

**THE MAKING OF UNIQUE ROAD IN
CONTEMPORARY CHINA:
Structural Change and Diverging Impacts**

V1

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Description

Some people believe that China's magic is providing a unique road compared to other stories of modernization. This course provides a lens for understanding this process, no matter you agree or disagree with this *Sonderweg* narrative. We will demonstrate China's remarkable process of transformation since late 1970s from the perspective of social structural change. In particular, this course will highlight the impacts of changing social structure on state-business relationship. For example, how a new group of private businessmen reemerge after the interruption of planned economy from 1949-1978? What can we expect from rising labor conflicts and anxious urban middle class? Will the new generation of bourgeoisie buying out the world? What should you know before nailing a contract with your Chinese partner? These questions will be addressed through a combination of extensive readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. Yet it is not a course specifically for Asian studies, Chinese Politics, or business management as you probably had enrolled in other classes. We are open for anyone who is interested with any background.

Format

This course consists of 12 in-class hours (8 x 1 ½ hour seminars). This course will meet once a week, except for special notification, for 8 weeks. Class will begin with lecture and end with discussion normally. Because a portion of each session will be devoted to discussion, students are encouraged to read assigned references prior to the lecture.

Evaluation

Students are given a mark (out of 20) and, if they pass, are awarded 1 ECTS (2 ECTS credits for international students). This course will use an essay way: to submit an essay of a maximum of 4 pages (15000 characters). The student will be required to hand this assignment in on the teacher's digital work environment on the Moodle website three weeks after the end of the course. Plagiarism will NOT be tolerated.

Reading list will be provided in an updated version later.

SESSION 1. Structural Transformation of Chinese Society

This session will provide a big picture on how the structure of social classes has been changed in China since the market transition in late 1970s. The baseline will be a story of transformation from a rank society without classes to a stratified society with classes. Consensus as well as debates on social class analysis in China will be introduced, but the point is to provide a tool to understand the complicated class scheme in this country.

SESSION 2. Meritocracy and Political Elites

Chinese politicians are often given a stereotype of taciturnity and mystery. But they are indeed the force that rule and run this country. How are they selected? What factors will influence their promotion? What is the difference between “cadre” and “leader”? This session will disclose the nomenklatura system by introducing key institutions that define Chinese politics.

SESSION 3. The Rising of Middle Class and its Enemy

Many observers, including Chinese politicians, believe that if the middle class cannot expand, the whole nation will be caught in a ‘middle income trap’. Chinese per capita is approaching to 9000 USD, while the large new middle class is becoming increasingly anxious. This session will introduce life, work, value, and behaviors of urban middle class in China.

SESSION 4. The End of Village and the Begin of New Peasants

Agriculture for a long has not been a profitable sector for Chinese peasants. They have been becoming the so-called migrant workers to work in industrial sectors, while their lands are seizing by the government for housing construction. This session will firstly introduce literature on the problems of peasants who lose their lands, but end with new studies on recent new rural urbanization.

SESSION 5. The New Chinese Working Class, and Robots

More and more new generation of working class kids are entering into factories, but they have vastly different faces and brains with their parents. Most of them are no longer the “exploited labor” working in the shallow sweatshops. And they are migrating from coastline to interior cities, from China to Africa. China has to learn

how to deal with a new type of labor-capital relationship, before robots “dominate” the production process.

SESSION 6.State-business Relationship: History and Current Days

This session tries to understand the current state-business relationship from history. It includes a long history from the old Chinese civilization, as well as a short history from the late 1970s. We will review those mainstream arguments on China’s clientelist local state and “red capitalists”, especially how their coalition make the economic booming happen. Yet we will also point out B side of this theory, especially its fundamental transformation due to recent anti-corruption campaign.

SESSION 7.Making Capitalists for Two Generations

This is a “sister” session of the previous one, but shifts to the side of economic elites. For the first generation of bourgeoisie remerged from market transition, their social origins are as diverging as Chinese economic opportunities. We will introduce a typology of becoming rich business people in the past four decade. The biggest challenges, however, are how to pass their fortune to the younger generation.

SESSION 8.Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Sphere

CSR has made remarkable progress in China due to increasing public concern on non-economic development, like humanity, environment, and civil right. All social classes we have discussed in this course have played their roles in pushing the emergence of a new type of public sphere, and the future hinges on the game of all stake holders. It could an ideal ending as the last session of this course.