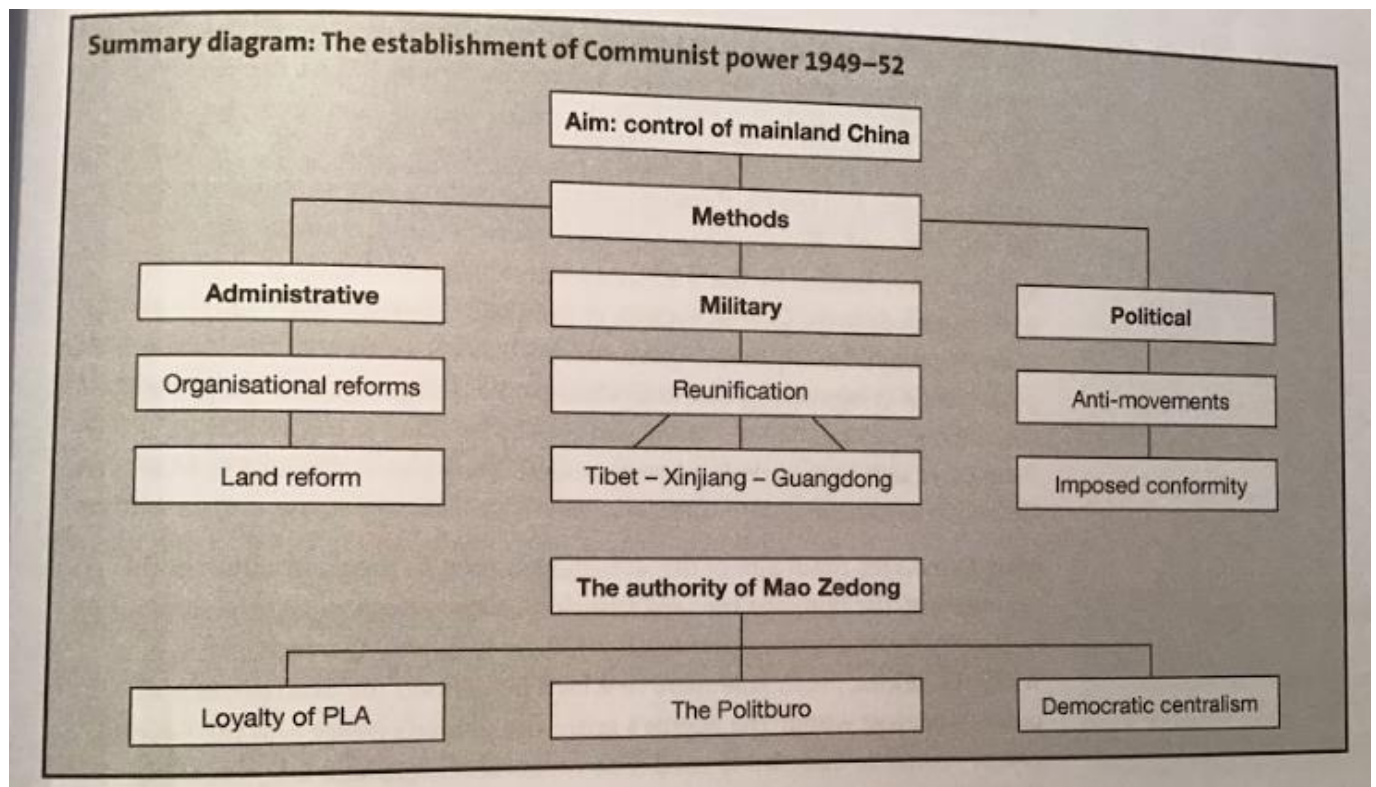


## The Early Years of the PRC 1949-1956 - early political control and administrative organisation

There are many strands to the establishment of Communist Party rule in the early years - 1949-52. The below chart gives an overview. Use this for reference as each 'strand' is covered.



**Political control** including: Administrative structure, registration, military control in Tibet, role of Mao NB Political control also includes the Anti's movements and conformity, studied later.

Lynch, Mao's China p43-53; Stewart, China 1900-1976 p88-108

**Mao takes power in 1949 on 1st October, in Tiananmen Square and China becomes the People's Republic of China.**

**To start**, Mao did not embark on reform.

He did seize assets of foreigners (except the USSR), and members of the GMD who had fled. He also nationalised banks and utilities.

However:

- Middle classes were not immediately purged as they made up the civil servants and managers required to run the country in the short term. They were offered jobs within the new administration.
- So too, we expatriate Chinese who returned.

**Administrative Structure of the PRC:**

There were now 4.5 million members of the CCP.

Overall power lay with the Central People's Government Council, a group of 56 party members, the majority from the Yanan Years. 6 of these members were vice-chairmen; **Mao was Chairman.**

To rule, China was divided into 6 regions ruled by regional Bureau:

North East China  
North China  
East China  
Central South China  
South West (inc Tibet) China  
North West China

In each region there was a:

Chairman  
Party Secretary - key post  
Military commander (of the PLA)  
(Army) Political commissar

The position of military commander and political commissar were always PLA officers so China was effectively controlled/governed by the military - a situation Mao felt provided the greatest stability/control.

Also importantly, key roles in key areas went to major CCP figures. Eg In the South West, Deng Xiaoping held both first secretary and political commissar. With these leading figures in key roles, authority was effectively centralised. It was almost back to the days of the Empire. The leading role of Mao's thought was written into the constitution. See below for more on this.

### **CCP rule in the PRC under Mao - rhetoric vs reality:**

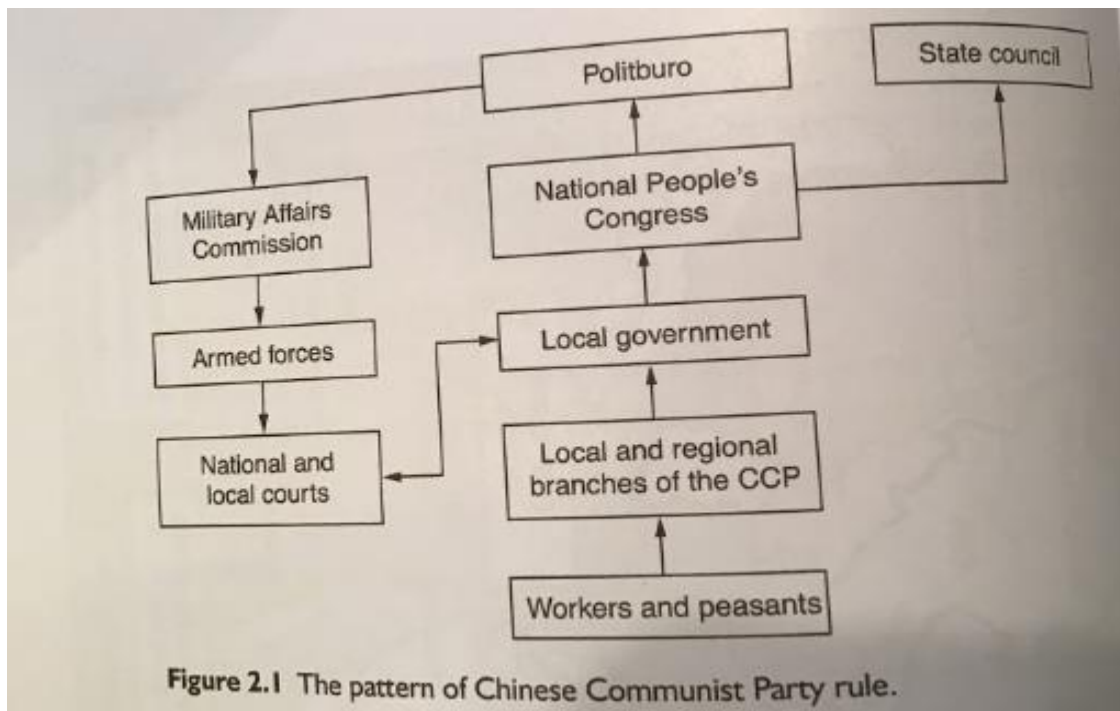
Due to the fact Communism (from the USSR and into China) believed in Democratic Centralism (see other sheet and below), China under the PRC should have been the most democratic and influential experience a 'civilian' - or importantly in China, a 'peasant' - could have.

This is due to the fact all policies originated from the people, were discussed by the people and agreed by the people. (They were then modified and enacted by the central authority whose power was never to be questioned).

In addition, the election of local and national party officials - including those elected to the National People's congress, the national decision making body - were the 'people's choice'.

However, in reality, there was only one party and even 'independents' had to agree to the absolute power of the CCP to rule.

## The Pattern of Chinese Communist Party rule:



Looking at this, all ideas come from the workers and peasants. However, this was not the case!

To clarify, what is what in the above chart:

The State Council - 56 key members of the Communist party, headed by the Chairman, Mao.

The Politburo - an inner core of 20 leading members of the CCP with the 5 man standing committee within this of Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai (Premier), Zhu De (Head of the PLA) and Chen Yun. They were the key policy makers. This is part of the:

The National People's Congress - elected members of the CCP, should be formulating policy and representing the people. In reality, they rubber stamp anything done by the Politburo.

NB in principle the role of Chairman does not have any power. In the situation above, it was more a recognition of the power Mao already had. Due to the fact the 'Chairman' role is not a true policy making role, it allowed Mao to step in and out when he wanted. The reality being the policies of the CCP were his in the main.

Another way to look at this is:

Communist Party as the overarching power

Under this with overlapping personnel and influence are:

State Council    National People's Congress    PLA    Chinese People's Consultative Conference

**Mao's ultimate authority:** Read p90 of Stewart

### **Military control and 'reunification campaigns':**

As noted, half of local representation came in the form of PLA officers. As such, military control was to be expected to a certain extent.

Reunification campaigns are a euphemism for forcibly bringing into the line invaded provinces such as Tibet (Xizang) or Xinjiang.

**Xinjiang:** This is an asset rich province in the North West of China. Through the late 30s and early 40s, the Russians had held massive influence as they traded concessions on oil in payment for help controlling the ethnic minorities. This continued to the end of the civil war when Jiang Jieshi negotiated an end to Soviet occupation in the Sino Soviet treaty whilst agreeing to power sharing with the East Turkestan republic.

The communists took over and invited key leaders of The East Turkestan republic to attend a Political Consultative Conference. The Russians encouraged them to attend but they were killed in a plane crash en route - some suspicion of foul play.

After this, leaders of the republic agreed to be subsumed into Xinjiang. The PLA surrounded the capital of Xinjiang and expelled the remaining Nationalists, thus liberating it (into CCP rule). However, the CCP/PLA ran out of resources and asked for Soviet help.

**Tibet:** July 1949 Tibet expelled the nationalists and contacted the US and said they would defend themselves aggressively against communist aggression. Copies also sent to Beijing who eventually opened negotiations. BUT meantime, Oct 1950, 40,000 communist troops entered Tibet, theocratic government wiped out. The Indian PM supported communist China so did not support Tibet, UN did nothing as tied up with the Korean War.

### **Registration: Hukou, Danwei, Dang'an**

**Household registration or Hukou** had begun in 1945 but this was continued under the Communists and was formalised in 1958 Hukou Registration Regulation.

A household could be a family or a collective unit such as a factory dorm or a temple.

The aim was to '...maintain social order, protect the rights and interests of citizens and to be of service to the establishment of socialism.'

Registration was linked to food ration cards and the 'head' of the household must report every change to a household so as to get the correct food cards.

The key point is that there is a different hukou for urban and non urban residents with urban residents getting more benefits thus, it has been linked to social inequality. Importantly, until recently, it has been very difficult to move as one's hukou, particularly to get a re-classification (only 1.5% reclassification per year)

Reasons for implementing the hukou system:

- Keep a viable agricultural population (1957-1960 the urban populace grew by 90%)
- Control residents in the urban areas who are more prone to revolt
- Control residents in the rural areas to maintain a base of agriculture to support the country

As noted above, the urban residents gained access to many welfare benefits and food ration cards in the towns meant access to food. (very important later on). In the rural areas, the hukou did not necessarily

provide access to food but was a means of forcing rural citizens to produce their own food - and food for the country.

What are the positives and negatives of the hukou system?

Class labels (chengfen) were also given to every individual. This includes 'family background', 'occupation' and 'individual status'. There were 60 categories eg revolutionary cadres, intellectuals and professionals, landlords. These in turn were ranked good, middle or bad in terms of their presumed loyalty to the revolution.

Simplified later to red/black and would influence a family's future as the label was inherited.

**Danwei System** Danwei is a generic term for a socialist work place and related activities. It can be translated as work unit and has that meaning today. However, when it was set up, The system was designed so that everyone had to belong to a "danwei" or work unit. The work unit provided employment, food, housing, education for family and retirement benefits.

If someone did not belong to a danwei, it meant that they did not have any of those things.

In principle it was a very good thing and helped to organise migration of people from country to city post 1949.

However, it is also a means of control and a key way of implementing party policy. And the danwei was involved in every part of a person's life including marriage and even birth control.

**Dangan** means a 'record'. It is a literally a permanent record of each individual, starting with school, to monitor their activities and 'attitudes'. The danwei and the Public State Bureau hold a copy and it was needed for any change in life, be it work or personal. Peasants and those with small holdings may not have a dang'an.