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FRAGMENTED AUTHORITARIANISM AND POLITICS OF HYDROPOWER IN
CHINA
CASE STUDIES OF TGP & NRP

WONG MIU FAI TOMMY

MPHIL

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

2010

FRAGMENTED AUTHORITARIANISM AND POLITICS OF HYDROPOWER IN
CHINA
CASE STUDIES OF TGP & NRP

by
WONG Miu Fai Tommy

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences
(Political Sciences)

Lingnan University

2010

ABSTRACT

Fragmented Authoritarianism and Politics of Hydropower in China -- Case Studies of TGP & NRP

by

WONG Miu Fai Tommy

Master of Philosophy

Thanks for economic improvements since the ‘open-door policy’ in 1978; China’s international status has been improving economically and even politically. For instance, she has become a major contributor of BRIC which is a group of four most rapidly developing countries in the world, i.e. Brazil, Russia, India and China, and the largest buyer of U.S. treasury bonds in the world. Nevertheless, a number of intellectuals like Liu and Shirk pointed out that there are still a number of difficulties – both exogenous and endogenous – underneath.¹ This research would like to concentrate on one of the aspects which Chinese investigators frequently highlighted: the hydropower development.

This thesis will concentrate on the most controversial dam construction projects in China – Three Gorges Project in central China and the Nu River Project in Yunnan (hereafter abbreviate as ‘TGP’ and ‘NRP’ respectively) to examine the roles, influences and linkages of several critical actors in midst of decision-making processes – i.e. central leadership, provincial governments and the civil society in diverse perspectives. By utilizing the model of ‘Fragmented Authoritarianism’ (hereafter abbreviate as ‘FA’) suggested by Kenneth Lieberthal, I argue that the central leadership is still the most critical stakeholder who determines the success or failure of mega hydropower development projects albeit the increasing decentralization and rapid emergence of environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the recent decades after economic liberalization of China.

Besides, the thesis would sketch out the tactics of participating and negotiations in the policy making processes of local leaders and social organizations and explain the apparent deliberation for hydropower development of the central authorities and the abilities of social organizations to halt dam constructions in the latest NRP in spite of being the most deterministic stakeholder in the polity. In the end, I would summarize general findings and enrich the FA model to facilitate the predictability of the model after social and economic changes associated with economic reforms.

¹Liu Guiping, “China still needs to be low profile (*Zhongguo reng xu taoguang yanghui*),” *The United Morning Post* (Lianhe Zaobao), 7 Nov, 2009, p. 26; Also see Susan L. Shirk. *China – Fragile Power*. U.S.A: Oxford University Press, 2007

DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

Wong Miu Fai Tommy
Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

FRAGMENTED AUTHORITARIANISM AND POLITICS OF HYDROPOWER IN
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CASE STUDIES OF TGP & NRP
by
WONG Miu Fai Tommy

Master of Philosophy

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The List of Abbreviations

CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CBC	China Construction Bank
CBIK	Centre of Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CTGC	China Three Gorges Corporation
CYPC	China Yangtze Power Corporation Limited
ENGOS	Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations
FA	Fragmented Authoritarianism Model
FN	Friend of Nature
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEV	Green Earth Volunteers
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GONGOS	Government-organized Non-Governmental Organizations
GV	Green Volunteers
GW	Green Watershed
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
MOCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
MW	Megawatt
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NGNCEs	Non-Governmental & non-commercial Enterprises
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPC	National People's Congress
NPOs	Non-Profit Organizations
NRP	Nu River Project
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSC	The Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP
RwD	Development-oriented Resettlement
SEPA	State Environmental Protection Agency
SOs	Social Organizations
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
TGP	Three Gorges Project
TVEs	Township-Village Enterprises
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
WB	World Bank
YASS	Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences
YHNHD	Yunnan Huadian River Hydropower Development Co. Ltd.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Rapid economic development in China has drawn the worldwide attention. In the recent financial tsunami and previous financial turmoil in the late 1997, she also has played an outstanding and dynamic role in the global economy. Yet, the economically prosperous surface could not fully cover a series of socio-political problems. Intellectuals and commentators -- both from overseas and domestic -- have expressed their concerns of China's prospects. Thanks to economic improvement since the 'open-door policy' in 1978; China's international status has been improving economically and even politically. For instance, she has become a major contributor of BRIC, which is a group of four largest developing countries in the world, i.e. Brazil, Russia, India and China, and has been the largest buyer of U.S. treasury bonds in the world. Nevertheless, a number of intellectuals like Liu and Shirk have pointed out that there are still a number of difficulties -- both exogenous and endogenous -- underneath.¹ Shirk even described that China as aggressive and autocratic when it dealt with well-publicized domestic issues that threaten the regime². This research would like to concentrate on one of the issues which Chinese investigators frequently highlighted: the hydropower development.

With hydropower development, China is the top developer amongst developing countries in the world. Implementing the advanced principle of Resettlement with Development (RwD, also known as Developmental Resettlement, Development-oriented Resettlement, etc.) in dam construction project enables China to gain admiration from the World Bank³. Hence, numerous developing countries have followed the Chinese

¹Liu Guiping, "China still needs to be low profile (*Zhongguo reng xu taoguang yanghui*)," *The United Morning Post* (Lianhe Zaobao), 7 Nov, 2009, p. 26; Also see Susan L. Shirk. *China – Fragile Power*. U.S.A: Oxford University Press, 2007

² Shirk, 2007: 11.

³Brooke McDonald, Michael Webber & Duan Yuefang, "Involuntary Resettlement as an Opportunity for Development: The Case of Urban Resettlers of the Three Gorges Project, China," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 1 (2008): 83 &86. Tan pointed out that the World Bank had examined the Shuikou Project and claimed it as 'the best-practice example of properly planned and executed involuntary

model as bailout of poverty, such as Nepal and Congo, etc⁴. In the mindset of elites from developing countries, huge dams represent the modernization and technological advancement or improvement of the countries. It is believed that the quicker dams are being constructed, the larger and faster the revenue from generating hydroelectricity realized⁵. Despite rising opposing voice to the construction of dam in the world, there is still a perception that dam-building is a necessary construction of infrastructure for an economy to develop⁶. Subsequently, developing countries are eager to construct thousands of dams in their territories in the fastest pace⁷. McDonald and her fellow authors pointed out that Chinese dam builders had been involved into over 90 projects globally and these projects are built in diverse developing countries in accordance with Chinese model of dam construction⁸. Thus, the in-depth analysis in Chinese hydropower projects could have strong predictability in the development of these facets in other developing countries.

On the other hand, further economic growth and material prosperity of the society is still an essential strategy for the development of China. Particularly this concept is explained as the major channel for the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter as the party or CCP) to consolidate the legitimacy of its administration⁹. In addition, the

resettlement in the world. See: Yan Tan, *Resettlement in the Three Gorges Project* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), 31

⁴Peter Bosshard, "Three Gorges Dam – Still China's Model for the World?" [Internet] (Accessed 16 July 2009), (International Rivers, 5 July 2009); available from <http://www.internationalrivers.org/en/blog/peter-bosshard/three-gorges-dam-%E2%80%93-still-china%E2%80%99s-model-world> .

⁵Brian Richter, 'Damming the Yangtze: Are a Few Big Hydropower Projects Better than a Lot of Small Ones?', *Scientific American*, [Internet] (accessed from 10 Nov, 2009) ,available from <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=damming-the-yangtze> (13 Oct, 2009)

⁶Thayer Scudder, *The Future of Large Dams – Dealing with Social, environmental, Institutional and Political Costs* (London: Earthscan, 2006), 2

⁷Richter, 2009

⁸Kristen McDonald, Peter Bosshard & Nicole Brewer, "Exporting Dams: China's Hydropower Industry Goes Global", *Journal of Environmental Management* 90 (2009): S294-S302.

⁹"The Issue of Challenges to the Legitimacy of CCP Rule" André Laliberté & Marc Lantaigne eds. (London: Routledge, 2008), 8-10

central government actively implemented fiscal policies to stimulate domestic consumption after the financial tsunami, so the demand for energy in China is anticipated to skyrocket. In the 11th Five-Year-Plan, diversifying the origins of fossil fuels and renewable energy dominated the lengthy content¹⁰. Thus, energy development in China becomes an important issue for China studies, especially its hydropower development. Unfortunately, the existing research has concentrated on the ‘going-out’ strategy of the Chinese government and state-owned petroleum enterprises. Although there are increasing literatures trying to extend to the development of renewable energy, research about Chinese hydropower development still forms in a low proportion. Thus, how the transformation of political and administrative contexts since the economic reforms influences the hydro-electricity development in China is a key question for those who would like to investigate the circumstances behind the China’s skyrocketing economic betterment.

Besides, when a gigantic project – no matter its scale – is on the track, thousands of people will be affected in resettlement, construction, planning and beneficiary. Thus, the making-decision process of projects reflects not only the effectiveness of a government policy, but also influences thousands of, or even millions of people, enterprises and other social actors. It is, thus, of vital importance for understanding how the authorities mobilized and managed the dam construction and how various social actors expressed their opinions for the projects. Hence, giant projects essentially are no longer mere economic policies, but also reflect the power and distribution competition

¹⁰Xinhua News Agency, *CPC Proposal Urges Energy Development* [Internet] , 19 October 2005, (accessed 30 November, 2009); available from <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/guideline/157456.htm>

among authorities and various stakeholders, so they are indeed arenas of political contest¹¹.

This thesis will concentrate on the two most controversial dam construction projects in China – Three Gorges Project in central China and the Nu River Project in Yunnan (hereafter abbreviated as ‘TGP’ and ‘NRP’ respectively) to examine the roles, influences and linkages of several critical actors – i.e. central leadership, provincial governments and the civil society in diverse perspectives. This enables us to have a more comprehensive and concentrated view of totally different consequences of both projects. In addition, this study reveals the constraints of the central leadership to implement the next step of its economic development strategy, other than relying on bare analyses about central-peripheral relationship or state-society relationship in China. Graph 1-1 shows the dimensions of research in this thesis. Amongst all social actors in the projects, the central government, local governments and officials and the civil society are selected to be the ‘apexes’ of research and reviews. Reciprocal interactions among these three actors would be discussed and analyzed. Conventionally, the central government was viewed as the paramount power and authority, in particular in the classical Leninist political system. Besides, local governments and the civil society are also the emergent actors in the decision-making process since economic liberalization in 1978. The leverages of mass media and international NGOs are also examined in this research. Nevertheless, they seem not to be as significant as individual actors in the decision making process. Subsequently, they would be discussed collaboratively with the civil society in the chapter 5. Apart from the interactions between these three main actors (via mass media and international NGOs as secondary players), this research will also explain the bargaining knots of various actors. These bargaining knots reflected their

¹¹Ranjit Dwivedi, *Conflict and Collective Action – The Sardar Sarovar Project in India* (London: Routledge, 2006): 9-34.

perceptions of their own interests or roles in the process. The word ‘knots’ is used because bargaining apexes in this triangular relationship did not just include individual units or organs, but a cluster of units or organs which have similar characteristics or missions, although there might be a specific organ or unit ascendant in the cluster¹².

Graph 1-1 – Diagram of Research Dimensions

Source: Author's interpretation

By utilizing the model of ‘Fragmented Authoritarianism’ (hereafter abbreviated as ‘FA’) suggested by Kenneth Lieberthal to investigate the decision-making processes of TGP and NRP, this thesis would like to tackle the following questions: Who were the major actors in the decision-making process of these two projects? How did these actors anticipate / exercise their own roles and the others’ in the projects? How did they deal with each other to fulfill their roles? How these two projects were applied to suit or

¹² Kenneth Lieberthal, Introduction: The “Fragmented Authoritarianism” Model and Its Limitations, in Kenneth Lieberthal & David Lampton eds. *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (U.S.A.: University of California Press, 1992)

improve the FA model? And eventually, how does political administrative reform in China contribute to the development of hydropower in China? In order to address these questions, data aim to construct arguments in the dissertation are collected from a wide range of Chinese or English literature, including scholarly journal articles, books related to Chinese bureaucracy or hydropower in China or other developing countries; and news articles accessed from either internet or credible posts in the world, such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, etc¹³. In addition, the research will be conducted in the qualitative historical and comparative approach with the case studies of the Three Gorges Project and Nu River Project. The literature about their construction would be analyzed, using the theoretical framework of FA model.

In the past, researches about central-peripheral relationships concentrated on the correlation of decentralization and economic reform via either particular economic indicators, such as fiscal flows, capital flows, etc; or the development in the coastal region¹⁴. However, findings from these two approaches could not be adapted to the inward shift in the focus of development in the 21st century. Additionally, these approaches could not deal with the cross-provincial and cross-agencies' nature of dam construction. The details of decentralization would be discussed in the following section.

¹³ The limitations of collecting data from reviewing literature should be mentioned herein. Due to the launch of 'guiding public opinion' campaign of the CCP during the decision making period of the TGP and the prohibition of entering reservoir areas of the Three Gorges Dam to conduct academic research, according to the Chinese Laws, data provided by Chinese literature was biased and unreliable, especially those related to TGP. Besides, because a number of unregistered ENGOs who have contributed a lot of efforts in suspending the NRP relied on internet and blogs to issue news and information, the reliability of data was in a certain degree questioned. Thus, English literature will share a greater proportion of reference so as to maintain the reliability of data.

¹⁴ For example, in the book edited by David Goodman and published in 1997 by Routledge, Hainan, Liaoning, Shandong, Shanghai and Zhejiang were chosen to be investigated; besides, Guangdong, Anhui, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Tianjin and Jiangxi in the books edited by Kendrischke and Feng and Fitzgerald respectively. See: David Goodman ed. *China's Provinces in Reform – Class, Community and Political Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997); Hans Hendrischke & Feng Chongyi eds. *The Political Economy of China's Provinces* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Unfortunately, the project-based research, or more precisely, having the research concentrating on and contrasting precisely two projects, might be argued to have limited applications for other aspects beyond the hydropower industry. In addition, the selection of specific couple of projects might be argued to degrade the ‘representativeness’ of the thesis. However, they are selected amongst a variety of dam construction projects in China because of their uniqueness and high representativeness. These two projects characterize the two critical stages of transformation of policy making in contemporary China. The determination of enforcing the TGP reflected features of transformation in policy making around the June-Fourth massacre in 1989. The unprecedented large scale of construction and resettlement in the project is the reason why the project drew the worldwide controversy, other than the autocratic stance of the central authority. Despite the centre’s autocracy, the bargaining postures of ministries and provinces could not thereby be ruled out. On the other hand, the NRP, to some extent, is less renowned, but this does not mean that it is less disputable and important. The fierce controversy was amplified by active lobbying of ENGOs (Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations), INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organizations) and the mass media’s cooperation. This indicates the emergence of other actors beyond the party state in contemporary China. Besides, the procedures of policy formulation of NRP are different from that of the TGP. In investigating in and contrasting these projects, it is not difficult to discover that the central leadership, provincial governments and NGOs had frequent interactions and influences to each other. Nonetheless, other projects, such as Sanmenxia Project in Yellow River and the Mekong River Project, which provoked equally high controversies might incur diplomatic variances. For instance, the Sanxiamen Project was largely influenced to the development of Sino-Soviet intimacy in the 1950s and the Mekong Project was suspended since the littoral countries in S.E. Asia,

like Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, opposed to the project jointly. This research aims to study the leverages of political transformation and the development of domestic hydro-politics in China, so diplomatic variance should be effectively eliminated. Thus, the cases of TGP and NRP were picked for study to have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of hydroelectricity development in China. From these two projects, we could further understand the constraints of China to develop its interior region as well as its hydropower potential. The implications of findings in this research for other projects, or even in other energy policies, should depend on other follow-up researches.

“Fragmented Authoritarianism” model and Chinese bureaucratic transformation

Table 1-2 – Type of Centre-Province Linkages and Directions of Flow

	Pre-reform Period		Reform Period	
Centre (Up-Down)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological introduction • Coercion • Command Approach • Patron-Client relations • Mass Mobilization • Conflict Nationalization 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control over leadership selection • Control over interest articulation • Merit-based recruitment • Interest re-distribution • Conflict Localization 	
Provinces (Bottom-up)	Administrative	Political	Administrative	Political
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Implementation • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleading • Persuasion • Patron-client relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Implementation • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Propositions • Opposition

With reference to the history of the PRC since its establishment, the process of Chinese bureaucratic system transforming could basically be delineated into two periods with the death of Mao. Features of bureaucratic system were shown on Table 1-2. The bureaucratic system in China was generally perceived as totalitarian model during the Mao's period and the system could be summarized as the following features: mighty central leadership, ideological mobilization, high conformity of localities, and nation-wide unitary, as well as comprehensive involvement of the central government. In this period, the central leadership actively involved itself in, and even dominated, the decision-making process and local governments were just its agents in following central commands with absolute conformity. Central commands would be legitimized, justified and promoted ideologically. Authorities and people were mobilized to actualize the visions promoted in the ideologies without allowing any opposition¹⁵. For instance, 'Taking steel as the key link' (*yi gang wei gang*) and 'Surpass the UK and overwhelm the US' (*chao ying gan mei*)¹⁶ were major slogans and ideologies promoted in the period of Great Leap Forward. Localities and individuals subsequently committed themselves to exploiting steel resources and heavy industries for radical industrialization.

The death of Mao means the PRC has entered a new era of economic development, as well as political transformation. The central leadership under Deng's instruction mobilized provincial governments to develop a new economic role to achieve high economic growth¹⁷. Additionally, through decentralization and empowerment of provincial governments, the provincial leaders would have greater autonomy to develop

¹⁵David Goodman, 'The Politics of Regionalism: Economic Development, Conflict and Negotiation' in David Goodman and Gerald Segal eds. *China Deconstructs – Politics, Trader and Regionalism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 7-8; Yang Zhong, *Local Government and Politics in China – Challenges from Below* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 5-6.

¹⁶Translated by author

¹⁷Janice L. Caulfield, 'Local Government Reform in China: a Rational Actor Perspective', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 72, no.2 (2006):254-255.

domestic economies. Consequently, there would be more interest clashes for provincial leaders to follow central instructions while fighting to maximize interests of provinces with regards to policies that reinforce economic growth¹⁸. Subsequently, it was generally agreed that the hierarchy had been pluralized and fractionalized. In her article, Caulfield summarized a series of decentralization reforms into three dimensions. They are: marketization, fiscal reforms and management and administrative reforms¹⁹. In essence, these decentralization reforms on the one hand could canvass support for economic reform from provincial leaders, while on the other hand, they could empower provincial governments to formulate tailor-made strategies for economic development²⁰. Nevertheless, Oksenberg sketched out the structure of the contemporary Chinese hierarchy and agreed that in spite of it being more fragmented, the core of hierarchy is still under the Soviet-Leninist style²¹. Thus, he concluded that no transformation has occurred systematically and the leadership might not have comprehensive planning and dimension for political reforms²². The philosophy of ‘crossing the river by touching stones’ is not only suitable for illustrating economic reform, but also political transformation as well²³.

Although decentralization contributed to the anxiety of political disintegration and the emergence of provincial protectionism, the necessity of decentralization for economic development could not be refuted²⁴. Decentralization brings space for local governments to have a more prominent role in policy making processes than before.

¹⁸ John Donaldson, ‘Provinces: Paradoxical Politics, Problematic Partners’ in Chung Jae Ho & Lam Tao-Chiu eds. *China’s Local Administration – Traditions and Changes in the Sub-national Hierarchy* (London: Routledge, 2009):27.

¹⁹ Caulfield, 2006: 258.

²⁰ Donaldson, 2009: 27.

²¹ Michel Oksenberg, ‘China’s Political System: Challenges of Twenty-First Century’, *The China Journal*, no.45 (January 2001), 25.

²² *Ibid*, 28.

²³ *Ibid*, 35.

²⁴ Yang, 2003, 4-5

Pessimists have argued that economic decentralization would prompt the centrifugalism of provinces, in particular in the 1980s, since provincial cadres committed themselves to develop their paddocks for self-sufficiency and imposed protectionist measures on inter-provincial trade. Each province acted like an individual actor and neglected the central authority. This phenomenon was known as ‘dukedom economies’ or ‘provincialism’²⁵. There was doubt that China might follow the path of USSR in going to collapse and separation²⁶. However, Goodman criticized the intellectual weaknesses of the causation of economic decentralization and political disintegration. He countered with historical-comparative approach and pointed out that the ethnic diffusion in China was much more ‘homogenous’ than Soviet Union. Furthermore, the most critical point is that the central leadership would still be holding the leading role in economic development, rather than the provincial cadres, despite power delegation²⁷. As a consequence, the causation of economic decentralization and political disintegration are logically weak.

The FA model is one of the models to illustrate the segmentation of authority in accordance with the functions of administrative organs and was proposed for explaining how economic policies are influenced by the bureaucratic structures of the Chinese government, rather than other issues. It illustrated the complexity of bureaucratic system of China in the 1980s and pointed out that economic decentralization fundamentally changed the bureaucratic system of China. The model claimed that negotiations among organs acted significantly in policy making. After the enrichment from Mertha, the FA model portrayed the triangular relationship between the central leadership, the provincial

²⁵ Goodman, 1994, 7; and also see: David Goodman, ‘China in Reform: the View from the Provinces’ in David Goodman eds. *China’s Provinces in Reform – Class, Community and Political Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997), 4-6.

²⁶ Goodman, 1997: 5.

²⁷ Goodman, 1994, 9-10, 17.

bureaucratic units as well as the civil society, and explained how this triangular relationship influences economic policies.

Prior to his writing in 1992 in which he modified his thesis on the fragmentation of the Chinese bureaucracy, Kenneth Lieberthal, with Michel Oksenberg, combined the rationality model and the power model to analyze the segmentation in the central leadership. Besides, Lieberthal extended the scope of his pluralism arguments to lower hierarchal levels. He argued that ‘authority below the very peak of the Chinese political system is fragmented and disjointed’.²⁸ The model asserted that authorities are divided into several ‘clusters’ based on their policy interests and modified the extent of segmentation of the authority. To achieve or retain their policy interests becomes the dynamics of officials expressing their opinions and stances. Thus, consensus seeking amongst ministries and commissions is the central process or core rationale in the decision making of China²⁹. He claimed that clusters of governmental organs could be classified into vertical lines (*tiao*) and horizontal lines (*kuai*) of hierarchy. Vertically, organs would gather with similar functions and jobs; horizontally, on the contrary, they would perceive others at the same level but with different functions in a sort of non-binding ‘professional relationship’³⁰. In effect, the economic reform and decentralization stressed horizontal line of authority rather than vertical line, which was described as ‘making *tiao* serve *kuai*’ in Chinese³¹. Under this backdrop, decisions were achieved by ‘an enormous amount of discussion and bargaining among officials to bring the right

²⁸ Lieberthal, 1992: 8.

²⁹ Kenneth Lieberthal & Michal Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China – Leaders, Structures and Processes* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 22.

³⁰ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China – From Revolution Through Reform* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 170.

³¹ Kenneth Lieberthal, ‘China’s Governing System and Its Impact on environmental Policy Implementation’, China Environment Series (1997), [Internet] available from <http://www.adb.org/vehicle-emissions/PRC/docs/ces1a.pdf> (accessed on 11 November 2009), 3

people on board.³² Lieberthal further pointed out that the fragmented authoritarianism would provide more opportunities for actors to thwart important policies from adoption and enforcement³³.

In the model, bureaucratic units and localities are important actors. The structural and functional divisions of authority among bureaucracies are critical elements. In addition to the influence of the ranking system of the bureaucracy, it leads to the inevitability of seeking consensus and achieving agreement among different 'clusters' of ministries³⁴. The model pointed out that the bargaining which incurred in the consensus-seeking process could influence the formulation and implementation of policy, as well as the effectiveness of the policy³⁵. This is the trend of the authority of provincial governments having expanded. Their *de facto* authority was even discovered to be much greater than what are authorized in the constitution³⁶. For example, J.S.Migdal stressed that

*'the state's capacity to develop the economy depends not only on the will and skills of the top leadership, but also on the lower level governments and state organizations.....[W]ithout the cooperation of low level governments, the state leaders could hardly get their job done or "get people in the society to do what they want to do".'*³⁷

Besides, whether the relationships of units are symmetric and units' orientations in the bureaucracy would influence their behaviors and activities in amplifying their interests³⁸. It is not difficult to discover that the market orientation of liberal economics has

³² Lieberthal. 1995: 173.

³³ *Ibid*: 170.

³⁴ Lieberthal, 1992, 8

³⁵ *Ibid*, 10

³⁶ Zheng Yongnian, *Institutional Change, Local Developmentalism, and Economic Growth: the Making of Semi-Federalism in Reform China*. (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1995),7

³⁷ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong, Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); cited in *Ibid*, 5.

³⁸ Lieberthal, 1992, 10

penetrated in the polity. Thus, the FA argued that ministers and organizations lobby and amplify their interest and power on the basis of market-oriented-rational analysis³⁹.

Notwithstanding the segmented nature of the bureaucracy, the authority of central leadership, which is still one of critical actors in the model, could not be underestimated. With reference to Lieberthal's explanation, the responsibility of the central leadership is to resolve any contests existing in the lengthy negotiations and discussions. Lieberthal and Oksenberg emphasized that the authority of central leadership is of vital importance and claimed that

*'policy is the aggregate response of leaders or factions to problems they perceive and this response reflect the relative power of the participants, their strategies for advancing their beliefs and political interests, and their differentiated understanding of the problem at hand'*⁴⁰.

Besides, the central leadership also possessed the right of framing normative principles of policies, so ideologies and slogans were widely used to facilitate the transfer of wisdoms and visions of the central leadership to the lower level and to enhance the centre's coordination⁴¹. When a policy was decided to be implemented, the lower-level agencies in the hierarchical system would be responsible for implementing the decisions of the centre and cooperating with others. Conversely, the reforms contributed to the declining utilization of ideologies and the elimination of the centre's power in providing normative motivations⁴². On the other hand, the strong influences of central leadership do not mean that the current leadership could have totalitarian authority that their famous predecessors like Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping possessed. Due to the

³⁹ *Ibid*, 22 & 24

⁴⁰ Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988, 15

⁴¹ *Ibid*: 171-172.

⁴² David Bachman, 'the Limits of Leadership in China', *Asian Survey Vol.32*, no.11 (Nov., 1992): 1058.

economic liberalization, the personal charisma and dictatorship would no longer be effective to direct the bureaucracy or implementing the policy. The leadership is less personalized and the power is less centralized than before. However, the central government is still powerful because it directs the general blueprint and dimension of economic reforms. Besides, the central government would also act as capital and information providers. The specific arrangements had been left to provincial governments so as to adapt the diverse situations among provinces⁴³. In the cases of TGP and NRP, it is not difficult to discover that how the central leadership valued or gave priorities to a project is a vital element in determining its success or failure.

Further, Lieberthal highlighted the difficulties of possessing actual and practical local information for the centre in this massive and segmented authoritarian system⁴⁴. It provided ample room for intermediate organs, i.e. provincial governments, to expand their leverage in the policy making process. These would most likely accelerate the bureaucratic flaws beyond the central level⁴⁵. Thus, the decision making process in China becomes more complicated and fragmented.

To have a short sum up, Lieberthal suggested the FA model to modify and portray the circumstances of the policy making process in China, highlighting the top-down approach. While affirming the mightiness of the central leadership, the FA model revealed a number of limitations that the central leadership encountered and flaws in the Chinese bureaucratic system. Unfortunately, the contentions of Lieberthal were based on his observations and insight into the initial stages of economic reform. Therefore, the continuing applicability of the FA model was questioned and there was a need to explain

⁴³Zheng, 1996,17; Huo Shitao, *Political Transition in Economic Decentralization: Bargaining Coalition Between Central and Provincial Government in China: 1978-1993* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995),2

⁴⁴ Lieberthal, 1995: 175-179.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*: 171-173.

and illustrate the status quo after further and deeper decentralization and administrative reforms in the late 1990s. This was in addition to the successful personnel succession in the 9th and 10th National People's Congress in 1998 and 2003 respectively. Alternatively, Lieberthal's suggestion was criticized as being unable to explain the dynamics of political transformation in the fragmented bureaucratic system. Subsequently, the contribution of the FA model seems to be limited to illustrating the situations, but its explicability seems to be limited⁴⁶. For instance, Mertha criticized Lieberthal's model as failing to explain the larger policy, such as the 'Open up the West' Campaign, seeing that it seemed to be 'obsolescen[t]'⁴⁷. Critics argued that the FA model could only explain the features of a stage of administrative evolution since the economic reform and the evolution has been entering into another stage, which Lema and Ruby have portrayed the new stage as a stage of 'policy coordination'. Contrary to Lieberthal's argument, they presumed that the current policy making in China should have developed an underlying consensus amongst ministers which differs from the anarchy-liked incremental phase⁴⁸. Unfortunately, they failed to modify the characteristics of policy making in the stage of policy coordination. If their arguments were deeply analyzed, they could only revise the FA model, but could not refute it. Then, their delineation of stages in policy coordination and fragmented authoritarianism is not significant because the major difference is the degree of power and resources competitions among agencies. Moreover, the existence of consensus is due to the involvement and directional guidance from the centre. The role of centre as the coordinator who balances and buffers the interests of competing agencies had already been mentioned in the article written by

⁴⁶ Andrew Mertha, *China's Water Warriors – Citizen Action and Policy Change*, (New Jersey: Cornell University Press, 2008):155.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*: 157.

⁴⁸ Adrian Lema & Kristian Ruby, 'Between Fragmented Authoritarianism and Policy Coordination: Creating a Chinese Market for Wind Energy', *Energy Policy* 35 (2007): 3879-3890.

Lieberthal several years before⁴⁹. As a consequence, their contribution did not contradict against the FA model, but have enriched the arguments of Lieberthal. The FA model seems to be qualified to describe the bureaucratic system of China.

Mertha's addition and modification

In order to deal with Lieberthal's limitations, Mertha enriched the content of the FA model with the aid of notions of 'policy entrepreneurship' and 'coalitions'. Although these two notions mainly referred to the backdrop of democratic systems, Mertha claimed that the context of fragmented authoritarianism had been able to 'provide a fertile context' for applying these two notions to explain the extension of the scope of segmentation in the Chinese bureaucratic system⁵⁰. Thus, some individuals in government agencies were prominently committed to reshaping the policy formulation. Mertha described these individuals as 'policy entrepreneurs'; this characterized the strong willingness of committing resources and efforts to altering or shaping the forms or consequences of policies that they were concerned with the most⁵¹. Mintrom and Vergari summarized the functions of policy entrepreneurs, including: (1) discovering alternative and creative methods or channels to amplify their issues or arguments; (2) willingness to bear a certain degree of risks while being involved in striving for goals with uncertain consequences; (3) coordinating, managing, and utilizing resources and networks so as to tackle various problems associated with collective actions⁵². Mertha added that the notion of policy entrepreneurship could explain the correlation between the existence of policy change and bargaining amongst agencies. He also argued that the

⁴⁹ Lieberthal, 1997: 8

⁵⁰ *Ibid*: 7.

⁵¹ Defined by John Kingdon and captured from Mertha, 2008: 6.

⁵² Michael Mintrom & Sandra Vergari, 'Advocacy Coalitions, Policy Entrepreneurs, and Policy Change', *Policy Studies Journal* Vol. 24, no.3 (1996): 422.

main sources of policy entrepreneurs could be identified from officials, social activists, and the media⁵³.

Besides, he applied the concept of ‘coalitions’ complementarily so as to explain the policy change in the FA model. Mertha recognized the forming of coalitions as the strategy of policy entrepreneurs to expand their own influences and political sphere⁵⁴. Thus, individuals or agencies from diverse positions or backgrounds, but with a shared belief system, might be willing to coordinate and commit in collective activities over time; with such cohesion known as ‘advocacy coalitions’⁵⁵. Mintrom and Vergari claimed that short-term self-interests amongst agencies could not effectively form coalitions due to the lack of a common belief system⁵⁶.

Therefore, due to the segmented nature of the Chinese bureaucratic system that the FA model presented, Mertha further added policy entrepreneurship’ and ‘coalitions’ to illustrate how bureaucratic organs and activists in society can fight for and lobby their agenda, as well as contend or cooperate with others. He described that,

‘.....the political dynamics captured in the fragmented authoritarianism framework provide policy entrepreneurs with a road map, a playbook by which they can pursue their policy goals. They adopt the strategies that traditional institutions have used for decades to pursue their agendas and institutional mandates’⁵⁷.

In other words, without refuting the arguments and contentions of Lieberthal’s FA model, Mertha discovered the drawbacks of the model and added the notions of ‘policy entrepreneurship’ and ‘coalition’, as well as including emergent civil society into the consideration of the policy making process, so as to reinforce the explicability of the

⁵³ Mertha, 2008: 8-12.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*: 16.

⁵⁵ Sabatier, 1989, cited in Mintrom & Vergari, 1996: 421.

⁵⁶ Mintrom & Vergari, 1996: 421.

⁵⁷ Mertha, 2008: 19

model in the aspect of dynamic political changes. Indeed, Mertha's addition is an appropriate response to large-scale administrative reforms in 1998, especially through the enhancement of contributions for policy making in the civil society. He further explains that 'the increasing levels of inclusion at some point reach a tipping point in which an ever-growing corporatist system begins to resemble a broader heterogeneous system of competing interests for parts of the policy pie'⁵⁸.

Nevertheless, because of rapid social change in China after economic liberalization, the functions of bureaucracy had been seriously constrained. There exists a rising trend in the occurrence of social protests throughout different parts of China. A number of scholars, observers and commentators have contributed in this aspect to study this rising trend. So did Mertha, and he noticed and extended the scope of the theoretical framework of fragmented authoritarianism. He argued that the model should include more actors -- such as intellectuals, individual activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) -- in the framework so as to adapt it to the rapid change in the political and social environment of China⁵⁹. He pointed out the weaknesses of bureaucratic units in responding to the enormous necessity in a rapidly changed society in which interest groups and citizens are much more aggressive in fighting for their own interests than before⁶⁰. NGOs are regarded as filling this gap. They act as supplementary, rather than hostile, to the authority like their western counterparts⁶¹. For example, they could absorb the officials dismissed from the restructuring of the government in 1998⁶².

⁵⁸ *Ibid*: 157-158.

⁵⁹ Andrew Mertha, 'China's Push for Hydropower Dams Sparking Grassroots Backlash, Suggests New Book,' interview by Garry Everding (7 January 2008), *Washing University in St. Louis News & Information*. [Internet] (accessed on 26 October 2009); available from <http://news-info.wustl.edu/tips/page/normal/10761.html>.

⁶⁰ Mertha, 2007.

⁶¹ There are different terminologies to describe this attitude, such as 'female mildness' by Peter Ho and 'Corporatism', etc.

⁶² Andrew Mertha, *China's Water Warriors – Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2008): 11.

Subsequently, it is necessary to include in the consideration of policy making in these two projects in the perspective of social organizations.

In short, the fragmented authoritarianism, according to Lieberthal, is a model to study the bargaining within the bureaucracy, in which how the central leadership, provincial governments and functional ‘clusters’ of ministries negotiate with each other so as to fight for their own interests and fulfill their roles. However, the generalization of the model was challenged, particularly after the June-Fourth Massacre in 1989⁶³. The limitations seem to be tackled by Mertha to add the emergent civil society into the investigation and to include the notion of ‘coalitions’ and ‘policy entrepreneurship’ to enrich the content of the FA model. This thesis further modified Mertha’s contribution via the research dimension of bargaining triangle mentioned in above. As a result, this thesis could explain the reasons for the transformation of the dynamic of policy formulation, beyond to illustrate the rationales.

NGO development and the FA model

Prior to this thesis, there are numerous contributions on state-society relationships in China. Especially after a wave of democratization in Eastern Europe, whether China would follow her western communist counterparts to have rapid development in democratization stirred up by the civil society has been discussed for years. Due to the economic liberalization, the Chinese civil society has been transformed. It is no longer simple corporatist who gives a hand to promote state interests and policies. Morton described that ‘Chinese civil society is therefore best understood as a mix of state-sponsored social control and spontaneous grassroots

⁶³ Andrew Mertha, *Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process*. [Internet] paper presented at the annual meeting of American Political Science Association, Chicago, 1 September 2007 (accessed on 16 November 2009); available from http://falcon.arts.cornell.edu/am847/pdf/FA_2.0.1.pdf.

activity’⁶⁴. In effect, it is impossible to completely neglect the existence of state intervention in the civil society in China.

Schwartz also noticed the transformation of the state-society relationship. He reviewed the development history of ENGOs, the most successful NGOs in China, in the post-Mao period and tried to answer whether Chinese ENGOs could act supplementarily to the state in dealing with the environmental challenges or could strike the state just like their Eastern European counterparts. Two portrayals of scenarios in China were generalized: With the aids of Graph 1-3, he stated the conception of ‘corporatism’. This concept portrayed the political space of ENGOs as being occupied by the state because of the authoritarian nature of PRC. Under the assumption of conventional Confucian education, Chinese NGOs prefer to respect the authority of the state, rather than challenge it. Notwithstanding the rising roles and contribution of NGOs, they would not be willing to be hostile against the state. As a result, to maintain the balance between the state and the civil society, there would be a longer time to have a persistent negotiation⁶⁵.

Graph 1-3 – Political Space of ENGOs Occupied by the State and Society

STATE	SPACE UNDER STATE CONTROL	SOCIETY
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Source: Figure 1 in Schwartz, 2008:.69

Nevertheless, the situation has been questioned because of decentralization and intensive emphasis on economic development accompanied by the economic reforms. For instance, Liu has argued that political injustice or uneven distribution of political

⁶⁴ Katherine Morton, ‘The emergence of NGOs in China and their transnational linkages: implications for domestic reform’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 59, no.4 (December, 2005), 520.

⁶⁵ Jonathan Schwartz, ‘Shifting Power relations: State-NGO Relations in China’ in André Laliberté & Marc Lanteigne eds. *The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century – Adaptation and the Reinvention of Legitimacy* (London: Routledge, 2008), 60-62

privileges makes people to accumulate their discontent against the authorities. This discontent from society is believed to be the major dynamic pushing the emergence of civil society of China. He uncovered two incompatible logical mindsets between Chinese civilian and elite. This contradiction probably deteriorates the situation of the communist regime. As a result, the Chinese authorities are ‘sitting on a powder keg’⁶⁶. Schwartz has another description which pictures ENGOS functioned as a dual role based on this circumstance. Due to the failure of the state to fully implement policies to achieve diverse goals in a range of aspects and to fulfill the public’s expectation accurately, NGOs supported the state to achieve the goals of specific issues, like environment protection, and participated actively in broadening the political space through taking up a part of state’s responsibilities⁶⁷.

Graph 1-4 – Political Space of ENGOS in the Public Sphere and State’s Delegation

Source: Figure 2 in Schwartz, 2008: p.70

Thus seen, the state-society relationship is different. The roles of NGOs are more aggressive and a pattern of confronting the state seems to exist (see Graph 1-4). He concluded that ‘[a]lthough the process may still be in its infancy, Chinese society seems to be following a more confrontational path, expanding its role and moving in the direction of challenging the state’⁶⁸.

Similarly, Ho argued that the ENGOS in China are not fully confronting the state. He suggested the terminology of ‘embedded social activism’ to portray the party-society

⁶⁶ Liu Xiaobo, ‘Reform in China: the Role of Civil Society’ , *Social Research* 73, no.1, (Spring 2006):122-125

⁶⁷ Schwartz, 2008: 70

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.71

relationship. In the semi-authoritarian context, ENGOs are engaged to participate in the decision-making process, but nevertheless, the room of participation was acquiesced to by the party-state. The party-state had the experience of clamping down on civil groups without any hesitation. As a result, activists and ENGOs would try to stay in the acceptable areas in which the party-state would tolerate⁶⁹. He said,

‘Chinese green activists profess a “female mildness” – a greening without conflict, environmentalism at a safe distance from direct political action...Green social organizations are increasingly courting government favor in the hope of influencing policy-making, and they avoid potentially dangerous confrontation with the state’⁷⁰.

In contrast to Schwartz’s argument, Ho stressed on the interactions of the civil society and the state. He thought that the current development of civil society in China is the consequence of ‘self-filtering’ of social organizations and ‘self-awakening’ of the authorities⁷¹. In other words, it is shaped by the informal consensus and interactive coordination between the party-state and civil society.

In sum, the ENGOs in China have a relatively open and free room for them to lobby their interests. In addition, they have more functions than before as they do not only act as supplementary to, but also complementary to, the state. The function of ‘check-and-balance’ is much more obvious than before⁷². Their operations have been more independent from the authority. Besides, regardless of which mode of the ENGOs are adopting to deal with their correlation with the party state, their influences of policy

⁶⁹Peter Ho, ‘Self-imposed Censorship and De-politicized Politics in China: Green Activism or a Color Revolution’, in Peter Ho & Richard Louis Edmonds eds. *China’s Embedded Activism – Opportunities and Constraints of a Social Movement* (London: Routledge, 2008), 20-37

⁷⁰Peter Ho, ‘Sprouts of Environmentalism in China – Government-Organized NGOs and Green Organizations in Disguise’, in Christof Mauch, Nathan Stoltzfus & Douglas R. Weiner eds. *Shade of Green – Environmental Activism around the Globe* (U.S.A. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 152-153.

⁷¹*Ibid*, 152

⁷²Morton, 2005, 522.

making could no longer be neglected. In an interview, Mertha has commented that ‘[f]ifteen years ago, opponents of large-scale dam projects in China were greeted with indifference or repression. Today they are a part of the hydropower policy-making process itself’⁷³. Wong & Chan pointed out that the party-state and the civil society are inter-influential. They help each other to transform and accommodate⁷⁴, but how much they thereby pressure the authorities in the aspect of policy implementation is a question addressed in this dissertation. Mertha employed the notions of ‘policy entrepreneurship’ and ‘issue framing’ to enrich the content of FA model so as to adopt changes and maintain explicability of the model. Admittedly, Mertha’s enrichment could effectively tackle the weaknesses of the model of neglecting the significance of social organizations and explain how organizations influenced the policy making. However, it overlooked the importance of the perception of actors in policy making and failed to picture the transformation of policy making process in China. As a result, this thesis did not only include social organizations in policy making process, but also adopted an interactive approach to analyze the success and failure of the TGP and NRP respectively so as to generalize the transformation of policy making process in reform period and show how the FA model could be employed to explain the policy making in China.

Structure of Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. In this chapter, the model of fragmented authoritarianism is discussed. Apart from the vast bureaucracy in China, the civil society, or more accurately the ENGOS, should be considered as important actors in the decision-making process of hydropower development. Besides, by reviewing a series of

⁷³Mertha, 7 Jan. 2008.

⁷⁴Wong, Yiu-chung & Chan, Che-po, *Corporatism and Civil Society in the People’s Republic of China: Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Implications*, Working Paper Series of the Centre for Asian Pacific Studies, no. 99 (Hong Kong: Lingnan University, 1999), 23-24.

literatures about Chinese bureaucratic system and civil society, the status quo in these respects could be briefly understood.

In chapter 2, the history of hydropower development of China is investigated. Why is dam construction important to Chinese economic development? This question would be addressed in this chapter. In addition, TGP and NRP would be highlighted and their importance would be stated. On the other hand, the history and rationale of economic decentralization would be embodied in this chapter. This arrangement would on the one hand be able to set forth the context of projects, on the other hand be able to provide a solid ground for analysis.

Chapter 3 is the starting point for discussing the respective bargaining with local administrations and ENGOS of the central government. The rationales of the distinct responses and values of the central authority in these two projects would be explained here. The implicit meanings of these two projects for leadership would thereby be inferred. Thus, how the central government, including both the central leadership and the central authorities, will be illustrated. The results of NRP and TGP will be explained in the central perspective.

After that, another bargaining node in the triangular relationship suggested in chapter 1 would be concentrated. The roles, interests of local governments would be discussed in chapter 4. Beyond local governments themselves, the interactions with the centre and ENGOS in local governments' perspective would also be reflected. Why were local senior cadres so enthusiastic about constructing dams in their paddocks? And how did they value the TGP and NRP respectively? All these questions would be answered in this chapter.

In chapter 5, the civil society and its bargaining node with the state would be analyzed. How the ENGOs penetrated their influences into the decision-making process of these two projects and why this existed would be expounded. It would be argued that how the domestic ENGOs allied with its international counterparts to achieve their goals in the NRP which they were prohibited doing so in the TGP, would clarify the roles of foreign activists.

Finally, a full picture of analysis would be indicated in the chapter 6, which is the conclusion chapter of the thesis. Apart from answering the questions concerning the fragmented authoritarianism model, general findings would be summarized and utilized to argue that the refined FA model is still applicable in China. Besides, findings in the research could help clarify the essence and features of the Chinese political landscape. Implications of general findings would enable us to forecast the weaknesses and limitations of China in its efforts to develop its hydropower. The most decisive question of determining the success of dam construction in China is whether the central leadership is willing to take up the role of driver, or just a coordinator, in the project. The priorities assigned to the projects and pressures arising from their execution would be the most determining factors in influencing the decision of leadership to answer this question.

Chapter 2 – Hydropower Development in China

In the previous chapter, the objectives of this thesis were briefly introduced. The significance of this research basically relied on China's rapid economic development in the late 20th century. When China has been further urbanized, industrialized and modernized, power supply would become one of the most critical problems that the government needs to deal with. In this chapter, the history of hydropower development in China would be discussed, in particular the history after the establishment of the PRC and economic liberalization. Additionally, why Chinese government seems to emphasize the necessity of hydropower development would be discussed. Via qualitative and quantitative data, this chapter would demonstrate that hydropower development is not a mere economic decision, but essentially a political decision. Through large-scale dam construction, the CCP could effectively consolidate its legitimacy. Apart from discussing the significance of hydropower development in a historical approach, the background of TGP and NRP were introduced respectively so as to provide empirical ground for analyses and arguments in the following chapters. In the modern world, water resources management does not only concern the passive sense of preventing natural crises, say flooding or drought, but also require functioning in an active sense of generating electricity. For example, the two cases studied in this thesis – the TGP & NRP – were constructed for both passive and active senses. In this chapter, the active sense of large-scale dam construction projects will be focused upon after the functions of these projects were introduced. Besides, incidents in the decision making processes of the TGP and NRP will also be briefly reviewed so as to present a rough overview of hydropower development in China before conducting in-depth analysis of transformation in the decision-making processes.

As one of the countries with the longest history in the world, China's fate seems to be closely tied with water resources management. It is not only because of the vast size of the Chinese population, but also the Confucian tradition. In the feudal period, the absolute majority of the population was peasantry. Stable access for water resources was extremely critical to maintaining their livelihood. Their political satisfaction for leaders and regimes was largely related to stable harvests and livelihood. Additionally, the absolute power of feudal Chinese emperors was derived from the Heaven's mandate, so flooding, drought and earthquakes were believed to be indicators of distrust from Heaven. As such, successful water resources management could determine sustainability and decay of empires and dynasties. It has profound political significance, rather than mere economic significance, in China⁷⁵. This concept seems to have been retained while time passes. Beyond ordinary people, the leadership of PRC is even more likely to uphold this conception. Subsequently, the Chinese people have praised large dams as effective and contributing tools of development by political elite⁷⁶. Furthermore, Leninist ideologies highly praised dam construction as the tool of defeating nature by humanity in ideological sense⁷⁷. As a result, Mao Zedong, as the loyal follower of Leninism, stressed and even implemented a series of dam construction projects within several years in spite of the severe poverty and famine in China, particularly during the Great Leap Forward period. Unfortunately, the furious speed of construction was associated with the detrimental quality of dams and inexpiable loss of life and properties. One of the best illustrations is the Sanmenxia Project at Yellow River. This project was approved in 1957 and completed in 1960. It was a symbol of Sino-Soviet intimacy in the

⁷⁵Yin Liangwu, *The Long Quest for Greatness: China's decision to launch the Three Gorges Project*, (PhD diss., Washington University, 1996), 535-536.

⁷⁶Thayer Scudder, "Development-Induced Impoverishment, Resistance and River-Basin Development" in Christopher McDowell ed. *Understanding Impoverishment – the Consequences of Development-induced Displacement* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), 72-73.

⁷⁷ Dai Qing, interviewed by anonymous, 'The Mao-Era Folly Hailed as a Model for a modern Mega-Project', *Financial Times* (15 Dec. 2009): A8.

1950s since it was designed by Soviet experts. Nevertheless, the dam had seriously suffered by the problem of extensive sand sedimentations. All functions of the dam, including hydroelectricity generation, were completely suspended and a huge area in the upstream to became inundated. Eventually, the dam was practically abandoned⁷⁸. According to Jasper, approximately 3500 dams collapsed and more than 33,000 dams were at the edge of collapse⁷⁹. Notwithstanding deep remorse from previous dam construction efforts; the Chinese leadership did not eliminate its fascination for mega hydropower projects; on the contrary, the appetite for energy because of industrialization further stimulated its determination to encourage hydropower development.

Indeed, the political value of dam construction in the mindset of elite should never thereby be underestimated. On the contrary, the multi-functional nature of dam construction projects further justifies the necessity of these projects for the political elite, particularly due to the economic value in generating hydroelectricity. For example, the central leaders frequently emphasized that the TGP was designed for at least three functions – electricity generation, flooding prevention and navigation⁸⁰, to underpin its necessity. Notwithstanding the multi-functional nature of modern dam construction, hydroelectricity generation would be stressed in this research. Quantitative data indicates that why hydroelectricity generation is the most noteworthy factor in contemporary Chinese dam construction. In absolute term, the amount of hydroelectricity consumption since ‘Open-door’ policy in China is shown in Chart 2.1. It is not difficult to discover that the amount of hydroelectricity consumed in China steadily escalates. More than 100 million tonnes oil equivalent hydroelectricity was consumed annually. In addition, the

⁷⁸ Liu Jimin, *Dam of Dream (Meng Zhi Ba)*, (Yunnan: Yunnan People’s Publishing, 2004): 213-214.

⁷⁹ Jasper Becker, *Dragon Rising – An Inside Look at China Today*, (Washington D.C.: National Geographic, 2007), 202

⁸⁰ Liu, 2004: 190; Wang Qusheng, ‘*Behind the Scene of Three Gorges Project Approval*’ (*Sanxia Gongcheng Fangan Chutai Neimu*), (Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing, 1992): 163.

pace of growth has accelerated to have no less than 8% growth per annum after entering the new century⁸¹. In order to further reflect the significance of hydroelectricity to the worldwide – in particular Chinese – economic development, the shares of hydroelectricity for total primary energy consumed in the world and China are calculated and contrasted in the Chart 2.2. The chart reflects the fact that the significance of hydroelectricity for energy consumption has been increasingly reinforced in China. In the initial stage of economic reform, the percentage of hydroelectricity to primary energy consumption was slightly higher at 2%, but the share could have caught up with the global level recently, i.e. at more than 6%.

Chart 2.1 – Hydroelectricity Consumption in China, 1978-2008

Source: BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy* -- June 2009

Both chart 2.1 and 2.2 could prove the high value and importance of hydroelectricity for China on the demand side. They indicate that hydroelectricity becomes another significant energy source beyond conventional hydrocarbon thermal in

⁸¹ Author's calculation. Data from BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy* -- June 2009, [Internet] (Accessed on 4 December 2009); available on http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/2009_downloads/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_report_2009.pdf. There was actually a slight decrease in 2003 but it was around 1.56% which seems to insignificant in the skyrocketing trend in this decade.

both absolute and relative terms. Apparently, rapid industrialization and urbanization after economic reform demanded greater consumption of electricity. Besides, the charts reflect that the pace of utilization of hydroelectricity could not catch up with the growth of national energy demand in China. The absolute amount of hydroelectricity consumption start to increase sharply between 2003 and 2008 approximately twofold, but the share of hydroelectricity to primary energy consumption remained around 5.5-6% in this period, which is slightly lower than the global average level. Thus, despite the rapid development, hydroelectricity seems not to be sufficient in meeting the national electricity demand. Subsequently, hydroelectricity could not fully replace conventional fossil fuels to become the largest energy source of China in spite of intensive development since the establishment of the ‘open-door’ policy.

Chart 2.2 – Share of Hydroelectricity to Primary Energy Consumption in the World & China, 1978-2008

Source: Calculated by author; Data from BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy* -- June 2009

On the supply side, Chart 2.3 shows the composition of electricity generation in China between 1987 and 2007. There is no doubt about the skyrocketing of electricity generation in China and the conventional thermal is apparently the largest source of electricity throughout the statistical period. Moreover, the share of conventional thermal

does not have any trend of deterioration. In contrast, hydroelectricity has a narrower gap in the chart, but the share is reinforcing and the gap is widening. Thus, hydroelectricity plays a more significant role of electricity generation in the contemporary China.

Data in above reflects the considerable economic values of dam construction and developing hydroelectricity in both demand and supply senses. Rapid economic and social modernization since the late 1970s did not mitigate but did stimulate the demand for dam construction and hydroelectricity development. Thus, the Chinese government approved and gave high priority to expanding power projects after the conservative power shortages in 2003 and 2004⁸².

Chart 2.3 – China’s Electricity Generation by Type, 1987-2007

Source: EIA, *Energy Information Administration -- Country Analysis Brief (Updated in July 2009)*, [Internet] (assessed on 17 December 2009), available on <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/China/pdf.pdf>

Apart from the ideological and economic considerations that hydroelectricity brings, dam construction projects are also justified by its contribution to energy security. According to the United Nations, the official definition of ‘energy security’ is the

⁸² Xu Yi-chong, ‘China’s Energy Security’ in Michael Wesley ed. *Energy Security in Asia*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 52-3.

persistent and adequate availability of energy at affordable prices⁸³. Nevertheless, different states have their diverse emphases on this definition because of their different situations, so they have different interpretations on this notion. For China, because it could no longer retain its self-sufficient energy circumstance, energy security emphasized the ability to freely and promptly adjust itself to its reliance on global energy market⁸⁴. Hughes further modified 4 'R' principles as dimensions to examine energy security for states. They are: Review, reduce, replace and restrict⁸⁵. 'Replace' refers to reliance on secure energy supplies instead of another insecure one by diversifying, changing infrastructure and encouraging development of alternative energy sources. In China, conventional fossil fuels which were highly relied upon have led to damages for the society and economy. China is the largest consumer of coal in the world⁸⁶, but consuming coal is one of the 'dirtiest' methods for generating power. Thus, the central authorities would like to reduce the reliance on burning coals so as to suppress the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. Apart from burning coal, conventional hydrocarbon is another resource to be consumed for electricity and power. The Chinese leadership and even the global economy worried the supply security of fossil fuels and the instability of the Middle East in recent times⁸⁷. Generating hydroelectricity would mitigate the over-dependence on fossil fuels for China. As a consequence, prompting development of hydroelectricity by dam construction is viewed

⁸³ Philips Andrews-Speed, Liao Xuanli & Roland Dannreuther, 'Searching for Energy Security: The Political Ramifications of China's International Energy Policy', *China Environment Series, Issue 5*, (Jan 2004): 14.

⁸⁴ Daniel Yergin, Ensuring Energy Security', *Foreign Affairs* 85, Issue 2 (Mar/Apr. 2006): 70-71.

⁸⁵ Larry Hughes, 'The Four "R"s of Energy Security', *Energy Policy* 39 (2009), 2459-2461.

⁸⁶ According to the data from Energy Information Administration (EIA) of the United States, China had consumed more than 2 billion short tons annually between 2004 and 2008, and the consumption has been increasing and it has reached 2.8 billion short tons in 2008. It was approximately 40% of global consumption amount in the same year. Detail sees: EIA, 'Table: Total Coal Consumption', *International Energy Statistics*, [Internet website] (accessed on 15 Jun 2010) available from:

<http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/cfapps/ipdbproject/IEDIndex3.cfm?tid=1&pid=1&aid=2>

⁸⁷ Michal Meidan, Philip Andrews-Speed & Ma Xin, 'Shaping China's Energy Policy: Actors and Processes,' *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, no 61, (September 2009), 591-593.

as a strategic remedy of alleviating the threat of energy security in China. It also explains why the central leadership since Mao's administration has hoped to reinforce the share of hydroelectricity in electricity generation instead of burning coals⁸⁸. With the considerable initial investment of dam construction, Chinese leaders have retained their strong determination for developing hydroelectricity. For instance, former Premier Li Peng expressed his great ambition of boosting the share of hydropower to the total energy production for no less than 30% by 2010⁸⁹. A Chinese hydrologist from the Chinese Academy of Engineering even described hydropower is 'the only viable way' of curtailing the coal consumption of China⁹⁰.

Chart 2.4 – The Largest Hydroelectricity Consumers in the World, 2008

Source: BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy -- June 2009*, [Internet] (Accessed on 4 December 2009); available on http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/2009_downloads/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_report_2009.pdf

As such, dam construction projects have never been criticized in the contemporary China. On the contrary, the advanced technology of construction has

⁸⁸ Dai Qing & Lawrence Sullivan, 'The Three Gorges Dam and China's Energy Dilemma', *Journal of International Affairs* (Fall 1999): 62-63.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*: 62-65.

⁹⁰ Pan Jiazheng, interviewed by Antoaneta Bezlova, 'China's Three Gorges Dam Comes of Age', *Asia Times* [Internet] available from <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/china/KK04Ad01.html> (accessed on 4 Dec., 2009), (Nov., 2009)

broadened the purposes of dams and further justified its necessity and feasibility of their construction. Subsequently, Chinese authorities are so enthusiastic about constructing numerous dams throughout the domain that British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has portrayed the enthusiasm of the authorities to develop hydroelectricity in words like ‘[t]he five great rivers of Asia all rise in China... China wants to dam them all’⁹¹. Hydroelectricity acts a more important role for supporting furious industrialization and urbanization. Thus, it is not strange that China could become the largest single hydroelectricity consumer. Chart 2.4 shows that the amount of hydroelectricity consumed by China was tantamount to the half of what the OECD members consumed in 2008.

By way of a short conclusion, dam construction in China has strong significance beyond effective water management. It was a symbolic icon of humankind to defeat nature and overcome devastating natural disasters, in particular, occasional flooding of rivers. Moreover, modern technological improvement has contributed to the diversification of functions for dam construction. Hydroelectricity generation is the most tempting factor for state to commit in grand dam projects. This statement is particularly true in energy-hungry China. As a consequence, hydropower development is the aspect that this research would like to concentrate on. In the coming section, the Three Gorges Project (TGP) approved in the 1990s and the Nu River Project (NRP) suspended in 2003 would be discussed so as to explain the reasons of choosing these two specific projects as case studies. Besides, their background of construction and controversies would also be briefly introduced respectively.

⁹¹Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, ‘Satisfying China’s Demand for Energy’, *BBC News*, 16 February 2006, [Internet] (assessed on 11 June 2008), available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4716528.stm>

Project Concentration

Prior to discussing the background of the projects individually, the objectives of these two projects would be introduced. Previously mentioned, the modern dam construction was multi-functional. Similarly, the functions of TGP and NRP are also diverse. In the Table 2.5, their estimated direct benefits to the economy are listed.

Table 2.5 -- Functions and Estimated Direct Benefits of Projects

Items/Project	Three Gorges Project⁽¹⁾	Nu River Project⁽²⁾
Hydroelectricity Generation (Installed Capacity)	17,680 MW	23,320 MW
Total Storage Capacity	39.3 billion m ³	15.1 billion m ³
Flood Control Storage	22.1 billion m ³	N/A
Navigation	Reservoir level increases 10-100m to allow 10,000 tons to travel to the upstream	N/A

Sources: (1) Extract from Table 3, Samuel Robert Fishleigh Allin, 'An Examination of China's Three Gorges Dam Project Based on Framework', [e-Paper Presented in the Report of the World Commission on Dams] (2004):16, available from: http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-12142004-125131/unrestricted/SAllin_010304.pdf (accessed on 15 May 2010); (2) Extract from Table 7, John Dore & Yu Xiaogang, *Update on China's Energy Industry Reforms and the Nu, Lancang & Jinsha Hydropower Dams*, [Online Working Paper] (Mar. 2004): 14-15, available from: <http://www.chinariversproject.org/files/Dore%20Yu%20Yunnan%20Hydropower%20Expansion.pdf> (accessed on 15 May 2010).

In the previous section, the shortfall in, and appetite of, energy in China have been demonstrated. However, the conventional thermal energy supplies brought various drawbacks for Chinese environment, economy and strategic security. In order to diversify energy supplies, giant dam construction projects were deemed necessary to facilitate the hydroelectricity supply. Moreover, the central government prompted economic development in the Western regions so as to mitigate the income disparity between the prosperous coastal and inferior provinces. In Graph 2.6, the GDP growth rates of Chongqing Municipality and Yunnan province, where the Three Gorges Dam and the Nu River Dams are located in, as well as Chinese national data, are shown. Referring to the graph, economic growth in Chongqing and Yunnan was varying and the

trends were close to the national trend. However, Chongqing has had a greater economic growth than the national average since 1992. It might probably be due to the enormous capital injection for the TGP and its resettlement campaign.

Graph 2.6 – GDP Growth Rate of China, Chongqing Municipal City and Yunnan Province

Source: CEIC Database

On the contrary, without the Nu river dams, Yunnan's economic growth rate has been lower than the national level. Therefore, one may conclude that gigantic dam construction projects, including TGP and NRP, were instruments to boost the domestic economic growth of provinces.

On the other hand, both TGP and NRP were selected amongst a variety of dam construction projects in China mainly because of their massive economic contribution to the country, as well as to the local government. Besides, these two projects were chosen because of the wide scope of the authorities and society in committing to both projects. Another reason for picking these projects is their international controversies. The Lancang-Mekong River Project was a project which has drawn intensive attention from

international society and mass media, as it has led to diplomatic negotiations amongst littoral countries. Thus, the consequences of Mekong Project might probably be influenced by the diplomatic pressure from Chinese neighbours. In contrast, Nu River is another transboundary river which originates from the Yunnan province, but foreign diplomatic leverage in the NRP seems to be insignificant because the Burmese government did not exhibit any fierce responses alike what Vietnamese and Thai governments did against the Mekong Project. Since this research would like to investigate the effective transformation of domestic factors in influencing the decision making of hydropower development in China since economic reform, the Mekong Project, albeit its greater fame, would be eliminated from the cases chosen to be studied in this thesis.

Development of Three Gorges Project

Yangtze River (or also known as *Changjiang*) is the longest river and the largest river system in China. It penetrates the whole domain of China from Tibet and Qinghai in the west to the East Sea. Millions of people's livelihoods traditionally relied on the river, especially for the residents in rural regions. Due to the vital importance of the Yangtze, the Three Gorges Project experienced more than a half-century of debates and political indecision which is uncommon for dam construction projects on the globe. Even with the construction near completion, the debates about the project have not subsided yet. In retrospect, the idea of TGP was first suggested by Sun Yat-sen in the 1920s. In his vision of developing China, Sun believed the necessity of hydroelectricity to drive the modernization of China and highlighted the huge potential for generating

hydro-electricity at Yichang, Hubei⁹². Graph 2.7 illustrated the area of reservoir and inundation after the completion of TGP, which is located in Yichang.

Graph 2.7 – Map of Three Gorges Dam and Reservoir Area

Source: Figure 1, Hu Yong, 'Mapping methane emissions from the three gorges reservoir area: A feasibility study' *GIS Development*, [Internet] (accessed on 6 January 2010) available from: <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/application/environment/water/ma04240a.htm>

Sun's positive argument of hydroelectricity is similar to Vladimir Lenin's. Lenin proclaimed that electricification is one of the necessary reasons for communism – the ideal stage of social development in Marxian philosophy – and the Soviet power is another one⁹³. Sun's dream hydraulic power was inherited by his successors and following famous leaders, Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Mao even visited Yangtze and affirmed the necessity of TGP in journeys. He wrote a poem to reveal his desire to utilize the project to on the one hand to enrich the country; and on the other hand, resolve occasionally the deadly flooding of the river⁹⁴,

*Snails move with the wind.
Tortoise and snake still
Great Plans are afoot:*

⁹² Liu, 2004: 29-30.

⁹³ Emily T. Yeh & Joanna I. Lewis, 'State Power and the Logic of Reform in China's Electricity Sector', *Pacific Affairs* 77, no.3 (Fall 2004), 442; Yin, 1996, 78-79

⁹⁴ Tian Shu, 'Leaders from Three Generations and Three Gorges Project in Changjiang' (San Dai Lingdao Ren yu Changjiang Sanxia Gongcheng), *History of Red Rock (Hungyan Chunqiu)* 3, (2007), 33-34.

...
*Walls of stone will stand upstream to the west
To hold back Wushan's clouds and rain
Till smooth lake rises in the narrow gorges.
The mountain goddess if she is still there
Will marvel at a world so changed*⁹⁵.

Mao's poem reflected the view that the TGP is more than a mere infrastructure project; it could also symbolize the prosperity and power of China. As a result, the project has enjoyed a great flock of prestige and praises from the authorities and leaderships even after the death of Mao.

In spite of the great zealousness of leaders, the unprecedented enormous costs and commitments necessary for undertaking the project had never been overlooked. Subsequently, there had been great debate on feasibility of the project for more than 50 years, and it did not achieve any consensus. In the 1980s, although Deng Xiaoping – the paramount leader – decided to establish the construction of TGP, there were still fierce debates within the bureaucratic system, and even the central leadership, on various issues pertaining to the project. The Ministry of Water Conservancy and Electricity was ordered to gather professional planning and surveys for the proposed TGP⁹⁶. Hence, the project had not been substantially established and remained the stage of planning. This cleavage will be discussed in the coming chapter. Until 1989, the State Council proposed the feasibility survey report to the National People Congress (NPC) for approval. This was the initiation of the central government to promote the Three Gorges Project systematically and formally. It was not approved by the NPC at that time, which decided

⁹⁵ Mao Zedong, Swimming – to the tune of *Shui Diao Ge Tou* [*Shui Diao Ge Tou – You Yong*], *Mao Zedong's Poetry* [Mao Zedong shici] (Beijing: Waiwen Chubanshe, 2001), 61-63.

⁹⁶ Wang Qusheng, *Behind Scenes of the Approval of Three Gorges Project Proposal (Sanxia Gongcheng Fangan Chutai Neimu)*, (Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing, 1992): 115.

to shelve it for seven years so as to have time to conduct in-depth investigation on the feasibility and planning of the project⁹⁷.

The debates did not only exist within the massive bureaucracy, it also expanded to the civil society. A number of intellectuals and individual activists in China, led by Dai Qing, allied with foreign mass media organs to publish or publicize criticisms against TGP⁹⁸. They struck the feasibility of the project in various perspectives and their arguments stirred up controversy about the TGP in abroad. Shockingly, the shelved proposal was re-submitted again to the fifth meeting of 7th NPC in 1992. Unfortunately, these three foregoing years did not bring any consensus for the project within the bureaucracy. The NPC voting results revealed that cleavages were not completely erased. In Table 2.8, the voting results of the TGP in the NPC are listed. Over 30% of delegates voted against or abstain from the project. Subsequently, the existence of resistance in the NPC should not be underestimated or neglected.

Table 2.8 – Voting Results of the Proposal of the TGP in NPC on 3 April 1992

Items of Vote	Agree	Disagree	Abstain	Total
Numbers of Vote	1767	177	664	2608
Percentage of Vote ⁹⁹	67.75%	6.79%	25.46%	100%

Source: Heggelund, 2004: 32

Some sensitive scholars pointed out the correlation between political atmosphere at that period and the voting results and disclosed the political significance of the TGP. It was claimed that the hasty and divided decision of the NPC towards the project was manipulated by the *Zhongnanhai* so as to consolidate the legitimacy of communist party

⁹⁷ Heggelund, 2004: 31-32.

⁹⁸ Dai Qing edited a couple of critical books to include these literatures against the proposal and feasibility report which the CCP proposed, but the books were prohibited to be published in China. Alana Boland, however, denounced Dai and her fellow's arguments to be undemocratic and to enhance the technocratic and developmentalist thought of the state. See: Alana Boland, 'The Three Gorges Debate and Scientific Decision-Making in China', *China Information* 13, No.1 (Summer 1998), 25-29.

⁹⁹ Calculated by author

state, as the June-Fourth Massacre seriously damaged the legitimacy of Chinese communist party as the ruling party. The cruel and autocratic oppression stirred up questions about the deterioration and continuity of the party leadership¹⁰⁰. Meanwhile, the TGP was a prestige project of the nation for Chinese political and intellectual elite¹⁰¹. Therefore, any opposition against the project was thoroughly suppressed so as to smoothen the implementation as soon as possible.

According to the official plan, the TGP is currently near completion and it should have already generated electricity for several years. However, criticisms and problems are gradually uncovered, in particular in the aspect of resettlement. Debate on the projects seems to be more rigorous. This phenomenon is the consequence of the inadequate transparency and narrow scope of participation¹⁰². It typically reflects that the characteristics of first stage of hydropower development in China – the major driver of project is the central authorities, and other bureaucracies as well as the civil society are just the agents for implementing policies and actualizing the visions and directions proposed by the centre.

Development of Nu/Salween River Project

The Nu River (also known as ‘Salween River’ in Southeast Asia) is one of the largest river systems in Asia and critical trans-boundary water network of China and her South-East Asian neighbours. Locating in the most remote region of China, the Nu River remains undeveloped for dams. Its unique ecological and environmental resources have never been exploited. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced the solitary landscape of ‘Three Parallel River’

¹⁰⁰ Huggelund, 2004:32; Tashi Tsering, *China's Water Politics: In Whose Interest?*, (M.A. Diss., Portland State University, 2005) [Online thesis] available from: <http://www.greengrants.org.cn/file/pub/inwhoseinterest.pdf> (accessed on 10 Nov. 2009): 32-33.

¹⁰¹ Baurch, 1998: 99-100.

¹⁰² Dai & Sullivan, 1999, 71

(*Sanjiang Biliu*) near Nu River as a Cultural Heritage preserve in 2003, but the Yunnan provincial government proposed to construct 13 dams along the river one year after. This plan stirred up heat controversy within China and abroad. With reference to the Graph 2.9, the provincial office planned to construct 13 dams and two reservoir areas (*liang ku shishan ji*) at the upper reaches of the Nu River. It is expected that an installed capacity of over 23,000MW (megawatt) hydroelectricity will be generated after the completion of this project¹⁰³. More than 50,000 people were estimated to be relocated due for relocation because of the project.

In contrast, the NRP is smaller scale than TGP in terms of resettlement and commitment of bureaucratic system, but it does not mean that it has a smoother implementation. On the contrary, the NRP has encountered a more rigorous debate during the planning process. In 2002-2003, the Chinese national power company was separated into 5 state-owned electricity corporations, and they are: China Huaneng Group, China Huadian Group, China Guodian Corporation, China Power Investment Corporation and China Datang Corporation. Competition amongst electricity groups motivated them to actively cooperate with provincial governments to develop hydroelectricity so as to maximize their returns from electricity generation¹⁰⁴. This phenomenon was known as ‘enclosing rivers by marking preemptive investment’ (*Paoma Juanshui*). The Huadian Group had achieved agreement with Yunnan’s provincial government to establish a company to develop hydroelectricity from the Nu

¹⁰³ Darrin Magee & Shawn Kelley, ‘Damming the Salween River’ in François Molle, Tira Foran & Mira Käkönen eds *Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong Region – Hydropower, Livelihoods & Governance*, (London: Earthscan, 2009), 119-121.

¹⁰⁴ Zhang Fan, ‘Economic Motivations and Remedies of “Enclosing Rivers by Marking Preemptive Investment”’ (*‘Paoma Juanshui’ de Jingji Dongyin ji qi Duice*), *China Water Resources*, 18 (Zhongguo Shuili), [Online Journal Article] (2005); available from: http://seekspace.resip.ac.cn/bitstream/2239/18117/1/File_03602.pdf (accessed on 20 Jun, 2010): 34.

River and invest capital to implement the proposal of NRP in 2003¹⁰⁵. Prior to the agreement between Yunnan government and Huadian, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) approved the NRP proposal and the State Council then approved the NRP in March 2003¹⁰⁶. Surprisingly, the Chinese ENGOs became major opponents and obstacles of the project. They criticized the project via various channels and strategies so as to reinforce the pressure on the central government to suspend the project. This transformation would be discussed in the chapter 5. In addition, the project was ordered to be shelved temporarily by Premier Wen Jiabao in order for it to be ‘carefully discussed and decided on scientifically’ in 2004¹⁰⁷. This is a rare practice in Chinese politics. Therefore, the NRP has drawn the attention of scholars and commentators to investigate and analyze the emergence of civil society and grassroots’ activism in China.

Graph 2.9 – Map of Nu River Project

¹⁰⁵ Tong Zhifang, ‘Structure of Mobilization and Development of Environmental Protection Movement – Case Study of Anti-dam Activism in Nujiang’ (Dongyuan yu Zhiran Baoyu Yundong de Fazhan – Yi Nujiang Fanba Yundong Wei Li), Open Times (Sep. 2009): 118-119.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Mertha, *China’s Water Warrior: Citizen Actions and Policy Change*, (New Jersey, University of Cornell Press, 2008): 116-117.

¹⁰⁷ Jim Yardley, ‘Seeking a Public Voice on China’s “Angry River”’, *New York Times*, 26 December 2005

Source: *International Rivers* [Internet] (accessed on 6 January 2010); available from <http://www.internationalrivers.org/en/image/trd/109>

Even if there was anxiety about the re-submission of the proposal of NRP after Wen's order, the provincial authorities have been facing a heavy pressure from the public, mobilized by ENGOs, individual activists and even media to stop the project. The project has thereby not been implemented hitherto.

The NRP's failure was seen to reflect the increased pluralism in China. In effect, the project was not hindered not only by the state-society-level conflicts, but also obstructed by the diverse positions taken amongst bureaucracies and the interest conflicts underneath. Thus, the bargaining process of NRP effectively reflects pluralism in the contemporary China which is likely the consequence of economic liberalization.

In sum, dam construction should not be simply recognized as a policy of encouraging economic development since the notion of modernization is closely

intertwined with development of hydroelectricity in China. Moreover, because China has over-relied on coals for energy generation, it would constitute a heavy burden of responsibility – both empirically and ethically – for China to curtail the greenhouse gas emission. Therefore, the development of hydroelectricity should be, and has been, encouraged due to its relatively ‘greener’ stereotype in the viewpoint of Chinese authorities. The TGP and the NRP are typical exemplifiers reflecting the evolution of perceptions in favour of hydroelectricity. Additionally, they also indicated the transformation of the Chinese bureaucratic systems and the emergence of civil society, as shown by discussing their decision-making processes respectively.

In this chapter, the most significant events surrounding the decision-making processes of these two projects have been sketched respectively. Further in-depth interpretation would be mentioned in the following chapters and the attitudes of several actors towards each other would be analyzed. As a result, the determining factors that influenced the success or failure of the TGP and NRP could be induced. The first actor discussed in the next chapter is the central government.

Chapter 3 – Limitation of Project Governance: Fragmentation and Cleavages of the Central Authorities

In an authoritarian regime, the central government acts as the most critical part of the decision making process, at least in theory. Moreover, the central government is perceived as the last referee of bureaucratic bargaining and coordination in the hierarchy. In the China's case, the central government is also a vital important actor to the decision-making process of mega projects, like the Three Gorges Project and Nu River Project. However, through investigating the decision making process and having the rationales analyzed in various perspectives, in addition to explaining the interaction between bureaucracies and organizations from the perspective of the centre, this chapter aims to examine how decision making towards the two projects by two generations of party leadership has changed, so as to reflect the limitation of the central leadership in policy formulation. In this chapter, the projects would be analyzed from the viewpoints of the centre. The interactions with provincial governments and ENGOs that the central authorities expected to have would also be included in this chapter. How the central government operated would be generalized and the political significance and interests of these two projects to the centre would be examined. Not only would central-provincial relationship and state-society relationship be understood, the structure of the central leadership would also be discerned.

This chapter would argue that the fragmentation of interests inside the bureaucracies hampered the efficiencies of decision making. Moreover, this fragmentation was the largest obstacle obstructing the success of policy implementation. Subsequently, the transformation of polity in China enabled the interests of political organs to become more distinct, and it even brings about the dichotomy and coalition amongst organs in the centre. The difficulty of successful dam construction is greater. The first section of this chapter would give an analysis of the perspective of the centre

towards the TGP, and detail how the centre expected to work with the localities and society. Then, the relatively indifferent participation of the centre in the NRP would be discussed. Apart from considering the actions that centre chose to implement, this chapter would also study tactics of the centre behind these projects so as to indicate the priorities in the mind of central leadership. Prior to all these analysis, the notion of central leadership should be clarified.

In traditional communist political systems, the mighty communist party was granted the power of overruling, overseeing and managing public institutions, like the government, enterprises, civil society, etc. Thus, the *Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP* (Hereafter as “PSC”), which is the highest bureaucratic body of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), contains the most powerful elites of the Chinese government. This small group of officials is currently composed of 9 core leaders of the party state and is presided over by Hu Jintao¹⁰⁸. The ‘central leadership’ generally refers to this small group of elites in this thesis. On the other hand, there are a number of bureaucratic organs in the party and in the government under this layer of officials, such as ministries from the State Council, commissions and committees from the party and also the military. Vertically, all these bureaucratic organs in the central government seem to be subordinated to the central leadership, which suggests, promotes and executes its policy directions and planning through commands and orders. The National People’s Congress (NPC) which is the highest legislative body in China is subsequently viewed as the ‘rubber stamp’ of the central leadership and only ‘solidifies the central political tasks for the party’¹⁰⁹. Being the apex of authority in the Chinese political system, the central leadership enjoys the highest privilege and political status in the

¹⁰⁸ The members of PSC included Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, Li Keqiang, Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, He Guoqiang and Zhou Yongkang.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China – From Revolution Through Reform*, (London: WW. Norton & Company, 1995), 160

system. However, it has been argued that the authority of the central leadership has been subjected to more challenges than at the beginning of the establishment of the state. The transformation of the political context, as encountered by the central leadership in these two projects, would be analyzed in the forthcoming sections to highlight the limitations of decision making by the leadership.

The Centre in the TGP – Oppressive and Strong

If we were to go through the history of the TGP, we will discover how China's central authorities supported and praised the project; even though the political environment had remained unstable for century. No different from their predecessors, leaders of the PRC also praised the putative contribution of TGP. Notwithstanding strong controversies against the project domestically and abroad, as well as the anticipation of massive technical difficulties in advance, the central leadership insisted on constructing the enormous Three Gorges Dam. The major activities of the central government in the project could be summarized into three aspects -- ideological, financing and resettlement.

First, millions of people needed to be displaced because of inundation and the investment cost of the central government was estimated at approximately 90 billion yuan¹¹⁰. According to a local cadre from Chongqing municipality, the number of resettlers approximately reached 1.12-1.13 million. Over 20 cities or counties, 356 communes, 116 townships and 1,711 villages were affected because of the project in 2005¹¹¹. Additionally, the whole hierarchy of the government needed to commit to the projects in different ways (see Table 3.1). Thus, leaders needed to promote the project and legitimize such unprecedented commitments of these units.

¹¹⁰ Yan Tan, *Resettlement in the Three Gorges Project*, (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2008), 19. It is estimated based on the price on the price level in the mid-1993 and the exchange rate of RMB against the U.S. is based on the level as at 2004, i.e. U.S.\$1=RMB 8.27 yuan.

¹¹¹ Huang Qifan, captured from Yan Tan, 2008, 20.

Table 3.1 – Commitments of Various Stakeholders in TGP

Aspect	Stakeholders	Responsibility (ies)	Commitment(s)
Government	Ministries & Departments at the Central Level ¹¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To supervise the completion of project on time • To take up the responsibility of technical research and provide resources and information for relevant departments in the provincial level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To delegate authority to the branches at lower level • To be directly instructed and coordinated by the TGP Construction Committee under the State Council • To allocate 100 billion yuan of capital and resources to the construction site and reservoir areas for construction from 1992¹¹³ • To issue more than 8.7 billion yuan national bond for supporting economic and environment in reservoir areas from 2001
	Ministries & Departments at the Provincial Level ¹¹⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing temptations to attract capital in the reservoir areas according to variety of circumstances in counties¹¹⁵ • To set up resettlement bureau at various levels of the hierarchal so as to complete the resettlement campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further implement policies from the central government in accordance with local situations, especially in the aspect of resettlement • To become the front-line delegates of the party state in order to overcome various problems in midst of the project • To provide sufficient compensation for relocating people and enterprises according to their different local situations and necessity of related people and enterprises¹¹⁶
Private-Public Enterprises	State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To invest in the pillar industries of the reservoir areas so as to develop the economy • State-owned banks needed to manage the project funds for construction and economic development, as well as to provide direct loans for relevant SOEs or TVEs • Local SOEs needed to relocate to new reservoir areas and employ landless farmers after relocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China Development Bank • Half of local inefficient SOEs were terminated before relocation •
	Township-Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To resettle in the newly- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every TVEs received 7,000 yuan

¹¹² Heggelund, 2004: 33-37.

¹¹³ He Bin, 'Difficult Problem for Billion Yuan Capital – Records of Full Commitment of Financial Agencies for Three Gorges Project' (Qianyi yuan Zhijin Jie Nanti – Caizheng Bumen Quanli Baozhang Gongcheng Jianshe ceji), *China Financial Post (Zhongguo Caijing Bao)* (13 May 2010) [Online Article]; available from: <http://sanxia2008.org/conter.asp?zid=401&one=1> (accessed on 15 Jun 2010).

¹¹⁴ Tan, 2008: 101-109.

¹¹⁵ Duan Yuefang, 'Involuntary Resettlement as an Opportunity for Development: The Case of Urban Resettlers of the Three Gorges Project, China', *Journal of Refugee Studies Vol.21*, no.1 (2008): 92

¹¹⁶ Sukhan Jackson & Adrian Sleight, 'Resettlement for China's Three Gorges dam: Socio-economic Impact and Institutional Tension', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33, (2000):231.

	Enterprises (TVEs)/ Private Enterprises in Reservoir Areas and nearby ¹¹⁷	established or resettled counties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To absorb landless farmers after relocation because of industrial transformation 	subsidy from the government for every employed resettler ¹¹⁸ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5million workers in Chongqing were employed in private sector¹¹⁹
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Generally, the central leadership embellished the necessity for, and significance of, the project ideologically with: Leninist and Nationalist doctrines. Li Peng, the former Prime Minister of State Council who proposed to construct the TGP and became the most important supporter of the project, stressed the aggregated contributions of the dam to anti-flooding, electricity generation, navigation and water supply, in his annual report at the 5th Meeting of the 7th National People's Congress¹²⁰. Ordinary Chinese people were generally brainwashed by the notion that 'humans must conquer nature' from Leninist doctrines during Mao's administration. The TGP came to be valued as the symbol of humanity's success in overcoming natural constraints. Particularly, because the middle reaches of Yangtze were frequently struck by devastating flooding, the project was praised as a triumphant instrument of humankind to defeat natural disasters¹²¹. The leadership, besides, praised the success of the construction of the TGP ideologically as reflecting of 'Chairman Mao's desire' (*Mao zhuxi de xinyuan*) and 'Deng Xiaoping's support and concern' (*Deng Xiaoping de zhichi he guanxin*)¹²². The TGP was justified in term of the social and economic development of China. Nevertheless, Dai criticized the project as reflecting 'uncontrolled' (*Bujia jiezhi*) development in China. It represented the conscious reluctance of the Chinese government to restrain itself from pursuing

¹¹⁷ Jackson & Sleight, 2000: 231-234

¹¹⁸ Duan Yuefang & Shawn Steil, 'China Three Gorges Project Resettlement: Policy, Planning and Implementation', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 16, no.4 (Dec. 2003): 431.

¹¹⁹ The data was in 1997. Detail sees Jackson & Sleight, 2000:235

¹²⁰ Huang Jiren, *How was the Three Gorges Project Proposal Approved? – Dairy of a Representative for National People's Congress* (Zhongqing, Zhongqing Publishing, 1992), 4.

¹²¹ James Beattie, 'Dam Building, Dissent, and Development: the Emergence of the Three Gorges Project', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 4, 1 (June 2002): 140-142.

¹²² Dai Qing, 'The Three Gorges Project -- A Symbol of Uncontrolled Development in the Late 20th Century', in Dai Qing compiled and John G. Thibodeau & Philip B. Williams eds, *The River Dragon has Come!: the Three Gorges Dam and the Fate of China's Yangtze River* (London, M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 13.

development¹²³. In sum, the central authorities lobbied and promoted the project with its socialist and developmentalist ideologies. This action was criticized by foreign activists and the mass media as irrational and inefficient¹²⁴.

Alternatively, the central authorities were also required to address questions pertaining to the financing of the project after approval was given. Particularly the World Bank (WB) which is one of the largest lenders for dam construction projects in the world was not involved in financing the project. As a result, the Chinese authorities needed to finance the project solely. To overcome the considerable cost of construction, they proposed three sources of financing beyond direct capital injection from the centre, and they are: 1) fixed percentage sharing of revenue from electricity sold to the construction fund; 2) domestic loans from the China Development Bank;¹²⁵ and, 3) allocating a proportion of revenue from the Gezhouba Hydro-Dam which is just nearby with the account of the fund managed by the China Construction Bank (CBC)¹²⁶. The capital injected for dam construction was collectively managed by the China Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC). To seek for sufficient sources for the project is an important and exclusive responsibility of the central government. Unfortunately, the diverse methods of collecting capital were not unable to fulfill the appetite of the project; it is largely because the returns of electricity sales would be ex-post and only contribute

¹²³ Dai, 1998, 3-4; Brian Richter also has similar comment with Dai and he criticized the project as the consequence of 'wildcat' dam development in China. Thus, dam constructions were diffused to exist in any level of government. Details sees: Brian Richter, Interviewed by David Biello, 'Damming the Yangtze: Are a Few Big Hydropower Projects Better Than a Lot of Small Ones?', Scientific American (13 Oct. 2009) [online article]; available from: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=damming-the-yangtze> (accessed on 7 Jan. 2010)

¹²⁴ Boland, 1998, 41-42.

¹²⁵ The amount of direct loans from China Development Bank should be approximately 3 billion yuan annually allocated within 1994-2003. Detail sees: Huaxia Jinwei Wang, 'Sources of Capital for Three Gorges Project' (*Sanxia Gongcheng Zhijin Laiyuan*). [Chinese Online Journal] (Accessed on 7 May 2010) Available from <http://big5.huaxia.com/zt/03-12/2007/00621112.html>

¹²⁶ People's Construction Bank of China, *Temporary Methods of Managing the Three Gorges Project Construction Funds by the People's Construction Bank of China & China Three Gorges Project Development Corporation* (Zhongguo Renmin Jianshi Yinhang, Zhongguo Chengjiang Sanxia Gongcheng Kaifa Zong Gongsi Sanxia Gongcheng Jianshi Jin Guangli Zhanxing Banfa). [Online Journal] (Accessed on 7 May 2010) Available from <http://www.51labour.com/lawcenter/lawshow-57661.html>

to the project in 2003. Thus the central government remained the largest investor for the project before 2003¹²⁷.

Traditionally, involuntary resettlement tends to be coordinated and mobilized by the state. Thus, another responsibility of the central government is to address the enormous resettlement issues associated with the project. The TGP construction resulted in an unprecedented number of resettlers displaced from their lands. It was a vast challenge for the Chinese authorities on how to persuade, arrange and manage the resettlement of more than a million of affected people. Hence, the authorities proposed the concept of ‘development-oriented resettlement’ and guaranteed that,

‘...the residents-resettlement funds shall be used in an overall way, the resources rationally exploited, the ecological environment protected and the residents to be resettled properly relocated to ensure that their working and living conditions reach or surpass their previous level and that favourable conditions are created for the economic and social development in the Three Gorges reservoir area.’¹²⁸,

In other words, the regulation provides legal guarantee for those relocated that their livelihoods would improve after the relocation and requests relevant administration units to prevent impoverishment. Through this regulation, the ordinary people would hopefully view relocation as an opportunity for improving their livelihoods. In addition to the embellishment on the economic significance of the project for the state and ideological mobilization from the party, people generally perceived themselves to be

¹²⁷ Jackson & Sleight, 2000: 231.

¹²⁸ Article 3, PRC National People’s Congress, *Regulations on Residents-Resettlement for the Yangtze River Three Gorges Project Construction*, (15 Feb, 2001), effective since 1 Mar, 2001, [Internet] available from http://english.gov.cn/laws/2005-08/24/content_25797.htm; (accessed on 17 Sep 2008).

relocated involuntarily but still able to achieve collective improvement¹²⁹. Consequently, people were more likely to be mobilized for relocation¹³⁰.

After the debatable approval of the Three Gorges Project from the NPC, repressions against domestic opposition seemed to be more frequent and rigorous. In order to further legitimize the project, the government banned any opposition voices in the society and mass media. For example, a publicity campaign which aimed to guide public opinion and mass media to publish favourable reports, editorials and commentaries was launched before the approval of TGP from NPC in 1992¹³¹. These actions reflected that mere ideological persuasions and economic meanings could no longer suffice to explain the strong attitude of the central leadership. Therefore, the political meanings of the project in the central perspective should be included in the analysis.

Political Background of the Centre in the late-1980s in the Construction of the TGP

The greatest political incident and challenge to the CCP in the late-1980s should be the June-Fourth Massacre after which the CCP was presented with a severe legitimacy challenge on both domestic and international levels because of the cruel oppression. It was hence necessary for the party leadership to seek means for consolidating its legitimacy. As mentioned in chapter 2, the TGP is a symbol of national pride of China. The lengthy history of foreign invasion since the late Qing dynasty contributed to the Chinese having a fervid fantasy for sovereign strength and prosperity. For example, the Self-Strengthening Movement in the late Qing Dynasty enforced a variety of military modernization to defend against invasions by Western imperialist

¹²⁹ Kelly Haggart, *Reservoirs of Repression*, [Internet] accessed on 25 Nov, 2008; available from <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/article?revision%5fid=1960&item%5fid=1959> (21 Feb, 2003), 4

¹³⁰ Xi Juan, Sean-Shong Hwang, Feng Xiaotian & et.al., 'Perceived Risks and Benefits of the Three Gorges Project', *Sociological Perspectives* 50, no.2 (2007), 326.

¹³¹ Shi Weiwei, *Relocation under the three gorges project : explaining policy implementation in rural China* (M.Phil diss., Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2008).

powers, and the Great Leap Forward Movement mobilized the population into a series of industrialization, collectivization and economic modernization so as to boost the China's economy into surpassing developed economies. Mega development projects, such as the TGP, were claimed as opportunities to provide a brighter future for the state to escape from the history of being weak and invaded¹³². The successful construction of these projects might indicate that the party state could bring about a powerful and prosperous prospect to the country. It is reasonable to conclude that the CCP would like to consolidate its legitimacy and show its great contribution in constructing a modernized and powerful China with the TGP¹³³.

The major features of the political context for the TGP in the 1980s were not confined to the legitimacy crisis of the party state. The technocratic nature of the party leadership was also another political circumstance to be considered. In Table 3.2, the academic backgrounds of the central leadership since 1989 are listed. It shows that the overwhelming majority of members from the PSC were well-educated and they have largely majored in engineering or technocratic disciplines.

Table 3.2 – Academic Background of Leaders

13 th Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP (1989-1992)		15 th Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP (1997-2002)		17 th Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP (2007-Present)	
Name	Education Background	Name	Education Background	Name	Education Background
Jiang Zemin	University Graduate, majoring electrical engineering, Shanghai Jiao Tong	Jiang Zemin	University Graduate, majoring electrical engineering, Shanghai Jiao Tong University,	Hu Jintao	University Graduate, Graduated from the specialty of hub hydropower stations of the Department of

¹³² Baruch Boxer, 'China's Three Gorges Dam: Questions and Prospects', *The China Quarterly*, No. 113, (Mar, 1988),94-95.

¹³³ Boxer, 1988, 99-102; Yin, 1996, 535-537.

	University, Engineer		Engineer		Water Conservancy Engineering of Tsinghua University, Engineer
Yao Yilin	N/A	Li Peng	University Graduate, majoring in hydroelectric engineering, Moscow Power Engineering Institute, Senior Engineer	Wu Bangguo	University Graduate, the Department of Radio and Electronics of Tsinghua University, majoring in electronic vacuum devices., Engineer
Song Ping	University Graduate, Agricultural Faculty, Peking University, Revolutionary Leader	Zhu Rongji	University Graduate, majoring electrical engineering. Tsinghua University, Engineer	Wen Jiabao	University Graduate, Beijing Institute of Geology, majoring in geological structure, Engineer
Qiao Shi	University Graduate, Shanghai Tongji University, Revolutionary Leader	Li Ruihuan	Certificate Graduate, majoring industrial and civilian architecture, spare- time architecture engineering institute, Carpenter	Jia Qinglin	University Graduate, the Department of Electric Power of Hebei Engineering College, majoring in electric motor and appliance design and manufacturing, Senior engineer
Li Peng	University Graduate, majoring in hydroelectric engineering, Moscow Power Engineering Institute, Senior Engineer	Hu Jingtao	University Graduate, Department of Water Conservancy Engineering of Tsinghua University,Engineer	Li Changchun	University Graduate, Department of Electric Machinery of Harbin Institute of Technology, majoring in industrial enterprise automation,

					Engineer
Li Ruihuan	Certificate Graduate, majoring industrial and civilian architecture, Spare-time Architecture Engineering Institute, Carpenter	Wei Jianxing	University Graduate, majoring in mechanical engineering, Dailian University of Technology, Senior Engineer	Xi Jinping	University Graduate, Department of Water Conservancy Engineering of Tsinghua University, Engineer
		Li Lanqing	University Graduate, Department of Enterprise Management, Fudan University	Li Keqiang	University Graduate, the School of Economics of Peking University, majoring in economics, Doctor of Economic
				He Guoqiang	University Graduate, Inorganic Chemical Engineering Department, Beijing Institute of Chemical Engineering, majoring in inorganic engineering, Senior Engineer
				Zhou Yongkang	University Graduate, the Exploration Department, Beijing Petroleum Institute, majoring in geophysical exploration, Senior Engineer equivalent to Professor

Source: Website of PRC, [Internet] (accessed on 27 Jan 2010); available from http://www.gov.cn/test/2008-04/30/content_958850.htm ; Wikipedia; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politburo_Standing_Committee_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China

The similar background of high-leveled officials implied intentions to rely on technologies for development. They were commonly known as ‘Red Specialists’ (*Hongshe Zhuanjia*). Dai explained the resulting drawback of the overwhelming domination of technocrats in the leadership is the reckless decision to develop high technology by the state. In other words, high technological construction would become the most dominant method of economic and social development. In the meanwhile, it is less likely for them to consider the environment, ecology and humanitarian costs of developing high technological projects. Given that the technocratic party leadership encountered an arduous political environment associated with the June-Forth Massacre, they might further be motivated to launch the TGP.

Implicitly, the TGP was a tool for safeguarding the interest of leaders and their families, especially Li Peng, who was the former Prime Minister in the early 1990s. Li was the largest supporter and driving force of the TGP in pushing for its approval in the decision making and planning. He repeatedly expressed his favourable stance for the project publicly. For instance, he ideologically justified the project by equating it to socialism’s triumphs and praising it as a reflection of ‘the fighting spirit of the Chinese people and the superiority of the socialist system’¹³⁴. However, once the involvement of his family in the power sector is included in the consideration, Li’s motivation for driving the success of TGP might be questioned. His son is the president and his wife is a major shareholder of one of the largest state-owned power generating company – Huaneng Power. His daughter Li Xiaolin is also the vice manager of the China Power Investment Corporation. Huaneng Power is one of main shareholders of the China

¹³⁴ Tsering, 2005, 37.

Yangtze Power Corporation Limited (CYPC) which is the operator of hydroelectricity generation at the Three Gorges Dam¹³⁵. Therefore Li's family was believed to have privately benefited from the TGP and the project was contemptuously referred to as 'Li Peng's pet project'¹³⁶. In some extents, this could also explain Li's enthusiasm for promoting the project and the autocratic decision making.

Considering the unique political atmosphere in China after the Tiananmen Massacre, the composition of the leadership and even the implicit benefits to the leaders and their families, the intoxication of the party leadership for the TGP could be uncovered and explained. TGP, in the eyes of the leaders, is not only a necessary means of economic development for the state, but also a tool of expanding their political power and ensuring their private interests¹³⁷. It could reasonably explain the oppressive presence and attitude of the autocratic central government in the decision-making process of the TGP. In China, criticisms against the project have been close to 'taboo' and they would be strictly repressed by the authorities. This implies an up-to-down decision-making approach of the TGP in which the central leadership becomes the sole decision maker of the implementation of the project, while the SOEs, ministries, provincial governments and other bureaucratic organs were just instruments of the implementation. Nevertheless, the decision making process seems to be more complicated than the leadership-oriented approach. In addition, despite the tendency of approving the project in an up-to-down approach, this did not mean that consensus was easy to achieve in the central and even leadership level.

¹³⁵ According to the official website of CYPC, Huaneng is the third largest shareholder of the enterprise, but it is the exclusive power state-owned company to possess the share of CYPC. Detail sees: China Yangtze Power Corporation Limited, *Major Shareholders*, [Internet] (accessed on 27 Jan 2010) available from <http://www.cypc.com.cn/TitleList.jsp?cateid=103391>

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

¹³⁷ Dai Qing & Lawrence Sullivan, 'The Three Gorges Dam and China's Energy Dilemma', *Journal of International Affairs* 53, no.1 (Fall 1999), 68.

In retrospect, the controversies of the TGP had achieved another high point in the early 1980s. The famous Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, aggressively promoted a series of economic and social reforms so as to encourage modernization of the country. Similar to Mao, Deng believed that a great leap forward in the modernization of hydroelectricity would consolidate social modernization in economic reforms. Therefore, he was seemingly quite determined to launch the TGP so as to deal with the necessity of hydroelectricity generation, flood control and navigation in the late 1970s; although the central leadership did not completely achieve the consensus of launching the project in spite of Deng's determination. According to Li, Chen Yun and Zhao Ziyang showed reservations to the project. Zhao, who would shortly be the Sichuan provincial leader and then the Prime Minister of China, showed his anxiety for the considerable amount of land which would be inundated and people to be resettled due to the project. Chen, the 'economic Tsar' and another important eminent leader of the CCP, questioned the financial and administrative abilities of the party to launching the gigantic TGP aggressively before 1990s¹³⁸. However, Chen and Zhao were cautious in proposing their opposition. Chen approached Li Rui who was a major opponent in China and allied with him to write a series of documents criticizing the proposal of TGP from the Ministry of Water Conservancy, to request the leadership to be more deliberative on for the project¹³⁹. The significant reservation of Chen and Zhao made the decision of launching TGP in the early 1980s unrealistic. Moreover, cleavages of opinions amongst other leaders also became more apparent.

Owing to the lack of consensus among the leadership, ministries, departments and state-owned enterprises, opinion at the central level remained fragmented towards

¹³⁸ Chen's opinion was based on the stern financial and administrative circumstances of launching three important projects – TGP, Baoshan Iron and Steel Complex in Shanghai, and Pingguo Aluminum Mine in Guangxi simultaneously in 1979. Detail sees: Yin Liangwu, *The long Quest for Greatness: China's Decision to Launch the Three Gorges Project*, (PhD. Diss., Washington University, 1996) 421.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 417-422.

the project. The common ground among relevant ministries and departments was their perception of Deng's advocacy of the project, so they tended not to directly challenge Deng's instruction. Nevertheless, in order to obstruct any reckless and rapid implementation, opposing agencies suggested having a slower pace of implementation via a variety of methods. For instance, the separation of the Ministry of Water Conservancy and Electric Power into the Ministry of Water Conservancy and the Ministry of Electric Power in 1979 reflected inter-ministry controversy towards the project. The Ministry of Water Conservancy was one of the major supporters for the project and enthusiastically promoted the approval of the TGP proposal as soon as possible. Unfortunately, they disputed with the Ministry of Electric Power because of repeated arguments on the priorities and details of the project, such as investments, administrative supervision and processes¹⁴⁰. The reorganization of the Ministry of Water Conservancy and Electric Power led to the surfacing of this 'in-house' argument within the ministry and even in the State Council. Additionally, although it would like to prevent direct contests against paramount leader, central authorities might dispute the technological problems and details so as to slow the pace of getting approval for the project.

In short, due to its inheritance of the traditional up-to-down approach in the Leninist socialist bureaucratic system, the central leadership had provided the core dynamic for the approval of the TGP. However, the cleavages of opinions amongst the leadership reflected the difficulties of successful implementation of dam construction. Further, the cleavages were not confined to within the leadership; it extended to ministries and departments of the central government. Accordingly, the project was not substantially approved throughout the 1980s until the Tiananmen Massacre. Since the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 407.

Massacre, the political environment, particularly in the central level, experienced a great change. For example, leadership became more autocratic and more technocratic officials entered the leadership. Thus, dam construction was praised as the most triumphant instrument of social and economic modernization. TGP was thereby approved, albeit with the existence of a number of unsolved problems and questions.

The Centre in the NRP – Indifferent but Critical Referee

Central Direction & Manipulation of Political Economy

In contrast, the attitude of the central leadership in the NRP was not as eager as in the TGP. The most obvious participation of the central leadership throughout the decision-making process of NRP was through the instruction of suspending the implementation of NRP and the leadership ‘cautiously studied, and scientifically decided’ it¹⁴¹. The presence of the central leaders in the project, to a large extent, implies intervening policies of local development in provinces, rather than simple suspension. Yardley even described that this instruction ‘signals that China’s top leaders have not a plan that most dam opponents had considered a fait accompli’¹⁴². In other words, Wen’s order reflected that the implicit political cleavages between the centre and locals, which gives space to environmental protection activists to lobby their interests in order to shape policy making process; something which is rare in the Chinese bureaucratic system. Nevertheless, the suspension could not thereby be concluded that the central leadership either would like to degrade the priority of developing hydroelectricity or that it has lost its bargaining power with social organizations. Therefore, prior to analyzing the

¹⁴¹ Jim Yardley, ‘Seeking a Public Voice on China’s “Angry River”’, *The New York Times* (26 Dec, 2005), [Internet], available from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9800E6DD1230F935A15751C1A9639C8B63&sec=&spo n=&&scp=2&sq=Jim%20Yardley%20Nu%20River&st=cse>, (accessed on 10 Nov, 2009)

¹⁴² Jim Yardley, ‘China’s Premier Orders Halt to a Dam Project Threatening a Lost Eden’, *The New York Times* (9 Apr, 2004), [Internet] available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/09/world/china-s-premier-orders-halt-to-a-dam-project-threatening-a-lost-eden.html?scp=7&sq=Jim%20Yardley%20Nu%20River&st=cse>, (accessed on 10 Nov, 2009)

interactive mechanism from the central perspective, a number of pre-depositions should be clarified and explained.

First, notwithstanding the rapid economic growth in the last decade of the 20th century, the Chinese government put significant efforts towards maintaining a high-growth economy. Economic growth and development has never been out of the agenda of central leadership. In the 11th Five-Year-Plan, the new leadership expressed its vision of constructing a more diversified energy sector beyond consuming fossil fuels and hydroelectricity through ‘administrative means’¹⁴³. Apparently, ‘development’ is still dominating the high priority of leaders, but they are concerned and thus mentioned the importance of environment more frequently than their predecessors. Subsequently, it is more likely for the new leadership to be deliberating dam construction projects.

The leverage of market mechanism, then, has penetrated a vital position in the Chinese bureaucratic system since the reform period. It is believed that the Chinese political system has transited from traditional socialist hierarchy to a more liberal and modernized system. The FA model argued and highlighted the transition of dynamics of bureaucratic apparatus from vertical relationship (i.e. chief-subordinate relationship) to a more ‘market-oriented’ and ‘rule-guided’ one¹⁴⁴. Therefore, policies have become considerably more utilitarian. The implementation of recent policies does not only rely on central commands, but also on market contribution to the policies, although the central authorities are still ‘holding back on giving freer rein to market mechanisms and using tighter administrative controls to monitor the economy in general’¹⁴⁵. For example, a number of SOEs have been privatized in a certain extent since the 1990s, so profit

¹⁴³ Michal Meidan, Philip Andrew-Speed & Ma Xin, ‘Shaping China’s Energy Policy: Actors and Processes’, *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, no.61, (Sep. 2009), 591.

¹⁴⁴ Kenneth Lieberthal, ‘Introduction: The “Fragmented Authoritarianism” Model and Its Limitations’ in Kenneth Lieberthal & David Lampton eds., *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, (Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 21.

¹⁴⁵ Median, Andrew-Speed & Ma, 2009, 593.

seeking and efficiency have become major objectives for SOEs in expanding the business scale. Market mechanism acted more prominently in the polity and has encouraged the bureaucratic apparatus to awaken their political and administrative interests. As a result, the cleavage amongst central ministries becomes more apparent and the NRP is a good example to illustrate this phenomenon.

Although the central authorities have emphasized the significance of developing hydroelectricity as a grand strategy, central ministries were not unified for the dam; with the NRP significantly reflecting this phenomenon. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) approved and supported the project with the initial schedule of the dam taken from the proposal presented to State Council for final approval and construction to commence in September, 2003. However, the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA)¹⁴⁶ criticized the project and published an article against the construction of the NRP¹⁴⁷. The large inconsistency among ministries in the central authorities contributed to the postponement of the approval, and thus activists had room to fight for re-consideration of the project after the enforcement of the law. Further, ministries informally worked with organizations and localities in accordance with their diverse interests. The subsequently agglomerate behaviors were similar to two adverse coalitions which commonly aimed to influence the decision of the central leadership. Graph 3.3 shows the structure and linkages of these two coalitions.

¹⁴⁶ In the 1st plenary meeting of the 11th NPC, the proposal of State Council Reform was approved and the SEPA was escalated to become the Ministry of Environmental Protection accordingly. Prior to the escalation, the SEPA was at the vice-ministerial level in the hierarchical system of China, under the direct subordination of the State Council. Thus, it is believed that the escalation in administrative position could reinforce the power and resources of the agency and allow it to participate in decision making process more directly. In this thesis, because the agency had not been upgraded yet, it might be misleading if the agency is referred as the ministry. Thus, the agency would remain as SEPA in this thesis; unless otherwise specified. For the information of SEPA's escalation, please sees: Lu Sicheng, Escalation of Ministry of Environmental Protection in China is not sufficient to turn environmental pollution', [online press journal] Greenpeace, available from: <http://www.greenpeace.org/china/ch/news/commentary/environmental-ministry-reform> (accessed on 15 Oct, 2009)

¹⁴⁷ Yardley, 2005.

show the efforts of the supporting coalition to lobby its interest. For instance, they gathered local intellectuals who mainly stand for the project and had a meeting in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province, allowing their views and arguments to be publicized by local newspapers in the spring of 2003¹⁴⁹. Also, the local government further justified the project with the promotion of responding to the ‘Open up the West’ Campaign. Moreover, due to the mightiness of the NDRC in the bureaucratic systems, the supporting coalitions seemed to be in advantage of this campaign, as they were seemingly giving the impression of having greater influence on the central leadership.

In effect, the central leadership, through its mighty authority in determining the success or failure of the project, is the only referee of the project whose responsibilities are providing the final approval and coordinating work with other relevant departments or ministries, such as SEPA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc. Subsequently, the central leadership seems to have no absolute stance on the NRP. However, some central ministries or commissions, like NDRC and Huadian, etc, would stand favourably for the project because of their policy interests. The NDRC which aims to balance the economic and social development of the whole country has a similar vision to the provincial government and believes that the project would benefit residents in the reservoir area through a better material livelihood. Thus, it might also hope that electricity generated from the NRP could be sent to the coastal regions for consumption¹⁵⁰. Unfortunately, electricity companies such as Huadian are more likely to participate in developing hydroelectricity simply because there is an enormous amount of cheap electricity to be sold. Thus, it agreed to establish the Yunnan Huadian Nujiang River Hydropower Development Co. Ltd (YHNHD) with the Yunnan Provincial government and its

¹⁴⁹ Yardley, 2005; Andrew Mertha, *China's Water Warriors – Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2008), 117.

¹⁵⁰ McDonald, 2007, 161.

investment corporation in 2003. Referring to Table 3.5, the Huadian Corporation is the largest shareholder of the YHNHD, and it was reported that Huadian estimated Yunnan provincial government could gain a 1.3 billion yuan annual return¹⁵¹. The considerable profit from hydropower development resulted in Huadian becoming aggressive and active in arguing for the implementation of the NRP, and this also explains why the provincial government was an important proponent of the project.

Table 3.5 – Allocation of Share of YHNHD

Name of Enterprise Shareholders	Proportion of Share
Huadian Corporation	51%
Yunnan Investment Group	20%
Yunnan Electric Group Hydropower Construction Ltd.	19%
Nujiang River Electricity Company	10%

Source: Tong Zhifang, 'Structure of Mobilization and Development of Natural Protection Movement – Case Study in Nujiang River Anti-dam Movement' (Dongyuan Jiegou yu Zhiran Baoyu Yundong de fazhan – yi Nujiang Fanba Yundong weili), *Open Times (Kaifang Shidai)*207 (Sep, 2009): 118

Nonetheless, some ministries do not seem to devote time and resources to dam construction, except state-owned electricity companies. However, the NDRC are apparently less devoted to the NRP, because it also considers the potential social issues, such as resettlement, social unrests and corruption which are associated with the launch of these types of projects. Different to the past, NDRC seemed to consider other aspects on this economic development; therefore, it is not surprising that NDRC is more deliberating with regards to the NRP.

In contrast, the weaker SEPA needed to forgo more effort to shape the policy making. The embarrassing position of ministries which stood against the project such as SEPA is noteworthy. On the one hand, they should maintain the unified images of the decision in the 'collective' centre, and on the other, they need to fight to achieve their interests in the policy. They failed to work directly with social organizations and

¹⁵¹ Anonymous, 'Investigating Triangular Interest Strategic Democracy in Decision Making Process of Nujiang Hydropower Project' [Online article] *China.com.cn* (20 Apr., 2004), available from: <http://big5.china.com.cn/chinese/huanjing/549035.htm> (accessed on 14 May 2010).

individual activists, yet they obstructed the supporting coalitions as they possessed a huge amount of empirical data which seemed to disadvantage the project and the centre's strong legitimacy in the public domain¹⁵². Also, they uphold the unique environmental value of the Nujiang region and demonstrate how the NRP contradicted the objectives of reserving the *Sanjiang Binliu*. Apart from educating and persuading potential individuals who were to be relocated in the project, they also informally allied with ENGOs to put pressure on the central leadership to suspend the NRP¹⁵³. In order to pressure the leadership effectively, environmental agencies also stirred up nationwide controversy about the project, in raising the arguments of how the project is incompatible with the new environmental law which came into force in September 2003¹⁵⁴. All works of the opposition proposed to call on the concerns of the public, especially in specific issues such as resettlement, environmental damage and social equality. Subsequently, they seemed to have become major obstacles that the provincial government needed to overcome in order to complete the project.

On the other hand, the supporting authorities were not willing to blindly demonstrate their favor to the project, even if the project could bring a huge amount of economic benefit to the organs themselves. Thus, they delegated some important responsibilities, such as promoting the project to the public, legitimatizing the necessity of the project, and even constructing precise content in the plan of the project to the local governments. Yet, the centre would still act as the largest investor for a range of dam construction projects, but the procedure of capital injection needed to be more rigorous. According to Ma Jun, Director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, the centre would not inject any capital into projects until they were 'unquestionably

¹⁵² Mertha, 2008, 143.

¹⁵³ Yardley, 2005.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

approved’¹⁵⁵. In other words, the centre wanted more deliberation over dam construction so as to achieve the balance of economic development and environmental protection.

The ‘Open up the West’ campaign in 1999 aims to narrow down the income disparity between this region and the coastal region. The campaign is an opportunity of change and development for Yunnan which is at the most South-western end of the territory and one of the resource-richest provinces in China. However, the lengthy history of being inferior and destitute led to great ambition of the Yunnan provincial government to improve the economic performance and it proposed diverse tactics of poverty relief¹⁵⁶. The Nu River Project is one of the major projects purposed for achieving this goal by the Yunnan government. Nevertheless, comments of the central government seemed to be less fascinated of the dam construction. Subsequently, the NRP from the leadership seems to be more neutral, especially after considering the environmental and ecological damages that the project will bring. The decision of the necessity of NRP, according to Mertha, was made in 1999 by the NDPC. The Huadian Group, which is one of the largest state-owned electricity enterprises in China, was a major developer and operator of the TGP and took part in the project four years later¹⁵⁷. However, despite their participation, their efforts in promoting the project seemed to be mentioned less throughout the controversy of the project.

In the meantime, civil society might act as a check-and-balance mechanism to the increasingly mighty local governments, and rather than mere critics against national reform¹⁵⁸. Social organizations may thus be responsible in mitigating drawbacks derived

¹⁵⁵ Ma Jun, interviewed by Antoaneta Bezlova in ‘Development: China Reins in Dam Builders’, [Internet] *Inter Press Service News Agency*, available from <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=47259> (accessed on 4 Dec, 2009); (18 Jun 2009).

¹⁵⁶ Ralph Litzinger, ‘The Mobilization of “Nature”: Perspectives from North-West Yunnan’, *The China Quarterly* (Jun, 2004), 489-491.

¹⁵⁷ Mertha, 2008, 117.

¹⁵⁸ Katherine Morton, ‘The Emergence of NGOs in China and Their Transnational Linkages’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 59, no.4, (Dec 2005) 522.

from these problems. For opponents, SOs are faithful and mighty allies to reshape public opinions towards the project. In the case of the NRP, civic groups highlighted a blind spot in the midst of the policy which the authorities might neglect, and they questioned the project and its incompatibility with the new environmental law. In addition, their additional information gained from assessing the project gave the SEPA an ability to argue against the project. The opponent apparatus and social organizations coincidentally had delineation of responsibilities. Environmental social organizations, which were against dam construction, made enormous contributions to constructing and broadening horizontal networks of opposition campaigns; opponent ministries, on the other hand, due to the help of particularly outstanding cadres inside, could amplify the opposition voices against the project while there was no consensus within central government¹⁵⁹. A *de facto* alliance was formed between a part of central authorities and social organizations; This *de facto* alliance proved to be effective in shaping the policy making process of China and altering the consequence of unpopular decisions. Beyond a direct contest with the authorities, they recognized the bureaucratic cleavages and ‘support [of] one department to oppose another,’¹⁶⁰ thus, the differentiation of policy interests amongst ministries and commissions is the core dynamic of maintaining the cohesiveness of the organization. In spite of the successful experience of altering the result of the NRP, it is not sufficient to conclude that the alliance of social organizations and central authorities was well-established and institutionalized.

In short, after analyzing the political contexts and circumstances of the central leadership and bureaucratic organs at the central level, in the decision making periods of

¹⁵⁹ Michael Busgen, 2006, 30.

¹⁶⁰ Wang Jianghong, interviewed by Michael Busgen, in *NGOs and the Search for Chinese Civil Society Environmental Non-governmental Organizations in the Nujiang Campaign*, Working Paper Series No. 422, (Institute of Social Studies, Feb 2006), [Internet] available from: <http://cendoc.esan.edu.pe/fulltext/e-documents/ISS-NL/wp422.pdf> (accessed on 30 Nov. 2009), 30.

the TGP and NRP, one may conclude that the central leadership seems to be the most determinant actor throughout the decision making processes. Nonetheless, the strategies, actions and responsibilities of the central leadership were demonstrated to have undergone significant transformation. In the following section, rationales of these transformations will be explained and the correlation of personnel transformation and these transformations will be analyzed. It is argued that the transformation of the notion of 'development' in the mindset of central leaders, and in particular the Prime Minister, exists and influences the success of mega projects, such as TGP and NRP. In spite of the great determination of the central leadership, the leverage seemed to, in the meantime, be restrained by the fragmented bureaucracy. Additionally, the interest fragmentation amongst agencies had become more distinct and apparent, so the restrains of central leadership had thereby become more embarrassing. It constructed solid obstruction and procrastination towards successful implementation of policy. Therefore, in order to deal with the situation and allocate agencies' interests more impartially, the central leadership tends to deliberate or passively shelve the NRP proposal instead of seeking consensus among agencies.

Transformation of Leadership & Change of Attitude?

Comparing analyses of these two projects from the perspective of the central leadership, one might conclude that the attitude of central leaders towards dams have evolved to be more deliberating. However, this conclusion is not sufficient to explain the scope of evolution since it concentrates on a part of it. The personnel succession in this decade should be included in analyses since the rationales of policy formulation in the central leadership have changed continuously. The table 3.6 has indicated these transformations.

Table 3.6 – Evolvement of Rationales of Agenda Setting and Policy Formulation for Central Leadership

	13 th Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP (1989-1992)	15 th Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP (1997-2002)	17 th Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP (2002-2007)
Instructional Ideological Slogun(s)	‘Reform for interior, Opening for exterior’ (duinei gaige, duiwai kaifang)	Three Representatives of CCP	‘Scientific Development’ & ‘Harmonious Society’
Considerations of Agenda Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainability or reinforcement of political legitimacy of CCP¹⁶¹ ● Stable personnel succession of the leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainability of rapid economic growth¹⁶² ● Reinforcing the reliability and efficiency of the government and economy ● Success of economic liberalization, e.g. privatization of SOEs, Financial Reforms, WTO accession, etc¹⁶³. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disparities and injustice in the society due to economic liberalization ● Drawbacks of globalization, e.g. economic instability, etc.¹⁶⁴ ● Serious rent-seeking activities and bribery in the hierarchy¹⁶⁵
Governance Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repressive leadership and weak opposition ● Ideological embellishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong and repressive economic & bureaucratic reforms¹⁶⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Showing to close to the grassroots¹⁶⁷ ● Strong pragmatic image and

¹⁶¹ Li Peng. *Zhongzhi Hui Hongtu – Li Peng Sanxia Riji (Unification and Great Planning – Dairies of Sanxia from Li Peng)*. (Beijing: China Sanxia Publishing, 2003).

¹⁶² Centre for Chinese Affairs. *Zhu Rongji Mianlin de Fengxian (Risks Encountered by Zhu Rongji)*. (U.S.A.: Mirror Books Publishing, 1998), 30.

¹⁶³ Xiao Zhengqin. *Zhu Rongji Kua Shiji Tiaozhan (The Coming Challenges to Premier Zhu Rongji)*. (Taiwan: The Pacific Century Press Limited, 1998), 312, 362-364.

¹⁶⁴ Lai Qingxiu. *Zhongnanhai Shimianmaifu – Hu-Wen mianlin de kunnan, fenqi he qianzai congto (The Potential Crises of Zhongnanhai – Difficulties, Diversity and Potential Threats of Hu-Wen Administration)*. (U.S.A.: Mirror Book Publishing, 2009), 11-12.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid: 16-17.

¹⁶⁶ Yang Lujun. *Zhonggong Desandai Pipan (Criticisms of 3rd Generation Leadership of the CCP)*. (Hong Kong: Xiafei'er International Publishing Ltd, 1999), 141-142.

¹⁶⁷ Lai, 2009: 27

	of policies	● Mighty central government to consolidate mechanisms	entrepreneur-like style ¹⁶⁸
Background of Power Possession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1989 Tiananmen Massacre & wave of democratization in Soviet Union hampering the legitimacy of the CCP¹⁶⁹ ● Great anxiety of economic liberalization in the leadership (e.g. Deng's tour in the Southern China in 1992) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforcing the pace of economic growth in high speed ● Rapid economic growth and serious social legacies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Successful WTO accession and related economic reforms¹⁷⁰ ● Emergence of the necessity of social policies¹⁷¹ ● Waves of collective incidents and anti-bureaucratic activities throughout the whole country¹⁷²

In 2002, the CCP experienced another personnel transformation of the central leadership after the 16th National Congress. Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao became the President and the Prime Minister to replace Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji respectively. This personnel transformation represented an evolution of political philosophy of the administration, and especially the attitude towards dam construction. According to the table 3.6, the leadership devoted actively for industrialization and modernization, especially Zhu Rongji who stressed the bureaucratic reforms and enhancement of efficiency in the economy and bureaucracy, so they were seemingly favour of dam construction. Surprisingly, despite their common background of being well-educated in engineering disciplines, the Hu-Wen administration – unlike their predecessors – claimed to be

¹⁶⁸ Yang Zhongmei. *Zhonggong Xing Lingdao – Hu Jintao (New Leader of CCP – Hu Jintao)*. (Taipei: Reading Times Publishing, 2002), 326

¹⁶⁹ James Miles, translated by Yuan Xizhen. *Deng Xiaoping de Yichan; Jiang Zemin de kunjin (The Legacy of Tiananmen: China in Disarray)*. (U.S.A.: Mirror Book Publishing, 1997), 10-12.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid: 310-311.

¹⁷¹ Lai, 2009: 16-17

¹⁷² Ibid: 191-195.

indifferent to hydroelectricity development¹⁷³. The new-coming administration did not deny the importance of energy supply for the development of the economy, but it had been more indifferent to the necessity of dam construction – especially gigantic projects such as TGP – and to the diversification of energy supply. This change could be evinced by the increasing stress of wind, solar and other renewables rather than hydroelectricity, in the 11th Five-Year Plan of China. Moreover, the low-profile celebration for completion of the TGP queerly contrasted the heavy efforts of embellishment of justifying the project by the previous administration¹⁷⁴. The value of hydroelectricity in the central leadership was thereby believed to be delegated more deliberately.

Prior to the succession of Hu and Wen, Heggelund suggested this argument in 2001. He especially concentrated on the transformation of premiership and exemplified with diverse orientations between Li Peng to Zhu Rongji so as to demonstrate the transformation of political attitude towards the leadership in relation to dam construction. Li who was the Prime Minister of the State Council during the late 1980s and early 1990s was a prominent supporter of dam construction. Apart from proposing the TGP, he also became one of the important defenders of the project. Zhu was more critical of the project. Instead of directly criticizing the validity of the project, Zhu allowed mass media and commentators to highlight significant problems encountered in the project¹⁷⁵. In the previous section, the critical position of the central leadership in policy making processes of both projects has been identified. The supreme determinacy of leadership is not only the consequence of the hierarchal superiority of leadership, but also its

¹⁷³ Jim Yardley, 'China Banks on Hydropower to Cut Emissions, but at Huge Human Cost', *The New York Times* (18 Nov, 2007), [Internet], available from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/19/world/asia/19iht-19dam.8384776.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=Jim%20Yardley%20Hydropower&st=cse, (accessed on 10 Nov, 2009)

¹⁷⁴ Shi Jiangtao, 'Colossal Project Seen as an Icon of Reform', *South China Morning Post*, (16 Dec, 2008) A7.

¹⁷⁵ Gorild Heggelund, *Environmental and Resettlement Politics in China – The Three Gorges Project*, (U.K.: Ashgate, 2001): 212

possession of information and professional knowledge¹⁷⁶. Leaders, assisted by think tanks and consultative intellectuals, might be able to achieve consensus among various bureaucratic apparatus and to produce rational and qualified decisions¹⁷⁷. Moreover, he also argued that the improvement of academic backgrounds of leaders might probably evolve the orientation of decision making to be more realistic and pragmatic.

During the policy planning of TGP, the central leadership was more autocratic and dynamical to the successful implementation of the project despite occasional hesitations from the leaders. Mass media, bureaucratic apparatus and state-owned enterprises were main agents that implemented policies and followed leaders without any challenge. Thus, policies were criticized to be of poor quality and ‘going out of shape’ (*zou yang le*)¹⁷⁸; yet, any unfavorable reports were prohibited in China. In addition, ideological slogans and propaganda were still being utilized to mobilize people and civil society to commit to the project and comfort the discontent of resettlers. Subsequently, at the beginning of the policy making process, the media played the role of ‘guiding public opinion’ towards the project¹⁷⁹. However, the quality of policies was not guaranteed and civilians, in particular resettled people in the project, were victimized. For example, it was reported that thousands of rural migrants had moved back to their lands because they were struggling with local people after relocating to other provinces¹⁸⁰. Besides, researchers were questioned as to the accuracy of official data and estimates about the project. The World Bank accelerated the estimated total number of

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 219.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 200.

¹⁷⁸ Migrants in Fengle town, Kaixian, Hubei Province, interviewed by Yan Tan, in Yan, 2008, 109.

¹⁷⁹ Shi Shanshan, *Relocation Under the Three Gorges Project: Explaining Policy Implementation in Rural China*, (Hong Kong University of Sciences and Technology: M.Phil Dis., 2008), 74.

¹⁸⁰ Kelly Haggart & Yang Chongqing, ‘Reservoirs of Repression – State Love Affairs with Big Dams Brings Suffering to Chinese People’, [e-feature] *Human Rights in China*, available from <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/article?revision%5fid=1960&item%5fid=1959> (accessed on 25 Nov., 2008), 7.

resettlers to be 1.4 million because the Chinese official estimates did not include secondary resettlers and figures were underestimated using the *Hukou* system¹⁸¹.

The autocratic method of implementation changed to one that was more transparent and realistic during Zhu and Wen's premierships, with more realistic news and even scandals discovered in the midst of their tenures. Heggelund cited the publication of four articles of the People's Daily – the tongue post (mouth piece) of the CCP – which called on the leadership to be concerned the different issues raised by the project. This reflects the gradual release of the party's grip in manipulating the mass media in relation to the TGP. As a result, Zhu's transparency was highly praised, and there was one comment that

*'[i]f it were not for Zhu Rongji, it would be impossible to show the state of affairs for the project.'*¹⁸²

On the other hand and in the case of the NRP, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced that he was going to suspend the project in response to fierce controversies in society, and the policy making process seems to have been more transparent. In addition to the diversification of policy interests among central authorities, the process had even become more transparent and free for expression. For instance, the public hearing by the SEPA in November 2005 is rare in authoritarian China, as to have such open platform to collect public opinion is not usual practice¹⁸³.

Heggelund explained the difference of orientation in the central leadership that

'[a] main difference between the revolutionary leaders of the first and second generations and the technocrats of the third generation (i.e. Leadership led by Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji) is that they are

¹⁸¹ Duan Yuefang & Shawn Steil, 'China Three Gorges Project Resettlement: Policy, Planning and Implementation', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 16, no.4, Dec, 2003, 423-424.

¹⁸² Heggelund, 2001, 217.

¹⁸³ Jim Yardley, 'Dam Conflict Resurfaces', New York Times (4 Jan 2005), [Internet] available from http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/03/world/asia/03iht-dams.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Jim%20Yardley%20Dam%20Conflict&st=cse (accessed on 10 Nov 2009).

problem-solvers by training; “they focus on problems, not ‘isms’¹⁸⁴.

The transformation of central leadership contributed to a well-educated and pragmatic leadership, and may thus lead to an intention for resolving and preventing problems. Thus, this might explain why the central leadership seems to be more deliberating and indifferent to gigantic dam construction projects.

Although the technocratic trend of the leadership, the rapid transformation of political background of power possession in this decade brought more diverse agenda setting of the central leadership. Referring to the table 3.6 (see p.71-72), the concentration of the central leadership in agenda setting has gone beyond economic development and included a series of social issues in the grand strategy, such as, anti-bribery, environmental protection and social justice, for the Hu-Wen administration. Enormous dam construction was viewed to deteriorate social problems and challenge the governance of the CCP. Thus, the central leadership has evolved to be more indifferent for large-scale hydro-electricity project.

In short, after analyzing the TGP and NRP from the centre’s perspective, one might contrast the political significance of TGP and NRP which seems to be one of the main reasons contributing to the diverse consequences of these two projects. However, the TGP should not only be regarded as a pure economic project, as it was highly praised by leaders due to its unique historical values and the arduous political atmosphere in China after the June-Fourth Massacre. As a consequence, the TGP could become a symbol of modernization and technological advancement in contemporary China which may consolidate the legitimacy of CCP. On the contrary, the political significance of NRP does not seem to be as high as the TGP in the central perspective, especially after

¹⁸⁴ Heggelund, 2001, 202; The latter dialogue was by Joseph Fewsmith. See ‘The New Shape of Elite Politics’, *The China Journal*, Iss.45, 84.

the anxiety over environmental and ecological problems had resurfaced. Moreover, the central authorities have been pluralized in accordance with diverse policy interests, so the NRP was easily obstructed and challenged. Beyond the approach of assessing the legitimacy of the project, this chapter has demonstrated and analyzed the contextual actions of the central leadership and authorities in the TGP and the NRP. Cleavages of interests existed in the central government, in both leadership and ministries. Further, this seems to correlate with the scope of economic liberalization. On the other hand, the higher level that leaders had possessed did not only lead to technocratic tendencies in decision making, but also explained the rationales of deliberation before decisions were reached by the new-generation central leadership. Nevertheless, the significant transformation is not restrained at the intra-bureaucratic level, but exists in the centre-periphery relationship. In the following chapter, the correlations of decentralization and interest fragmentation inside the hierarchical system in China will be explained.

Chapter 4 – Local Officials and Mega Hydropower Project: Transformation of Interest Articulation

The extensive domain of China has caused huge diversity of environment amongst provinces. Taking Yunnan and Hubei provinces, where the Nu River Dams and Three Gorges Dam are respectively located, even though they are both inland provinces, Yunnan province is inferior to Hubei in terms of economic performance; however it has richer reserves in a range of natural resources and its relief is relatively mountainous. Moreover, Yunnan is more ethnically diverse than other provinces. The huge diversity of provinces thus enables local officials to sound legitimate when taking part in the important role of policy formulation. This is because, local officials, particularly provincial cadres, have greater political leverage than constitutional regulations. They shoulder responsibilities of implementing policies, planning directions, and strategizing development. In this chapter, not only will actions of provincial governments in these projects be introduced, how localities regard mega dam projects like TGP and NRP will also be discussed. The rationales of their praises towards these projects will also be analyzed from the perspective of local bureaucrats. Thus, how these notions influenced expectations and interactions with the central agencies and civil society are of concern here. Moreover, this chapter will argue that market mechanism and local developmentalism in the local governments, rather than ideology, have penetrated into the calculations of local cadres. Ideology seems to have become only an instrument for local cadres in achieving their goals, hence this chapter aims to support and even enrich the applicability of the FA model.

Before going into the analysis of this chapter, the level of investigation should be clearly delineated. In the contemporary Chinese polity, there are three main stories of local-level echelon: provinces, townships/cities/prefectures and village/district levels. Throughout this thesis, local governments generally refer to public administrative

institutions in provincial and prefecture levels and correspondent cadres. Organs in several autonomous areas, such as Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet and Xinjiang, also have an identical administrative position in political system of China. The majority of cadres in these levels are positioned through the promotion, deployment or recruitment of the extensive party membership. Moreover, different from the elected village-level cadres, provincial and prefecture-level cadres seem to have a brighter prospect and future of promotion to the central leadership¹⁸⁵. For instance, both President Hu Jintao and Vice President Xi Jinping have rich experience of working as general secretaries in provincial party committees¹⁸⁶. Additionally, regardless of the patterns in power distribution, the provincial government's role cannot be eliminated¹⁸⁷ and it is viewed as having an identical ranking with ministries in the centre. As a result, a governor in a province will generally have a similar status with a minister of the centre in Chinese administrative hierarchical system¹⁸⁸. Thus, their interactions and expectations with civil society and central agencies are main foci of this chapter.

Due to the diverse geographical and cultural varieties of these provinces, the central government failed to implement economic policies with absolute uniformity. Local governments were gradually allowed to implement a range of economic policies in their willingness to boost the economies of their domains. Decentralization of authority altered responsibilities and relationships between the centre and peripheries.

¹⁸⁵ Ignatius Wibowo, *The Current State of the Chinese Communist Party in the Countryside*, (Singapore: Singapore University Press & World Scientific, 2000).

¹⁸⁶ Hu was the general secretary of provincial party committee in Guizhou and Tibet in 1985-1992 respectively, and Xi was the deputy secretary of Fujian CCP committee and general secretary of provincial party committee in Zhejiang and Shanghai municipal city between 1995 and 2007. See: Website of PRC [Internet] (accessed on 28 Feb 2010) from: http://english.gov.cn/2008-03/15/content_922944.htm (Hu's official CV) & http://english.gov.cn/2008-03/15/content_922965.htm (Xi's official CV)

¹⁸⁷ Andrew Mertha, 'China's "Soft" Centralization: Shifting Tiao/Kuai Authority Relations', *The China Quarterly*, (Dec 2005): 792

¹⁸⁸ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China – From Revolution Through Reform*, (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995): 164.

Further, it also implies the provision of a platform for local officials to have greater political leverage, as they are no longer mere agents of the centre who will stick to its directions and guidelines as many of them were in 1950s. Lieberthal uncovered the reality of the degradation of power that '[a]lthough Beijing (i.e. the centre) retains important resources to bring provinces to heel, provincial leaders often evade orders that are not quite specific and are not given high priority by the national leaders¹⁸⁹.' Li elaborated the situation as

'[r]ather than merely responding to central demands, provincial leaders mobilized substantial resources for their own use. Their lower status in the state hierarchy might have made them the weaker partner of the bargaining relationship with the Centre. However, despite the disparity in theoretical power, the provinces have shown themselves to have no small measure of power in their own right¹⁹⁰.'

Thus seen, provincial leaders also enjoyed the authority of economic policies formulation, and they could initiate policies in accordance with their own interests and visions. Besides, they have also been able to 'influence national policy informally through their reactions to central directive'¹⁹¹. However, this may not represent the deterioration of the authority of the central leadership.

The emphasis of economic and social development in the post-Mao period has highlighted an imbalanced domination of economic development in the agenda of provincial leaders. From their viewpoint, mega dam projects are opportunities to attract capital injection for the provinces beyond improving infrastructure facilities in the domain. Particularly in the cases of TGP and NRP, reservoir areas in these projects are

¹⁸⁹ Lieberthal, 1995: 166.

¹⁹⁰ Li Linda Chelan, 'Towards a Non-Zero-sum Interactive Framework of Spatial Politics: The Case of Centre-Province in Contemporary China', *Political Studies* 45, (1997), 55.

¹⁹¹ Zheng Yongnian, *Institutional Change, Local Developmentalism, and Economic Growth: The Making of Semi-Federalism in Reform China*, (Ph.D Diss., Princeton University, 1995): 19.

located in poverty-struck regions of China. Thus, local leaders frequently claimed that the projects and their respective resettlement campaigns could encourage the economies and to develop, or indeed improve environment and accessibility of these regions; in other words, mega project were viewed as a way of poverty alleviation. This chapter will investigate how these projects were considered by localities as means to develop economies of their paddocks.

Localities in TGP – enforcement and specific decision

Since fiscal decentralization in the reform era, provincial leaders were enthusiastic of developing industrial levels within their paddocks. As an illustration, it was reported that some provincial governments imposed ‘protectionist policies’ on ‘inter-provincial trade’ in order to protect their industries and economies¹⁹². The great and mercantilist enthusiasm of provincial leaders uncovered interest and political clashes between provinces. Thus, mega projects such as the TGP, in the perspective of local officials, could not be simply regarded as economic policy alone. This is because they would be an arena of bargaining for leaders to lobby, amplify, and fight for interests of various provinces as well as their own. Therefore, this could reflect increasing interest differentiation between provinces. In Graph 4-1, the structure of governmental institutions that was adopted in TGP management is shown and provincial governments were responsible for institutionalizing, planning and managing resettlement. They need to coordinate resource, workload and responsibility allocation amongst local governments at the lower level. Besides, in order to facilitate the completion of the project, local governments mobilized state-owned enterprises and township-village enterprises in their domains in order to invest in reservoir area. For instance, Zigui

¹⁹² John Donaldson, ‘Provinces: Paradoxical Politics, Problematic Partners’, Chung Jae Ho & Lam Tao-Chiu eds. *China’s Local Administration – Traditions and Changes in the Sub-national Hierarchy*. (London: Routledge, 2009): 31; Susan Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 185-86.

county and Badong county, which are located in Hubei province and encountered resettlement on a similar scale, offered tax exemption. Also, Zigui even offered the return of added-value tax to enterprises in order to tempt more capital investment in different industries of the local economies¹⁹³. As a consequence, this section will concentrate on the realm that provincial governments were involved with the most: resettlement¹⁹⁴.

Resettlement Campaign

Resettlement was portrayed as the most difficult and complicated part of the entire TGP campaign¹⁹⁵, and local governments generally acted as agents to follow and actualize the vision and planning of the centre in the project. According to Graph 4-1, local governments shouldered the responsibilities of planning, managing and inspecting the relocation process of the project, as well as establish relevant administrative organs which specialized in handling all issues incurred in the relocation campaign. The project could thus be eventually completed on time. Also, due to the simultaneity of resettlement and construction works, as well as the significant relocation population, the difficulties of resettlement were accelerated. However, responsibilities of provinces would substantially vary according to the flow of individuals relocating. For instance, the reservoir provinces and the host provinces' responsibilities were substantially different. Referring to Graph 4-1 (sees p.98), the State Council would oversee the whole project while provincial governments would be responsible for managing the flow of resettlement. Nevertheless, for reservoir provinces, i.e. Chongqing-Sichuan and Hubei,

¹⁹³ Brooke McDonald, Michael Webber & Duan Yuefang, 'Involuntary Resettlement as an Opportunity for Development: The Case of Urban Resettlers of the Three Gorges Project, China', *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol.21, no.1 (2008): 91-92.

¹⁹⁴ Article 8, State Council of the People's Republic of China, *Regulations on Residents-Resettlement for the Yangtze River Three Gorges Project Construction*, Decree No.299, effective as of 1 Mar. 2001.

¹⁹⁵ Jiang Zemin, 1994, Captured from Wu Xinmu & et.al. eds. *Cross-Century Resettlement – Millionaire Resettlement of Three Gorges Project (Kuashiji de Yimin – Sanxia Gongcheng de Baiwen Da Yimin)*, (Hubei: Hubei People's Publishing, 1999): 80-81.

they would manage the distribution of compensation to resettlers and also mobilize affected residents. For the host provinces, they were in charge of receiving relocatees and provided inter-provincial investments to reservoir area. The differentiation in substantial responsibilities amongst provinces led to the fragmentation of stances for the TGP amongst provinces.

Sichuan was a good example of not favoring the TGP. The opposition was the consequence of considering the inundation area of reservoir area and the considerable cost of resettlement. Before the elevation of Chongqing's administrative status in 1997, provincial leaders in Chengdu were afraid to shoulder too heavy burden of resettlements, and other development projects in the province would most probably be influenced or even suspended¹⁹⁶. As a result, Sichuan's enthusiasm for the project was apparently conditional and limited. Provincial officials were subsequently enthusiastic towards supporting and preparing the proposal for a lower dam in the initial stage of the project planning¹⁹⁷. The high dam would bring about a larger reservoir area and more people would thereby be relocated, so the burden of Chengdu might be heavier. Nonetheless, it was reported that a new administrative entity would be created out of Sichuan and would bear the responsibilities for resettlement, instead of Sichuan¹⁹⁸. The stance of Sichuan seemed to be softened and, in the end, Chongqing and the suburb around was escalated into a municipality in 1997, which is tantamount to provincial level¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁶ Yin Liangwu, *The long Quest for Greatness: China's Decision to Launch the Three Gorges Project*, (PhD. Diss., Washington University, 1996): 415; James Beattie, 'Dam Building, Dissent, and Development; The Emergence of the Three Gorges Project', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 4, no.1 (Jun., 2002): 143-145.

¹⁹⁷ Kenneth Lieberthal & Michel Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China –Leaders, Structure and Processes*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988): 327-328.

¹⁹⁸ Hong Lijian, 'Sichuan: Disadvantage and mismanagement in the Heavenly Kingdom', in David Goodman eds, *China's Provinces in reform: Class, Community and Political Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1997): 214-215; Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988: 328.

¹⁹⁹ Hong Lijian, 'New Chongqing – Opportunities and Challenges', John Fitzgerald ed. *Rethinking China's Provinces* (London: Routledge, 2002): 56-59.

Lampton argued that the political process was the consequence of lengthy consultation and negotiation amongst bureaucratic organs, rather the simple and unilateral command from the central leadership²⁰⁰. For example, notwithstanding the strong enthusiasm of completing the TGP from the central leadership, localities were not fully willing to follow the centre with absolute compliance. This was because the fiscal decentralization allowed provincial governments to develop their own economic policies without the centre's approval. Provincial leaders focused on economic development of provinces that they serve rather than of the whole country, or other provinces, when they decided the strategies of economic development of the provinces. Accordingly, there were confrontational strategies amongst provinces. The strategy differentiation might imply interest fragmentation amongst provinces albeit the common target of developing local economies. On the other hand, the economic liberalization awakened the perception of departmental interests of bureaucrats, and most probably clash with localities' strategy of economic development. This differentiation brought apparent cleavages in the decision making between the centre and the peripheries such as in Sichuan's case. Subsequently, it was necessary for the centre to coordinate the diverse interests of provinces and to bargain with provincial leaders in order to achieve consensus in the hierarchy. Therefore, it sought to have an efficient decision making but the time of to make political decision would be lengthened²⁰¹. Referring to Sichuan's anxiety in TGP, Chongqing's escalation from prefectural to municipal level in 1997, which is directly administrated by the centre and enjoys the identical echelon of provinces in the hierarchal system of China, was viewed as an instrument of seeking for agreement to high-meter dam construction from Chengdu.²⁰² Eventually, Sichuan

²⁰⁰ David Lampton, 'Water Politics', *The China Business Review*, (Jul-Aug 1983): 15.

²⁰¹ Ma Shu Yun, The Politics of the Three Gorges Project, *Issues & Studies*, Dec. 1990: 99.

²⁰² Hong Lijian, 'Chongqing: Opportunities and Risks', *The China Quarterly*, Iss. 178 (Jun 2004): 451.

became another host province responsible for absorbing distant resettlers from the reservoir area.

On the other hand, the great challenge of resettlement that was brought to the project was not only the vast population of affected people, but also in essence the uprooting of livelihoods and high risk impoverishment. In addition, tragedies in Chinese resettlement history highlighted the significance of resettlement.²⁰³ As a result, the center proposed regulations and policies of development-oriented resettlement in order to promise the maintenance of resettlers' livelihoods after relocation. This was presented in the official regulations for resettlement campaigns, issued in 2001:

*'[i]n the Three Gorges Project construction, the development-oriented residents-resettlement guideline shall be enforced, under which the residents-resettlement funds shall be used in an overall way, ...and the residents to be resettled properly relocated to ensure that their working and living conditions reach or surpass their previous level and that favourable conditions are created for the economic and social development in the Three Gorges reservoir area.'*²⁰⁴

*'[t]he people's governments and the people in the Three Gorges Project inundated areas or in the residents-resettlement areas shall take the interests of the whole into account, be subordinated to the State overall management, and properly handle the relationship between residents – resettlement and economic development.'*²⁰⁵

However, interest diversity amongst provinces, which would hamper the effectiveness of policies and promises from the center, could not be attained. Therefore,

²⁰³ Three major research projects listed out legacies of three important hydro-power projects so as to request for further investigation on the feasibility of the TGP. They are: Xin'anjiang Hydro-station in Zhejiang Province (1957-1960), Sanmenxia Hydro-station Project in the middle reaches of Yellow River (1957-1962), and the Yongjing case (including 3 dams) in the upper reaches of Yellow River (1958-1975). These three projects brought over 10.2 million people to be relocated for the construction. Over 70% remained in the situation of 'extreme poverty'. Details see: Jun Jing, 'Rural Resettlement: Past Lessons for the Three Gorges Project', *The China Journal*, no.38 (July 1997): 65-92.

²⁰⁴ Article 3, State Council of People's Republic of China.

²⁰⁵ Article 5, *Ibid.*

this may be a probable consequence of the unfavorable perception of resettlers by provincial leaders. Thus, provincial leaders of both reservoir areas and host provinces were more likely to welcome dam construction, since it would bring a huge amount of capital to help local economic and social development. Yet, they were necessary in order to tackle the thousands of ordinary people who were relocated to their residential locations that were inundated. In addition, resettlers found it difficult to establish new livelihoods in resettled areas and some found it challenging to get along with the host population. Accordingly, it was necessary for provinces to prepare more public discussion and allocate a certain proportion of the budget and personnel resources to handle the adaptation of the resettlers, as well as being ready for possible confrontation with the host population.²⁰⁶ For Hubei and Chongqing, the overwhelming majority of the population living in the reservoir area was poor, unskilled, and low-educated. Thus, cultivation was the exclusive channel for individuals to generate an income and support their families. The dam was associated with the loss of considerable hectares of farmland or arable land that would be inundated. Subsequently, local authorities proposed the transfer of thousands of rural relocatees into secondary and tertiary industries, as well as moving into urban areas in order to improve relocatees' material livelihoods.²⁰⁷

Nevertheless, hundreds of enterprises – including SOEs, township-village enterprises (TVEs), and those privately owned – were terminated due to the considerable cost incurred in resettlement and their weakness of competing in the market.

²⁰⁶ Sun Zhongfeng & et.al., 'Study of Community Integration and Development of Distant Resettlement in Three Gorges Project – Case Study of Fengxia Village' (*Sanxia Waqian Yimin Shequ de Zhenghe yu Fazhan Yanjiu*), *Hefei College Journal* (Hefei Xueyuan Xuebao) Vol. 23, no.3, (Aug 2006): 28.

²⁰⁷ According to Heggelund's citation, the amount of relocatees transfer was around 144,600. But it was calculated referring to the data of population census in 1990 and the authorities were unlikely to consider the natural growth of population afterward. Details sees: Gørild Heggelund, *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China – The Three Gorges Project*, (U.K.: Ashgate, 2004): 101-102.

Notwithstanding the 7000-RMB compensation from the authorities, considerable TVEs were terminated and went bankrupt due to the limited improvement of competitiveness after the relocation.²⁰⁸ Hence, the excessive labor force could not be effectively absorbed. For instance, in the Yunyang county of Hubei province, approximately 60 percent of peasants-turned-workers were unable to work in a factory, after being promised by the local cadres. Therefore, the ideal planning of the center and localities could not be actualized.²⁰⁹ Subsequently, there seemingly was an apparent shortfall of visions between the central and provincial governments – for both reservoir and host provinces; and this shortfall would be associated with the discontent and grievance of those affected. Ordinary people gathered and fought for their interests through collective actions and even violence. In addition to the frequent scandals of corruption and bribe at local level, many blamed local cadres for obstructing progress and the vision demonstrated by central leaders.²¹⁰ Thus, the hostility between local cadres and ordinary people has sharpened, and in 2000 Kaixian county saw a devastating collective incident. Thousands of resettlers destroyed buildings, infrastructure and facilities, contested with local cadres and were even violent in expressing their discontent against the government's assignment of their accommodation. In the end, troops had to be deployed to disperse resettlers.²¹¹

In the perspective of local cadres in the reservoir area, the TGP have an uncommon political significance, in that

²⁰⁸ Duan Yuefang & Shawn Steil, 'China Three Gorges Project Resettlement: Policy, Planning and Implementation', *Journal of Refugees Studies* 16, no.4 (Dec., 2003): 431-432.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*: 101-105.

²¹⁰ Shai Oster, 'Three Gorges Drama: Why Chinese Dam is Forcing Yet Another Mass Exodus; Pollution, Poverty Spur Relocation of 4 Million; Death in a Demolition', *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)*. 6 Nov, 2007: A1.

²¹¹ Yan Tan, *Resettlement in the Three Gorges Project*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008): 109-110.

‘... [a]ll local officials know that their careers depend on saying what the center wants to hear. Hence it is hardly surprising that many local officials have kept any reservations about the project to themselves, while the less upright among them try to advance their careers by participating in deceit.’²¹²

In other words, the smooth completion of the resettlement campaign was believed to guarantee the brighter future of promotion and greater political leverage. Thus, despite a range of limitations and weaknesses in the resettlement program, officials needed to pay enormous political costs to counter the project or to challenge the decision of the central leadership. Hence, many were willing to follow central instructions in mobilizing, encouraging or even forcing citizens to resettle. Still, as Li mentioned, the unique political status of provincial governments in the hierarchy provided a solid guarantee of political and administrative leverage for provincial officials.²¹³ The central authorities were unable to thoroughly implement the resettlement program without local government help, and the differentiation of strategies between the center and local authorities hampered the effectiveness of policies. Therefore, this subsequently led to a variety of humanitarian crises in the reservoir areas and resettlement villages throughout the country.²¹⁴

Localities in NRP – Planning, enforcement and promoter

Different from being agents of implementation in the TGP, localities acted as a major dynamic force of the NRP a decade later, and hydropower development was

²¹² Wu Ming, *Major Problems Found in Three Gorges Dam Resettlement Program*, International Rivers Network/ Human Rights in China, [Internet] (accessed on 11 Oct, 2008), available from: http://www.hrichina.org/fs/view/downloadables/pdf/downloadable-resources/three_gorges_98.pdf: 4

²¹³ Linda Chelan Li, ‘Towards a Non-zero-sum Interactive Framework of Spatial Politics: the Case of Centre-Province in Contemporary China’, *Political Studies* XLV, 1997

²¹⁴ Jim Yardley, ‘Chinese Dam Projects Criticized for their Human Costs’, *International Herald Tribune* (14 Dec., 2007)

considered a critical component of the ‘Open up the West’ campaign announced in 1999. However, before the national planning of hydropower was made by the center, the Yunnan government expressed its eagerness to develop hydroelectricity, in conjunction with eco-tourism and ethnically cultural promotion, to become the ‘pillars’ of economic development of the province.²¹⁵ In other words, beyond traditionally recognizing pillar industries for economic development, the Yunnan provincial government had a mixture of motivations to encourage hydroelectricity development.

Contradictory Actions

In chapter 2, the scarce landscape of *Sanjiang Biliu*, which refers to the parallel runoffs of the Nu, the Mekong-Lancang River and the Jinsha-Yangtze River, which are in the same region (located in North-western Yunnan), was briefly introduced. This region has also been recognized to be a ‘World Heritage’ site by UNESCO. Also, Mertha pointed out that the conjunction of both terrain and recognition was a typical illustration of the dilemmatic contest between economic development and environmental protection.²¹⁶ He, however, over-simplified the controversy and neglected its implications towards Yunnan provincial leaders. In Litzinger’s article, he claimed that Yunnan had introduced the idea of a ‘great ethnic cultural province,’ which had the purpose of promoting the tourist values and uniqueness of Yunnan.²¹⁷ Thus, paradoxically, both the approval of natural ‘World Heritage’ and the plan of NRP seem to be alternative strategies of provincial leaders to encourage economic development. Fiscal decentralization, as mentioned above, encouraged the shift of responsibilities of provincial leaders toward rapid economic growth. Thus, successful economic

²¹⁵ Ralph Litzinger, ‘The Mobilization of “Nature”: Perspectives from North-West Yunnan’, *The China Quarterly* 178, 2004: 493-494.

²¹⁶ Andrew Mertha, *Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, (New Jersey: Cornell University Press, 2008): 116.

²¹⁷ Litzinger, 2004: 489.

improvements in the paddock might have brought about better political prospects to the provincial leaders. Unfortunately, the ethnic context in Yunnan was no more or less complicated than in other parts of China, and they are particularly complex in the Western part of the province. Consequently, provincial officials are thought to have a strong perception of having a balanced geographical economic development and prevent the disparity of benefit among different races. Hence, they proposed to develop the Nu River area via the NRP and looked to enrich the material livelihoods of the ethnic minorities in the area, without eroding the cultural uniqueness of these minority groups. Based on these predispositions, provincial officials might thus be frequently perceived as being over-reliant on economic development. Further, the announcements amplified the controversy about the NRP. In June 2003, Yunnan television revealed the establishment of a new hydropower development corporation financed by the consortium and headed by China Huadian Corporation and the Yunnan Development Investment Company, with a plan to exploit the hydropower potential in the upper reaches of the Nu River. One month later, UNESCO announced its approval of the *Sanjiang Biliu* site to become part of the World Heritage Sites.²¹⁸ Environmentalists or dam opponents criticized the Yunnan provincial government for being contradictory on the unique environment of *Sanjiang Biliu*. Unfortunately, the close simultaneity of these two events was more likely to be in consequence of unconscious coincidence: they happened independently but the simultaneous announcements seemingly ‘linked them up.’ The ‘linkage,’ therefore, could amplify the argument of anti-dam activisms, such as Yu Xiaogang and Wang Yongchen.

²¹⁸ Ralph Litzinger, ‘In Search of the Grassroots – Hydroelectric Politics in Northwest Yunnan’, in Elizabeth J. Perry & Merle Goldman eds. *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China*, (U.S.A.: Harvard University Press, 2007): 285-286.

In sum, the general role of local leaders has been more aggressive and active in the decision making processes of the TGP and the NRP, whereas the motives have remained to emphasize economic development in the provinces. In the 1990s, localities were still acting as an agent for implementing and mobilizing those affected and became relevant for entities following central instructions. In particular, with inter-provincial investment and resettlements, localities shouldered the most critical part of practices including mobilizing, planning practices, managing, and resolving any legacies. They were working on the frontline while the central leadership, through various administrative apparatuses, was issuing a range of directions, visions and ideologies in Beijing. In spite of the presence of interest fragmentation, localities would never openly challenge the central leadership. For instance, they would never criticize the feasibility of TGP. This may be due to the strong eagerness toward the project of the center, and the expected conjunction of the smooth completion of the project and their political prospects. However, they would try to bargain with the center in order to maximize their interests or minimize their responsibilities. Uncommonly, localities acted more dominantly in the decision making process of NRP. The NRP's planning was initiated by the Yunnan provincial government as the response of the 'Open up the West' Campaign established in the eve of new millennium. It shouldered the planning, mobilizing and promoting responsibilities of the project. On the other hand, the announcement in quick succession of the planning of the NRP and the recognition of World Heritage of the *Sanjiang Biliu* site, in 2003, amplified the controversy and consolidated arguments against the NRP. Thus, the co-existence may hamper the legitimacy of the NRP and cause the provincial government to plan recklessly and introduce paradoxical strategies of economic development.

Bargaining in the Decision-making Process

To Centre: Restrained Bargaining Partner

As mentioned in chapter 1, the uniformity of the Chinese hierarchy was no longer considered as absolute compared to that of the Mao period. In the past, the coercion of the state was highly emphasized and the Leninist central-periphery relationship was completely asymmetrical. Thus, some provincial governments may only be mere followers of the centre. Ideology has played an important role in mobilizing officials, ordinary citizens and other entities in the country to follow central instruction. Currently, provincial governments may express negative opinions on policies proposed by the center, so as to articulate their local interests. The central-provincial relationship seemed to be transformed from being radically center-oriented to increasingly provincial-oriented, and the leverages of social mobilization and ideology also deteriorated. Therefore, we ask: what factors have become dominant in policy making in China, and in particular when developing mega projects? And, how would these changes of provinces influence the relationship with the center? These questions will be addressed in this section through a comparison of the general findings from the actions of provincial governments in the TGP and NRP.

The importance of provincial leaders should not be explained only in an administrative sense, but further explained in both economic and political senses. Provincial leaders – governors and the general secretary of the party in provinces – were not the paramount of the vast hierarchal system. However, the great diversity amongst provinces provides ample administrative, economic and political advantage for provincial leaders, and decentralization further underlines these advantages. Generally speaking, they possessed these advantages owing to the intermediary essence of provincial leaders between the central authorities and local people. These advantages

highlight the center's lack of information about local situations, the local governments' abilities for allocating fiscal revenue to the center, and in declaring the content of 'local interest.' Referring to table 4.2, in an administrative sense, due to the significant and diverse population in China, the central authorities were incapable of implementing policies with absolute coercion. In the 'Great Leap Forward' campaign, as an illustration, the ideological embellishment and mass mobilization of the center for ambitious development of industrialization and modernization brought inefficient productivity, common poverty, and devastating famine throughout the country. The central authorities needed provincial governments to provide local information in various aspects in order to prevent similar mistakes as those in the 'Great Leap Forward' campaign. Besides, in the traditional quasi-federal context, provincial governments should allocate a proportion of revenue as a contribution to the center. In China's case, economic reforms, including the fiscal reform in 1980 (known as *fenzhao chifan*²¹⁹), allowed provincial governments to plan their budgets and issue their budgetary targets. The obligations of provinces were to allocate part of the revenue or surplus to the central authorities.²²⁰ Consequently, provincial governments may thus have adequate fiscal or budgetary resources for economic development, and the central government may not be able to restrain the power of provincial leaders through 'wallet power' in an economic sense. On the other hand, in a political sense, the role of provincial leaders should not be simplified as representatives of the party or the government in provinces; they are also 'the creators of provincial interests,'²²¹ which implies that they could enunciate local interests in various political discourse. Yet, this unique leverage may possibly

²¹⁹ The Chinese wording means 'separating the stove to have the meal'

²²⁰ There were five mechanisms of revenue/surplus sharing between the centre and peripheries. They are 'sharing the total annual revenue', 'fixed proportion of sharing revenue and expenditure', 'collecting-and-subsidy', 'fixed proportion contract' and 'dividing revenue and expenditure, fixed submission or fixed subsidy'. Different provinces might have different choice of mechanism so as to have varying degrees of fiscal autonomy. Details see: Zheng, 1995: 132-134.

²²¹ Ibid: 19.

legitimize their priorities for unfavorable policies in the eyes of ordinary people. Thus, the autocratic center was unlikely to completely eliminate the necessity of a presence from the local governments. These three leverages could also be illustrated by the TGP and NRP, as shown in the table 4.2.

Table 4.2 – Three Leverages of Provincial Leaders

Leverages of Provincial Leaders	Rationales	Impacts for the center	Illustration in TGP or NRP (case specified)
Administrative	The central authorities failed to access considerable local information without the help of provincial apparatuses.	Restrained by information contributed by provincial governments to formulate directions and nationwide policies.	Allowance of constructing practices of resettlement campaign for local governments (TGP).
Economic	The central government allowed provinces to construct their own budgets and share a certain proportion of the revenue/surplus.	Loss of ‘wallet power’ in the bargaining or negotiation with provinces.	Sichuan’s opposition for a high-dam proposal (TGP).
Political	Provincial governments could articulate local interests according to leaders’ perceptions.	Ample room for provincial governments to going off or even violate central directions or instructions.	Earlier proposal of dam construction in the Nu River before the official establishment of the ‘Open up the West’ campaign (NRP).

Unfortunately, the rise of provincial governments might probably not represent the delegation of central authority. The zero-sum assertion of the central-peripheral ‘power’ spectrum does not suffice to explain the interest fragmentation reflecting in the decision making process of two projects; however, it seemed to suit the autocratic

actions and attitudes of the center in the 1980s.²²² Li described the essence of the central-local retrospective interactions as:

*'[i]t is impossible for the Centre to win a total victory over its intermediary. Provincial governments are an indispensable ally of the Centre in governance ...As neither the Centre nor the provinces could decisively win over and eliminate the other, both were forced to accommodate the interests of the other and to compromise.'*²²³

In other words, while the central government could not have absolute authority over replacing or neglecting the presence of provincial governments, such governments could also never challenge or even overrule decisions made by the central government. Thus, provincial leaders would need to remain obedient to the center, albeit their various leverages. For instance, although the Yunnan government was allowed to formulate any economic policy for their own economy, the NRP required the approval of the center and related ministries at the central level. Thus, the State Council has suspended the project for approval in 1999. Additionally, with economic decentralization and considerable administrative reform, the core apparatuses of the contemporary Chinese bureaucratic system remained Soviet-Leninist style,²²⁴ which favors a mighty central authority, and the perception of local officials seem to be dominated by conventional Confucianism; thus implying that officials maintain their 'sincerity, loyalty and reliability' to the party.²²⁵ Consequently, the expansion of power in the local government was associated with decentralization, as economic reform was unlikely to link with the

²²² Li, 1997: 65.

²²³ *Ibid*: 64.

²²⁴ Michel Oksenberg, 'China's Political System: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century', *The China Journal*, no. 45 (Jan., 2001): 25.

²²⁵ The CCP was praised to be 'the exclusive leader' of leading to and maintaining national unity, social stability and rejuvenating China to be strong and powerful. Thus, it was believed that local officials retained their loyalty towards the Party. Detail sees: Guo Xiaogin, *State and Society in China's Democratic Transition – Confucianism, Leninism and Economic Development*, (London: Routledge, 2003): 24-27.

separatism of provinces. This phenomenon was explained as the consequence of self-restraint and effective political control of the central government. Naughton even described central-periphery negotiation as ‘the Centre fights with one hand tied behind its back.’²²⁶ In a nutshell, decentralization brought a more symmetrical center-periphery relationship for the Chinese bureaucracy. Thus, provincial leaders were provided to serve more critically and with greater leverage due to bureaucratic transformation. Nonetheless, it was analyzed that provincial leaders were more likely to retain an intimate relationship with the party leadership because of the maintenance of a Leninist-style hierarchy and the influence of conventional Confucianist loyalty in themselves. From the case of TGP, they would bargain or negotiate in order to maximize their ‘local interests.’ So, how would provincial bureaucrats interpret and fight for their ‘local interests?’

In retrospect, the legacies of romantic Leninist mobilization, in the ‘Great Leap Forward’ and Cultural Revolution periods, brought material deficiencies through the entire country. Accordingly, there was seemingly a great consensus in the state and society of seeking for approaches towards improving the material livelihoods of society.²²⁷ Due to the absence of institutions such as the bourgeoisie in the Western society representing the interests of ordinary citizens and society in China, provincial officials could be viewed as serving as the main representatives of local interests. Under this backdrop, provincial officials were generally enthusiastic towards fast economic and social development. In other words, economic development of the provinces became the most important ‘local interest’ perceived by provincial leaders. As a result, according to

²²⁶ Barry Naughton, ‘Decline of Central Control over Investment in Post-Mao China’, in Linda Chelan Li, 1997: 56.

²²⁷ Huo Shitao, *Political Transition in Economic Decentralization: Bargaining Coalition Between Central and Provincial Government in China – 1978-1993*. (Ph.D Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995): 186.

Zheng, a new set of ideological doctrines – ‘local developmentalism’ – emerged in the Chinese hierarchy.

Easterly explained ‘developmentalism’ as a set of ideologies that asserts ‘(economic and social) development promises a comprehensive final answer to all of society’s problems, from poverty and illiteracy to violence and despotic rulers.’²²⁸ However, his explanation initially aims to explain the phenomenon existing in international society and could not be fully applied to the unique backdrop of China in a post-Mao period. Given the context of economic (and even political) decentralization in China, Zheng generalized six characteristics of ‘local developmentalism,’ which would be demonstrated through examples in TGP and NRP (contained in table 4.3).

Table 4.3 – Characteristics of Local Developmentalism & Examples in TGP & NRP

Characteristics²²⁹	Examples in TGP	Examples in NRP
Cooperate with the center so as to escalate economic development to become the issue with the highest priority in both national and provincial agenda.	Promoting the advanced development-oriented resettlement, in which development becomes an instrument of resettlement and an opportunity to encourage resettlement to enter another higher level. ²³⁰	Promoting and emphasizing the objectives of the project in improving the accessibility and economic development of the most remote and ethnically-complex region in the province.
Taking part in negotiation and bargaining with other provinces, and even bureaucratic organs in the center, but also maintaining persistent economic development of the provinces.	‘Partnership Support Programme’ (PSP) aims to encourage the prosperous coastal regions to partner with any specific counties in the reservoir area, so as to provide ‘one-to-one assistance’ for resettlement and development. ²³¹	Interest divergence between the coalition’s pro-dam departments in the center and the Yunnan provincial government against anti-dam ministries in the center and ENGOs.
High intention of guiding provincial economies to develop and have fast	Requiring counties in reservoir areas to recognize and develop sectors which	Encouraging the development of eco-tourism (e.g., the recognition of

²²⁸ William Easterly, ‘The Ideology of Development’, *Foreign Policy*, no. 161 (Jul-Aug 2007): 31.

²²⁹ Zheng, 1995: 44-45.

²³⁰ Wu, 1999: 23.

²³¹ McDonald, Webber & Duan, 2008:87.

growth.	have greater comparative advantage as ‘pillar sectors.’ ²³²	Three Parallel River as Natural World Heritage) and cultural tourism by utilizing the diverse culture of the ethnic minority with the construction of NRP. ²³³
Direct participation in economic activities as the role of entrepreneurship of provincial governments.	N/A ²³⁴	20% total share of Yunnan Huadian Nujiang River Hydropower Development Co. Ltd belongs to the Yunnan Investment Group, which is an enterprise directly subordinate to the Yunnan provincial government. ²³⁵
Uneven development policies which are in favor of sectors that contribute to the largest economic growth.	Peasants were given more arable land if they moved to grow high yielding plants, such as fruits, herbs, and tea beyond the initial land compensation from the authorities. ²³⁶	Encouraging the development of eco-tourism (e.g., the recognition of Three Parallel River as Natural World Heritage) and cultural tourism by utilizing the diverse culture of the ethnic minority with the construction of NRP.
Encouraging various sectors and correspondent enterprises to expand and grow, so as to intensify the competitiveness against the same sectors in other provinces.	Various temptation policies, e.g. tax exemption, lower rent or even free use of land were employed to attract enterprises from the East to invest in the reservoir area. ²³⁷	N/A ²³⁸

²³² *Ibid*: 87-88. According to McDonald, Webber & Duan, the pillar sectors of the reservoir areas should be citrus, tourism, fishing and animal husbandry.

²³³ Litzinger, 2004: 492-493; Margaret Swain, ‘Looking South: Local Identities and Transnational Linkages in Yunnan’ in John Fitzgerald ed. (London: Routledge, 2002: 202-205.

²³⁴ The key stakeholder of China Three Gorges Corporation which is the major enterprise to be the beneficiary of electricity generation from TGP is not provincial government, i.e. either Hubei province or Chongqing Municipality, but is the State Council in the central government. Thus, this feature could not be effectively indicated in the TGP.

²³⁵ Yunnan Investment Group, Official Introduction [Internet website] available from: http://www.cnyig.com/Wpublisher/displaypages/ContentDisplay_2.aspx?contentid=150 (accessed on 24 Jun.,2010)

²³⁶ Heggelund, 2004:97

²³⁷ McDonald, Webber & Duan, 2008:91-92.

²³⁸ The NRP was shelved and there was no substantial policy of encouraging economic development and industries in the reservoir area. Thus, this feature could not be illustrated in the case of NRP.

In short, decentralization provided a fertile land for the growth of ‘local developmentalism,’ in which economic development of provinces dominated and influenced the reciprocal interactions between the center and provinces.

To Civil Society: Scientific Findings & Ideological Mobilization

By contrast, the attitude of provincial leaders towards civil society seemed to be more indifferent than towards the central authorities. In the Leninist communist society, civil society was subordinate to the mighty communist party and vast bureaucracy. Despite the presence of a few social organizations beyond the bureaucracy, such as the Communist Youth League, these organizations proposed an expansion of the totalitarian leverages of the party. Economic liberalization and decentralization, since Deng’s administration, brought forth a flourish of social organizations or associations to articulate a variety of interests. Besides, more intellectuals vivaciously engaged in policy formulation through a wide range of channels. Yet, even due to the rapid emergence of civil society, provincial governments have seemed to remain indifferent and repressive towards contributions to civil society. Subsequently, the relationship between civil society and provincial authorities has transformed to be more hostile. In this section, I will argue that the hostility seems to be inevitable and increasingly violent. Moreover, it will imply a further decline in the ideological leverage of authorities. However, the provincial-society hostility might lead to a certain degree of civil society independence in an administrative sense.

As previously mentioned, provincial governments were once viewed as representative of society, owing to the absence of class or institutions such as the middle class in the Western society in China. However, economic liberalization was accompanied by the evolution of property ownership and improvements in material

livelihoods. Accordingly, society has been more pluralized even though the party state remained mighty, and such changes led to society becoming more fragmented. The consensus of economic development, since provincial governments uphold economic reform, seemed to be questioned. Thus, a number of civic society organizations were established and Chinese civil society saw rapid growth. Additionally, the intellectuals in China had been more romantic and willing to shoulder the risk of being marginalized and punished, but uncovered the truth. The functions of intellectuals has transformed from loyal followers of the Party or revolutionary comrades to become a unique class of citizenship in society.²³⁹ The emergent civil society (in the forms of civic associations and individual activists) challenged the existing representation of provincial governments to articulate the interests of ordinary people. Subsequently, this may probably bring hostility between these two sectors. Retrospectively, the role confrontation between civil society and local governments could probably transform to be more apparent, especially in rural regions. Without the help of civic voluntary organizations, resettlers in rural areas would be more vulnerable to impoverishment; resulting in mass rural protests and even riots after relocation. Beyond the incident in Kaixian County, mentioned in previous section, another well-known illustration of mass protest was in Gaoyang County, Chongqing in 1997; this originated from the discontent of insufficient compensation of arable land after relocation and involved direct petition against local officials to Beijing.²⁴⁰ Economic liberalization was more likely to awaken political rightfulness of ordinary citizens. Thus, whether provincial governments could retain their representativeness and intermediary essence between the centre and ordinary people had been questioned. In particular, with their various leverages listed in table B,

²³⁹ Merle Goldman, Extracts from "From Comrade to Citizen: the Struggle for Political Rights in China", in Andrew Kipnis, Luigi Tomba and Jonathan Unger eds. *Contemporary Chinese Society and Politics*. (London: Routledge, 2009): 401-402.

²⁴⁰ Beattie, 2002: 149-151.

provincial leaders and other local leaders were frequently viewed as targets of criticism and activism.

Nonetheless, the mutual relationship between local governments and civil society organizations was not solely confrontational, as they tended to be interdependent in an administrative sense. In 1998, the party leadership implemented administrative reforms by downsizing the bureaucracy and a huge amount of nearly laid-off bureaucrats were absorbed by social organizations, and particularly by those that had a close relationship with the authorities. Also, the latest registration system requested social organizations to seek a local administrative organ or professional unit as sponsoring unit and to fulfill the cumbersome process of registration with the Ministry of Civil Affairs. These administrative processes were aimed towards maintaining the growth of civil society under the Party's manipulation. In the meanwhile, this enabled social organizations to have a greater intention of retaining an intimate relationship with local governments, since their actions were regulated and supervised by the sponsoring units. These embedded interactions reflect the administrative interdependence of both local governments and social organizations. As a consequence, the provincial-society relationship should not be over-simplified as mere intimacy or hostility. On the contrary, they were more likely to vary their attitudes toward each other so as to cope with practical difficulties. However, this stage seems to be short and unsustainable, as the provincial-society relationship, generally speaking, was more likely to be confrontational.

In sum, the authoritarian nature of the central leadership could not eliminate the necessity and importance of provincial governments. The intermediary position of the provincial governments allowed them to become a 'contractor' of the center to govern the paddocks. Besides, owing to the absence of an institutionalized and mature class or

organ of articulating local interests, in addition to the egalitarian deficiencies of China, provincial governments were regarded as representative of local interests. Therefore, provincial leaders would negotiate or barter with the central authorities to maximize local interests. In the context of economic liberalization and decentralization, provincial leaders tended to represent the willingness of rapid economic development in localities. Nevertheless, economic liberalization also contributed to radical, social and economic change, and society had more likely to become fragmented and pluralized. Therefore, the phenomenon of provincial leaders representing the 'local interest' is in doubt. On the other hand, the emergence of civic voluntary organizations may have challenged the role of representing the local interests of provincial governments. In the following chapter, how these organizations emerged and fought for their interests will be discussed, with the aid of the TGP and NRP.

Graph 4.1 – Structure of Governmental Institutions in TGP Resettlement Management

Chapter 5 –Civil Society and Hydropower Projects: Passive Players?

In previous chapters, the importance of central authorities and local cadres has been respectively discussed and examined. Nevertheless, concentrating on investigating the facet of authorities is not sufficient to picture the entire scenario of decision making about hydropower in China. This is essentially due to the emergent leverages of civil social organizations for these mega projects. Therefore, despite the authoritarian nature of the communist regime, social organizations (SOs, and also known as ‘civil social organizations’) also played critical roles in the policy making processes. In particular the recent suspension of Nu River Project, in which SOs actively expressed their concerns of environmental damage such a project might bring, was even regarded as a ‘victory of civil society’²⁴¹. Therefore, this chapter will examine TGP and NRP from the activists’ perspective and also discuss the transformation of their roles in policy making processes.

The overall situations of social organizations would first be introduced in an effort to clarify several important concepts mentioned in this chapter, such as ‘social organizations’, and briefly explain the notion of civil society in the Chinese context. Several characteristics of social organizations in China, or more accurately environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS), will also be demonstrated to sketch out orientations and behavioral patterns of SOs. This may facilitate an understanding over the palpable transformation of SOs for the TGP and NRP. Throughout investigating the actions and contributions of SOs in both projects, this chapter will demonstrate that the influence of social organizations in China should not be neglected or underestimated; as they have already been one of major contributors in the policy making process in China. In the meantime, their leverages, however, should

²⁴¹ Michael Blüsgen, *NGOs and the Search for Chinese Civil Society Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations in the Nujiang Campaign*, Working Paper Series No. 422 (Hague: Institute of Social Sciences, Feb. 2006): 18

not be exaggerated as having the opportunity to challenge the central leadership. SOs in China were unlikely to have any intention to challenge the central authorities. Although there might be more confrontations in the state-society relationship, SOs seemed to remain awed by the central leadership and reluctant to directly challenge the central leadership. In addition, they had behaved in a more strategic and out-going manner through cooperating with the mass media and establishing networks with international alliances, in order to amplify their leverages and lobby for their interests. In essence, this chapter will argue that SOs were able to fulfill their social responsibilities, but were unable to bring any political leverage to become more aggressive and radical. In other words, they were able to put pressure on the central leadership through a series of strategic promotion, activities and alliances, but they may not have been able to satisfy political functions to establish an independent and autonomous relationship from the party state. Alternatively, this chapter will argue that these entities are still not sufficient to determine the success or failure of hydropower development projects in China. However, before providing any analysis, a definition of social organizations and other important concepts should be clarified.

Traditionally, social scientists interpret civil society organizations in accordance with two senses. In the sociological sense, the essence of civil society is as an intermediate entity between state and ordinary people. Hence, civil society organizations should highlight a range of social problems encountered by ordinary people and provide material, knowledge or personnel resources in support. On the other hand, the independent nature of civil society from the state has been emphasized in the political sense. Civil society organizations were viewed as entities that enjoyed autonomy and operated without any intervention from the authorities, and that the state-society relationship should be on a basis of important political notions, such as citizenship,

legitimacy and representation²⁴². This implies a responsibility for representing ordinary people in order to lobby their various interests, such as rightfulness, justices and even power, by reshaping the policies or even denying the existing regime. Nevertheless, civil society had generally been subordinate to, or manipulated by, the party state in China. After achieving power in 1949, the communist party constructed a vast bureaucratic network in the civil society and cracked down on numerous civic organizations in the rural area, such as temples, ancestral halls, and clan associations. Thus, civic organizations left in this transformation were mainly subordinate to the massive Party state. The re-existence of relatively independent social organizations should be traced back to the time after the many economic reforms started in 1979. Yu pointed out the transformation of ownership forms and the improvement of productivity and living standards²⁴³ were major factors contributing to this phenomenon. However, their independence was still limited and they were essentially controlled by the Party state. Subsequently, one might conclude that there were just a few organizations in China that could satisfy the ‘autonomy’ requirements of the traditional notion of civil society²⁴⁴.

Essentially, the public perceive NGOs as being similar to the notion of ‘popular organizations’ (*minjian zuzhi*)²⁴⁵. In the past, all organizations that are self-governed and non-profit, in essence, would be classified as social organizations, non-governmental & non-commercial enterprises (also known as Civil/ Private Non-Profit Enterprises; hereafter abbreviated as ‘NGNCEs’ or ‘non-profit enterprises’) and foundations. Hence, the Chinese official classification of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is

²⁴² Yu Keping, ‘The Emergence of China’s Civil Society and its Significance to Governance’, in *Globalization and Changes in China’s Governance* (Leiden: Brill, 2008): 137. Gordon White, *Market Reforms and the Emergence of Civil Society in Post-Mao China*, Working Paper no.6 (England: Institute of Development Studies, Sep 1994): 2.

²⁴³ Yu, 2008: 141-142.

²⁴⁴ Ma Qisha, ‘The Governance of NGO in China since 1978: How Much Autonomy?’ *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 31, No.3, September 2002: 306.

²⁴⁵ Lu Yiyi, *Non-Governmental Organizations in China*, (London: Routledge, 2009): 2-3

different from the Western one. Chinese officials and scholars generally named self-governed organizations which lobby for diverse interests as non-profit organizations (NPOs) rather than NGOs, in order to eliminate the implication of anti-government sentiment reflected in the Chinese language²⁴⁶. Yang further classified environmental organizations which are able to place the official definition of social organizations into seven categories in accordance with their registration status (as shown in Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 – Types of Social Organizations (in environmental realm) in China

Organizational Type	Registration Status	Examples
Registered NGOs	Legally registered as organizations or private, non-profit work units	Friends of Nature; Green River
Non-profit Enterprises	Registered as business enterprises but operate as non-profit organizations	Global Village of Beijing; Institute of Environment and Development;
Unregistered Voluntary Groups	Unregistered organizations that function as NGOs	Green Earth Volunteers
Web-based groups	Unregistered groups that operate mainly through the Internet	Green-Web; Greener Beijing
Student environmental associations	Registered with campus Youth Leagues yet function and perceived as NGOs	Environmental Volunteer Association
University Research Centres / Institutes	Affiliated with institutions of higher learning but operate as NGOs	Centre for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims, China University of Political Science and Law
Government-organized NGOs	Social organizations established by government agencies, also known as state-owned NGOs	China Environmental Science Association

Source: Captured from Table 1, Yang Guobin, 'Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China', *The China Quarterly*, no. 181 (Mar. 2005), 50.

²⁴⁶ In Chinese, the prefix of 'non' is translated into *fei*, but it induces to two diverse implications. The first one is 'be not' in English; the second meaning is 'oppose' and even 'turn over' in English. Details see: *Ibid*, 308.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, in addition to the inclusion of grass roots organizations which have not registered with the authorities but have contributed a lot of efforts in social and economic development, this thesis will name all entities that are self-governed (or government-controlled civil organizations in different realms) as social organizations (SOs). If specific types of organizations were to be highlighted, it will be mentioned in detail according to Yang's classification.

In retrospect, the party-state had never recognized the importance of SOs 'development until the Jiang-Zhu administration in 1998. In the 15th Party Congress, Zhu Rongji – the former Prime Minister – expressed the necessity to encourage the development of 'social intermediary organizations' as a component of deepening economic reforms²⁴⁷. Initially, the stress of the central leaders tended to reduce the responsibilities of tackling the negative impacts of a series of reforms in 1998, such as the downsizing of bureaucracy, state enterprise reforms and restructuring the State Council²⁴⁸. Thus, they emphasized the responsibilities of SOs being intermediary between the party-state and ordinary people. In Graph 5.2, the official data of social organizations and non-profit enterprises, after the Jiang-Zhu era, is as shown.

Graph 5.2 – Number of Social Organizations and Civil Non-Profit Units in China

²⁴⁷ He Baogang, *The Dual Roles of Semi-Civil Society in Chinese Democracy*, Discussion Paper no. 323, (England: Institute of Development Studies, Aug.1993): 10

²⁴⁸ Tony Saich, 'Negotiating the State: the Development of Social Organizations in China', *The China Quarterly*, no. 161 (Mar. 2000): 127-128.

Source: Civil Affairs Bureau, *Civil Affairs Development Statistical Reports in 2003-2008*, [Online Chinese File] available from <http://cws.mca.gov.cn/article/tjbg/>, Retrieved on 5 Apr., 2010.

From Graph 5.2, it is clear that the number of registered social organizations has grown since 2000. It seems to testimony the direct correlation between leaders' encouragement and the growth of social organizations. Nevertheless, the graph also indicated another noteworthy trend in the development of civil society organizations: that is the rapid growth of civil non-profit enterprises. In 1999, the *Falun Gong* awakened the sense of threat for central leaders as it surprisingly gathered approximately 10,000 followers to surround the *Zhongnanhai*, the headquarters of the central leadership, for more than thirteen hours. This incident reflected the dilemma that the CCP was facing in the issue of the emergence of social organizations. On the one hand, it recognized the necessity for SOs in society from their intermediate nature between the state and society²⁴⁹, and from their absorption of excessive manpower posed by downsizing the bureaucracy²⁵⁰; on the other hand, it experienced the contest for legitimacy that SOs could bring in

²⁴⁹ Katherine Morton, 'The emergence of NGOs in China and their transnational linkages: Implications for Domestic Reform', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 59, no.4 (Dec. 2005): 522; Ma, 2002, 306
²⁵⁰ Ma Qiusha, *Non-Governmental Organizations in Contemporary China – Paving the way to Civil Society*, (London: Routledge, 2006): 56-58.

Tiananmen Massacre and *Falun Gong* Crackdown²⁵¹. As a consequence, the party state strengthened its manipulation of civil society through a range of administrative and legal means, such as seeking for professional units in the bureaucracy²⁵², nominating from a sponsoring unit for registration, and the inability of appealing against the failure of registration. These policies are aimed at restraining the growth of civil society organizations under the manipulation of the party in order to move the party away from another tremendous confrontation such as with the *Falun Gong*²⁵³; hence civil society was portrayed as ‘state-led’ or ‘state-sponsored’²⁵⁴. This political scenario fundamentally influences mutual interactions between the Party and NGOs, as well as the development of Chinese NGOs. Hence, it is necessary to demonstrate some characteristics of SOs before examining their roles in individual hydropower projects.

Characteristics of Chinese ENGOS

Notwithstanding economic liberalization, the CCP seems to be struggling to foster the social openness that allows civil society to have greater autonomy, and is reflected by the party’s administrative restraints and violent repressions. He Baogang suggested separating the notions of an opening ‘economic civil society’ and the closure of ‘political civil society’, in which autonomy of civic society organizations is highly related to how high-level officials perceive their political interests; and the essence of these organizations relied heavily on their compromises with the party state²⁵⁵. Hence, the development of civil society is still highly influenced by the authorities. In chapter 2, the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 was highlighted to analyze its impacts for the central

²⁵¹ Peter Ho, ‘Sprouts of Environmentalism in China? – Government-Organized NGOs and Green Organizations in Disguise’, in Christof Mauch, Nathan Stoltzfus & Douglas R. Weiner eds. *Shades of Green – Environmental Activism around the Globe*, (U.S.A.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006): 151.

²⁵² Kenji Otsuka, ‘China: Social Restructuring and the Emergence of NGOs,’ in Shinichi Shigetomi ed., *The State and NGOs – Perspective from Asia*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002): 232.

²⁵³ *Ibid*: 152.

²⁵⁴ Yu, 2008: 163; Morton, 2005: 520

²⁵⁵ He, 1993: 8.

leadership. This tragedy, additionally, becomes the nightmare of activists and social organizations in China. However, the top-down repressions afterward from the party seriously hampered the development of civil society. Activists and social organizations learned a lesson from this incident and attempted to steer away from political challenge with the party. As a result, a paradoxical phenomenon was formed in the state-society relationship. He observed this phenomenon through green NGOs;

'the Chinese embedded context forces green organizations and activities into the role of a partner of the state, rather than a representative and defender of certain interests. As a result, environmental activists take all necessary means to avoid being regarded as, or even having the potential for, growing into a full-fledged, green social movement'²⁵⁶.

In other words, due to their fear of the authoritarian CCP, Chinese NGOs tended to remain in a fragmented, low-scaled, localized and informally institutionalized stage. However, they seemed to encounter drawbacks from remaining in such an immature stage of development, such as a lack of financial and personnel resources, public unfamiliarity and limited possibility of being involved in policy making. Hence, they tended to take part in some 'specialized and media-attractive, yet politically innocent activities'²⁵⁷. This intention was arguably to eliminate the functions of NGOs, as it hampered organizations' capabilities in lobbying for their own interests, or even challenging the authorities to fight for their own interests²⁵⁸. However, this argument seems to be deficient since it was not able to explain the resultant suspension of the Nu River Project by ENGOS, and so neglected the pressure constructed through society-media cooperation. Yang contributed to correlate Ho's observation on the fact of successful mobilization for the suspension of dam construction in the Nu River Project.

²⁵⁶ Peter Ho, 'Self-imposed Censorship and De-politicized Politics in China – Green Activism or a Color Revolution?' in Peter Ho & Richard Louis Edmonds eds. *China's Embedded Activism – Opportunities & Constraints of a Social Movement*. (London: Routledge, 2008): 29.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*:29.

²⁵⁸ Liu Junning, 2000; Captured from Yu Keping, 2008: 166-167.

He pointed out that Chinese ENGOs were successful in identifying the cleavages of bureaucracies and could negotiate with the authorities through kaleidoscopic tactics, such as informal coalitions and contact with environmental departments, as well as direct petition letter to the leadership. Subsequently, they were able to pressure the central leadership despite being closely constrained. This argument would be further elaborated after demonstrating the functions and actions of ENGOs in both specific projects.

Apart from their high awareness and intertwined relationship with the authorities, the Chinese NGOs also characterized a heavy reliance on charismatic leaders and individuals in the organizations. For example, the Friends of Nature – one of the most well-known NGOs in China – depends on the personal network and political prestige of Liang Congjie, one of founders of the organization²⁵⁹. These leaders generally either have experience of being cadres and journalists, who are more likely to have a well-established informal personal relationship (*guanxi*) in the bureaucracy and with mass media, or ‘(were) strong in professional expertise and international connections²⁶⁰’. In her research, Lu discovered that those leaders who generally had good presentation and relations skills, in addition to high fund-raising capabilities²⁶¹, appeared frequently in a range of reports, seminars and salons. All of these abilities meant they were able to facilitate, and even to determine, the exposure and familiarity of organizations.

²⁵⁹ Jonathan Schwartz, ‘Environmental NGOs in China: Roles and Limits’, *Pacific Affairs* 77, no.1, (Spring 2004) 39-40. According to Yang, Liang is an important scholar of culture and history. He was also a member of Political Consultative Conference which reflects that he has a strong personal network in the bureaucracy and high representativeness in professional discipline. Additionally, he is also the grandson of Liang Qichao – one of the most famous and critical reformers in the late-Qing dynasty. Thus, he could enjoy strong political influence and prestige. Detail sees Yang Guobin, ‘Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamic in China’, *The China Quarterly*, Iss.181 (Mar 2005), 60.

²⁶⁰ Yang, 2005, 60-61; Ho, 2008: 33.

²⁶¹ Lu Yiyi, *Non-Governmental Organizations in China*, (London: Routledge, 2009) 120.

Therefore, this would fundamentally influence the effectiveness of lobbying and participating in policy making.

In short, discussing the transformation of civil society is a critical part of understanding the policy making processes in China, particularly in the post-reform period. Despite the common communist contexts, the Chinese ENGOs were unlikely to have the similar influence of their Eastern European counterparts in successfully encouraging democratization in their countries. On the contrary, they remained influential due to the party's tolerance but are reluctant to have antagonistic relationship with the authorities. This may, however, be the consequences of autocratic, cruel and bloody repressions at Tiananmen Square and of *Falun Gong* in 1989 and 1999 respectively. Additionally, a range of administrative instruments existed to obstruct social organizations in having legal recognition and development. Thus, Chinese NGOs are more likely to be 'sensitive' to the political context of the party state and in particular of the central leadership, to prevent it from touching the boundary of the central leadership. Undoubtedly, these limitations hinder Chinese NGOs from having check-and-balance responsibilities which their western counterparts possess. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the Chinese NGOs or activists are unable to pressure the authorities and fight for their interests. The facts from TGP and NRP indicate that they, on the contrary, could generate huge pressure on the authorities through cooperating with the mass media and international allies.

TGP – Clapping with a Single Hand?

In considering the political influences, some features of civil society of China in the late 1980s and early 1990s should be introduced, as these features can provide contextual influences for engagement of society in policy formulation. Generally, the

significance of social organizations and individual activists in TGP seemed to be dimmer than provincial leaders. Thus, when the proposal of the Three Gorges Project was publicized, it was argued that the major obstacle of this project was negotiation within the bureaucracy, rather than pressure from civil society²⁶². As mentioned previously, civil society in China was seriously hampered in the June-Fourth Massacre. In this massacre, students, intellectuals, and workers demonstrated the potential leverage of civil society against the authorities and, hence, the party state revised its attitude for the development of the civil society. Institutionalization of social organizations had become one of the major concerns of the party. Within the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA), a division office took care of the institutionalization, development and management of social organizations. Apart from more institutionalized and stricter supervision for the civil society, the party state also strengthened the regulatory system so that more social organizations were abolished²⁶³. Subsequently, the contributions of social organizations and individual activists were limited. In addition, the central leadership had launched a campaign of ‘directing the public opinion’ in which anti-dam opinions were prohibited in the mass media, resulting in it being more difficult for individual activists to amplify their heterogeneous opinions. The limitations of environmental activists and agencies did not only exist in their attempts to reach the media and the public, but also in their efforts to establish coalitions with international society.

According to Khagram, a number of foreign and international environmental organizations, such as Probe International, River Watch East and Southeast Asia and International River Network, expressed strong opposition to the implementation of TGP and persuaded other governments from engaging in this project. Foreign opponents

²⁶² David Lampton, 1983: 15-16.

²⁶³ Ma, 2006: 63.

suggested a range of arguments against diverse aspects of the project such as environmental damage, cultural heritage, and navigational obstructions; it then published anti-dam writings of Chinese journalists and scholars, such as Dai's *Yangtze! Yangtze!* and Wu Ming's field report²⁶⁴, so as to mobilize domestic intellectuals and celebrities to alter the Chinese government's determination. The close existence of anti-dam movements abroad and hunger strike of students in Beijing caused Chinese leaders to think about linking these two independent activities and tackled these problems 'with the full range of repressive tactics available under their authoritarian regime'²⁶⁵. The oppressive and autocratic attitude of the central leadership obstructed Chinese environmental intellectuals and organizations from taking part in the feasibility assessment of the project. Consequently, despite their forecasts of the destructive environmental damage, Chinese activists and organizations did not express their full opposition against the project.

Not only were opinions of anti-dam activists and organizations suppressed in the policy making process due to the 'guiding public opinion' campaign before the approval of the NPC for the project, opinions of some NGOs and intellectuals who have close links with the party state were also filtered by the authorities. However, they were allowed to express opinions for the project, such as conducting researches to provide recommendations for various aspects of the project²⁶⁶. However, they were not be able

²⁶⁴ Wu Ming is anonymous sociologist in China who visited the reservoir area of the TGP in January 1998. He contributed a field report investigating the impacts of dam construction programs and revealing the deficiencies of resettlers in the TGP. Detail sees: International Rivers Network & Human Rights in China, *Major Problems found in Three Gorges Dam Resettlement Program*, [Online e-document] Retrieved on 20 Oct., 2008; available from: http://www.hrichina.org/fs/view/downloadables/pdf/downloadable-resources/three_gorges_98.pdf

²⁶⁵ Sanjeev Khagram, *Dams and Development – Transnational Struggles for Water & Power*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) 173-174.

²⁶⁶ Yu, 2008, 157.

to challenge the feasibility of the project and could only provide supportive testimonies and evidences which were favorable for the project²⁶⁷.

In the early 1990s, social organizations were not given sufficient legal and political sphere to develop, so only a few institutionalized organizations existed to participate in the decision making process; and research centres in universities were considered the exception. Under the blessings of universities, these research centres benefited from a certain degree of resources and personal supports for conducting researches on the Three Gorges Project. Policy recommendations in researches from some renowned universities, such as Tsing Hua University and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), were even considered when policies were discussed²⁶⁸. Nevertheless, their researches could not challenge the feasibility of the project. Consequently, the participation of intellectuals and experts from different disciplines, to some extent, were constrained.

In short, voluntary organizations and individual activists outside the bureaucracy would rarely participate and lobby for any feasibility assessment of the project. This was essentially due to the strong repressions of the party leadership since the Tiananmen Massacre and the ‘guiding public opinion’ campaign before the approval of the project by NPC. Domestic anti-dam intellectuals and activists had limited links with the media needed to amplify their arguments to the public. Just a few -- such as Dai Qing, Wu Ming and Jun Jing -- could approach foreign publishers and other anti-project activists abroad to lobby their interests or to express their viewpoints about the project. Other intellectuals and scholars, both for and against the project, could conduct their researches and make recommendations in limited ways. Yet, they were unlikely to

²⁶⁷ Yin Liangwu, *The long Quest for Greatness: China's Decision to Launch the Three Gorges Project*, (PhD. Diss., Washington University, 1996): 400.

²⁶⁸ Huggelund, 2004:201

challenge official feasibility assessment and determination of the project. Currently, even as the dam is approaching completion, researchers are not allowed to enter reservoir areas in Chongqing Municipality to conduct any research. Strict repressions by the authorities made the project ‘taboo’ in China and impeded individual activists’ efforts to contribute to the project beyond what has been done by the authorities. The TGP reflects the political and social reality in policy formulation of mega projects and infrastructure construction which are determined by the party state autocratically and where civil society was not sufficiently engaged. Yet there has been a huge change with the NRP, in which social organizations, or more accurately, environmental social organizations seemed to have some ability to suspend implementation of gigantic hydropower projects and even involve in the decision making of the project.

NRP—Evidence of the Rise of SO?

After more than a decade of the TGP, another mega hydropower project reflected how emergent civic society hopes to pressure the authoritarian government. Environmental voluntary agents, such as Green Watershed (GW) and Friends of Nature (FN), seemed to contribute significantly to altering the initial determination of the central authorities in encouraging hydroelectricity development. In particular, in the Nu River Project, 13 dams were proposed to be constructed along the Nu River in Yunnan Province and Chinese ENGOs were praised as they succeeded in effectively obstructing the project. In the 1980s, the contribution of ENGOs and other civil social organizations were strongly suppressed by the mighty party state, particularly after the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Nevertheless, they could amplify their opposition against the project through cooperating with other players, such as the media, international organizations and environmental agencies within the bureaucratic systems. The extreme differences in the consequences of the NRP and the TGP might thus indicate the transformation of

roles of civil society in policy formulations and hydroelectricity development in China. This section, therefore, will sketch out the process of ENGOs for contesting the NRP and examining their roles in the project.

The participation of emergent ENGOs in the conservation of Nu River should be referred back to controversies involved in the construction of Manwan Dam over the Lancang River, in the mid-1990s. Although it is not a direct component of the gigantic Nu River Project, it should be recognized as a starting point of the state-society contest about hydroelectric development projects in South-West China. In the midst of these controversies, the Yunnan provincial government came into direct confrontation with one of the most influential grass-root ENGOs in Yunnan – GW. The Yunnan provincial government once investigated GW on suspicion of it engaging in illegal issues, dispatching a representative team from the local bureaucrats and scholars from Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences (YASS) with requests for the organization to disband. When the representative team visited the Nujiang region for investigation, they encountered petition from ordinary people testifying to the innocence of the GW²⁶⁹. Besides, the tense relationship of GW with the Yunnan provincial government since the Manwan Dam controversy has uncovered cleavages within the vast bureaucratic system. This is significant, for when the Yunnan provincial government ordered GW to disband, SEPA – one of environmental administrative organs in the centre – showed its favorable stance to the GW and claimed that the GW was innocent, while also criticizing the Yunnan provincial government as not having sufficient testimonies for their order against GW²⁷⁰.

²⁶⁹ Andrew Mertha, 2008: 114. The confrontation was initiated because local ordinary people complained that why the bureaucrats and scholars from YASS did not investigate in the impoverishment problem of resettlers in Manwan Dam and obstructed their investigation against GW.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 115

In retrospect, the successful recognition of the proposed NRP site as a ‘natural’ World Heritage Site, and the effectiveness of the new *Environmental Impact Assessment Law* (hereafter abbreviated as ‘*Environmental Law*’) in 2003²⁷¹ were symbolic turning points of the state-society confrontation in the NRP. Before 2003, ENGOs, particularly grassroots organizations that did not have close relationship with the authorities, had limited channels to lobby their interests and arguments, and these interests included educating the affected people and having interviewing shown on a national television station. These two incidents in 2003 could effectively consolidate their arguments against the project and draw the attention of the public to this area. It might also facilitate ENGOs to mobilize their international allies and media, and amplify their opposition to the project. For example, twenty journalists, scholars and environmental protection volunteers from Beijing were invited and organized for a nine-day trip to the Nu River by GW and Global Volunteers (GV) in February 2004. In the midst of the trip, participants collected stories from residents and recorded videos to reflect the status quo. It was regarded as an important step for local grassroots ENGOs to make the anti-dam campaign one that was worthy of nationwide attention²⁷².

Different from their successors after the Tiananmen Massacre, Chinese ENGOs had been more aggressive in expressing their discontent towards the project. Apart from mobilizing the mass media and their counterparts in other regions, they had even petitioned the central leadership directly by collecting signatures of scholars, journalists,

²⁷¹ According to the Article 16 of the *Environmental Law*, the state is necessary to have appraisals or examination in the environmental impacts associated with the construction project in accordance with its seriousness of the impacts. If the impacts might be ‘significant’, an ‘all-rounded’ appraisal should be conducted. Detail sees: State Council of People’s Republic of China, *Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Environmental Impact Assessment*, [Online e-document] China Environmental Law Blog – A Discussion of China’s Environmental and Energy Laws, Regulations and Policies, retrieved on 20 Apr. 2010, available from: <http://www.chinaenvironmentallaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/environmental-impact-assessment-law.doc>

²⁷² Büsgen, 2006: 31; Litzinger, 2007: 290 & Mertha, 2008: 125.

students and celebrities in the society and then sending the petition letter and collected signatures to leaders in *Zhongnanhai*. This was particularly useful for ENGOs under the control of the leadership who either had a close relationship with bureaucrats or participated in the NPC or Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). This method could be properly illustrated by the petitioning action of Green Earth Volunteers (GEV) – one of important but unregistered ENGOs in China – in December 2003. Wang Yongchen was the famous leader of GEV and had a close relationship with State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) – one of important environmental protection apparatus of the Chinese government. She encouraged approximately sixty renowned and influential scholars, journalists and celebrities to sign the petition letter in order to request an intervention by the central government, so that the Nu River was protected from gigantic dam construction²⁷³. Besides, more than 10,000 students in Chongqing Municipality signed a petition letter to express their common opposition against Nu River Project in 2005.

In a nutshell, Chinese ENGOs differed from their western counterparts because of their restrained autonomy and lack of independence from the authorities. Nevertheless, the success of obstructing the NRP from implementation has attracted worldwide attention to the development of Chinese ENGOs. It is believed that the influence of Chinese ENGOs in policy formulation could no longer be underestimated or neglected. In the anti-dam campaign, these ENGOs had utilized a wide range of channels – domestic, national and even international -- to amplify their arguments in order to construct a sufficient pressure area and demand that central authorities intervene in the policy making process of the NRP. Different organizations utilized channels and tactics that were more likely to be successful in drawing the public's attention or gaining a

²⁷³ Büsgen, 2006: 30-31; Mertha, 2008: 121.

respectable advantage, such as developing close relationships with the authorities, media or affected people. In addition, they had closer alliances and more frequent interactions or co-operative efforts with their international counterparts, such as the World Wildlife Fund, and the International River Network. However, do these actions mean that the tremendous transformation of SOs could enable them to have a more dominant role in developing mega projects? In the following section, the transformation of civil society in China will be discussed and society's roles in both projects will be compared. Hence, it is argued that social organizations have been more significant in the decision making process, but they are still encountering a variety of limitations and need to deal with these limitations with the aid of other fields in society.

Civil Society in Decision Making Process

Dilemma of Social Organizations: Autonomy vs. Influential power

Despite the recent emergence of SOs, civil society remained in a subordinate relationship with the Party after the establishment of PRC; therefore, Chinese civil society was suspected of not being eligible to fit into the conventional definition of a 'civil society. With the TGP, the skepticism against Chinese civic society organizations seemed to be valid, since the formation and opinions of civic voluntary organizations were mainly repressed or 'guided' by the authorities. Although there were a few individual activists breaking through the closed oppression of the authorities and connecting with international civic organizations, the majority of civic voluntary organizations were still being scared by the nightmare of Tiananmen Massacre in 1989. Owing to previous lessons of cruel and bloody oppressions of the authorities since 1949, Chinese civic organizations were struggling in the predicament of autonomy and survival in a narrow political sphere. Thus, in order to gain a larger public sphere, SOs sought an amiable relationship with the authorities – both central and local – and

managed to become generally supplementary to the policy implementation of state²⁷⁴. In the eyes of the SOs' leaders, having an amiable and meshed relationship with the government and the Party, yet compromising on a certain degree of autonomy and independence, was the most effective way of gaining influence²⁷⁵. White suggested that the authorities recognized the necessity of social organizations in dealing with new challenges of economic and social changes that are associated with economic liberalization, but believed that the political and social threats, posed by uncontrolled, un-disciplined and disarrayed SOs should be managed and disciplined. Thus, the party state would maintain close supervision in the development of civil social organizations. Saich further explained this logic in the party-state perspective:

'...the state has tried to influence key groups in society by binding them into organizations that become dependent on its patronage. To head off potential mass opposition, the state will attempt to extend its organization, co-ordination and supervision of as much of the population as possible....This move by the state from insulation from society to integration within it can be interpreted as an attempt to prevent a plurality of definitions arising by revising the structure of the regime and the state's relationship with the society'²⁷⁶.

From Saich's analysis, the Party state had transformed its participatory pattern from 'insulation' to 'integration' and it seemed that Chinese SOs might have greater autonomy than before. This may probably be the consequence of the diversification of funding sources. In the past, the largest share of SOs funding was from the Party state and this was particularly true for GONGOs. In Table 5.3, the funding structure of SOs is shown.

Table 5.3—Funding Structure of Social Organizations in China²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Saich, 2000, 139.

²⁷⁵ Gordon White, 1993; Captured from He, 1993, 10.

²⁷⁶ Saich, 2000, 127.

²⁷⁷ Interviewees of this survey including both GONGOs and other types of NGOs.

Type of funding	Percentage
Government Subsidies and Grants	50
Membership Fees	21.2
Income through Commercial Activities	6
Project Funding or Grants by Companies	5.6
Others	4
Project Funding by the Government	3.6
Collection Funding	2.2
Donations by Individuals (Excluding Membership fee)	2
Surplus Funding from the Previous Year	1.8
Project Funding or Grants by International Organizations	1.6
Capital Turnover	1.2
Project Funding or Grants by Domestic Foundations	0.5
Loans (Commercial & Non-Commercial)	0.3

Source: Table 2.3, Ho, 2008:32

By compromising on autonomy, these GONGOs were supported with stable and considerable fundings from the state. On the contrary, for those organizations which have a weaker linkage with the authorities, a significant proportion of fundings was made available from abroad²⁷⁸. For example, the Centre of Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge (CBIK), which is based in Kunming, Yunnan, intensified its foreign funding income from U.S. \$203,000 in 2002 to nearly U.S.\$ 550,000 in 2004²⁷⁹. Nevertheless, the situation more or less changed in the anti-dam campaign. More Chinese ENGOs could access funding from their foreign counterparts, such as International River Network, and Oxfam in Hong Kong²⁸⁰. Besides, more organizations have become self-sufficient. It might probably be the consequence of a contraction in government funding towards domestic social organizations associated with downsizing reform of the

²⁷⁸ Sun Liping, interviewed by Qin Chun 'Fledging NGOs Told to Raise the Bar', *China Daily*, (30 Mar, 2005): 02.

²⁷⁹ Figures are captured and calculated from the annual reports of Centre of Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge in correspondent years by the author. The 2004 figure was calculated with the exchange rate used in 2002 and it should be RMB 4,492,119.28. Detail sees: Centre of Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge, 'CBIK Annual Report for 2002' & 'Annual Report for 2004', [online e-document] (accessed on 3 May 2010) available from: <http://www.cbik.ac.cn/Get/Annualrepor/index.html>

²⁸⁰ Büsgen, 2006:23.

government. Ma pointed out that it widened the interest gap between SOs and the Party, and would further motivate SOs to approach foreign sources or sources beyond the public sector. Accordingly, the motivation and orientation of SOs to be autonomous from government's intervention would be accelerated²⁸¹.

In short, Chinese SOs tended to have an intimate relationship with the government, even though it might sacrifice a certain degree of autonomy and independence. The apparent advantage of this action meant that not only did organizations have more resources and fundings to develop, it also enabled them to have greater leverages for lobbying their interests. Unfortunately, the gradual retreat of government from intervening in the civil society and curtailing the government's funding towards organizations have widened the interest gap between the government and SOs. Subsequently, the state-society relationship might incur more confrontation than before, with the anti-dam campaign in the NRP being a typical illustration for this phenomenon.

International Alliance and Media Activisms

On the other hand, while ENGOs were successful in urging the government to suspend the Nu River Project from construction, the influence of the media and international non-governmental organizations should not be neglected. In this section, I will argue that the media and international organizations seem to have become an effective catalyst in reinforcing the pressure from Chinese SOs against the government, in particular the media. In retrospect, Chinese SOs had limited contacts with their international counterparts. This may have been due to the authoritarian insulation by the Party into the civil society. Additionally, from the TGP, the autocratic repression of

²⁸¹ Ma, 2006:96.

opposition in the civil society by the CCP hampered transnational coalitions of SOs.

Khagram further analyzed that

‘China’s authoritarian regime prevented domestic anti-dam proponents from effectively accessing domestic decision-making structures as well as from forging sustained coalitions with trans-nationally allied nongovernmental advocacy organizations. Perhaps most important, however, the lack of domestic social mobilization limited the ability of opponents to more dramatically alter the trajectory of the Three Gorges Dam²⁸².’

Accordingly, a number of scholars and activists tried to access the foreign anti-dam network and provide information of the Three Gorges Dam.

Since the mid-1990s, the intermediary position of civil society between the party state and ordinary people has provided opportunities for SOs to develop their links and cooperation with other Party organs, in particular the mass media. Due to the paradoxical confrontation between the politically ascendant Party and market power since 1980s, the mass media tended to expand their professional values and autonomy. As a consequence, these organizations seemed to ‘share structurally similar positions with the mass media²⁸³’. This reciprocal relationship between society and the media has tightened their coalition but it tended to be informal. The NRP was thereby viewed as the most effective example of reflecting the society-media coalition. In their article, Yang and Calhoun explained that mass media could facilitate the excavation of a broad public sphere, which refers to ‘the space for public discourse and communications’ so as to provide fertile land for the growth of public opinion about the environment²⁸⁴. They observed that ENGOs in the anti-NRP campaign acted in a pivotal role and the media

²⁸² Khagram, 2004: 175.

²⁸³ Yang, 2005:56.

²⁸⁴ Yang Guobin & Craig Calhoun, ‘Media, Civil Society, and the Rise of a Green Public Sphere in China’, *China Information* XXI, no.2 (2007): 213-214.

could reinforce the controversy of the issue in an effort to stir up more diverse public opinion²⁸⁵. For instance, Wang Yongchen allied with Zhang Kejia, who is a senior and well-known journalist in China, to have numerous news reports published about the anti-NRP debate in *China Youth Daily*²⁸⁶. Additionally, there was a related exhibition in Beijing in which a number of celebrities, journalists and scholars were invited to participate²⁸⁷. All these actions of cooperation both social organizations and the media have seemingly mounted a greater debate about the project beyond local society.

On the other hand, the coalitions between Chinese social organizations with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were also another important catalyst for putting pressure on the centre. Apart from amplifying the opposition voices, the close coalitions of domestic and international NGOs might have positive contribution for encouraging institutional reforms, or even democratization, of the country²⁸⁸. Since 1995, interactions between domestic and international NGOs and agencies have been closer. For instance, the World Bank and INGOs directly subsidized domestic NGOs to further develop – both technically and financially. Some Chinese NGOs introduced the ways of operation from their international or foreign counterparts in an effort to improve their administrative efficiency²⁸⁹. Through contrasting the situations of TGP and NRP, the effectiveness of international-domestic organizations' coalitions to pressure the centre seems to be further verified. In the TGP, the domestic-international nexus was limited. Not only social organizations, but the connections of

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*: 229.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*: 228.

²⁸⁷ Jim Yardley, 'Seeking a Public Voice on China's "Angry River"', *New York Post* (26 Dec 2005).

²⁸⁸ Khagram argued that the domestic –international nexus of organizations is sophisticated. In the short run, they intend to have a more intimate relationship with authorities and the states, but the repeatedly frustration in achieving goals in the long run might expand the scale of social and institutional reforms so as to reinforce the possibility of achieving their goals. Details see: Khagram, 2004: 26.

²⁸⁹ Deng Guosheng, 'The Change and Trend of Chinese NGOs since 1995' (1995 *Nian Yilai Zhongguo NGO de Bianhua yu Fazhan Qushi*) in Wang Ming ed. *Qinghua Development Research Report 2003 – Non-governmental Public Agencies in China* (Qinghua Fazhan Yanjiu Baogao 2003 – Zhongguo Fei Zhengfu Gonggong Bumen), (Beijing: Qinghua University Press, 2004): 92-94.

individual activists were also retrained. Only a few of scholars could establish networks with foreign counterparts. Dai Qing, the most well-known opponent against the Three Gorges Project, communicated with a variety of international organizations, such as Probe international, to mount the opposition campaign of the large dam construction. Yet, due to their limited relationship with domestic social organizations, the INGOs showed their opposition to, and petition against, the Three Gorges Project. They even lobbied the different state institutions to draw them away from financing the project, and criticized to the feasibility report conducted by the Chinese government. Apparently, the influence of this criticism seemed to be limited. The Chinese government simply chose to finance the project without foreign financial aid in order to go around INGOs' obstruction. By contrast, the actions of INGOs in the anti-NRP campaign were more effective by cooperating with domestic NGOs. Since the late 1990s, more INGOs have established their offices in China, such as Greenpeace, Oxfam and Friends of Earth (Hong Kong), and their correlations with domestic NGOs had been closer²⁹⁰. Thus, Yang pointed out the 'symbiotic' relationship between domestic and international NGOs. While INGOS could establish domestic partnerships to implement their global agendas, local NGOs could access more funding, information and resources beyond the Party state in order to possess more independence²⁹¹. With the NRP, the coalition of INGOs and domestic NGOs has tightened. Prior to the announcement of suspending the NRP, sixty international NGOs gathered and signed a petition letter against the NRP, which was sent directly to the Chinese government, and they also called on UNESCO to intervene²⁹².

²⁹⁰ Yang, 2005:57.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 57.

²⁹² Yardley, Dec 2005.

Undoubtedly, the ENGOs and SOs in other related aspects were pivotal to the Chinese anti-dam campaign. However, from contrasting the cases in TGP and the NRP, it is not difficult to see that the obstruction of domestic civil society is not as strong as anticipation. The inclusion of mass media and international NGOs probably reinforced the bargaining power of social organizations. In the TGP, the Party leadership launched a campaign of ‘guiding public opinion’ across the whole country in an authoritarian manner. Thus, the stances of the media were generally favorable towards the project. In addition, local organizations and activists were constrained by their ties to international networks. The sole opposition by international NGOs did not sufficiently alter the central decision of constructing the gigantic dam. On the contrary, the coalition of domestic ENGOs-mass media-INGOs stressed the contradictory actions of the Yunnan provincial government and state-owned power enterprise to develop the series of 13 Nu River dam construction projects. Moreover, they have amplified the anti-dam campaign so as to draw nationwide attention, and have thus more likely provoked the central leadership to intervene and alter the decision.

Even with the success in halting the NRP, the development of civil society in China does not look optimistic and no one should assume Chinese social organizations have the ability to challenge the Party state. In the past, Chinese NGOs have tended to value an intimate relationship with the authorities, even though they might have to compromise a certain degree of independence and autonomy. For leaders of these NGOs, they preferred to insert themselves into the policy-making processes, rather than to directly confront the Party. The vague attitude of social organizations might largely be due to the autocratic and violent history of top-down state repression. Additionally, the essence of Chinese NGOs is generally informal, un-institutionalized and immature. Consequently, they would have encountered more constraints and limitations in the

development and sustainability of organizations, if they had been more independent from the government. Nonetheless, the administrative reforms of the government in 1998 contributed to civil society and these have led to further development, since more excessive manpower has been absorbed by social organizations and the government has gradually curtailed its subsidies towards social organizations. In the new millennium, the society-government confrontation seemed to be fiercer. For instance, in the NRP, the ENGOs allied with INGOs and the mass media to lobby using arguments against the dam construction effort.

Through these strategic actions with other entities in society, Chinese social organizations have wanted to encourage leadership and the public to broaden their considerations beyond economic development²⁹³. Distinct from their Eastern European counterparts, Chinese NGOs are more unlikely to challenge the legitimacy of the Party. However, they would intensify the fragmentation of interests in the society and diversification the agenda within the Party leadership. Thus, one might conclude that they could satisfy their sociological functions to import more issues and departmental interests for debate with the government²⁹⁴, but they are more likely to be weak and reluctant in fostering the democratization of the country and directly challenging the Party. However, even the sociological intentions might actually influence the policy formulation process of China and modify the FA model in the theoretical sense.

²⁹³ Wu Zhu, interviewed by Alice Yan, 'Environmental Watchdogs Hungry for Action', *South China Morning Post* (28 Mar, 2005).

²⁹⁴ Yang, 2005: 65; Saich, 2000:127.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

After much progress, a series of questions have been addressed through a review of reciprocal interactions and transformation of leverages in three important players, i.e. central government, provincial governments and officials, and the civil society in the decision making processes of the Three Gorges and the Nu River projects. (1) However, why should these three players be recognized as critical in decision making process? Thus, beyond these three, are there any players which are secondary but critical in the different processes? (2) How did these players perceive and exercise their own roles and interests in the processes? (3) How did the political and economic contexts of these two projects determine and transform individuals' perceptions? As the final part of the thesis, this chapter intends to summarize the findings of previous chapters and further explain the findings to the applicability of the FA model. Also, explanation will be given to how the findings contribute to further studying the prospects of China and global hydroelectricity development, as well as institutional development.

The thesis begins with an overview of hydroelectricity development in China, which originated from the necessity of river management for human and scientific revolutions in the modern world; and China has possessed a longest history of river management. Successful river management is represented in the legitimacy and sustainability of the regime and the changes that Chinese river management has gone through. Thus, I argue that dam construction is essentially full of political significance, and that, in the contemporary China, dam construction functions as more than mere counter-flooding. Famous leaders, such as Sun Yat-sen, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, hoped to reinforce the modernization of the Chinese economy through dam construction. In addition to the practical shortfall of energy consumption since economic reforms, hydroelectricity has become one of the most important and grand strategies for economic and social development in the eyes of the elite. The TGP and NRP reflected

two stages of hydroelectricity development in China and in contemporary China respectively. Thus, in the following section, the transformation of bargaining amongst actors will be summarized.

Dimensional Bargaining of Players

Summarizing the transformation of complicated bargaining amongst actors should be classified as reciprocal interactions, bargaining knots and strategies. In chapter 1, the bargaining ‘knots’ were stated to represent the consideration and contentions of actors in the decision making processes of the individual projects.

Reciprocal Interactions

Referring to Graph 6.1 (sees p.140), the interactions of actors are more independent from others; in other words, there were few collective actions and little cooperation between actors. However, this may have been due to the autocracy of the central leadership during that period. Thus, later in the June-Fourth Massacre in 1989, the decision making process of the TGP was more leadership-oriented. In this project, the party leadership, led by Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng, became the dynamic force for the successful implementation of the project. Under this backdrop, the debate of this project was fierce but limited. Researchers and central and local officials were reluctant and lacked the sphere to challenge decisions over the feasibility of projects presented by the leadership. As a result, other actors seemed to become feeble compared to the mighty party leadership, and in particular, mass media and civil society. Prior to the official approval of the project in the NPC, the central government launched a ‘guiding public opinion’ campaign to suppress anti-project opinions and requested that mass media comment positively on the project. Accordingly, there was only a small sphere for domestic social organizations and individual activists who developed and amplified their oppositional opinions towards the project. Hence, the project was rarely challenged even

though it had aroused worldwide attention and extensive criticism. On the other hand, local cadres, particularly cadres from reservoir areas, predicted that the project would be associated with an enormous amount of capital injection into the local economies from the centre. This considerable capital and other related policies were viewed as instruments for fostering the economic development of these provinces. Thus, they were generally favorable towards decisions from the centre, even though there were scattered debates on the details of particular issues, such as the height of a dam and the management of resettlements, and so on.

In contrast, triangular interactions in the NRP (see Graph 6.2, p.141) were relatively responsive and confrontational. Decentralization evolved, since economic reforms had eliminated the participation of central governments in the practical formulation of local economic issues, and provincial governments were granted the right to intensify autonomy of policy formulation. Therefore, the central-periphery relationship and responsibilities had transformed, even though the subordinating relationship generally remained unchanged. Apart from the provincial governments, the emergence of civil society and the rationalization of the mass media, since the late 1990s, enabled social organizations to have a greater political sphere of development. Subsequently, their participation in the NRP became more aggressive and hostile. They were able to criticize the NRP directly and amplify their contentions through various channels, particularly via cooperation with their international counterparts and the domestic media, such as CCTV, the internet and the press. Through these channels, they were able to arouse national awareness and even direct petition to the central leadership, which could effectively reinforce anti-project pressure towards central government. This is why Wen Jiabao, the Prime Minister of the State Council, would publicly announce the suspension of the NRP. Apparently, although still powerful, the central leadership

has been more responsive to the issue. In chapters 3 and 5, the project was mentioned as being approved by the National Development and Reform Commission in the State Council, at its initial stage. Nevertheless, civil society, in collaboration with mass media and international NGOs, were able to reinforce public opinion against the project, which enabled the central government to reshape and intervene, and thus suspend the process.

Bargaining Knots

Bargaining knots in the interactive triangles of two projects represented the differentiation of focus points and rationales behind their interactions towards others. Thus, due to the strong legacies of the Tiananmen Square Massacre during the decision making process, the bargaining knots of actors in the TGP reflected that the project was viewed as a means to bailout of legitimacy crisis in the party. For the central leadership, however, the cruel suppression of the student movement in the massacre damaged the legitimacy of the party, and it was necessary for the party leadership to have an instrument for consolidating the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime. Moreover, the shared background of technocracy and the considerable personal interests of leaders in the project favored an autocratic attitude of the leadership towards it. Beyond the central leadership, individuals in civil society were also influenced by the legacies of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. They tended to be in awe of the leadership which prevented them from confronting against the party directly. Besides this, the massacre bated their contacts with a number of international counterparts, owing to close supervision and manipulation from the authorities after the massacre. Subsequently, their stance was generally favorable towards the project and the debate concentrated on the details of it.

Meanwhile, provincial leaders, because of the absence of a middle class in the society and their intermediary nature between ordinary people and central government,

had the responsibility of representing local interests which requested the maintaining or pursuance of high pace economic growth. A series of administrative reforms at the provincial level, such as fiscal decentralization, rationalization of agencies and empowerment of local governments, brought about the pursuit of high economic growth rates as means to influence the probability of promotion²⁹⁵. Accordingly, provincial leaders were motivated to adopt a strong pro-growth stance and economic development of the provinces, and there exists a phenomenon known as ‘local developmentalism’. Provincial leaders would be aggressive in order to retain a high growth rate of revenue and develop various industries in higher preference, similar to an entrepreneur²⁹⁶. Alternatively, they would also compete for resources, capital and manpower in order to facilitate both industrial and economic development. Owing to the considerable capital and manpower associated with gigantic projects, they would view these projects, such as TGP and NRP, as an opportunity to accelerate the economic growth of individual provinces; and this would thereby produce better career and political prospects. As a result, provincial leaders generally prefer dam construction. Thus, the bargaining tool of provincial leaders seemed not only to retain but also to reinforce their pro-growth perceptions.

Moreover, although there was rapid economic liberalization, the ‘open door’ policy widened the income disparity between rural and urban areas, as well as coastal and interior regions. When Yunnan province proposed to construct the Nu River Project, provincial leaders wanted to improve the accessibility of the most remote region of South Western China and to accelerate revenue through selling hydroelectricity. Thus, the utilitarian rationales of the provincial cadres for supporting the NRP were the

²⁹⁵ Susan Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*, (U.S.: University of California Press, 1993): 182-183; Guo Gang, Retrospective Economic Accountability under Authoritarianism, *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 60, no.3 (Sep., 2007): 386-389; Bo Zhiyue, *Chinese Provincial Leaders – Economic Performance and Political Mobility since 1949*, (U.S.A.: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2002):136-141.

²⁹⁶ Shirk, 1993: 185.

illustrations of their developmentalist doctrine. There is no doubt that the dynamic of promoting NRP was no longer with the central government, but the Yunnan provincial government. The indifference of the central government was a consequence of further decentralization in the 1980s. Currently, the central government will no longer directly participate in policy formulation of economic development, but can provide grand instructions to agencies in the lower level of the hierarchy and would keep its power of approval for policies. Consequently, the role of coordination for central government seems to be fostered, while its authority has been restrained due to decentralization. Unfortunately, the cleavages amongst bureaucratic agencies at the central level might be wide and apparent. However, penetration of market mechanisms into the bureaucratic system has moved the hierarchy to be more modernized and segmented. Thus, the bureaucratic apparatus has become the route to pursue departmental goals and interests, and this phenomenon deepened cleavages amongst organs. While the central leadership becomes the referee and coordinator who impartially consider interests of the various organs, they require more time to achieve a consensus and prevent decision from being made too quickly. The self-restraint of the central leadership²⁹⁷ also contributed to the greater political sphere for social organizations and the mass media. Furthermore, organizations and mass media will also encounter keen competition owing to economic liberalization and marketization. In the late 1990s, a series of administrative reforms enabled mass media and social organizations to have greater autonomy and degree of international linkages. They transformed to become more willing to criticize specific aspects of policies which could then avoid direct challenges to the central leadership, such as environmental protection. Under this backdrop, ENGOs and mass media were

²⁹⁷ Li Chelan Linda, Towards a Non-zero-sum Interactive Framework of Spatial Politics: the Case of Centre-Province in Contemporary China, *Political Studies XLV*, (1997): 56.

willing and able to form coalitions against the construction of the NRP, in addition to extending the coalitions to include international NGOs.

Applicability of FA Model

Despite leaders' domination in both feudal and contemporary Chinese systems, the vast bureaucratic system has been shown to be complicated and fragmented. In the system, an organ, and particularly departments at the local level, will be subordinated to more than one unit. For example, the Civil Affairs Department at the county level is subordinated to both the county government and the Civil Affairs bureau of the central and provincial governments. Even the governors from the provincial governments need to be somewhat administratively accountable to the National People's Congress, the Communist Party Committee in the provinces, and the Central government. This complicated accountability / relational matrix has made the authority, priority and directions of policy formulation become more segmented.²⁹⁸ As a consequence, the model of Fragmented Authoritarianism suggested by Kenneth Lieberthal, has modified these relations as *kuai* and *tiao* which symbolize the professional relationship of territorial coordination and leadership relationship of functional bureaucratic branches amongst the apparatus respectively²⁹⁹. In reality, Lieberthal argued that the priority of reforms should be given to the horizontal professional relationship rather than the vertical leadership relationship; a phenomenon known as 'making *tiao* to serve *kuai*'.³⁰⁰ In the cases of TGP and NRP, the *kuai* relationship influenced the implementation of the project. In the chapter 3, the contradiction between the Ministry of Water Conservancy and the Ministry of Electric Industry in the 1980s was highlighted to illustrate how the

²⁹⁸ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China – From Revolution Through Reform* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995): 169-170.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*: 170.

³⁰⁰ Kenneth Lieberthal, China's Governing System and its Impacts on Environmental Policy Implementation, *China Environment Series* (1997): 3-4.

FA model could be applied in the TGP case. The separation of these two central ministries uncovered the ‘in-house’ negotiations in an organ. The Ministry of Water Conservancy would like to implement the project as soon as possible while the Ministry of Electric Industry put the project in a lower priority and postponed the schedule of investigation and negotiations of the project. Hence, the project had not been approved until the central leadership repressively urged the pace of negotiations. Besides, the adversary between the SEPA and Yunnan provincial government in the negotiation of NRP further indicated the segmentation of authority between organs also mentioned in the chapter 4. These cases are typical illustrations of showing the leverage of *kuai* relationship for successful policy formulation. Through the dimension of bargaining triangle, the rationales and considerations behind the stances of different actors were generalized and the FA model has been further enriched and amended. Despite the rapid economic and social change in China since economic reforms, the FA model retained its high explicability and applicability for the status quos in China.

Mertha added notions to explain the dynamic and strategies of political changes; the FA model’s explanation is not as yet complete. However, his contribution is unlikely to explain the rationales of decision and coalitions, so his addition was criticized to be ‘over-strategic’ and too optimistic, in merely elaborating on how an emergent civil society would be more likely to oppose the authorities. Subsequently, this thesis would like to contribute to this area by demonstrating the transformation of initiatives and frustration in the policy-making processes of these two specific projects. Through investigating the rationales of transformation from a multi-perspective approach, more covered flaws in the bureaucratic systems were disclosed in the analyses. All of these flaws may somehow influence the policy implementation, and even the legitimacy, of the CCP. More importantly, these findings were able to be applied to various aspects of

public policies in China. Thus, more research should be conducted in the future in order to further extend the explicability of the model. However, rather than illustrating the circumstances of a specific point in the timeline of Chinese political development, this thesis aimed to deduce from these circumstances the capabilities of the party and distribution of power in decision making processes since the economic reforms. It might be argued that the representativeness seems to be constrained because merely using the illustration of hydropower development. Thus, the arguments and implications might thereby be limited. Yet, this thesis has contributed to the enrichment of our study of the transformation of the political contexts that different players encountered, so as to reveal the responsiveness of players for the continuous transformation of political contexts in China.

Further Discussion: Empirical Implications for Chinese Hydroelectricity and Institutional Development

Findings from the multi-perspective research in this thesis should not be constrained to reflecting the Chinese political system. They could have further implications for the institutional development in China, so as to anticipate the prospects of the Chinese political system. Beyond the institutional aspect, the research findings could also provide a foundation to discuss hydroelectricity, or even environmental issues, in China.

Clashes of Interests

In the political sense, this thesis contributed to reveal cleavages of interests amongst critical actors of the political system in China. Initially, the party leadership would like to separate economic reform from political ones. The state attempted to adopt a market mechanism to allow the emergence of private ownership in the Chinese socialist economy; the political transition to liberal democracy, on the contrary, seemed

to be limited. This may be due to the fear of chaos and catastrophes in pluralist society. Hence, the CCP would be prevented from becoming democratized and remain in the form of consultative authoritarianism³⁰¹. Nevertheless, this research disclosed a number of cleavages amongst important actors in the decision making process. Interest fragmentation did not only exist inside the bureaucratic system, but latent cleavages were also discovered between society and the authorities. As a consequence, the party authorities' role of 'representing local interests' and 'representing the fundamental interests of the majority' has been more likely challenged, especially with respect to provincial cadres. Owing to the extensive diversity among provinces, the central government relied heavily on provincial leaders to reflect local interests³⁰². Zeng Xiaowei identified that this phenomenon was more popular in the period of economic reform, as it was chiefly the consequence of the tendency towards recruiting native people to become provincial leaders in the central government. There were two advantages to this: (1) the native provincial leaders were equipped with rich knowledge and understanding of local situations, and this was favourable towards promoting economic growth in local initiatives; (2) Cross-provincial social mobility was more unlikely to be available for elite recruitment³⁰³. Subsequently, provincial leaders were regarded as the representatives of 'local interests' and the most important channel of bridging the communication gap between localities and central government. Thus, they were granted greater autonomy and more substantive powers than before.

Nonetheless, this research discovered that the provinces' role of representing local interests may have been reduced. Provincial leaders represented the high motivations of economic development in the four decades of economic reforms.

³⁰¹ He Baogang, *The Democratic Implications of Civil Society in China*, (U.K., Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997): 124.

³⁰² Li, 1997: 55-56.

³⁰³ Zang, 1991; cited by Bo, 2002: 7-8.

Accordingly, there was a phenomenon known as ‘local developmentalism’ which describes the unbalanced emphasis for economic development and industrialization of provincial leaders, as well as their entrepreneurial metaphors for local economies. Thus, dam construction projects were highly favored by leaders. However, rapid economic improvements in previous decades encouraged environmental awareness amongst the central government and ordinary people³⁰⁴. As a result, the political agenda between provincial leaders and the central government, as well as ordinary people, seemed to diverge. This flaw was more likely to enlarge due to the direct correlation between local economic improvement and leaders’ career promotion. Further, this finding could also explain why provincial governments and leaders frequently become the target of large-scale protests and civilian criticisms, rather than officials in central government.

Implication for Development of Chinese ENGOS

In chapter 5, the Chinese ENGOS were selected for close investigation and it was concluded that the Chinese ENGOS, different from their Eastern European counterparts, were unlikely to significantly challenge the authorities. Thus, they were unable to fulfill their political functions. Nevertheless, the success of the anti-dam campaign, which was mainly composed by ENGOS, international NGOs and the mass media, was highlighted when the NRP was discussed. Therefore, how could these ENGOS expand their political sphere beyond informal coalitions? And, how did these ENGOS maintain their cohesiveness with their media allies and international counterparts? Hence, the emergence of NGOs in China most probably enabled the ‘import (of) varied social interests into the state and, of course, the Party³⁰⁵’. Yet, to what extent would the CCP tolerate the NGOs’ participation? These questions should be further studied as they may

³⁰⁴ Peter Ho, ‘Greening Without Conflict? Environmentalism, NGOs and Civil Society in China’, *Development and Change* Vol.32, (2001): 914.

³⁰⁵ Tony Saich, ‘Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China’, *The China Quarterly*, no.161 (Mar. 2000): 127.

fundamentally transform the political landscape in China. In the aspect of hydroelectricity development, Chinese ENGOs are another cluster of players in the decision making process, and their opposition has transformed the strategy of development. Thus, instead of constructing gigantic multi-functional dams in the river, Chinese authorities would like to construct a lot of smaller dams for developing electricity³⁰⁶. Subsequently, it is unlikely that the Chinese authorities will reduce the determination of hydroelectricity development. Nevertheless, environmental activists may probably reduce the development speed of hydropower and pressure the authorities to stop constructing gigantic dam projects, such as TGP and NRP³⁰⁷.

³⁰⁶ David Biello, 'Damming the Yangtze: Are a Few Big Hydropower Projects Better than a Lot of Small Ones?', *Scientific American* [Internet] (13 Oct. 2009), (accessed on 5 Jan 2010) available from: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=damming-the-yangtze>

³⁰⁷ Anonymous, 'Chinese Province Hopes to Build Dams Despite Concerns', *The New York Times* (6 Mar 2008), (accessed on 15 Jan 2010) available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/06/world/asia/06iht-dam.1.10764252.html?scp=16&sq=Chinese%20hydropower&st=cse>

Graph 6.1 – Interactional Triangle in the TGP

Source: Author's Interpretation

Graph 6.2 – Interaction Triangle in the NRP

Source: Author's Interpretation

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