954. The Chinese chief of the General Staff directly reports to the Chairman of the Central Military Commission—a

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<sup>12</sup> Commissioned in 1955. Military rank was first introduced to the People's Liberation Army in 1955. Before this date, the armed forces did not have a rank system. For the sake of consistence, all the military ranks in this thesis refer to the military rank of the historical actor in 1955 if the date of commission is not specified.

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position is always occupied by the head of the Party. Military personnel pledge allegiance not to the state but to the party and the socialist fatherland in their oath.

In comparison, the Soviet party-state developed a separate pattern of party-army dynamics that was reinforced by subsequent geopolitical changes. After the military catastrophes in 1941 and 1942, Stalin no longer intervened generals' planning of strategic operation. Since then, the Soviet Stavka (i.e., Staff of the Supreme High Command) could autonomously draft plans of strategic operations (see Glantz 2013, 120-123). The Stavka thus provided organizational linkages between "political and military leaders and, hence, clear political control over the conduct of war" (Glantz 2013, 122). The working organs of the Stavka were the General Staff. According to Marshal Sokolovsky, "the General Staff, the most important agency of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the main working agency of the Supreme High Command, was reorganized" (Sokolovsky and Garthoff 1963, 362) in 1941.

Specifically, the Soviet General Staff was entrusted with planning for "strategic operations, their thorough provisioning, control over their fulfillment, the solutions of problems of organization of the armed forces, control over the formation and reformation of units, organization of operational and strategic transport, and many other problems concerning the direct control and coordination of the military activity" (Sokolovsky and Garthoff 1963, 362) of every branch of the armed forces on numerous fronts. "The General Staff created special groups of officers, known as the General Staff Officer Corps, which provided liaison between the General Staff and operating forces. These officers provided a constant General Staff presence in *front*, army, and even corps and division staffs" (Glantz

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2013, 123). Against the background of Party's despotic power, the Soviet General Staff—a state bureaucracy—became the institutional embodiment of unity of command.

Moreover, the soviet arm-to-army strategy of defense created a professional military bureaucracy in which political commissars' interventions to operational planning often resulted in conflicts between political commissars and military officers and catastrophes on battlefields. "The *Stavka*, either directly or through its representatives, familiarized commanders of directions and *fronts* with the aim of each operational, provided forces and weaponry, designated missions, and organized cooperation between fronts and other large units" (Glantz 2013, 122; emphasis in original). Consequently, the Soviet political commissars were outcompeted by professional military officers in the Second World War since they lack the military expertise for conducting combat-arms operations. In October 1942, they lost the command-and-control authority and were demoted to be subordinates of professional military officers. This relative autonomy of the Soviet military subfield continued in the post-war era (see Nichols 1993). The Soviet and Eastern European socialist armed forces were all nationalized in the late 1940s. During peacetime, the Soviet armed forces was administrated by a state bureaucracy—the Soviet Ministry of Defense. The chief of General Staff directly reports to the minister of defense for assisting the minister (i.e., an active duty officer) to perform his duty of defending the socialist fatherland. The Soviet state planning commission was always led by professional technocrats.

Too much fear is paralyzing; and too little fear is suicidal. The right amount of fear, however, can become a potent force of social change. This collective insecurity enables the socialist elites to sense danger and react to it. Structured by this fear, the competitive

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dynamics of policymaking emerged in the Leninist field of power. Each camp of the divided socialist elites (i.e., the central planners, the consumption builders, and the mass mobilizers) within the Central Committee strived to present their particular agendas as the best means to fulfill the universal interests (including socialization, industrialization, and defense). These power struggles resulted in pragmatic, ruthless, and ultimately disturbing articulations of the unlimited use of state-sanctioned violence for neutralizing perceived threats. These competitive dynamics of political articulations shaped and reshaped these self-proclaimed guardians' action-orientations of socialist industrialization. The competitive dynamics of political articulation was at center of the bureaucratization of socialist states.

In sum, the differences in party-army dynamics in the Soviet Union and China are shaped by their differing trajectories of the founding struggles—the socialist revolutions. Consequently, a separate pattern of party-army dynamics emerged in the Soviet Union and an infused pattern emerged in China. Then, the power struggles within the Leninist fields of power in the subsequent years of state formation reshaped the rationalization of state apparatuses in which centrally planned industrialization and national defense (i.e., the development of mobile warfare in the form of total wars) were classified as the political priority. In the following section, the roles of this relational structure (i.e., the infused pattern of party-army dynamics of the CCP) in shaping the formation of state strategies of economic development will be analyzed in detail.

Table 2.1: Existential Insecurity as the Producer of Militarization (Method of Difference)

<u>Events</u> (Alternative Explanations)	The Russian Revolution (1917-1922)	The Chinese Revolution (1911-1949)
Repressive Monarchy	Yes	Yes
Repressed Agrarian Proletariat	Yes Monarchical state and “Whites”	Yes Guomindang and Warlords
International Rivalries	Yes	Yes
Imperial Military Modernization after Defeat in Interstate War	Yes Military Reforms of 1905-12.	Yes Military Reforms of 1903-11
<u>Cause:</u> <i>Prolonged</i> Multidirectional Threats to the Party Leadership from Fragmented Counterrevolutionary Warlords and Foreign Invaders	No Civilian party leaders stayed in <i>cities</i> (Moscow and Petrograd) for <i>proletarian uprisings</i> ; Enemies were quickly defeated (1917-1922). Irregular tactics were an auxiliary factor in the Red Army’s army-to-army strategy.	Yes Civilian party leaders were forced out of cities to stay with military officers of the Red Army. Bloody <i>regional insurgencies</i> lasted 22 years (1927-1949). Army-to-army war was the final stage (1946-49).
<u>Mechanism (1):</u> Ideological Conversion of Military Officers (Non-Instrumental Compliance to Party for Dealing with Threats)	No Tsarist officers were systemically recruited; Loyalty of former Tsarist officers to the party leadership were assured <i>via threats</i> and <i>disciplines</i> .	Yes Peasant boys, mutinous soldiers, and radicalized junior officers were the backbone of the Red Army officer corps.
<u>Mechanism (2):</u> Infused Party-Army Networks of Civilian Party Elites and Military Officers (Non-Instrumental Compliance to Party for Dealing with Threats)	No The commissars never fully gained command-and-control authority: the civilian party elites lacked the <i>military expertise</i> for intervention during the Civil War; Commissars’ group power was further <i>reduced</i> in the Second World War to improve combat efficiency.	Yes <i>Emotions</i> and <i>values</i> from the autonomous operational experience of decades-long regional insurgencies contributed to the institutional persistence of the <i>infused</i> pattern of party-army relations.
<u>Outcome:</u> Militarization of Post-Revolutionary Party-State	No (less militarized ) Military bureaucracy was a state apparatus; the military officers retained high level of subfield autonomy. Military focused on combat operations; industrial bureaucracies were run by professional technocrats	Yes (more militarized) Military bureaucracy was integrated into the Party; symbolic boundaries between statesmen and officers were blurred; generals were transferred to industrial bureaucracies



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### The Matrix of Socialist Statecraft: Military Merits, Industrial Modernity, and the Formation of Central Planning Subfield

The lived experience of large-scale taking of life, as fundamental as they are, cannot be properly understood without an appreciation to the larger organizational frames in which they are embedded. This is to say that the ways in which the Leninist party in general and the military organization in particular treat the military officers on the basis of combat efficiency and ideological commitment are as important to the transformation of post-imperial societies as the bureaucratization of the revolutionary organizations. After the Revolution, when camaraderie had been experienced by so many members of the CCP, the ideals of class universalism gathered strength as a fixture of all official account of the revolutionary past (Ho 2018), whether it took up the myth of sacrifice (for excellent studies of the symbolic structures of death in French and Russian Revolutions, see Mosse 1990; Halfin 2003) or emphasized the savagery of counterrevolutionary enemies. Put it differently, the ideals of self-sacrifice, of the collective quest for a meaningful life free from exploitation, antagonism, and violence, which emerged from these post-imperial crises, represented real needs in a war-torn society on the threshold of industrialization.

To actualize the socialist project, the CCP elites decided to learn how to rapidly industrialize from the Soviet Union not only because Stalin's Soviet state seemed to exercise the final authority of Marxism (as a form of ideological-symbolic power) but because the Soviet planned economy was viewed as the only viable option for rapidly advancing socialist modernization too. After the founding of the People's Republic, the State Planning Commission was established in 1952. The State Planning Commission was tasked to have firm control "over the basic factors of the national economy, most importantly, finance,

material supplies, and the labor forces and among others” (Hou 2018, 17) and to focus on long-term strategic planning and macro-economic management. In theoretical terms, the establishment of the State Planning Commission can be interpreted as the installation of a new administrative subfield that structures the relations between socioeconomic properties (including physical assets) of the socialist political economy. In practice, the state planning commission is an autonomous subfield which can only be deconstructed by the dominant actors of the main overarching field—the leader of the Central Committee of the Party. “Fields come to be defined as relatively autonomous realms in which a particular activity is pursued for its own sake” (Steinmetz 2014, 2). As central planning became the vehicle of building the socialist industrial society, the subfield autonomy of central planning agencies rapidly expanded in the 1950s.

This relative autonomy of the central planning subfield was backed by its members’ high *rankings* in the meta-field of the Party. The founders of this administrative establishment included “Chen Yun, Peng Dehuai<sup>13</sup>, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping, Rao Shushi<sup>14</sup>, Bo Yibo, Peng Zhen, and Li Fuchun, all of whom were core Party Leaders”<sup>15</sup> (Hou 2018, 17). The efficacy

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<sup>13</sup> Marshal of the People’s Republic, vice prime minister, the minister of defense and deputy commander in Chief of the People’s Liberation Army

<sup>14</sup> Rao Shushi (the Director of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party) and Gao Gang—and the First Chairman of the State Planning Commission who had extensive ties with the Soviet officials were purged in 1954. Zhou Enlai (the prime minister), Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping had conflict with Gao Gang and Rao Shushi over the design and implementation of the First Five Year Plan in 1953. On December 24, Mao concluded that Gao and Rao were opposing his leadership. In 1954, during the same conference in which the Central Committee formally initiated the First Five Year Plan, the Central Committee denounced Gao and Rao for trying to form “an independent kingdom” within the party. On the height of despair, Gao then committed suicide in 1954. And Rao was arrested in 1955. They were never rehabilitated. This conflict was known as Gao-Rao incident.

<sup>15</sup> The other planning commissioners were Xi Zhongxun, Huang Kecheng, Liu Lantao, Zhang Xi, An Zhiwen, Ma Hong and Xue Muqiao; Li Fuchun and Deng Tuofu were deputy directors.

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of this *symbolic* power is precisely because the membership of the Central Committee, as “symbol excreting a symbolic action of reinforcement of the symbol” (Bourdieu 2005, 61), allows the agents (i.e., the planning commissioners) to be recognized by the subordinate groups (such as generals and provincial leaders who were not in the central committee but made crucial contribution to the victory of the Revolution). “This symbolic capital is thus inevitably concentrated in his person, which, in and through its recognized existence (as delegated representative, president minister, or secretary general), tears the group from the non-existence of a mere aggregate, symbolized by the procession of voters isolated in the solitude of the pooling booth” (Bourdieu 2005, 61). Put it differently, the membership of central committee grants the symbolic leverage to ensure conformity and compliance from the postrevolutionary officer-ministers to the planning commissioners.

Interestingly, as a part of the central government’s efforts to consolidate its *national* power, most of these people were regional and military leader rather than technical and economic experts. In fact, there was only one professional economist (i.e., Xue Muqiao) among all 15 planning commissioners. Three of them were professional military elites<sup>16</sup> and everyone except Xue had extensive operational experience during the Revolution (ca. 1927-49). The military background of the commissioners further strengthened the autonomy of the state planning commission since the Marshals of the People’s Republic are regarded as the dominant figures of the military subfield—the backbone of CCP’s political power.

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<sup>16</sup> Lin Biao and Peng Dehuai were the Marshals of the People’s Republic—there were ten marshals in total; Huang Kecheng was General of the Army who worked as Peng Dehuai’s assistant for demobilization. He was the deputy minister of defense and later was appointed as the Chief of General Staff in 1958. Peng and Huang were purged in 1959 during the Lushan Conference for their opposition to the Great Leap Forward.

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A similar collective strategy to consolidate *national* power by integrating the personal networks of regional leaders into the formal structures of central government (Easter 1996; Easter 2000) can also be found in the political processes of the formation of the Soviet state in the 1920s. Although most (if not all) Soviet regional elites who entered the central government were radical intellectuals who had no military background before the October Revolution. Partly because the Tsarist armed forces had much stronger and coherent military bureaucracy than the imperial military of the Qing state (Zhou 2019); partly because the Russian civil war was not as intense and prolonged as the Chinese ones; and partly because most of the Bolshevik party intelligentsia were from the periphery of Russian empire who were denied by the imperial state to join the administrative subfields for their ethnic background (Riga 2008). The majority of Marxist intelligentsias in China who founded the Party, by contrast, were Han Chinese. In addition, the symbolic boundaries between the intelligentsia and the officer corps were blurred as the New Armies and the military schools of the post-imperial warlord troops attracted a great number of intellectuals of the lower classes. Henceforth, the militarization of the Chinese party-state field was decisively shaped by the structure and intensity of the Chinese Revolution.

In 1954, the Central Committee of the CCP formally decided to initiate its First-Five-Year-Plan during the Fourth Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee. During the same year, the State Capital Construction Committee was formed to assist the State Planning Commission for managing the construction of national infrastructure. “In 1956, the State Economic Commission, under Bo Yibo, was established to ease the burden on the State Planning Commission by auditing and examining implementation of the annual state plans,

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coordinating among industrial sectors, and balancing plans and resources among the central ministries” (Hou 2018, 18). As the functions of the three commissions overlapped with each other to a certain extent, there was much minor restructuring among the three agencies. These three agencies consisted the planning agencies of the central government for design and implement the centrally planned industrialization.

Though these Chinese socialist elites shared the optimism of historical progress with Marx and Engels when they obtained state power in 1949, their dream of building a nonviolent, progressive, and emancipatory social order was almost immediately challenged by domestic and foreign security threats. Emerged from horrifying revolutionary violence, the Chinese party elites soon found themselves had to industrialize for national defense in an age of competing and nuclear-armed nation-states. This time, their imaginary enemy could no longer be analyzed by class warfare since the lethality, objectives, and intensity of their imaginary warfare were completely altered: they prepared to fight against superpowers in nuclear total war. Thus, the spirit of the movement was *restructured* by the fear of enemies.

In the next chapter, I argue that the combination of the collective insecurity (embedded in the infused party-army dynamics) and the geopolitical changes of the global Cold War results in the military logic of the Third Front strategy of industrialization. Tracing the actual interactions between the divided socialist elites has produced interesting insights into what matters most to them in their stipulations of what and who they are. These perspectives on roles played in the formation of state strategy by organizational frames, fantasies, fears, spaces, times, capabilities, power, and knowledge lend structure to the next chapter. Taken together, they offer a perspective on the roots of the militarized socialist project.

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**Chapter 3 The Becoming of the Third Front: Macro-Structural Change, Reformulated Socialist Statecraft, and the Militarized Logic of Big Push Industrialization**

The professional groups' principal political orientations and attitudes, and their structural propositions in the society, also determined the arenas and channels in and through which they engaged in political struggles.

– Eisenstadt 1993, 197

**From Bureaucratization to Militarization: The Third Front as a Turning Point**

The socialist dream of a non-violent world order ended in 1964. In that year, the political turmoil ended the world that the Chinese socialist state had taken for granted and brought administrative chaos, mass violence, and military interventions into everyday life. The arche-images of enemies were radically altered: all socialist states led by the Soviet Union were the revisionist enemies at the gates. Moreover, the Chinese revisionists—domestic agents who supplied these external enemies with crucial information, traitors who broke their oaths of allegiance, and saboteurs who intended to destroy the “correct” approach of socialist modernization developed by the CCP—had been infiltrating into the Party in the preceding years. Without this state paranoia (Glaeser 2004, 244-5) par excellence, the bureaucratic structures of state capital differentiation would fail to occur. As I will explicate below, geopolitical change is a necessary, but insufficient, condition. Insecurity, as the cultural schema of state competitions, also played a critical role in shaping the state strategy of decentralized military buildup, as Mao himself acknowledged in his instructions.

In May 1964, the CCP leadership became very concerned with its capabilities to defend its sovereignty. After the Sino-Soviet split, the CCP leadership soon realized that China's security environment had drastically deteriorated. “No major attack ever occurred, but the CCP clearly had reasons to worry. In the preceding years, Beijing had seen the number of Soviet troops on China's northern border rise to one million” (Meyskens 2015, 238). In addition, imperialists could launch attack from a new direction. “Meanwhile, in Vietnam, the

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United States had been increasing its military presence for over a decade, and in late 1964 it had leaped closer to China's southern border with its first air raids on North Vietnam" (Meyskens 2015, 238). By this time, the possibilities for prioritizing improvements of living standards had looked very different from the recent recovery from the catastrophic Great Leap Forward.

As the Sino-Soviet relationship continued to deteriorate, the CCP leadership sensed that it was possible that China would fight a war against the Soviet Union (and Mongolia). "From February to August 1964, China and the Soviet Union negotiated border issues, but failed to reach any agreement. In this period, reportedly, the Soviet Union greatly reinforced its military presence along the Sino-Soviet border" (Li and Xia 2018, 95). In addition, "according to Chinese reconnaissance, the Soviet Union increased the number of troops and installations along the western section of the Sino-Soviet border from July. These troops were engaged in frequent training and maneuvers, and senior officers increased their visits to forward areas" (Li and Xia 2018, 95). The Chinese socialist elites interpreted this as the signal of an incoming nuclear armed conflict.

The CCP leadership then turned to military solution to this ideological-diplomatic crisis. "In February 1964, Mao told the North Korean leader Kim Il-sung that the Soviet Union might fight a war with China if it failed to subdue it by all other means" (Li and Xia 2018, 95). Mao's assessment was then turned into the operating procedures of China's national economy. At the Central Committee of the CCP working conference "between 15 May and 17 June, Mao shifted China's goal of the Third Five-year Plan from resolving the issue of 'food, clothing and daily necessities' to war preparedness" (Li and Xia 2018, 95). In fact, he

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suggested to establish defense industry in each province. This proposal marked the beginning of Mao's support to the decentralization of China's industrialization. To operationalize Mao's new grand strategy, the military establishment had to rewrite its military doctrine since Mao rejected the existing strategy (Li and Xia 2018, 95) which placed American amphibious assault as the primary threat (see Fravel 2019, 72-7) in June. In addition, the planning officials had to figure out how to decentralize national economy while kept investing defense industries.

#### The Changing Logics of Practices: Fear of Imagined Enemies and Collective Action

The CCP leadership sensed that national strivings in this bipolar universe “were subjects to the geopolitical intrigue and military posturing that morphed into armed conflicts” (Meyskens 2020, 21). Changes in international threats, especially the growing possibilities of a Soviet land combat-arms invasion and American air-raids backed amphibious assault, had eroded important sources of support to prioritize investments for improving living standards (Naughton 1988, 353). According to the political logics of the Chinese party-state elites, the People's Republic not only lost its main security sponsor and all economic, technological, and military aids, but it had to then face hostilities from Guomindang (in Taiwan), U.S, India, and the Soviet Union as well.

At the root of this state paranoia lays a fear of being annihilated, but it also results from a military assessment of the changing security environment. According to a report from the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (the PLA) in April 1964, most of China's existing industrial bases concentrated in 14 major cities were under grave dangers (General Staff Division of Combat Operations [1964] 2014, 55-7) if a nuclear total war broke out in the form of Soviet combined-arms ground invasion or American amphibious assault in



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combination with aerial bombing<sup>17</sup>. In a potential total war, if strategic bombing or nuclear air strikes destroyed these industrial bases, the armed forces would be unable to defeat the ground invasion (General Staff Division of Combat Operations [1964] 2014, 55-6). On 9 May, this report was sent to the Chief of Staff Luo Ruiqing (Army-General Luo was also the dominant actor of the defense industry subfield). Army-General Luo immediately sent this report to Mao Zedong and his colleagues within the top echelons of the CCP who were in charge of China's defense and economic planning<sup>18</sup>. This report immediately caught Mao Zedong's attention. Based on these security concerns stated in this report, the CCP leadership concluded that the existing defense industry and regular forces were inadequate for defeating the possible invasions (Naughton 1988; Mao 1964; Meyskens 2015) in the age of nuclear standoff.

Paradoxically, conditioned by China's rugged and vast geographical scale, shortage of technical expertise, Cold War insecurity, and lack of economic capital, the CCP leadership sought to decentralize the socio-political processes of industrialization (Li and Xia 2018, 95). Members of the mass mobilization camp who mostly originated from propaganda and ideological indoctrination apparatuses favored this strategy as their weapon in the struggles for access to agenda-setting power at national level. On ideological grounds, Soviet-style planning was oppositional to their Maoist thinking which stressed proletarian power. In

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<sup>17</sup> In particular, the report states that about sixty percent of the civilian manufacturing industry, 50 percent of the chemical industry, 52 percent of the defense industry are in these fourteen cities. The armed forces lack the air defense capabilities to protect these cities and the nearby transportation facilities. Based on this report, Mao later suggests that the Chinese planning technocrats should learn from the Soviet Great Patriotic War experience to relocate the industrial bases in hinterland.

<sup>18</sup> In this report, the Division of Combat Operation suggested to establish a task force (zhuan an xiao zu) within the State Council to deal with these problems in China's industrial economy.

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practice, decentralization of industrial operations (mass mobilization based) seemed to serve the state's interests in defense which required the mobilization of militias and local troops in the form of "people's war" (Chen 2014, 8-10; Fravel 2019) which in turn provided them with the opportunity to remove the military and industrial elites who favored building on existing industrial bases for expanding urban consumption and agricultural production (Mao).

Consequently, when decentralization was supported by Mao Zedong as the guiding strategy for industrialization, the mass mobilization camp was privileged within the divided elites. The other two camps -- liberalization-oriented "consumption-investors" (mostly originated from the State Economic Commission) and hardline "central planners" (mostly originated from the State Planning Commission) were marginalized and purged in the Cultural Revolution. Between 1963 and 1964 an outline of the Third Five Year Plan was jointly drafted by the leading figures of these two camps which concentrated on restoring living standards, developing agriculture, and increasing urban consumption by building on existing industrial capacities in coastal areas (Chen, 2014 7-12; Meyskens 2020; Li and Xia 2018, 95). However, Mao intervened in central planning from October 1964 and eventually rejected this draft Five-Year Plan in 1965.

By this point, Mao—the dominant position and actor in the field of power was haunted by his nightmares of a military catastrophe in the near future. His mind was preoccupied by Stalin's failures to relocate Soviet defense industries in 1941. On 20 August 1964, when Mao was hearing the director of State Economic Commission Bo Yibo's briefing about the Plan, Mao urged Bo to move "not only industrial and transportation agencies but entire schools, research institutes and technological complexes [to the Third Front] as well" (Mao [1964b]

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2020, 73). In addition, “every province in the coastal areas needs to be stationed with one more division. New arsenals [in these regions] should be built in your Plan. Standing army<sup>19</sup> must jointly operate with stationary coastal defense forces [as the only way to fight off Soviet and American invasions]. This is not about retreat; this is the preparation for fighting the enemy” (Mao [1964b] 2014, 73). On November 26, He urged his fellow comrades in the central committee to “learn from Stalin’s mistakes” (Mao [1964a] 2014, 119-20) in preparations for nuclear total war. According to Mao, “Stalin’s inactivity for relocating factories, accelerating fortifications and reluctance to engaging in guerilla warfare” (Mao [1964b] 2014, 73; Mao [1964a] 2014, 119-20) caused the Soviet defeat in 1941.

As the response to Mao’s directives, the technocrats in the planning subfield immediately began to turn Mao’s visions into industrial realities. On September 18, Bo Yibo submitted a detailed report ([1964] 2014, 85-7) for relocating the industrial and transportation enterprises to the Third Front to Mao; Bo also sent it to some other members of the Central Committee. In essence, this report is a guideline for implementing the relocation of the defense industry. The aim of this guideline was to relocate the entire defense industry in concealed and decentralized forms to the Front in which all the production facilities were enshrouded by caves and mountains. Only facilities that had imported machinery for ongoing production which were too important to be interrupted “can be temporarily excluded from immediate relocation” (Bo [1964] 2014, 86). In this case, “a new set of machinery should be acquired and sent to the Third Front” (Bo [1964] 2014, 86) as substitutions. Bo also attached the initial

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<sup>19</sup> Here Mao refers to the motorized combined-arms forces. These elite troops were stationed in second line for strategic counterstrike. They are better equipped and more mobile and heavily armed in comparison to the front-line troops in coastal areas.

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drafts of the relocation plans for the Ministry of Metallurgical Industry, the First Ministry of Machine Building<sup>20</sup>, Ministry of Agricultural Machine Building, the Ministry of Chemical Industry, the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Oil Industry, the Ministry of Geology and the Ministry of Construction in this report. According to Bo, these drafts would be sent to the State Planning Commission for further revision. In sum, the leading consumption investor—Bo Yibo agreed to operationalize Mao’s import-substitution industrialization at national scale as the unified collective strategy to regulate economic capital for national defense.

The Third Five Year Plan was restructured to turn the expectation of rapid growth of defense industry into industrial policies as well. For a while, the state planning officials tried to modify their original draft to satisfy the new requirements by building the existing industrial bases. But this modification was rejected by Mao. Since then, the State Planning Commission started to reformulate its Soviet-type plan-based industrialization strategy. Li Fuchun (the director of the State Planning Commission) delivered a speech to the planning officials from the entire country at the National Planning Conference on September 21 for implementing the new strategy which prioritized the decentralized construction of the defense industry ([1964] 2014, 88-91). In December, the State Planning Commission and State Economic Commission sent orders to provincial authorities and state-owned enterprises for relocating industrial enterprises, universities, and research institutes in coastal cities to the “rear”.

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<sup>20</sup> the umbrella agency of civilian manufacturing sectors

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The State Capital Construction Commission also ordered to develop China's West as the "rear" in preparation for resisting potential invasions at the same time. This movement was dubbed as the "Third Front Construction." The primary goal of this national project was to develop a new industrial economy in China's inner lands that cannot be easily occupied by ground invasion or destroyed by strategic bombing. This political goal soon reconfigured the sociopolitical horizons of industrialization in socialist China. In reality, "between 1964 and 1980, China devoted nearly 40 percent of its capital construction budget to building the Front. With these funds, the CCP built more than 1,000 industrial projects. As these numbers illustrate, the Front occupied a major place in China's industrialization for nearly half the time that Mao Zedong was in power" (Meyskens 2015, 238-9). In the state field, intense competitions among central planners, consumption investors, and mass mobilization camp were initiated: each camp articulated an institutional logic for national industrialization as the weapon in order to compete for the agenda-setting power to turn their blueprints into industrial reality.

#### The Becoming of the Third Front: Symbolic Capital, Political Articulation, and Elite Competition

Mao's rejection of the drafted plan and removal of the consumption investors from the planning agencies decisively reshaped the power dynamics inside the meta-field: At this point, the dominant sector of the industrial policy subfield was determined by the dominant position and actor—Mao Zedong. Put it differently, Mao insisted on duplicating massive military-industrial complexes in China's hinterland. His intervention drastically reduced the relative autonomy of the central planning subfield.

On 23 January 1965, Mao commented on Lieutenant-General Yu Qiuli (the de facto leader of the State Planning Commission who replaced Li Fuchun)'s briefing about his new proposal of the Third Five Year Plan during a Politburo meeting (zheng zhi ju chang wei kuo da hui yi). Mao instructed Yu to include "manufacturing industries, chemical industries, and defense industries" (Mao and Yu [1965] 2014, 136) into the planning of the Third Front. Mao argues that "if we build steel, defense, machine-building, chemical, oil, and railway industrial bases in the Third Front, we won't be afraid to go to war" (Mao and Yu [1965] 2014, 136). This shift in the industrialization strategy undercut the authorities of the central planning agencies and the joint efforts from central planners and consumption investors to partially reverse radical agricultural collectivization and reduce investment to heavy industries within planning as a response to the post-Leap crises. In December 1964, "Mao accused Liu Shaoqi<sup>21</sup>, Deng Xiaoping<sup>22</sup>, and Li Fuchun<sup>23</sup> of sidelining him in the policy-making process" (Meyskens 2020, 7). In January 1965, Mao said Liu was a revisionist. From 1965-66, marked by the downfalls of Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Li Fuchun, and Chen Yun<sup>24</sup>, the mass mobilization camp's strategy of decentralization (favored by Mao Zedong) eventually outcompeted central planning and agricultural liberalization (i.e., consumption investors' agenda).

On 16 June 1965, Mao and his colleagues within the Central Committee organized a conference in Hangzhou to discuss the Third Five Year Plan. Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, Li

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<sup>21</sup> President of the People's Republic – leading consumption investors

<sup>22</sup> General Party Secretary – leading consumption investor

<sup>23</sup> the Director of State Planning Commission – leading central planner who developed the rejected draft Five-Year Plan (1965-1970)

<sup>24</sup> Former Director of State Capital Construction Commission – leading central planner

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Xiannian, Bo Yibo, Peng Zhen, Chen Yi participated in the conference. According to Yu Qiuli's report, the original Planning's investment strategy had prioritized consumption. Basic industries were secondary; and defense industry was the least important sectors. Now the state strategy of investment was restructured to the reversed sequence. Yu asked Mao whether this decision "violated the principle of treating agriculture as the base" (Mao and Yu [1965] 2014, 138) of the national economy. Mao replied that "this should be violated. The agricultural sector would do better" (Mao and Yu [1965] 2014, 138). Mao then suggested to further reduce agricultural investment. However, while Mao insisted on prioritizing the defense industry, he decided to control the size of state investment. Yu proposed to set the total state investment of the Third Five Year Plan at 108 billion yuan. Mao argued that "108 billion yuan was too much. Extracting so much [money] from the working masses was not good" (Mao and Yu [1965] 2014, 138). In the end, Mao inputted three goals for the Third Five Year Plan. "In sum, the most important goal is to [serve] the laboring masses, we cannot lose popular support. Military preparation is secondary. Famine prevention is the third factor" (Mao and Yu [1965] 2014, 140). This conference marked the formalization of the decentralization strategy of industrialization in the national agenda of the Leninist party-state.

As a result, the decentralization of industrial enterprises was implemented as the economic goal to increase the survivability of production facilities in nuclear total war. This parallel process of decentralization within the centrally planned political economy then gave rise to the rearrangement of the managerial structure of state capital. "The climatic event in this process was the decentralization of large enterprises decided on in 1969" (Naughton 1991, 166). The central government's state interests altered: its only focus was the military

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industry at this point. “In 1965, 10533 enterprises, accounting for 47 percent of state-run industrial output, had been under central ministerial control. By 1971 only 142 factories, accounting for 8 percent of state industrial output remained under central control” (Naughton 1991, 166). In fact, almost all firms other than defense industries were transferred to local governments. This decentralization of administrative structure was accompanied by the parallel decentralization of financial structure. “One of the most important results of the enterprises' decentralization was the depreciation funds of large enterprises (amounting to about 5 billion yuan annually) were remanded to local governments, giving them a reliable, large-scale funding source for the first time” (Naughton 1991, 166). The primary goal of state investment policies of the decentralized socialist industrial economy was military preparation. The investment policy, regardless of the level it was crafted, was concentrated to a small set of heavy industries.

Decentralization without clear procedures in the sub-fields of the party-state immediately led to conflict between state actors who nominally supported the decentralization agenda for seizing power and/or protecting their projects. In fact, even the leading member of the mass mobilization camp—Marshal Lin was horrified by Mao's changing strategic thinking which recognized the Soviet Union as the primary threat to national security. As a senior officer who spent three years in the Soviet Union (from the end of 1938 to 1941), Marshal Lin was probably uncertain about his own fate as well. In 1964, after hearing the deputy Chief of the General Staff (Yang Chengwu)'s briefing on Mao's “speeches on strategic defense, Lin was very upset when he linked this to Mao's other talks regarding vigilance against the Khrushchev-type people within the CCP” (Li and Xia 2018, 95). Marshal Lin's anxiety



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reflected the fact that Mao was *the* dominant position and actor in the meta-field. The Defense Minister (i.e., Lin Biao) worried that he would fail to keep pace with Mao in reformulating a new grand strategy.

This ambiguity in state interests, which was far-reaching in many bureaucratic subfields of the Chinese party-state during the Cultural Revolution, revealed and concealed the possibilities of changing the bureaucratic lines between party, state, military economy, and society (see Xu 2017). For example, senior officers of the PLA who allied with central planners and consumption investors were targeted and purged by their comrades and subordinates who aligned with mass mobilization camp in every branch and service. For instance, in 1968, the de facto leader of the State Planning Commission—Lieutenant-General Yu Qiuli was targeted by the mass mobilization camp as a revisionist. (He was partially rehabilitated by Mao and was not dismissed from office.) This loss of subfield autonomy mirrored the alteration in the competitive dynamics in the meta-field.

#### Corrupted by Design

Another consequence of this ambiguity in state interests was the epidemic chaos in industrial economy. For example, for fulfilling the reequipment of decentralization, much of the industrial planning of the Third Front factories was wasteful and impractical. In Shanxi Province, the factory which produced artillery projectiles was built 150 kilometers away from the factory which produced shell cases. Consequently, the state had to “overrun the original planning with an additional 7.3-million-yuan investment to complete the project. The employees of these two factories were one-third more than the original plan. But the production capacity was only twenty-five percent of the plan” (Chen 2003, 232). The tank factory built in Shanxi province was plagued by similar flaws caused by the decentralization

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strategy. Its facilities were structured into two zones in four counties which were 120 kilometers away from each other. For connecting the production line, a railroad of 120 kilometers and a road of 70 kilometers had to be built (Chen 2003, 232). This kind of administrative chaos appeared in all industrial projects of the Third Front during this period.

As a result, the Third Front reshaped the possibilities of elite competition in industrial bureaucracies: It acted both as an empowering factor for involvers to articulate their interest into party-state's political agenda at the national level for gathering resources and as a constraining factor for participants to form a political alliance based on informal ties with prominent figures of the CCP's leadership. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), these competitions at all levels of the party-state were escalated into political-ideological conflicts (Xu 2017) which further disrupted the design and implementation of central planning.

The developmental trajectory of the automobile industry best exemplifies this crisis inside the Leninist state. For central planners, the decentralized operational networks of automobile production were a nightmare. There were two reasons. First, by the mid-1960s, the State Planning Commission had been targeted by Mao Zedong as the headquarter of revisionism. The leading opponents to decentralization – Li Fuchun and Chen Yun, the directors of the State Planning Commission and State Capital Construction Commission, respectively,<sup>25</sup> were marginalized; their most capable staff shared much of the same fate:

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<sup>25</sup> These two agencies were the two primary agencies for designing and carrying out plan-based industrialization at national scale

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most of them were either re-assigned or purged. Li died in 1975 in Beijing<sup>26</sup>. Consequently, from 1965 the central planning agencies were reorganized into a much weaker bureaucracy without the capacities to independently oversee and implement planning. In other words, the State Planning Commission was no longer capable of coordinating industrial organizations for designing and implementing coherent investment policy at the national level.

In fact, the State Planning Commission was one of the first agencies that were stormed when the Cultural Revolution broke out. On 20 June 1968, a joint report from the reorganized State Planning Commission and the Office of Defense Industry of the State Council stated that the construction of the Front emerged from “a struggle between the socialists and the capitalist roaders, a conflict between two Party lines, and a war between two classes within the Party” (State Planning Commission and Office of Defense Industry 1968, 234-5). From this teleological viewpoint of power struggles, “Liu [Shaoqi], Deng [Xiaoping], Peng [Dehuai], He [Long], Luo [Ruiqing], Bo [Yibo] capitalist roaders and their agents delayed and sabotaged the construction of the Third Front” (State Planning Commission and Office of Defense Industry 1968, 235). According to the newly appointed reporter of the mass mobilization camp, “all delays of the implementation of the Front strategy” (State Planning Commission and Office of Defense Industry 1968, 235) were caused by this counterrevolutionary group (i.e., the state planning officials who favored central planning). The credentials of the state planning officials (both central planners and consumption investors included) as worthy beings in the socialist society were destroyed.

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<sup>26</sup> After being removed from power, Li was unable to stay in Beijing, his health deteriorated drastically in the de facto exile to Guangdong in the name of military evacuation in preparation for potential invasion.

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State planning officials, hailed and respected a few years earlier, were now painted as a fifth column. Consequently, the utility of their expertise was denied too. In 1967 and 1968, no annual state planning was ever designed or implemented. In 1969, all staff (except for a group consisted about 100 officials for basic day-today management) were exiled in the name of relocation for wartime relocation (zhan bei shu san). “Moreover, in 1970, the entire planning apparatus—including the former Planning and Economic Commissions, Material Supply Bureau, and Statistical Bureau—was amalgamated into a single ‘revolutionary committee’ with only 610 employees, 12 percent of the former personnel” (Naughton 1991, 166). By the end of 1968, the Cultural Revolution deconstructed the other planning agencies—the State Capital Construction as well. The entire planning subfield was killed off by the external forces unleashed by the mass mobilizers. Its agenda-setting power for setting production quotas, maintaining supply chain, and enforcement of fiscal discipline was taken over by military officers and provincial revolutionary committees controlled by the members of the mass mobilization camp.

Second, the mass mobilizers originated from military-propaganda apparatuses. They possessed limited technical knowledge for managing industrial production. During the Cultural Revolution, their local allies often came from similar backgrounds or were directly promoted from rank-and-file workers and peasants who received little technical training. The members of the mass mobilization camp in the provincial government started to have the control over labor, materials, and money to stimulate the growth of local industrial system since they could use the newly acquired economic capitals for carrying out their own investment policies. Consequently, this change in the competitive induced political conflicts

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at workplaces. It is in this sense that “the Cultural Revolution played a significant role too, since administrators and skilled workers<sup>27</sup> came under attack for supposedly stabbing Maoist China in the back and supporting Soviet revisionism and a capitalist road for the country” (Meyskens 2020, 29).

In the period of 1966-69, these localized conflicts between the divided socialist elites culminated in bloodshed. “Nationwide fights against perceived internal threats collided with the Third Front in 1966 and almost completely supplanted its construction with internecine clashes in 1967 and 1969” (Meyskens 2020, 29). Since the mass mobilization camp possessed significant influences on the industrial planning of the decentralized operations networks in the hinterland, many of these facilities are often built solely for military-ideological purposes which failed to be productive: since these projects were developed for military purposes, their geographic remoteness made them economically inefficient. To increase the survivability of these facilities in nuclear air raids, all of them were purposefully built on rugged terrains which were far from existing cities. These decisions increased the difficulty of construction. “Some projects were also impetuously built, and their construction dragged on for years. This is partially attributable to security pressures speeding up construction” (Meyskens 2020, 29). Consequently, they could not be easily integrated into inter-regional trade networks and national market without the completion of large-scale (economic) capital intensive investment into transport infrastructure (which was beyond CCP’s structural capacities at that time)

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<sup>27</sup> They are perceived as the local allies of the central planners and consumption investors.

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The fate of the hinterland industrial bases immediately became a subject of contestation between central planners and consumption investors after Mao died in 1976. For central planners in Beijing who tried to save these industrial complexes through recentralization via means of finance and personnel, they soon realized that these decentralized, geographically remote networks of operations were very difficult to be integrated into the national economy due to remoteness and lack of economic scales. In addition, these factories often competed against each other for funding, production quota, technical assistance, and administrative ranks which are controlled by the central government.

To make the situation more hopeless, the harsh conditions of these factories led many technicians and engineers who were mobilized from pre-existing industrial bases at coastal cities in these facilities to petition for improving their welfares. On 26 January 1984, the Office of Third Front Adjustment and Reform (san xian jian she tiao zheng gai zao gui hua ban gong shi) of the State Council made a detailed guideline ([1984] 2014, 299-303) to address these issues. Within six months, its proposal was turned into policies. The State Council and the Central Military Commission issued a joint order ([1984] 2014, 304) to improve the living conditions the Third Front enterprises' employees and their dependents.

Finally, perhaps most importantly, the cause for developing these industrial complexes was lost. Deng Xiaoping, as the supreme leader, no longer considered a nuclear total war would break out soon<sup>28</sup> ([1981] 2014, 284; [1984] 2014, 309-10; [1985] 2014, 314-315).

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<sup>28</sup> In July 1977, Deng Xiaoping was formally rehabilitated by the CCP leadership. He was appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP, the Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, the Vice Prime Minister and the Chief of the General Staff of the PLA at the same time. This meant he had access to veto power in the decision-making processes in party, state and military affairs. His appointment of the Chief of the General Staff ended in November 1979. From 1981 to 1989, Deng was the Chairman of the Central Military

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Since the Sino-US relationship had been greatly improved since the early 1970s, he also expected the United States would play a more supportive role if a Sino-Soviet war broke out. Because of the improvement of Sino-US relationship and the gradual abandonment of supporting third world revolution, Deng Xiaoping—the leader of the survived state planning officials who favored investing consumption and agriculture (i.e., the consumption investors) decided to shift the focus of industrialization from defense industry to agriculture and basic industries (for consumptive goods). Deng’s decision marked an important change of the meta-field—the socialist state no longer considered military preparation for nuclear total war as the priority of its national agenda. As a result, the investment policy of the central government was opened to debate, competition, and revision.

#### The Articulated State Interests: Defense, Industrialization, and Decentralization

Given that the primary (if not sole) purpose of the Front was to develop a war-time industrial economy for a potential nuclear total war, the military and industrial bureaucracies of the central government were both heavily involved. When the Front was officially abandoned in 1985, it had reconfigured the structural features of the heavy industries in China. “From 1964 through mid-1971, 380 large-scale factories were moved to Third Front regions (about one-fifth of the total number of large plants in the Third Front)” (Naughton 1991, 160). In fact, “the program was so huge that it can fairly be said that, with the exception of petroleum development, the central government’s industrialization policy from 1965 through 1971 *was* the Third Front” (Naughton 1991, 158; emphasis in original). The Front was central to socialist industrialization in the late Mao era.

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Commission. In the command-and-control structure of the PLA, this meant he was the supreme leader of the armed forces who had final authority to military decisions.

All capital-intensive industrial sectors were involved in the Third Front to various extent. For example, “during the Front, the CCP further expanded railroads in China’s West with an additional 8,000 kilometers of tracks, which accounted for 55 percent of rail built in China between 1965 and 1980. In this same period, western China’s percentage of national rail also jumped from 19 percent to 35 percent” (Meyskens 2015, 241). As these numbers illustrate, the mass mobilization camp’s collective strategy of the Third front occupied a major place in China’s industrialization for almost half the time that Mao Zedong (i.e., the dominant actor and position of the state field who favored the mass mobilization camp’s agenda) was the supreme leader.

**Table 3.1: Third Front Investment as a Proportion of National Investment**

Region	1953-1964	1965-1971	1972-1980	1981-1987
Southwest <sup>29</sup>	10%	23%	11%	8%
Northwest <sup>30</sup>	10	12	9	7
Second Phase <sup>31</sup>	13	15	15	11
Third Front Total	32	50	35	26

(Source of Data: Naughton 1991, 161)

The Front was especially prominent during much of the late Maoist period (ca. 1959-76). Henceforth, these strategic choices also profoundly restructured the administrative subfields of the Leninist party-state. Large scale organizations were formed and reconfigured to oversee railroad construction; and existing institutions were rearranged for directing factory construction and facility relocation. Depending on the path, pattern, and degree of

<sup>29</sup> Southwest: Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan

<sup>30</sup> Northwest: Shanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai

<sup>31</sup> Second Phase: Hubei, Hunan, Henan.



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involvement in the Third Front, the political consequences of the Front were differentiated for industrial sectors.

Martyred for the Socialist Cause: Dreaming about the Emancipatory Futures in the Violent Past

The distinguishing mark of the socialist state field is the extraordinarily high cost of contestation inside the meta-field of power. The political field is “the relatively autonomous world within which struggle about the social world is conducted only with political weapons” (Bourdieu 2015, 335). This conceptualization of the political field captures how the power dynamics inside the Central Committee of the Party “transcends” into economic-industrial realities. The power struggles for acquiring the symbolic capital—the “correct” approach to build a socialist industrial society at the scale of nation-state often led to the annihilation of its participants and the deconstruction of the administrative subfields led by them.

It is in this sense that Lenin’s democratic centralism was never actualized by the socialist elites in the politics of industrialization. The mode of operation was neither democratic (i.e., every participant can willingly express and articulate their voice and turn their voice into actions) nor centralized (i.e., the collective strategy adopted by the party commission cannot be overwritten by the subsequent closed-door confrontations within the state bureaucracy) This competitive dynamics of annihilation and reconstruction was at the center of the politics of socialist industrialization.

Dubbed the “golden boy” of the October Revolution by Lenin himself, Nikolai Bukharin nonetheless was removed from the meta-field of the Soviet party-state for his objection to Stalin’s dreams of rapid industrialization which resulted in disastrous forced collectivization. Shortly before Bukharin’s execution by his former comrades he wrote to his wife, “urging her

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to ‘remember that the great deed called the Soviet Union lives; only this is really important. Our personal fates are transient and pitiful’” (Halpin 2003, 282). From the beginning of the politics of socialist industrialization, the cost of contestation was extraordinarily high.

In the case of socialist China, this stake of contestation over the “correct” means to perform the “self-fulfilling revolutionary prophecy” (Glaeser 2011) of creating a communist society is equally high. Marshal Peng Dehuai and Army-General Huang Kecheng, respectively, the minister of defense and the chief of the general staff were purged in 1959 for trying to save the national economy from the catastrophic Great Leap Forward. Their opposition was classified by Mao as a plot of coup d'etat.

Peng's successor was Marshal Lin Biao who never dared to challenge Mao's strategy of industrialization. Lin was appointed as the minister of defense and deputy secretary-general of the Central Military Commission of the CCP shortly after the purge to Marshal Peng and his generals in 1959. Within a few years, Li Fuchun and Liu Shaoqi, respectively, the director of the State Planning Commission and the Chairman of the People's Republic, paid with their lives for opposing Mao's agenda to prioritize national defense. They were classified by Mao as the revisionists who tried to sabotage the socialist development as the hidden enemies inside the Party.

These violent dynamics of competition were by no means limited to the meta-field. During the first three years of the Cultural Revolution, rank-and-file of the Third Front workers were slaughtered as well. In 1967, a group of the 17000 workers from Shangdong and Henan provinces who had been tasked to construct the Third Front roads for military preparation (zhan bei gong lu)—the Eighth Regiment of Workers became involved in the

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violent conflicts between rival grassroots organizations backed by mass mobilization camp and the administrative establishment. By 16 January 1967, 104 people were killed in street fights. The members of the mass mobilization camp backed faction who attacked the workers reported to the Kunming Military District that the members of the Eighth Regiment of Workers became a “armed column of bandits” which had been “robbing arsenals, storming towns and killing military personnel” (Chen 2003, 187). The Kunming Military District then reported to the Central Committee for permission to conduct counter-insurgency operations. After obtained the permission from the Central Committee, commanding officers of the Kunming Military District ordered its troops to encircle the Eighth Regiment of Workers in a coal mine. The troops then opened fire on the workers. 243 civilians were killed as insurgents and all the rest were arrested by the troops (Chen 2003, 187).

On 13 February, Jiang Qing—Mao’s wife and the leading figure of the mass mobilization in the central government camp phrased this bloody event as a “necessary counter-insurgency operation” when she met with the leaders of these grassroots organizations from Yunnan province (Chen 2003, 187). The other prominent member of the mass mobilization camp Kang Sheng—the head of the secret police supported Jiang’s evaluation: “if [the workers who supported the administrative establishment] went to the oppositional side [of the party line issued by the mass mobilization camp], then they are counterrevolutionary bandits” (Chen 2003,187). As the mass mobilization camp now started to exercise the political power of classification at national level, they could deploy institutional degradation to any voice which opposed their agenda.

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Similar incidents happened in almost every town in China. These conflicts were vicious, murderous, and bloody regardless of administrative level (see Su 2011; Wu 2014). In the case of Shanghai, many workers and engineers who were mobilized for the Third Front took this chance to escape their factories and returned to their hometown. Once they returned to Shanghai, “they started to hold struggle rallies against their superiors who had mobilized them for the Third Front” (Chen 2003, 188). By early 1967, the 20000 personnel of the 26000 workers mobilized by three industrial bureaus of the Shanghai municipal government had returned to Shanghai. In one Third Front factory in Xian which had 1500 employees mobilized from Shanghai, only the firm manager and the party secretary refused to desert (Chen 2003, 188). As a result, the Front was halted. “In 1967 and 1968, the completed state capital construction projects only equaled 66.9 percent and 50 percent of the one of 1966” (Chen 2003, 188). The state bureaucracies, the industrial subfields included, were first sent into chaos, and then paralyzed.

As a result, the Central Committee was forced to devise unconventional policies to restore social order and industrial production. The authorities of the party-state officials in provincial government were relinquished. And the military was instructed to replace the party committees at all levels of the administrative subfields for exercising state authorities. The power of the military subfield mushroomed to an unprecedented level.

In fact, the experts in violence were in charge of socialist development. On 16 February 1967, a new separate troops branch of the PLA—the Corps of Engineers for Capital Construction (*ji ben jian she gong cheng bing*) was established to be the backbone of the construction of the Third Front. In the joint order issued by the State Council and Central

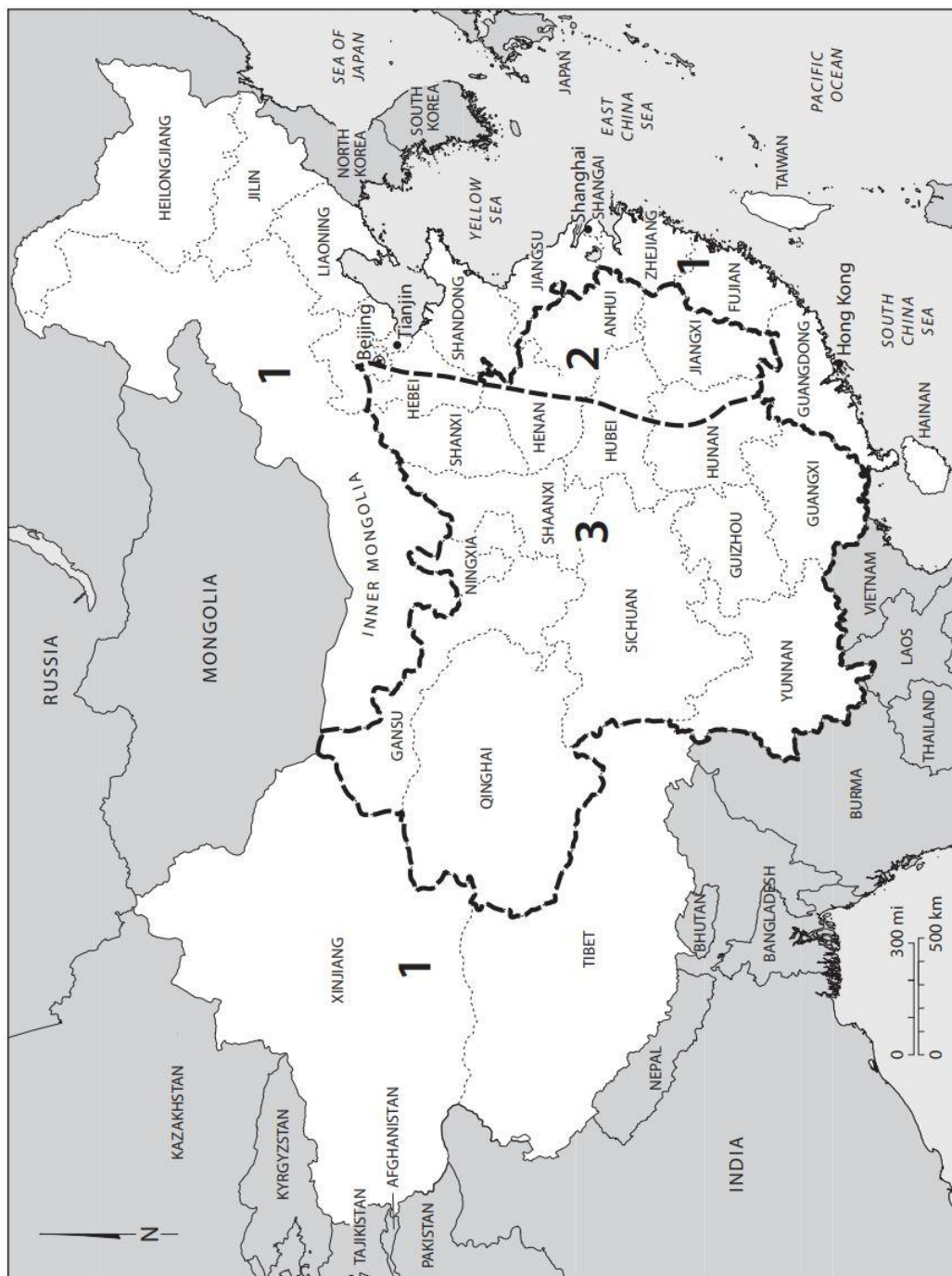
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Military Commission titled “The Decree to Carry Out the Cultural Revolution in the Corps of Engineers for Capital Construction” (guan yu ji ben jian she gong cheng bing bu dui jin xing “wen hua da ge ming” de tong gao), the Corps was tasked to “construct the most important projects of industrialization and national defense industry”. The party-state depicted the Corps as an elite unit for realizing socialist development in the highly dynamic time of the socialist theodicy: “this is a big event about speeding up the race against time for out-competing the imperialists and revisionists” (Chen 2003, 189). This decision militarized all construction team and civil engineers employed by the central government. Mao personally endorsed this policy. The officer corps of the Corps was transferred from other branches of the PLA and the Corps was explicitly instructed to be not involved in the factional struggles.

Certainly, worrying about the fate of the socialism is not something new under the sun. Fears of the possible end of the historical progression of class universalism have been recurrent in the political thinking inside the Leninist states across the globe and have sparked intense debates among socialist state elites as to the reality of the coming of the emancipation under central planning, or whether such claims were merely a wishful thinking of the self-deluded nomenklatura for justifying its own existence (Djilas 1983). Contestation about the “correct” approach to fulfill the final completion of socialist modernization in the universal time of emancipation, usually articulated only in very general way, can be found in every socialist state from East Germany to China. Despite accusing each other being revisionist traitors (Mao 1964), the attempt at linking the time of industrialization campaigns to the universal time of the coming of true communism can be found in the official narratives of all

socialist states. It is in this sense that the search for the correct vehicle of industrialization is at the center of the power struggles inside the socialist state fields.

Since the core argument of this chapter revolves around socialist elites' attempt to secure the CCP's political survival, chapter 4 provides a comparative historical analysis of the political consequences of that attempt.



Map 0.1 The First, Second, and Third Fronts

(Source: Meyskens 2020,5)

Table 3.2: Political Articulation and Elite Preferences in the Meta-Field (1964-1976)

Group Preferences	Consumption Investors <sup>32</sup> (Market-Building Supporters in Post-1978 Reform)	Central Planners (Large SOEs Supporters in Post-1978 Reform)	Mass Mobilizers (Decentralization Supporters during the Cultural Revolution)
Political Articulation			
Ideological Justification Frame	Economic recovery: increase in consumption benefits the working people	Central planning is the only viable instrument for rapid socialist industrialization	Opposition to Soviet-type revisionist (central planners) and capitalist roaders (Consumption Investors)
Investment Priority	Consumption over industrialization over security & defense	Industrialization over consumption over security & defense	Security & defense over industrialization over consumption
Areas of Developmental Priority	Agriculture over coastal cities over hinterland industrial bases	Coastal cities over agriculture over hinterland industrial bases	Hinterland industrial bases over coastal cities over agriculture
Primary Agencies	State Economic Commission; State Capital Construction Commission	State Planning Commission; State Capital Construction Commission	General Political Department of the PLA (during the Cultural Revolution); Office of National Defense Industry
Preferred Organizational techniques as the Mode of Operation of National Economy	Rationalization of pricing and accounting system within the plan; (limited) decollectivized agriculture coexists with the Plan;	Rationalization of pricing and accounting system within the Plan; vertical integration of enterprises within the Plan; conditional support for de-	Decentralization of planning (transfer to local party authorities); mass mobilization as the vehicle of industrialization: Plan is only accepted if it is modified to

<sup>32</sup> These elites were *not* publicly advocating tearing down central planning during this period. In fact, before 1978 few elites thought market economy can be a vehicle of building the socialist project. However, their skepticism to mass mobilization and central planning began to emerge during this period. Many of them tried to convince Mao that expanding consumption and developing agriculture for urban population within the central planning should be prioritized for remedying the post-Leap crisis. Mao's rejection to their proposals, endless power struggles and the stagnation of consumption made them became increasingly doubtful to the feasibility of command economy as the vehicle for building a new emancipatory social order. This painful experience decisively shaped the contours of their economic thinking of market liberalization in the post-1978 period. They started to search for possibilities to incorporate market economy into the national system of political economy after Mao died in 1976. Therefore, I name them as consumption investors.



	expansion of urban consumption for improving living standards	collectivization if heavy industries remain centrally planned	accommodate the mass movements
Preferred Structure Industrial Authority at Enterprise Level	Firm managers Supervise management; limited intervention from party committees	Firm managers and party committees coordinate through planning agencies for fulfilling the Plan	Firm managers subordinate to party committees for the day-to-day management
Leading Figures in the CCP Leadership	Deng Xiaoping (party-state: Deng also had extensive ties with the military establishment due to his active roles as commissar before 1949) Liu Shaoqi (State Head: violently purged at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution) Bo Yibo (state – director of the State Economic Commission) Hu Yaobang (party-state) Gu Mu (state)	Chen Yun (state: known as the “economic tsar” who led and supervised the formation of command economy; in the 1950s; Director of the State Capital Construction Commission) Zhou Enlai (Prime Minister) Li Fuchun (state – director of State Planning Commission) Yu Qiuli (party-state-military; de facto leader of the State Planning Commission from 1964 to 1980) Li Xiannian (state) Luo Ruiqing (military-state)	Mao Zedong (party-state) Lin Biao (party-military: deputy commander in chief before his death in 1971) Huang Yongsheng (military) Wu Faxian (military), Li Zuopeng (military-party) Qiu Huizuo (military) Kang Sheng (head of the secret police) Gang of Four (the designation to the four leading figures of this camp; they rose to prominence during the Cultural Revolution from propaganda apparatuses)
Effects of the Cultural Revolution on Groups (1965-1976)	All purged or removed from party-state positions; some remained/rehabilitated after 1973	Most purged or removed from party-state positions. some remained/rehabilitated after 1973	Rapid expansion of power in dominant positions during the Cultural Revolution; entirely removed/purged in 1976 after Mao died

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**Chapter 4 The Beginning of State Capital Differentiation: Power Struggles, Subfield  
Autonomy, and Delegation of Political Will**

But the lessons of historical experience, particularly that of the Soviet states, and the teachings of social analysis does not incline those who would seek a mode of formation of opinions that is as egalitarian as possible – that is, capable of giving everyone an equal chance of producing and imposing opinions corresponding to their interests — to rely unconditionally rely on the other mode of production and expression of opinions, this one collective that is based on *delegation* to institutions especially designed to produce and express collective claims, aspirations, or protests (such as associations, unions, or parties), and charged, at least officially, with the collective defense of the individual interests of their members.

– Bourdieu 2005, 59 (emphasis in original)

Mao's Endkampf

The purges to the generals and statesmen who opposed the decentralization strategy of industrialization was the first stage of the political competition of the Cultural Revolution. These purges marked the start of the reign of terror against members of the intellectual, administrative, and military establishments who favored to prioritize agriculture and consumption. The purges to these state planning officials and generals silenced all voices against military buildup in the Leninist field of power.

According to State Planning Commission's annual plan of 1966, "the state capital construction budget [of this year] is 15.57 billion yuan. This is 0.61 billion yuan more than the 14.96-billion-yuan investment of the 1965 annual plan. The Third Front [projects] and military mobilization programs and defense industry in the First and Second Front will receive 7.8 billion yuan—half of the total investment" ([1965] 2014, 194). In total, 846 mid-to large scale industrial projects were planned in the annual planning. And "408 projects were in the Third Front, 203 projects were in the Second Front; 227 projects were in the First Front; 8 projects such as telecommunication facilities were interprovincial ones" (State Planning Commission [1965] 2014, 198). Most planned production facilities, power stations,

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and transport facilities were for the full-scale production of conventional weapons in preparation for the imminent nuclear total war.

As the central planning subfield was killed off by Mao, a power vacuum inside the socialist state field emerged. To fill this vacuum, the members of the mass mobilization camp soon played a key role in supervising the construction of the Front. Interestingly, the high command—the Central Military Commission of the CCP took over the role of designing and implementing the industrialization strategy; the high command became a kind of war cabinet which sidelined the State Council. By 1965, “the PLA numbered more than 6 million troops” (Li 2007, 236). To restore social order, under Marshal Lin’s command, “the Chinese military replaced civilian governments at the provincial, district, county, and city levels through military administrative committees from 1967 to 1972” (Li 2007, 236). In fact, civil power was in the hands of the divisional commanders.

Therefore, between 1967 and 1972, the Chinese socialist state was militarized to an unprecedented level. By indirect militarization, this means “a civilian leads the executive and the military wields political power from the background, for instance through a national security council ‘advising’ the government” (Eibl, Hertog, and Slater 2019, 3). While the Chinese military did not develop a logic of practice in which they pursued the military interests for their own sake, the military *was* the backbone of state institutions. The PLA used its officers as administrators for schools, factories, companies, villages, and farms. More than 2.8 million officers and soldiers participated in the tasks” (Li 2007, 236). In fact, one could argue that the entire state field was under the command of military officers who remained loyal to the supreme leader—Mao Zedong. By February, “the military administration took

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control of nearly seven thousand enterprises of mass media, defense, law enforcement, foreign affairs, transportation, finance, and other pivotal activities” (Li 2007, 236). By the end of 1967, PLA administrative teams had taken over all universities, colleges, high schools, and elementary schools across the country” (Li 2007, 236). All key ministerial portfolios were occupied by active-duty officers. The military became the most powerful subfield of the socialist state field.

In provinces where the Third Front projects concentrated, civil power was almost entirely in the hands of the men on horseback. “By September 1968, each province had established a provincial revolutionary committee to replace the governor’s office, a provincial congress, and a provincial court (Li 2007, 236). Inside these “omnipotent” revolutionary committees, “the majority of the provincial committee members were from the military: about 98 percent in Hubei, 97 percent in Yunnan, 95 percent in Shanxi, 84 percent in Liaoning, 81 percent in Guangdong, and 78 percent in Beijing” (Li 2007, 236). The first five years of the Cultural Revolution was the only period of the People’s Republic in which the armed forces replaced party-state bureaucracies for basic administrations.

### Nuclear Nightmare

These militarized structures of state power were also partly caused by changes in geopolitics: the Warsaw Pact’s combined-arms invasion to Czechoslovak in 1968 was a particularly alarming event to the Chinese socialist elites. From the viewpoint of the Chinese socialist elites, the “Brezhnev Doctrine” was the formalization of the Soviet state’s denial to other socialist states’ sovereignties. “Late in 1968 the situation along the Sino-Soviet border deteriorated sharply in the wake of Soviet troops’ invasion of Czechoslovakia and the CCP Central Committee’s 12 Plenary Session” (Yang 2000, 25). Soon, the process of escalation

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itself went head over heels. In March, a major armed clash erupted between Soviet border guards and PLA troops on Zhenbao (Damanskii) island. “The situation at the border quickly got out of hand and created, for Beijing, a perceived danger of war that Mao never intended” (Yang 2000, 22). As a result, Beijing had to prepare for a nuclear total war between the Soviet Union and China<sup>33</sup>.

Therefore, Marshal Lin’s military buildup was also nominally supported by the remaining central planners such as the Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. Although the Prime Minister considered a full-scale nuclear war to be avoidable (Yang 2000) and tried to control the scale of military production, he could not object Marshal Lin’s military buildup as *the* priority of the central government. After all, Marshal Lin was one of the most talented military officers whose skills of mastering combined-arms operations at strategic level were widely acknowledged by the CCP leadership. In addition, Mao concluded that the economic liberalization which prioritized agriculture and urban consumption by building-up existing industrial bases, as a response to the catastrophic Great Leap Forward, was inappropriate and insisted that a national agenda that prioritized heavy industries was *obsoletely* necessary.

In response to the imminent threat of nuclear total war with the Soviet Union, the CCP threw the Third Front construction into high gear in 1969. Mao had to consider the possibility of the border conflict of being the precursor of a full scale Soviet combined-arms invasion. On 28 April 1969, Mao delivered a speech to the Central Committee of the CCP for urging

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<sup>33</sup> Zhou Enlai’s assessment of the possibility of full scale invasion differed from Mao’s analysis. Zhou thought that it would be unlikely for the border conflict to escalate into total war. But this border conflict did create a armed standoff between China and the Soviet Union. This standoff forced the Chinese party-state to regard the Soviet Union as its primary security threat.

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the party-state leadership to mobilize the Chinese people for mentally and materially prepare for the incoming war (Mao [1969] 2014, 244). In the same speech, Mao also reemphasized his support to the decentralization strategy of industrialization. According to Mao, the provincial authorities should not “request materials from the central government for weapons such as hand grenades. Hand grenades can be built in every province. Small arms should be produced in every province too” (Chen 2014, 244). Indeed, “the Chairman even claimed that China should be ready to ‘fight a great war, an early war, and even a nuclear war’. He also mentioned that in fighting a war against the Soviet revisionists, China should be prepared to lure the Soviet enemy deep into Chinese territory” (Yang 2000, 31). As a response to Mao’s speech, the mass mobilizers led by Marshal Lin and his generals inside the high command was tasked to supervise the growing defense industry by implementing the decentralization strategy. To address these security concerns, the central government continued to let military necessities dictate industrialization.

In terms of state security, the military appeared to be the final assurance for the central leadership of the CCP. Generals were needed to hold the country together. As the most *cohesive* organization which (re)controlled the arms, the PLA was the dominant political force to restore social order and to end the factional violence unleashed by Mao’s Cultural Revolution at the grassroot level. These self-reinforcing dynamics drastically increased the power of the military subfield in the state field for shaping and reshaping policy outcomes. Marshal Lin became the only Vice Chairman of the Party. Consequently, Marshal Lin and his generals started to hold agenda-setting power and veto power to industrial policy at national

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level since they became the de facto successors of the purged central planners and consumption investors within the party-state field.

Known as the “Lin Biao clique”, this group consisted Lin’s wife Ye Qun, the chief of General Staff Huang Yongsheng (a Colonel General), deputy chief of the General Staff Wu Faxian (a Lieutenant General who also served as the commander of the Air Force), Lieutenant General Li Zuopeng (deputy chief of the General Staff and Political Commissar of the People’s Navy) and Lieutenant General Qiu Huizuo (the chief of the General Department of Logistics)<sup>34</sup>. From 1965 to 1971, this group of the mass mobilization firmly controlled the formation of military doctrine, the management of economic recourses (inside the military field) and the design of industrial policy for the defense industry.

The action orientation of the mass mobilizers marked the assimilation of war within the mechanisms of state power. Ordered by these generals of the mass mobilization camp, the military establishment switched China’s industrial economy to a total-war track. Marshal Lin stated that “fighting war is about the ratio [of turning national strength into military power]. We should reserve all existing fiscal capacities and cutting expenditure of all businesses for concentrating fiscal capacities to this affair” (i.e., military buildup) (Chen 2003). According to the Minister of Finance Wang Bingqian’s report on the National Planning Conference in 1972 (shortly after Marshal Lin’s death on 13 September 1971), the socialist state’s military expenditure had jumped from 16.5 percent of the state budget of the Second Five Year Plan

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<sup>34</sup> While Lin Biao hold a tremendous of power as Mao’s handpicked successor, he was not the dominant position and actor in the meta-field. Mao continued to be the dominant position and actor in the military, party and state field. In fact, Lin’s position was very unstable. After Lin Biao’s violent death in 1971, the Lin Biao clique was denounced and arrested.

(37.5 billion yuan) to 28.5 percent of the state budget of the Third Five Year Plan (70.7 billion yuan). In 1969, the state spent 15.8 billion on defense (30.2 percent of the annual state budget); in 1970 this number was 23.7 billion (33.6 percent of the annual budget). To execute Marshal Lin's industrialization strategy, the socialist state devoted 40 percent of its budget to defense in the Third Five Year Plan (Chen 2003, 235). In comparison, between 1950 and 1953, the central government's military expenditures amounted to 41 percent, 43 percent, 33 percent and 34 percent of total state budget<sup>35</sup>(Li 2007, 112). In other words, Marshal Lin spent as much state funding as the one of the Korean War. "In an atmosphere where the threat of imminent war was dominant" (Yang 2000, 22), military buildup became the only goal of the socialist state in 1969."

#### The Socialist Fatherland is in Danger: Competition and Crisis

Comparing to the Central Military Commission's active roles of supervising and constructing the Third Front, the state bureaucracy played a much more limited role of coordinating the development of defense industry from 1966 to 1969. While the Central Military Commission directly designated the locality, type and technical requirement of the production facilities, the State Council could influence the path, scale, and budget of these industrial projects. The state field was led by the Prime Minister Zhou Enlai<sup>36</sup>. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, a small group of experienced state officials was able to

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<sup>35</sup> "In all, about 73 percent of the Chinese infantry troops were rotated into Korea (25 of 34 armies, or 79 of 109 infantry divisions). More than 52 percent of the Chinese air force divisions, 55 percent of the tank units, 67 percent of the artillery divisions, and 100 percent of the railroad engineering divisions were sent to Korea" (X. Li 2007, 106).

<sup>36</sup> In contrast to Mao's preference of radical decentralization for rapid growth; Zhou Enlai's strategy was much moderate. Zhou Enlai protected many central planners who were attacked by the mass mobilization camp during the Cultural Revolution.



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retain their authorities and issue state orders. This administrative establishment included Li Xiannian, Gu Mu, Yu Qiuli, Su Yu, Yuan Baohua (Chen 2003, 191) and some other officials. They functioned as the backbone of the surviving central planners in the state field. In fact, these fiscal-planning officials led by Zhou Enlai were the core of the central planners (Meyskens 2020, 77) during the Cultural Revolution. The members of the administrative establishment were organized into the Administrative Group of the State Council (guo wu yuan ye wu zu) which was established by the Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1967.

Before Mao Zedong died in 1976, the central planners worked under the protection of the Prime Minister Zhou in the Administrative Group of the State Council as indispensable experts for technical management within the collective strategy of decentralization. This organization continued to exist till 1975 when a power struggle in the meta-field began. Lin's death in 1971 changed this distribution of power between the military subfield and the state subfield to some extent. This event was proved to be an opportunity for the surviving state planning officials. After Lin's violent death, Mao allowed planning officials to regain their authorities to oversee the military industry to some extent.

However, before Mao's death, central planners were unable to regain access to agenda-setting power at national level. The Cultural Revolution was a violent nightmare for the state officials who favored the collective strategy of central planning. On 5 January 1968, the primary agency of policy implementation—the Office of the Third Front Construction Committee of the Southwest Bureau of the CCP (Zhong gong xi nan ju san xian jian she wei yuan hui ban gong shi) reported to the State Capital Construction Commission that “the Cultural Revolution had paralyzed the Southwest Bureau” and the Office “was no longer able

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to perform its duty of constructing the Front” (Chen 2003, 192). And at this point, the State Capital Construction Commission itself was on the edge of destruction. On 6 February 1968, the authorities of the planning officials of the State Capital Construction Commission were relinquished. On 26 August, they were exiled to Jiangxi province (Chen 2003, 192).

Consequently, the entire central planning subfield (i.e., the State Planning Commission, the State Economic Commission, and the State Capital Construction Commission; the officials of the other two agencies had been purged and exiled in the previous two years) ceased to exist.

The authority of constructing the Third Front was transferred to the military. In fact, all industrial sectors which were considered to be important to national defense were all transferred to the military in 1969. This institutional arrangement would constitute to function till Marshal Lin lost his power and life in 1971.

While Lin’s generals were purged in 1971, the mass mobilization camp *within* the administrative field managed to expand their power by exploiting this power vacuum. Led by Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, this group who originated from the propaganda apparatuses would be known as the Gang of Four. In terms of collective strategy, they agreed on the necessity of industrialization with other state elites but disagreed on almost every other issue from military doctrine to foreign policy. Between 1972 and 1976, no coherent state strategy of industrialization was issued by the central government: the investment to the Third Front reduced since the border conflict deescalated and a nuclear total war between the Soviet Union and China no longer seemed to be the most imminent threat. But the Front was still considered to be the primary goal (at least in the official statements). The final showdown between the mass mobilizers and the alliance between central planners and consumption

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investors would only happen shortly after Mao died in 1976 in which this alliance decisively won by purging all the members of the mass mobilization camp (Baum 1994). The Guard Regiment (zhong yang jing wei tuan) arrested the leading figures of the mass mobilization camp (i.e., the Gang of Four) that marked the end of the Cultural Revolution.

#### The Fate of Ministries: Railway, Automobile, and Shipbuilding Industries

To illustrate the causal effects of the strategic choices on the political consequences (on institutional change), I decide to focus on the three national agencies which all involved in the Third Front construction to various extent: The Ministry of Railways, the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building (Or simply the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry), and the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry. Given that the three agencies took differentiated roles in facilitating the construction process, the technocratic-minded ministers' abilities to articulate their organizational interests during the Cultural Revolution were weakened; in the subsequent post-1978 economic reform period, their capacities to articulate their interests for influencing industrial policy were conditioned by their engagement in the Third Front.

These changes at sectoral levels were decisively shaped by the competitive dynamics in the meta-field. In the meta-field (i.e., the Central Committee of the CCP), before the Front was put to an end in the early 1980s, consumption investors and central planners' capacities of articulating industrial policy (i.e., the State Capital Construction Commission and State Planning Commission's capacities to directly control and oversee industrial production at national scale) were weakened since the Maoist mass mobilization camp led by the Gang of Four was not outcompeted in the power struggles inside the Central Committee. Between 1971 and 1976, a temporal stalemate (Naughton 1991) emerged between the divided socialist elites.

Table 4.1: The Differentiated Institutional Outcomes of the Third Front

<u>The Socio-political Consequences of the Third Front for the ministries</u>	Assets and Industrial Outputs (Total Investment to the Front Facilities from 1965 to 1979)	Informal Ties with Central Planners in the Central Committee of the CCP	Internal conflicts between subordinated units	Industrial Policy at national level in the post-1978 reform
The Sixth Ministry of Machine Building	Moderately Expanded (1.86 billion Yuan)	Strengthened (indirectly)	Reduced (indirectly)	Coherent policy for export-oriented industrialization; Vertical integration of the industrial Sector directed by centralized agency
Ministry of Railways	Rapidly Expanded (20.9 billion Yuan)	Strengthened	Reduced <sup>37</sup>	Coherent policy for import-substitution industrialization; Vertical integration of the industrial Sector directed by centralized agency
First Ministry of Machine Building Industry (The umbrella agency of the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry)	Expanded (9.339 billion Yuan)	Weakened	Intensified	Fragmented policies with multiple agendas; Limited horizontal integration directed by individual firms

Source of Data: (Chen 2003)

After Mao died in 1976, however, the decentralization strategy was collectively understood by survived consumption investors and central planners as economically inefficient and dysfunctional. Furthermore, the violent conflict among these three camps led to a strategic alliance between central planners and consumption investors to remove the mass mobilizers from positions of power: After the arrest and trial of the Gang of Four

<sup>37</sup> Its internal conflict was moderate in comparison to the other two ministerial agencies.

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(which is the official designation to the four leading figures from the mass mobilization camp who played active roles in escalating the Cultural Revolution), decentralization strategy was halted in 1977; and its supporters in the party-state bureaucracy were marginalized.

Once the Maoist decentralization camp was outcompeted, to put an end to the dysfunctional outcomes of the decentralized industries, these two groups of elites (the consumption investors and central planners) started to compete over the agenda-setting power in the meta-field. On the one hand, survived central planners favored to simultaneously strengthen large state-owned enterprises and central planning. On the other hand, rehabilitated consumption investors opposed recentralization and favored market-building and de-collectivization (for example, see Gewirtz 2017). In the industrial subfields of the socialist state, ministers of industrial sectors soon realized that they had to align themselves with one of the two remaining groups to expand their autonomy in policy formation which in turn led to the differentiated paths of reform in the state sectors.

The variations in patterns of involvements in the Front decisively shaped the differences in the developmental trajectories of the three ministries in the post-1978 reform. In this chapter, how and why the Ministry of Railways, the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building and Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry opted for import-substitution, export-oriented industrialization and decentralization (for inflow of foreign direct investment and joint ventures with foreign firms), respectively, in the post-1978 reform for market-building will be discussed in detail. The ministerial actors' abilities to autonomously design and implement the developmental trajectory of their organization were decisively shaped by the ways they

were channeled to the constituencies inside the main overarching field—the state planning commissioners in the Central Committee of the CCP.

Dismember Me If You Can: Sectoral Coherence of the Railways Industry, Dynamics of Policy Alignment, and the Formation of Import-substitution Industrialization Strategy

For the Ministry of Railways, its involvement in the Front engendered two sets of institutional arrangements which then conditioned its political trajectory in the post-1978 reform. First, due to its extensive involvement in railroad construction, its administrative power, personnel, and assets had grown to an unprecedented level. “In total, the Front added over 8000 kilometers of tracks between 1964 and 1980. In this same period, regional railroads rose from roughly one-fifth of the national stock to over one-third, and trackage increased in all provinces, except Gansu. During the Front, western China’s annual freightage also increased” (Meyskens 2015, 246). As a result, the Third Front Railways became an indispensable component of China’s national transportation infrastructure. “By 1980, it had quadrupled and come to comprise one-third of the national total. In terms of personnel, China mobilized roughly 5.5 million people, of whom over 80 percent came from rural militias (4.45 million)” (Meyskens 2015, 246). As these numbers indicate, the Ministry of Railways’ involvement in the Front transformed itself into a “superagency” with vast resources and power. Put it differently, the Ministry of Railways was the vehicle of transforming China’s West to a unified social space for the construction of *national* economy.

From the beginning of the Front, the ministerial officials realized that they would be central to the construction of the Third Front since they would be in charge of building inter-provincial railroads. From mid-August to September 1964, the acting minister of railways Lu Zhengcao submitted reports to the dominant actors in the military, state and party subfields

(i.e., State Council, the Central Military Commission, the State Planning Commission and the State Economic Commission) for building four railway lines of the Third Front (collectively designated as the Southwest Railways). In Lu's August 11 report, he explicitly stated that the task of complete these four lines was "the most difficult and the biggest railway project in the history of China" ([1964] 2014, 58). In order to complete these four main lines, his apparatchiks had to "build 795 tunnels of a total length of 339 kilometers; This equal the length of all existing tunnels in our country; 784 large and mid-scale bridges of a total length of 90 kilometers [also needed to be built]; And 2248 kilometers tracks [to be constructed]. This required a 2.45-billion-yuan investment" (Lu [1964] 2014, 58). To complete such a megaproject in very limited time, Lu also had to deal with labor shortage. "Now there are 20000 soldiers of the Railway Corps and 22000 workers from the Southwest Railway Construction Bureau [of the Ministry of Railways] at the construction sites of these lines. Most of them are skilled workers and officials. [We] need 200000 to 240000 workers for full-scale construction" (Lu [1964] 2014, 58). Lu thought it would be impossible to train so many peasants with the required technical skills. "Mobilizing so many peasants and then demobilizing them after the completion of the project will be a huge burden for the villages" (Lu [1964] 2014, 58). Consequently, Lu turned to the armed forces for completing this megaproject.

For turning this ambitious program into industrial reality, Lu's solution was to create an army of 240000 soldiers. "After careful consideration, we think the Southwest railways should be constructed by the armed forces. In doing so, 80000 soldiers of the 5 divisions and 22 regiments of the Railway corps should be assigned to the construction" (Lu [1964a] 2014

59). A detailed plan to expand these existing troops into the army Lu wanted was also included in this report. Lu suggested to name this army as the Southwest Railway Construction Troop. “The Southwest Railway Construction Troop will be subordinated to the Central Military Commission; the command-and-control authorities should be exercised by the Railway Corps and the Ministry of Railway. During the construction, the Ministry of Railways should be the primary leading agency of the Troop”. Lu also made a name-list for the military officers, state planning technocrats, and provincial leaders and their proposed positions within the command post of the Troop.

Lu’s reports were sent to Mao Zedong (the Chairman of the Party), Zhou Enlai (the Prime Minister) and Deng Xiaoping<sup>38</sup> (the Secretary-General of the Central Secretariat) for approval. In these reports, Lu also made an estimate of labor demands, funding and the schedule of construction. He proposed to rely on 180000 military personnel from the Railway Corps (80000 soldiers in active service would be deployed and 100000 new soldiers would be recruited to meet this goal) with 50000 workers from the Ministry of Railways, 6000 workers from the Ministry of Coal Industry and 1000 workers from the Ministry of Metallurgical Industry (Lu [1964b] 2014, 79-80). In addition, he also requested 0.32 billion yuan for funding the construction (Lu [1964b] 2014, 79-80). Lu’s reports received instant approvals from the directors of the planning agencies (i.e., Li Fuchun—director of the State Planning Commission and Bo Yibo—the State Economic Commission) and the dominant actors of the party-state (i.e., Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping) (Chen 2014, 78). On 11 September, the Central Committee issued a directive ([1964] 2014, 81) to formalize this

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<sup>38</sup> Between September 1956 and March 1967, Deng served as the Secretary-General of the Central Secretariat.



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decision by establishing the Southwest Railways Construction Command. Lu obtained everything he wanted.

Within two months, the Ministry of Railways then started to marshal resources into its Third Front projects. On 6 November, the Ministry of Railways issued a ministerial guideline as the countermeasure to potential surprise attacks. Titled “The Ministry of Railways’ Countermeasures to Surprise Attacks and the Plan for National Railways Adjustment”, this document included a summary to the weakness of the existing railway networks, a design of four Third Front railway hubs and a detailed plan for building new strategic railway lines. According to the analysis of the ministerial officials, the major problem of the existing railroads was over-centralization (Ministry of Railways [1964] 2014, 99-101). The existing railway hubs at the industrial heartland could be destroyed in one full-scale strategic air strike which in turn would paralyze the entire national railway transports.

Furthermore, the existing railways failed to facilitate the formation of a true *national* economy. In this document, the ministerial officials state that “there is only one railroad linking the areas outside Shanhaiguan<sup>39</sup>; and there are only two and half main lines inside Shanhaiguan” (Ministry of Railways [1964] 2014, 100). In terms of the construction of the Front, they concluded that “all the four Third Front railway hubs must be built within the Third Five Year Plan [1965-1970] and this required 0.2-billion-yuan investment” (Ministry of Railways [1964] 2014, 100) In addition to the railway hubs new railway lines were planned as well. “For the sake of national defense and national economic development, several

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<sup>39</sup> Shanhaiguan was the historical borderline of the Dynastic State. The regions outside Shanhaiguan were (and still is) considered to be the inhabitable hinterland in mountains. The regions within Shanghaiguan were the most populous and developed area of China.

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strategic railway lines must be built as soon as possible” (Ministry of Railways [1964] 2014, 100). Specifically, the ministerial leaders listed 12 strategic railways lines which need to be built from scratch in this ministerial guideline. They plan to complete this megaproject of 7195 kilometers of railways on rugged terrains in seven to eight years.

This quick response of the Ministry of Railways to Mao’s call for wartime mobilization can be partially explained by its institutional origins. From the foundation the Ministry of Railways in 1949, the CCP central leadership structured the Ministry of Railways as a militarized organization which would play a key role in the war-time industrial economy. Put it differently, the dominant actors in the meta-field of power actively converted talented military officers (who acquired their credentials from their military education and battlefield victories) into ministerial agents in the railway subfield for designing and implementing socialist industrialization. For instance, the acting minister Lu Zhengcao was a former professional military officer who had worked as the head of CCP’s railway bureaucracy since 1946. In 1955 he was commissioned as a Colonel General who acted as the commanding officer of the General Staff’s Division of Military Transportation and the deputy commanding officer of the Railway Corps simultaneously. In comparison, the minister of oil industry (and the future leader of the State Planning Commission) Yu Qiuli was commissioned as a Lieutenant General in 1955 (i.e., one rank lower than Lu, the Army General was a four-star general; the Colonel General was a three-star general and the Lieutenant General was a two-star general; Army General was the second highest rank in the 1955 military ranking system in which Marshal was the highest rank). In 1958 Lu was transferred to the Ministry of Railways as the acting minister. Meanwhile he worked as the First Political Commissar of the

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Railway Corps. Lu's exemplary execution of the militarized socialist industrialization cannot be explained without taking his merits in the military field into account.

Consequently, the Ministry of Railways emerged as one of the most powerful ministerial subfields of the socialist state. According to the proposed 1966 Annual Planning Guideline (1966 nian guo min jing ji ji hua gang yao) issued by the State Planning Commission on 17 November 1965, the Ministry of Railway alone would receive 1.863 billion yuan from the Annual Plan for constructing 19 new railway lines (656 kilometers in total) (State Planning Commission [1965] 2014, 197). In other words, the Ministry of Railway would enjoy 12 percent of the total state budget<sup>40</sup> of industrialization (i.e., state capital construction budget: *ji ben jian she*) of that year. In addition to the construction of railway lines, the Ministry of Railways also utilized its funding for industrial upgrading. Before the Front, the Ministry of Railways mostly relied on imported Soviet locomotives. The acting minister of railways Lu Zhengcao ordered to build indigenous locomotives in 1964 when the Front began. In 1965, 48 locomotives were built in total and the acting minister ordered to start experimenting with electric locomotives. Prototypes of electric locomotives were successfully built in 1969 (Chen 2003, 270-71). This strategy of import-substitution industrialization for industrial upgrading was then crystalized as the dominant mode of operation in the railway subfield which continued to operate in 2021.

Obtaining a tremendous number of resources and power engendered political consequences. First, the Ministry of Railways' informal ties with military elites and

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<sup>40</sup> This number is calculated from the document of State Planning Commission's proposal of annual planning guideline issued on 17 November 1965. Here the state budget excludes the projects that would be built by provincial authorities. In other words, this is the budget of the central government.

administrative staffs in the central government was strengthened. Historically, the ministry had developed close ties to the military establishment. From its foundation in 1949 to 1985 (when the Front was formally ended by the Central Committee), all the ministers of railways had military backgrounds. Such ties were further strengthened by the construction process of the Third Front. “To engage in more capital-intensive work, the CCP also sent in personnel from the People Liberation Army’s Railway Corps (tielu ju; 660,000) and regional railroad offices (tielu sheji yanjiu yuan; 480,000)” (Meyskens 2015, 240). These staff from the Ministry of Railways often worked closely with the troops of the Railway Corps at the construction sites. For example, for constructing the Xinyang-Chongqing railway (895 kilometers in total) which connected the major industrial bases of the Front, 9 divisions of the Railway Corps (Chen 2003, 276) were assigned for construction and three research institutes of the Ministry of Railways were tasked to design the railway lines. In addition, 800000 workers (Chen 2003, 276) were mobilized from militias to assist the construction.

In fact, all major railway lines designed and completed from 1964 to 1978 were arranged in this organizational pattern as parts of the Third Front industrialization. As the Central Committee was instructed by Mao to be fully prepared for a Soviet combined-arms ground invasion in 1970, the military started to become even more involved in railway construction. On 25 August 1970, a joint order from the State Council and the Central Military Commission issued to the Railways Corps and the Ministry of Railways stated that the railway construction personnel should “lower the cost of construction as much as possible; the materials, machineries and investment will be prepared by the agencies of the State Council. The Hunan-Guizhou railway and Zhicheng -Liuzhou Railway Construction

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Command will be led by the Guangzhou Military District” (State Council and Central Military Commission [1970] 2014, 258). Inside the Construction Command, the commanding officer was a senior military officer from the Guangzhou Military District (Chen Haihan), the deputy commanders included officials from Kunming Military District (Xu qixiao), the Ministry of Transportation<sup>41</sup> (Sujie), the State Planning Commission (Liu Binghua), and the Ministry of Commerce (Jia yimin) (State Capital Construction Commission, Ministry of Transportation [1970] 2014, 259). In total, the Construction Command built 1639 kilometers of new tracks (about 20 percent of the total Front Railways) by mobilizing 1.85 million local workers. These two railway lines were built for linking the military industrial bases in the hinterland. This was a typical arrangement which reflected the industrial policy inside the railway subfield of this period: while the project was centrally funded, the military coordinated with ministerial officials to mobilize local workers for completing the project.

Eventually, the entire Railway Corps would be absorbed by the Ministry of Railways in the mid-1980s when the CCP changed its military doctrine and streamlined the PLA. These formal relations and informal ties with the military would be pivotal for the Ministry of Railways’ capabilities to articulate its role in national security and economic development in post-1978 reform to retain its autonomous status. By incorporating the Railway Corps and participating in the Front, the Ministry of Railways gained its symbolic leverage to represent

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<sup>41</sup> From 1970 to 1975, the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication were briefly incorporated into the Ministry of Transportation. But this arrangement was ended in 1975 when Deng Xiaoping was tasked to resolve the administrative chaos in the railway system caused by the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, the Ministry of Railways became an independent entity again in that year.

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itself as a successful agency to manage and accumulate state-owned economic capital at national scale by carrying out import-substitution industrialization.

The other institutional arrangement, perhaps the more important one, is the participation in the Front created a long-term coalition between the Ministers of Railways and central planners in the Central Committee of the CCP who could jointly take political credentials from the fast-track industrialization. For instance, when central planners tried to claim the importance of socialist modernization through planning, their involvement in the recent development of railway networks were utilized as evidence of their contribution which cannot be achieved through market-oriented liberalization alone. For the central planners, the industrial development in hinterland is the cornerstone of a *national* economy: “With this additional railroad infrastructure, the CCP aimed to lessen transport bottlenecks between eastern and western China and facilitate interregional trade” (Meyskens 2015, p.244).

As Vice Premier and Minister of Finance Li Xiannian (1909–1992) explained in his comments on the Hunan-Guizhou Railroad, “the Southwest was rich in resources but its development required products from other regions. Due to a dearth of interregional transport, resources could not easily circulate, especially since mountains surrounded the Southwest and made up much of its terrain” (Meyskens 2015, p.244). As the efforts to overcome developmental problems, “the Hunan-Guizhou Railroad would aid in resolving this problem since it would enable materials to flow to and from the rest of the country” (Meyskens 2015, p.244). It is in this sense that the central planners considered their collective efforts of building plan-guided industrialization as the foundation of a national society in which

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emancipatory state-structured order could then be gradually constructed as the metanarrative of historical progress in socialist theodicy.

The technocrats of the Ministry of Railways then claimed that such railway networks were developed as an integrated system and put it under the administration of a highly centralized agency was the best option (if not the only one) to fulfill the state's interests in national security (for wartime mobilization) and economic development (for inter-regional trade). In other words, after the Front ceased to exist in the early-1980s, the participation in the Third Front still brought political credentials for the Ministry of Railways. By presenting the historical participation in the Front as their contribution to the socialist modernization, the Ministry of Railroads was able to keep the fingers of ministerial power down to each track in the post-1978 reform.

Consequently, the institutional structures of the Ministry of Railways, backed by a long-term political coalition, granted the opportunities for it to pursue import-substitution industrialization even in the post-1978 reform. This coherent investment policy was articulated by the Ministry of Railways as an effective instrument to satisfy state interests in *national* development and defense. For consumption investors who prioritized the improvement of economic efficiency in the state sectors via trade, material incentives, and rationalization of managerial procedures, this viewpoint was proved to be exceptionally difficult to be challenged. In practice, changing such institutional structure and its investment policy means that these politicians must prove their proposal to be effective not only in the economic sense, but also in the lens of political, military, and ideological sense. For example, one of the repeated arguments from the Ministry of Railways to fight off decentralization

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which allowed the regional railway networks to retain profits was that such changes in investment policy would lead to the disintegration of the interregional railroads which would undermine the capabilities to mobilize and deploy troops.

This voice often found sympathetic ears in the armed forces and the State Planning Commission in the reform era. For example, the military and revolutionary veteran leaders such as Li Xiannian who controlled the veto power in the economic decision-making process always support the Ministry of Railways's proposal to maintain centralization since these elites had personally involved in the affairs of central planning and regarded the construction of this national railway network as their achievements in promoting socialist modernization. On practical grounds, streamlining the PLA means the CCP leadership had to found ways to assure the loyalty and combat effectiveness of the PLA while drastically reduce defense expenditure. From this perspective, rewarding the retired personnel of the Railway Corps with positions in the Ministry of Railways was critical for the CCP's structural capacities to control its coercive means. If industrial reform to the Ministry of Railways meant destabilizing the morale and loyalty of retired officers of the Railway Corps who possessed substantive ties with active-duty officers who might share the same fate, this tradeoff between economic efficiency and insecurity became a dangerous game which few elites in the Central Committee were willing to play.

In sum, the Ministry of Railways' engagement in the Front leads to the formation of a long-term coalition between central planners and ministerial technocrats (with the active involvement of the Railway Corps) in this subfield. The emergence of this coalition was the political consequence of state interest in defense and security. In this case, the necessity to



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have a centralized agency for overseeing and coordinating the construction of interregional railway networks overdetermines the mass mobilization camp's articulation to overhaul the structure of ministry and its industry. Central planners continued their domination in the Ministry of Railways since they were indispensable for the completion of national railroad networks. They welcomed the organizational techniques of mass mobilization as a supplementary means to deal with the shortage of economic capital. Mass mobilization camp failed to provide any viable options without the assistance of technocrats among central planners in this subfield.

Also, the dominance of central planners' allies in the subfield of the Ministry of Railways led to the stabilization of import-substitution industrialization as the mode of operation to arrange state-controlled economic capital in the railway system. While the majority of the consumption investors were started to be weakened and purged in the mid-1960s, a few surviving central planners were able to participate in the construction of railroads as indispensable experts<sup>42</sup> who held relative autonomy in the ministerial subfield. In the post-1978 reform, moreover, the consumption investors found themselves were neither able to discredit the central planners' active roles in railway construction nor to separate the

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<sup>42</sup> In the railway system, central planner-backed technocrats accepted some mass mobilization camp's organizational techniques as auxiliary means for compensating their shortage of economic capital during the Cultural Revolution. For example, personnel and materials for construction projects were mobilized locally during the Front via militias controlled by local party authorities. This measure was accepted by the central planners for two reasons. First, this lowered the costs of construction since it reduced the amount of economic capital that needed to be mobilized by the central government. Second, since Mao favored decentralization, adopting these measures as auxiliary means for plan-oriented construction gave the central planners the final authority to railway development and the superficial cooperation with decentralization. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, these techniques were almost immediately abandoned since mass mobilization camp in the meta-field were outcompeted by the alliance between consumption investors and central planners.

economic utility of railway networks from their usefulness in fulfilling defense and security purposes. Consequently, central planners were able to maintain the validity of the argument that the Ministry of Railways was the best vehicle to fulfill their achievement to socialist modernization.

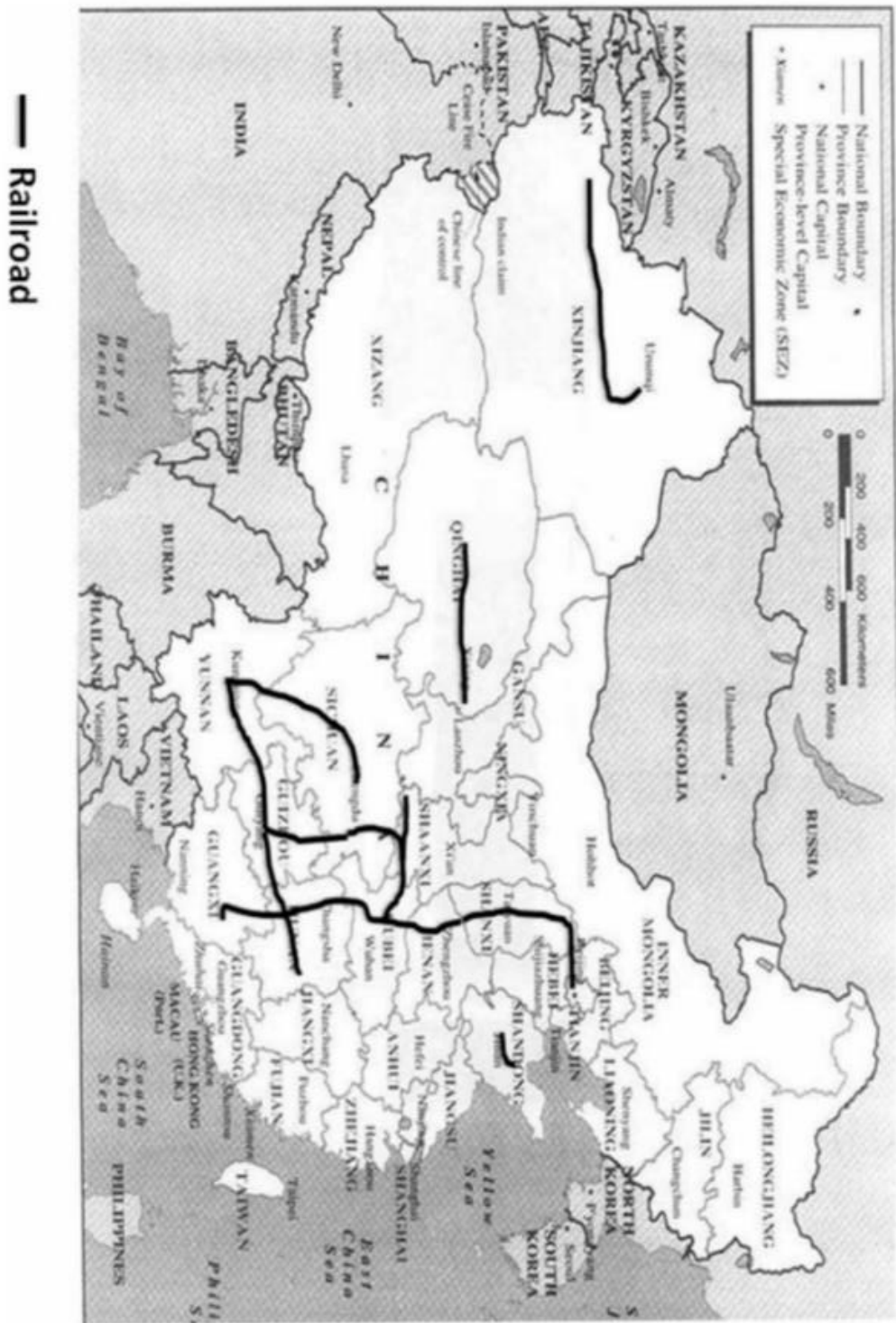


Figure 1. Map of major Third Front railways.

(Meyskens 2015, 242)

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No Mercy for Failure: Structural Fragmentations of Automobile Industry, Competitive Dynamics of Reform, and the End of Coherent Industrial Policy under Central Planning

For the automobile industry subfield, the involvement in the Third Front led to a series of institutional changes. “Everything about a field, including its very existence, is open to revision on the basis of struggles and changes inside and outside the field” (Steinmetz, 2014, 2). The fragmentation of the automobile subfield was an outcome of intense competitions which existed both in the meta-field and the sectoral subfield. First, new production networks were developed in decentralized forms in China’s West. For example, a new mega-plant was built in Hubei province. Named Second Automobile Works, it was developed as part of the Third Front strategy. This was the largest single project in the manufacturing sectors during the Cultural Revolution (Naughton 1991, 160). In 1964, the Central Committee of the CCP formally approved the construction of Second Auto Works as part of the Front. As a result of the institutional logics for national defense, the Second Auto Work’s operation was highly decentralized.

Before 1964, the First Auto Works was the only automobile production facility. It was developed under Soviet technical assistance as one of the national priorities of the First Five Year Plan. In 1953, the construction of the First Automobile Works began in Changchun. After its completion, there were intense debates inside the Central government about whether to develop another automobile facility. Before the beginning of the Front, this plan (articulated by Mao personally) to develop the Second Automobile Works was discussed for multiple times. Each time it was struck down by the central planners. The planning officials argued that there was insufficient economic capital for building another Fordist mega-plant. Rather, they favored to build on the First Automobile Works.

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The Third Front strategists (i.e., Mao and mass mobilizers) rejected central planners' centrally planned strategy and approved the construction of the Second Auto Works as the second production facility of the automobile industry. Given that this new automobile factory became a separate entity from the already established one, the political consequences of the Front were very different in comparison to the ones of the railway system. For the Chief Directorate of the Automobile Industry, the immediate results for the automobile industry were that the networks of production with their supply chains were further decentralized at national scale. Such decentralization unintentionally intensified the competition between factories (i.e., the First Automobile Works and Second Automobile Works) for funding, administrative rank, and other institutional privileges. In addition, because of the purges of technocrats in the automobile industry who were deemed as potential or actual members of the other two rival camps (i.e., the central planners and consumption investors), the production networks were often poorly designed and constructed (Meyskens 2020).

The competitive dynamics at the firm level during the Cultural Revolution also contributed to the fragmentation of the automobile industry. For the industrial subfields (including the automobile industry) in which central planners were unable to outcompete the members of the mass mobilization camp, "the old cadres were increasingly disturbed by the disruptive political movements led by the radicals, and the radicals were convinced that the old cadres were taking China down the capitalist road." (Andreas 2019, 164) Comparing to the railway and shipbuilding sectors, because the mass mobilization camp gained the upper hand in the guiding agency of the automobile industry, but skilled workers and engineers were indispensable to the industrial development inside the factories, fragmentation of the

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industry were reinforced by pressures from the competitive dynamics at both top and grassroots levels.

As the political competition between these two groups at the grassroots level escalated into armed conflicts in 1967 to 1968, the industrial bureaucracies were first stormed by armed red guards supported by the local allies of the mass mobilization camp and then paralyzed by the violent confrontations between armed groups. For example, in September 1968, the managers, engineers, and party officials who were mobilized from the First Auto Works to construct the Second Auto Works were captured by their former subordinates of the First Auto Works. These technocrats were sent to the struggle rallies at the First Auto Work (Wu 2009). Most construction projects and industrial productions were halted during this period.

Consequently, the construction of the Second Auto Works did not begin until 1969. In 1969, Mao personally ordered to deescalate violent conflicts between the local armed groups organized by the local allies of the mass mobilization camp and central planners, construction of the Third Front restarted. “Led by Rao Bin, the former director of First Auto Works, the workers (many of whom had also been transferred from Changchun) scattered production facilities across different valleys, often utilizing the many caves of the region.” (Thum 2005, 186) The development of the Second Auto Works reflected the typical institutional arrangements of the Front as well: “Construction costs were financed by the central government, and in that initially it would be manufacturing military vehicles, it also had close ties with the military command.” (Thum 2005, 186) Specifically, military officers of the mass mobilization camp extensively intervened the design and construction of the Second Auto Works.

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Marshal Lin — the dominant actor of the military subfield and Mao’s handpicked successor at the time (he was appointed as the *only* vice-chairman of the Party) from the mass mobilization camp (before his “defection”<sup>43</sup> to the Soviet Union and sudden death in 1973) continued to act as the patron of the Second Auto Works. Since Marshal Lin was the leading figure of the mass mobilization camp who was able to articulate military interests in the national political agenda, his support, in turn, alienated the firm managers of the Second Auto Works from the central planners and consumption investors. In the report from the First Ministry of Building Ministry (i.e., the umbrella agency of the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry) to the State Council (sent to the State Council on 30 July 1969) for accelerating the construction of the Second Auto Works, the ministerial officials stated that “the Second Auto Works is the defense project personally approved by the Vice Chairman Lin [Biao]. The task of the Second Auto Works is designated by the General Staff. The location of the factory was personally approved by the Prime Minister [Zhou Enlai]” (First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014, 249).

In addition, the design of the construction project needed to comply with Marshal Lin’s military doctrine which required the decentralization of industrial production facilities. “The general arrangement of the Second Auto Works is guided by Vice Chairman Lin’s instruction to [build factories] ‘near mountains, with camouflages and in caves’. The layout of its 24 specialized production facilities is divided into four zones” in an area of “200 square

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<sup>43</sup> Lin Biao died in an air crash in which he and his family was heading to the Soviet Union. Most party-commissioned historians in China suggested that Lin Biao had been plotting a coup. The plan was exposed and defeated by troops loyal to Mao. Consequently, Lin attempted to flee to the Soviet Union. Most governmental files on Lin Biao’s death remain classified.

kilometers in which there are 19 ravines” (Military Administration Committee of the First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014, 249). Each zone “is divided by a mountain” (First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014, 249). By building the Second Auto Works, the socialist state only “possessed an automobile production bases in the hinterland” but also “is able to meet the demand of the armed forces for mid-size off-road vehicles” as week (Military Administration Committee of First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014, 249). In addition, “the automobile industry of the socialist fatherland will master the technology of industrial automation. Thus, the industry will be able to improve its efficiency” (Military Administration Committee of the First Ministry of Machine Building [1969], 2014, 249). In sum, the ministerial officials articulated a collective strategy of import-substitution to expand production, facilities industrial upgrading and satisfy military requirements. This collective strategy of the automobile subfield can be understood as an operational subtype of the decentralization strategy at national scale.

In terms of production capabilities, the Second Auto Works was instructed to be fully integrated into the wartime economy. According to the ministerial report to the State Council, the Second Auto Works “should focus on producing two military vehicles (2.5-ton and 3.5-ton military tracks) at the amount of 45000 vehicles per year to meet the requirement of the General Staff” (Military Administration Committee of the First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014, 249). For putting the production line to better use, the factory should also organize production of civilian trucks (5-ton) based on the same prototype [of the two military vehicles] at the amount of 55000 trucks per year. In sum, the annual production capabilities of the factory should be 100000 vehicles” (Military Administration Committee of



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the First Ministry of Machine Building [1969] 2014, 249). The report was formally approved by the State Council and then turned into a directive (State Council [1969] 2014, 249) for the acceleration of the construction on 28 October 1969. This directive marked the beginning of the construction of the Second Auto Works.

Despite the fact that the workers' contributions to the completion of the Second Auto Works was widely recognized by the central government as an extraordinary accomplishment,<sup>44</sup> the actors in this industrial-administrative subfield missed the opportunity to be fully entrusted by central planners as political allies. After all, the Second Auto Works' patrons were Marshal Lin and his generals who purged the state planning officials. Consequently, the central planners had to outcompete the Gang of Four—the remaining members of the mass mobilization camp—before they could design industrial policy for the Second Auto Works.

This power struggle between the central planners and Gang of Four between 1971 and 1976 disadvantaged the Second Auto Works in its competition with the First Auto Works. The plan to import equipment from West Germany which was essential to mass production was classified by the Gang of Four as “traitorous actions”. Moreover, the Gang of Four threatened to purge the leading central planner—Li Xiannian who supported this plan. Li could not approve this plan until the Gang of Four was outcompeted. For the Second Auto Works, this meant that they could not obtain equipment for mass production. Consequently, the planning

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<sup>44</sup> Rao Bin's contribution to the construction of the Second Auto Works was recognized by the rehabilitated central planners and consumption investors in the Central Committee. Consequently, after the completion of the Second Auto Works he was then appointed as the Minister of First Machine Building (the First Ministry of Machine Building is the umbrella agency for civilian heavy industries in the manufacturing sectors); in 1982 he was appointed as the president of the Chinese State Automobile Corporation.

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agencies often set higher production quotas for the First Auto Works which in turn expand First Auto Works' revenue and increase Second Auto Works' deficit. In 1976, the Second Auto Works had a deficit of 50.66 million yuan. In 1978, the State Planning Commission set a production quota of 2000 vehicles for the Second Auto Works which led to a deficit of 32 million yuan (Chen 1996, 237-8). Meanwhile, other facilities of the First Ministry of Machine Building continued to trouble (rehabilitated) central planners in the post-1978 reform.

After Mao died in 1976, the strategic alliance between consumption investors and central planners in the meta-field immediately arranged systemic purges to the mass mobilization camp—the Gang of Four and their local allies. And this alliance soon found the institutional legacy of the decentralization movement – dysfunctional industrial bases in the hinterland was a black hole for state funding. Many of them still failed to initiate any meaningful mass production. The production quality was often unbelievably poor. Even in the most successful one of all these facilities—the Second Auto Works, mass production had just begun: “regular production of the 2.5-ton military truck did not begin until 1975, the same year that a rail line to Shiyan was finally completed” (Thum 2005, 186). As a result, the managers of the Second Auto Works soon realized they must abandon the original wartime design of the facilities to achieve economic efficiency. In the 1980s, as the Second Auto Works continued its program of reform and development, “its remote location became a severe handicap. The sedan joint venture in Wuhan was not only an opportunity to acquire the technology necessary to build a modern car, but also a chance to move from Shiyan to Wuhan” (Thum 2005, 186). Viewed both horizontally and vertically, then, the Chief

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Directorate of Automobile Industry was troubled by the structural fragmentations of its production facilities.

Consequently, in the post-1978 industrial reform, such structural fragmentations in the automobile industry subfield made it easy for consumption investors to mobilize opposition to centralization, which forced policy innovators among central planners to rely on short-term coalitions and to pursue innovation through existing channels rather than recast the institutions themselves. “If the field is space of objective positions, this does not mean that the array of positions is static” (Steinmetz, 2014, 2). In the state field, the agents actively sought to recreate the relational configurations of power and capitals. For example, in 1978, the party committee of the Second Auto Works decided to end the deficit by producing civilian 5-ton trucks.

To sale these trucks, they not only fixed 64 defects but also mobilized their ties to the provincial officials. In August 1978, the provincial party secretary of Hubei—Chen Pixian paid a visit to the Second Auto Works (i.e., one of the leading auto factories at the national level developed during the Third Front). During this visit, the firm managers seized this opportunity to complain to Chen that the Second Auto Works was not able to get enough orders from the five-year-plan which had led to years of deficits. Chen immediately ordered to purchase 2000-3000 civilian trucks (a modified version of the military truck which used the same production line) on behave of the provincial government to expand revenues for the Second Auto Works. This move allowed the Second Auto Works to produce 5000 trucks in 1978: the central government purchased 2000 trucks; the provincial government bought 2000 ones; and the military bought 1000 trucks (Chen 1996, 238). This expansion of production

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ended its deficit and turned over its profit to the central government for the first time in history. In 1978, the Second Auto Works turned 2.79-million-yuan revenue to the central government (Wu 2009). Consequently, the State Planning Commission expanded the production quota for the Second Auto Work in the following year which enabled it to achieve a balance of payment. In 1980, the State Council issued an order to continue the Construction of the Second Auto Works.

All these problems made the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry (and its successor: Chinese State Automobile Corporation) an easy target for firm managers in the automobile industry and consumption investors in the Central Committee to collectively criticize its inefficacy and failures as a centralized agency. While the Second Auto Works' output jumped from 125,400 vehicles (1.2 percent of the total production of motor vehicles at national level) in 1977 to 222,300 vehicles (14.2 percent of the total production of motor vehicles) in 1980 (Byrd 1992, 374), the state planning officials had to deal with the economic and administrative problems of the automobile industry with "a legacy of small<sup>45</sup>, backward, overly integrated and high-cost producers" (Byrd 1992, 375). Then, the central planners and consumption investors would start to compete for devising the most effective policy to rationalize, reform, and modernize the automobile industry in the 1980s.

In this case, neither the State Planning Commission nor the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry was able to take credentials from the industrial-economic outputs of the automobile industry as their achievement. This can be understood as the failure of the central planning strategy in the automobile subfield. "Individual and collective strategies may create

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<sup>45</sup> Except for the First Auto Works

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or eliminate entre positions or transform the overall balance within a field – say, a shift from dominance by autonomous positions to the less autonomous pole” (Steinmetz, 2014, 2). In fact, the autonomy of dominant actors of the automobile subfield would be killed off by the internal and external forces of power struggles: an alliance between consumption investors<sup>46</sup> in the Central Committee, provincial governments and firm managers emerged. Under pressure from this vertical alliance of market-building, industrial policies designed by central planners were constantly under revision, and no coherent policy was pursued at the national level.

The central planner’s inability to design coherent policy was also caused by fiscal restraints: in 1979, the planning agencies had to reduce its investment to capital construction (Chen 1996, 239-40) because of the lack of hard currency. This provided possibilities for consumption investors to devise policies to outcompete central planners. One of the most effective weapons crafted and deployed by consumption investors for achieving this goal is to strip the monopolistic status of the CSAC (i.e., the successor organization to the Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry). The justifying frame used for these policies was to point to the endemic failures of centralized agencies in solving inefficiency and conflicts: Market-building is the only way out. This criticism was proved to be very difficult for central planners to counteract.

In stark contrasts to the disalignment of policy preferences in the meta-field, the managers of the Second Auto Works formed a contingent alliance with officials of Hubei

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<sup>46</sup> Chen Pixian is one of them who maintains close ties to Deng Xiaoping. His appointment as the provincial party secretary was engineered by Deng.

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provincial government in 1978. This alliance became the backbone of regional market-building. In fact, this alliance functioned as an investment fund. In 1981, the central government decided to reduce the scale of its investment to industrialization which in turn reduced the demand for automobiles. To deal with this situation, the provincial officials led by Chen Pixian not only decided to buy 3000 trucks for providing the Second Auto Works with the funding for industrial upgrading, but these officials also lobbied the central bank to provide the loans to resolve the financial difficulties of the Second Auto Works. On the supply side, to achieve economies of scale, the Second Auto Works implemented a vertical integration strategy which put 9 factories from 8 provinces into its syndicate. On the demand side, Chen decided to scrap the old trucks and buy new ones from this syndicate to replace the old ones. According to the analysis of the provincial bureaucrats, this investment decision would become profitable in two years (Chen 1996, 243). Chen sent a report to the State Council which presented this “trade-in” strategy as an effective tool of socialist modernization.

Moreover, the party committee of the Hubei provincial government also participated in lobbying the planning agencies. The Second Auto Works managers required to use the depreciation funds for capital construction. According to the formal regulations, this move cannot be approved. But the director of the Second Auto Works—Huang Zhengxia sought to get Chen Pixian’s support to make his case as an exception. In February 1980, Huang paid his third visit to Chen for obtaining this permission. According to Huang, all he needed was “a policy” to use the depreciation funds for continuing the construction of the Second Auto Works. Once he obtained the permission from the party committee of the provincial

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government, he would need no additional investment from the central government. Chen said to Huang that “this is a smart move which is much better than petition for more funding” (Chen 1996, 240). The party committee of the Hubei provincial government then approved Huang’s plan and sent it as a report to the central government on February 4.

The response of the constituents within the central government to the subfield bureaucrats’ industrial policies validates the encasing effects of political alignment in the meta-field on policy formation. In this case, the utilitarian logics of socialist ethics (Glaeser 2011, 107-9) shared by the divided elites in the Central Committee underpinned the integration of policy preferences. Although the central planners competed with the consumption investors, both camps were consequentialists who were interested in actualizing socialist modernization. This utilitarian logic was the *illusio* of the meta-field. On March 15, the State Council planning officials led by the leading central planner—Li Xiannian held a meeting to review the Second Auto Works’ proposal (Chen 1996, 240-1). If Li’s primary interests were to hold his agenda-setting power for his own sake, he could reject the proposal since it breached the regulations of central planning. But Li approved the proposal since he was also interested in actualizing socialist industrialization with whatever means which were necessary. “Values can provide a strong basis for integration of policy making and implementation” (Lieberthal 1992, 6).

Put it differently, the *illusio* of the meta-field structures the competitive dynamics between divided elites which structures the state-structured economic order. “Shared values, in short, can substantially affect the operations of a political system. Value consensus can basically reduce the need of the political leadership to develop additional resources to assure

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fidelity to their priorities and compliance with their policies” (Lieberthal 1992, 7). In the language of analytical political economy, these shared values incentivize the members of the Central Committee to overcome collective action problem. In this case, the Second Auto Works’ initiatives were symbolically valid for achieving the goals which the consumption investors and central planners in the Central Committee agreed to be important. On March 22, the State Council issued an order that formally approved the Second Auto Works’ initiatives as an industrial policy.

Soon, the consumption investors in the meta-field enthusiastically supported these industrial policies designed and implemented by the alliance between the Second Auto Works and the Hubei provincial government. On July 22, Deng Xiaoping—the leading consumption investor visited the Second Auto Works, he phrased the decision of producing civilian trucks as “a great one”. In addition, he notified Chen and firm managers that he had read the State Council’s order which approved their proposal to use depreciation funds for investment. Deng also expressed his interests in recommending their investment policy to other industrial enterprises (Chen 1996, 242). When Bo Yibo (at this point, he was a vice prime minister) — another leading consumption investor in the central committee paid a visit to the Second Auto Works in 1981, he openly endorsed the “trade-in” policy (i.e., the provisional government’s decision to scrap its old trucks for buying new ones from the Second Auto Works) as well. According to Bo, “there should be a plan to gradually upgrade the machineries. It is impossible to produce good products if the equipment is technologically backward. Old products should be scrapped. The vehicles which had traveled 0.5 million kilometers can be scrapped. This policy is great; it must be an effective one” (Chen 243). Chen then seized this



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chance to lobby the President of the People's Bank of China and Bo Yibo to provide loans for the Second Auto Works.

This alliance between firm managers, provincial officials, and consumption investors, or if you will, a faction within the state field became a potent force of market-building. The People's Bank of China then provided the Second Auto Works with a 160-million-yuan loan. By the end of 1981, the demand of the Second Auto Works' trucks exceeded the supply. Between 1978 and 1981, the annual production at the Second Auto Works jumped from 5000 vehicles to 40000 ones; every year, the average cost per vehicle reduced 9.6 percent. By the end of 1981, the Second Auto Works had turned over 250-million-yuan revenues with 100-million-yuan taxes to the central government. The financial difficulties created by the lack of investment from central government was effectively resolved by this alliance between firm managers and provincial officials.

Eventually, the alliance between consumption investors and firm managers outcompeted the coalition between central planners and head of the centralized agency (the CSAC): the central government would abandon its role in directly crafting investment policy and left such roles to provincial state authorities in the late 1980s. The alliances of firm managers and provincial government replaced the centralized agency for market-building. From the late 1980s to today, the central government's main leverage for altering the national agenda for automobile development would be its ability to control the access of forging direct investment via manipulation of the desires of foreign firms to obtain access to China's domestic market.

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The Birth of the Developmental State: Central Planners, Shipbuilding Industry Subfield, and the Historical Origins of the Export-Oriented Industrialization Strategy

In contrast to the automobile and railway industry's extensive involvement in the Third Front, the lack of engagement of the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building (or simply the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry) created a new set of constraints and opportunities when it faced state-led economic liberalization. The lack of engagement in the Front generated three structural conditions<sup>47</sup>. First, unlike the automobile and railways industries, the shipbuilding industry did not obtain much funding from the Third Front. Given that the shipbuilding industry cannot be entirely developed in mountains, most of its production facilities remained in coastal areas. The decentralization of networks of operation was limited both in scale and depth.

More importantly, since the dominant actors of the military subfield decided to combine mass mobilization of militias and to expand its still ill-equipped ground force as its strategic force to fight off a potential Soviet invasion or American amphibious assault, the development of naval armament programs was constrained (Fravel 2019). This collective strategy in the military subfield which favored preparations for conventional total war to deter the two nuclear great powers was endorsed by Mao Zedong as the only practical response to external threats to the CCP. The high command found itself *technologically* cannot rely on thermonuclear weapons to resolve existential insecurity.

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<sup>47</sup> The Front did not include seaports; in 1973 Prime Minister Zhou Enlai ordered to renovate and develop seaports as a separate project. This project excluded the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry since its duty primarily focused on manufacturing vessels. Rather, the project was nominally supervised by the State Planning Commission, funded by the State Capital Construction Commission and carried out by the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication; the PLA Navy was instructed to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Transport.

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Although the PLA successfully conducted the first thermonuclear test on 17 June 1967, the armed forces still lacked the capabilities of mutual assured destruction since the PLA did not have strategic bombers or Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) in service. The PLA acquired limited nuclear retaliation capabilities in 1971 when the DF-3 missile system was pressed into service (and the DF-3 missile system, which was an intermediate-range ballistic missile with a range fewer than 3000 kilometers, was not able to reach Moscow). In fact, the newly acquired nuclear retaliatory capabilities was far from assured. The only “reliable” operational method to conduct nuclear strike was to use the obsolete H-6A bomber (i.e., a license-built version of the Soviet Tu-16 bomber) which was pressed into service in 1969 to conduct suicidal one-way air raid. The PLA never successfully acquired ICBMs that were able to reach the United States before the Front was abandoned in 1980 (Lewis and Di 1992). In total, fewer than ten DF4 missiles (the missile which could carry a megaton warhead to a maximum range of 4800 kilometers) were produced in total before 1980. Some of these DF-4 missiles entered initial service in 1971 (Lewis and Xue 1991, 213). “In 1984, the probability of successful Chinese nuclear retaliation against the European part of the Soviet Union (i.e., Soviet territory west of the Urals) was 38 percent for day-to-day alert status; if Chinese nuclear forces were on full alert, the probability would increase to 64 percent” (Riqiang 2020, 86). In the case of deterring the United States, the PLA nuclear forces appeared to be even weaker: “In 2000, however, the only type of Chinese weapon that could reach the continental United States was the vulnerable, silo-based, intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)” (Riqiang 2020, 86)<sup>48</sup>. Consequently, the high command (i.e., the Central Military

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<sup>48</sup> This refers to the DF-4 missile mentioned above.

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Commission) was forced to prioritize the Third Front as the primary industrial bases of its military doctrine which heavily relied on its massive conventional troops since its thermonuclear weapons alone were inadequate for resolving existential insecurity before the nuclear rocket force finally came online in the mid-1980s.

Since military-industrial preparations for conventional total war were central to the military doctrine, the PLA Navy received limited funding for its surface fleet. On several occasions, the navy ordered new frigates to replace its aging gunboats built in the World War Two when the leading central planner—Prime Minister Zhou Enlai approved this request, but this funding alone was insufficient for the entire industry to upgrade its obsolete technologies. The only exception in naval armament programs was the development of the nuclear submarine force which was personally supported by Mao Zedong. From the viewpoint of securing political survival, the nuclear submarine force was key to the PLA's second-strike capabilities in the long term since only the nuclear submarines were unlikely to be destroyed in the first strike. Consequently, the PLA Navy, the main client of the shipbuilding Industry, remained as a coastal defense force. The primary role of the surface fleet was to conduct counter-amphibious operations and secure the territorial waters. In addition, most funding for the nuclear submarine programs went into research facilities which were unavailable for the majority of the production facilities to the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building. The only major investment of the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building was its new industrial complexes for producing torpedo boats and diesel-powered submarines in the Third Front. These facilities were never intended to be built as the replacement of the most advanced and productive facilities (such as shipyards) in the First Front.

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In 1969, when Li Zuopeng (the Political Commissar of the People's Navy; the Deputy Chief of the General Staff)—the senior naval officer of the Lin Biao clique (i.e., the main implementers of the decentralization strategy in the military-industrial subfields) was appointed as the director of the Leading Group of the Shipbuilding Industry of the Central Military Commission, Li decided to expand the Third Front industrial bases of shipbuilding industry as a part of the rapidly growing defense industry. However, this directive was overturned in 1972 when the central planners regained some agenda-setting power at national scale. Partly because the downfall of the Lin Biao clique in 1971 had led to the removal of Li Zuopeng from power; partly because the scale of industrial development had overreached the fiscal capacities of the central government; and partly because the central planners within the State Council considered the ambitious program of rebuilding an entire shipbuilding industry in mountains to be unpractical and thus wasteful and unnecessary. In addition, unlike other capital-intensive transport industries such as automobile, railways and aviation, the fixed cost of running shipbuilding factories in caves that were thousands of kilometers away from sea was ridiculously high. For testing the products, these factories had to send the disassembled ships to seaports and then reassembled them for testing. Eventually, the Minister decided to sell/transfer most of these facilities to provincial authorities in the post-1978 reform era.

Without much military funding, the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building had to seek alternative approaches to gather economic capital. The limited funding from the People's Navy was further reduced in the early 1980s when the CCP's central leadership decided to cut the defense budget. In fact, the naval armament programs would not regain importance in the agenda of the Central Committee until the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. As a result of this

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reevaluation to the military strategy in the main overarching field, the political influences of the high command to policies inside the industrial subfields were weakened in the post-1978 period (Although this certainly does not suggest that the pursuit of national security becomes irrelevant to the members of the Central Committee).

When the Front was halted in 1980, most Front industrial bases administered by the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building faced severe economic difficulties the existing facilities in the coastal areas could produce the same product at much lower fixed costs. Consequently, these military-industrial bases which had been tasked to produce torpedo boats and diesel-powered submarines soon were forced to produce civilian products such as automobile engines, bicycles, and refrigerators (Chen 2003, 321-25). In the post-1978 reform, Chai decided to focus on investing its coastal facilities for industrial upgrading (Chai [1982b] 2000, 74-7), while he continued to provide some orders to the Front facilities by “outsourcing” tasks from coastal industrial bases. Based on these decisions, the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building gradually transferred/sold the rest of its Third Front factories to the provincial governments.

The minister of shipbuilding industry — Chai Shufan<sup>49</sup> did not have the fortune of his comrades in the automobile and railways industry to shield himself from vicious factional struggles initiated by the mass mobilization camp both from top and below during the Cultural Revolution by pointing to his “usefulness” in the Third Front. However, he was indispensable to the administration of the socialist economy for a different reason: the management, use and accumulation of hard currency. Trained as a custom officer before he

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<sup>49</sup> Chai was commissioned in 1977 as the minister of shipbuilding industry; by this point the mass mobilization camp had been weakened since the leading figures of this camp in the meta-field were arrested in 1976 shortly after Mao died.

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joined the Revolution, Chai was one of the few technocrats in the state field who had the economic expertise which were essential to the import-substitution strategy. In fact, the divided socialist state elites all realized that they had to import foreign technologies for achieving their common goal—building a socialist industrial society at national scale.

Furthermore, Chia's informal ties with central planners which originated from the early 1940s would be essential for the formulation of export-oriented industrialization of the shipbuilding industry in the post-1978 reform era. This relational configuration between the shipbuilding subfield and the planning subfield was weaponized by the central planners in the early to mid-1980s for fortifying their positions in the state field for exercising their veto power to changes in industrial policies.

Before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, Chai Shufan was himself a top central planner who was responsible for the formation, design, and implementation of the Five-Year Plans: Chai's career in the party-state began as a fiscal technocrat in the early 1940s. From the very beginning of his political career, he worked as a subordinate to Chen Yun in the Yan'an Marxist-Leninist Institute (i.e., the most important apparatus in the theoretical-ideological subfield of the Party). In 1949 and 1952, he served as Prime Minister Zhou Enlai's assistant during their two visits to the Soviet Union for economic, military, and technological aids (Gu 2000, 3-18). From 1952 he worked as the deputy director of the newly established State Planning Commission and then he was commissioned as the deputy director of State Capital Construction Commission in 1958<sup>50</sup>(Gu, 19-20). After the purges to the members of the three central planning agencies (i.e., the two mentioned above and the State

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<sup>50</sup> Chen Yun was the director.

Capital Construction Commission) in the mid-1960s, Chai was reassigned as the deputy minister of foreign trade in 1972. At this point, he worked as Li Xiannian<sup>51</sup>'s assistant for designing and implementing China's import-substitution plans for industrial upgrading too (Song 2000, 3; Gu 2000, 21-4). Chai's skills and ties with other central planners ultimately provided new opportunities for him to participate in the state-led institutional changes in the post-Mao reform.

Such a personal network among the central planners was one of the critical antecedents for the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building to maintain autonomous status for recasting its institutional structure for investment policy in the subsequent years of post-1978 reform. These inter-organizational networks in turn left an imprint on the form it assumed and channeled subsequent policy debates along particular paths. These network facilities the creation and accumulation of informational capital among central planners. For example, when Chai Shufan demanded to restructure the ministry into an "economic entity"—the Chinese State Shipbuilding Corporation, he sent personal letters and formal reports to the central planners in the Central Committee who had been his colleagues and superiors from his days in the State Planning Commission, the State Capital Construction Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Trade. As early as in April 1979, Chai started to utilize his ties with central planners in the meta-field to pursue his goals. In his letter sent to vice prime minister Wang Zhen, Chai urged Wang to instruct the State Planning Commission to design a plan for "three to five years" to "coordinate the demand of ships" ([1979] 2000, 54). Moreover, if

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<sup>51</sup>Li was vice prime minister in the 1970s who supervised the Front, international trade and import of foreign technologies; he was a leading central planner who survived the Cultural Revolution and remained in power. He became the head of the state (Chairman of the People's Republic) in the early 1980s.



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domestic industrial enterprises needed to import foreign vessels, Chai wanted the State Planning Commission to intervene by contacting the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building to arrange domestic production.

In this case, the minister successfully exhibited his alleged expertise of socialist modernization for turning this field- and competitive symbolic capital into changes in investment policy. Chai skillfully presented his demand as a critical factor which can potentially contribute to the central planners' state strategy of industrialization. To gain support from the domain central planners in the mate-field, Chai pointed out that his proposal was a necessary step to actualize these central planners' dream of plan-based industrialization. "We consider the design of a long-term developmental plan of shipbuilding industry as an urgent task which should be done as soon as possible" (Chai [1979] 2000, 54). In addition, Chai articulated his sectoral industrialization strategy as the vehicle of actualizing central planners' orders. "The Vice Chairman Li Xiannian's recent instructions for developing a long-term developmental guideline for the shipbuilding industry is absolute necessary. These instructions meet the [economic] reality of the industry" ([1979] 2000, 54). In other words, Chai skillfully demanded to restructure the central government's investment policy to provide him with the opportunities to obtain material, technologies, and money for carrying out industrial upgrading. His proposal received instant approvals from not only these central

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planners but direct support from the consumption investors too: Deng Xiaoping<sup>52</sup>, Chen Yun<sup>53</sup>, and vice prime ministers<sup>54</sup> all endorsed his plan.

Put it differently, the lack of involvement—in comparison to the degree and form of the Ministry of Railways and Chief Directorate of Automobile Industry—in the Third Front indirectly pushed the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building to seek export-oriented industrialization (Chai [1978] 2000, 41-53) as the alternative strategy for raising funding and vertical integration as the industrial policy to improve economic efficiency. To actualize this strategy, Chai's ties to central planners and his expertise in industrial planning and international trade were the two necessary conditions. This strategy was then transformed into the political-symbolic capital for both central planners and consumption investors to obtain agenda-setting power for directing national economy in contrasting but coherent forms. For central planners, the success of a centralized agency in generating revenues and industrial upgrading can be transformed into their agenda for creating more similar agencies under planning.

The restructured Sixth Ministry of Machine Building represented the birth of a new kind of massive industrial complex which was more economically efficient and technologically advanced. For marker builders, the success of Chai's shipbuilding industry could be articulated as a new path for national development: the integration of Chinese manufacturers into the international market for attracting foreign investment and technologies. As a result,

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<sup>52</sup> The leader of consumption investors

<sup>53</sup> The leader of central planners

<sup>54</sup> They are senior technocrats of the State Council who had veto powers to the operationalization of institutional reform and changes in fiscal discipline and monitored the design and implementation of industrial policies at ministerial level. Most of them were members of the Central Committee of the CCP at the same time.

both camps thought this move could be useful for their contrasting agendas.

Statement policy was shaped by the combination of effective bureaucratic coordination and entrance into the international market. In this case, contingent events also opened new possibilities for re-orienting institutional choices. While funding from the armed forces dwindled in the late 1970s, the international market of maritime technologies shrunk due to the oil crisis. At the same time, Chai Shufan was troubled by obsolete technologies and inadequate funding to restore mass production. Surprisingly, the lack of demand in the international market was an unprecedented opportunity for him: it lowered the cost of importing foreign technologies.

Indeed, the minister seized this opportunity to get orders from Hong Kong entrepreneurs and subsequently imported foreign technologies and introduced new industrial standards which met the requirements of western clients (Gu 2000, 24-8). According to Chai, “now Europe and America have exited the international market of shipbuilding. Japanese shipbuilding industry are focusing on technologically advanced equipment and special vessels. From the viewpoint of gaining hard currency for the socialist fatherland, the most promising commodity is export ships” (Chai [1982a] 2000, 64). Therefore “we must implement coherent policy, unified planning, and centralized strategy to deal with foreign [competitors]. We can have some domestic competition, but we should not let the outcome of such competitions to benefit the foreign [competitors]” (Chai [1982a] 2000, 64). In a few years, these “foreign” investments from Hongkong entrepreneurs and state funding from the Ministry of Transport transformed the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building into a competitive manufacturer in the global market.

In the mid-1980s, the Chinese State Shipbuilding Cooperation<sup>55</sup> was able to obtain 4% market shares in the global market of the civilian shipbuilding industry. This success would be phrased by central planners in the central committee as the exemplary success of the creative application of state-managed economic capital in advancing socialist modernization under central planning.

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<sup>55</sup> It was the successor of the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry from 1982; Chai was appointed as the founding president of the company.

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### **Conclusion State Strategies and Zeitgeist**

But it is not possible, Theodorus, that evil should be destroyed—for there must always be something opposed to the good<sup>56</sup>.

— Socrates 1990, 304

#### **Political Competition, Subfield Autonomy, and Policy Formation**

When viewed side by side, the episodes of political competition examined earlier constitute a history of socialist industrialization that is striking on two counts. First, because it consists of waves of actions and reactions: those exemplified by the Tsarist officers' reaction to Bolshevik leaders, Mao's reaction to the contingent alliance between consumption investors and central planners for the post-leap recovery (ca. 1961-64), and this alliance's reaction to mass mobilizers (ca. 1976-78), respectively. Although in some ways each wave is different from the ones follow, they are also very similar. Each wave is marked by a pragmatic, ruthless, and ultimately disturbing articulation of the *appropriate* solution to existential insecurity. These political articulations resulted in the reclassifications of priorities of the socialist party-state. Consequently, the fear of enemies shaped and reshaped the logic of practices: Leninist elites' action-orientation is geared toward preventive intervention—that is, a self-defeating project in which the self-proclaimed defenders of the spirit of the movement can characterize their repression as preemptive measures. We may not know the good (i.e., the correct approach to actualize the promised emancipation), but we do know the bad (i.e., the absolute necessity to crush the counterrevolutionaries).

Second, the history of socialist industrialization is striking because despite the fact that it consists of a series of actions and reactions, it displays a remarkable degree of continuity. This continuity can be seen on two levels. The first of these concerns the events that gave rise

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<sup>56</sup> See (Burnyeat, Levett, and Plato 1990, 304)

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to each wave of action. In particular, the tension between a totalizing dream of the coming of a non-violent, egalitarian, and emancipatory order and an empirical reality which always threatens to annihilate the socialist project resulted in the state terror against (imagined) enemies. The second level, however, is even more surprising because it concerns the reaction. What is unexpected is the degree to which those who react to each wave are also forced to make room for the undeniable roles of the consequentialist logic of practices. This priority of transforming agrarian societies into industrial one is the *illusio* of the mate-field of power.

To substantiate this theory, I combine theoretical assumptions and empirical analysis to get a detailed picture of what and how historical actors thought and acted. Because values vary across time and space, I think this is the best method for explaining the agency relations that are central to the closed-door state competition. The personal idiosyncrasies of socialist state elites in positions of power—the Central Committee of the Party—have important impacts on socioeconomic order at the macro level. In particular, the collective experiences of insecurity formed in bloody regional insurgencies between 1927 and 1949 critically affected the CCP elites' threat perceptions and opportunities in the global Cold War. Their misconceptions, fears, and fantasies (Fligstein, Stuart Brundage, and Schultz 2017) played important roles in the politics of industrialization. This existential insecurity resulted in the militarization of the post-revolutionary party-state.

The military merits formed in the founding struggles between mass-mobilizing CCP and elite-protecting counterrevolutionary warlords were central to the militarization of the Chinese socialist state. The Chinese generals were extensively involved in the making of state strategies of industrialization. Conversely, because the Russian Marxist intellectuals shared

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little operational experience with the former Tsarist officers who commanded the Red Army during the Russian Civil War, the bureaucratization of the Soviet state was much less militarized. As a result, Soviet generals were much less involved in economic policymaking which took place in the Central Committee of the Party.

This neo-Bourdieuian theory of socialist statecraft enables us to explain the historical origins of state capital differentiation in post-1978 China. In this sense, then, it was the classification struggles in the political sphere led the Chinese socialist elites to restructure the economic sphere by reclassifying “a definite social relation of production pertaining to a particular historical social formation, which simply takes the form of a thing and gives this thing a specific social character” (Marx and Mandel 1991, 953). Thus, it is because the competitive dynamics within the Chinese Leninist state gave rise to capital differentiation which allowed social labor to be commodified in forms that were incompatible with Soviet-type socialism, the economic institutions in post-1978 became more “adaptive” than the ones of the post-Soviet transition in which organized violence (for example, see Volkov 2002) was used for primitive accumulation (see Fraser and Jaeggi 2018). The post-1978 economic sphere (see Desan 2013) was shaped by these political forces (see Wright 1993, 219-25) structured by the symbolic parameters of the Leninist state.

In particular, the agency relations among the dominant actors conditioned the divergent trajectories of industrial reform designed by the actors in the ministerial subfields. Because the contingent alliance between consumption investors (led by Deng Xiaoping) and central planners (led by Chen Yun) outcompeted the mass mobilization camp (led by Marshal Lin and the Gang of Four) in 1976, the military logic of decentralized big push industrialization

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for preparing nuclear total war was abandoned. Consequently, policymakers in the ministerial subfields were able to articulate alternative policies that gave rise to state capital differentiation. On the one hand, industrial policy is the subject of political competition that needs to be articulated by competitors as the vehicle to fulfill universal interests. On the other hand, it is also weaponized by competitors to hold power (Bourdieu 2014) as their particular interests. The relative autonomy of the subfields (for example, see McDonnell 2020, 141) can be successfully defended by the subfield actors if their collective strategy can symbolically transform their performance into the justification of the existence of the subfield.

If the *illusio* of the subfield collapsed or the collective strategy of the subfield actors failed to transform their resources into field- and competitive-specific symbolic capital which can be recognized by the dominant actors, subfieldness can be killed off by the actors of the meta-field—the loss autonomy. This theoretical approach can explain the conversion, creation, and circulation of symbolic, economic, and informational capital in the central government, and how the three economic-industrial subfields (i.e., the three ministries) are created and recreated by the competitive dynamics over the collective strategy of industrialization inside the meta-field of the Leninist state. In this sense, the institutional variations of administrative states (McDonnell 2020) are shaped and reshaped by political competitions that need to be thematized in the procedural context of power struggles.

#### State Capital in the Global Spaces of Neoliberalism

Without wishing to present the reader with an all-inclusive “master interpretation”, a few possible theoretical implications can perhaps be presented here. In this thesis, I explored the historical origins of differentiated state capital in post-1978 China. The theoretical arguments offered here are rooted in the geopolitical context of the global Cold War in which the



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possibilities of a nuclear holocaust were central to the Chinese socialist elites' collective strategy of national development. Between 1949 and 1976, the prioritized universal interest of the Chinese socialist project is the development of defense capabilities.

Indeed, many of the inferences in this thesis such as my theoretic claim that the messianic self-understanding of socialist state elites that considers the Leninist state as the producer of a new emancipatory order challenges the conventional theoretical assumptions to authoritarian politics which impute state officials as self-interested actors who prioritize holding power for its own sake (which in turn implies that state-structured social order is a given product), serve as starting point for future research. The point is not that the currently prevalent economic and political accounts are altogether wrong. Rather, I argue there is a symbolic dimension of power struggles that has so far not been properly addressed. Any future work on state capital beyond my own focus of socialist China during the Cold War era would almost certainly amend, refine, or challenge the arguments offered here.

I would also welcome a literature exploring the varieties of state capital. Different state strategies of industrialization existed in other national systems of political economies outside this global Cold War space as well. In the case of post-soviet state formation, for example, state control of strategic sectors was and still is a hallmark and a defining feature of the Russian leviathan in the time of Putin. In the developing world, state-owned enterprises play important roles in national economies as well. The strategic sectors in India, for example, are owned by the state. In recent years, the military establishments of the Leninist party-states in North Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam have been working on national economies behind the scenes as well. I suspect each of these subtypes of state capital might have different pathways to

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their emergence, alternative sources of crystallization, and diverse mechanisms of differentiation from the ministries in socialist China I discuss here.

Differentiation of state capital can also be treated as an independent variable for outcomes other than authoritarian resilience and economic development. For example, the Polanyian effects (1985) state capitals have on the domestic responses to global neoliberal capitalism (Chen 2018) or the redistribution of social services are natural areas for consideration. In this sense, state capital is of importance because the fate of the developing world is interconnected to the rise and expansion of market fundamentalism.

Moreover, the reach of state capital can go beyond the territorial boundaries of nation-states. However, their modes of operation differ from the ones of private capital to a great extent. After all, Ching Kwan Lee's sociological analysis to Chinese state capital in Africa reveals that it can "adapt to local conditions in its attempt to realize its encompassing and multidimensional agenda, more so than global private capital, whose single-minded profit motive makes it more mobile" (159). In this sense, a comparative study of state capital in the global spaces of neoliberal economic order would contribute to our understanding of state-society coalitions in the global periphery (for example, see Kohli 2020) from a new analytical angle. My hope is that such analyses would clarify the causal mechanisms that produced these socioeconomic orders, especially the role of economic sovereignty, or the lack thereof.

A final fruitful path for research would be to systematically explore the actual political processes which mediate elite politics and the (re)configuration of state capital. Such an inquiry is important not only because of the potential implications to social justice but also because of the intellectual consequences. After all, state always makes claims of economic

capital. Without economic capital, the state cannot exercise its coercive force. That is to say, we might regard the differentiation of state capital in the global spaces of neoliberal capitalism as a consequence of “a new historical intensification of the contradiction between the forces and relations of production in an age of increased scientific and technical complexity” (Joas 2003, 106) and where informational capital is increasingly central to post-Fordist methods of decentralized production. In this regard, striving to understand the means by which a more inclusive mode of policy formation might lead to more equitable futures has potentially enormous sociopolitical consequences.

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