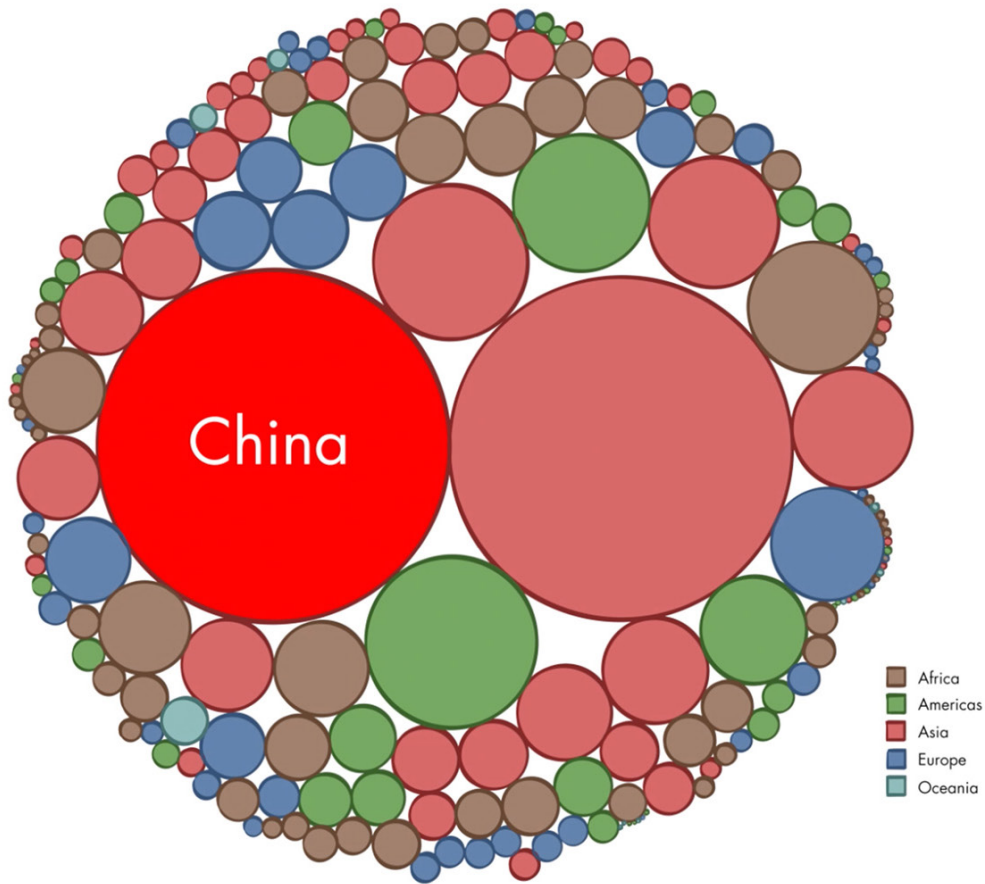


Countries by Population Size



## Global China into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Modern, globalized China provides its citizens with great economic growth and social stability, but at the cost of some key freedoms. How do these choices work?

**0:01**

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

*Figure showing countries  
by population size*

Say an alien came to Earth today and wanted to learn more about humans. Say this alien decided to meet with a hundred people—everyday, average, randomly selected people, to find out more about our lives and experiences.

Statistically, four or five of those people would likely be Americans. A few other big countries like Brazil, India, and Indonesia would likely have multiple people selected. Most countries would have one or none, but about 20 of those people would be Chinese. That's right. One in every five people in the world, about 1.4 billion human beings, lives in China. That's more than four times as many as the United States.

**0:56**

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

*Images of China a hundred  
years ago*

*Images of products  
manufactured in China*

*Chart of China's GDP per  
capita since 1950*

Hi, I'm Francesca Hodges, and I'm here to talk about China's increasingly global presence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In many ways, China's story is at the center of global change over the past two decades.

A hundred years ago, China was a country divided among warlords, occupied by foreign powers, and with much of its population living in poverty.

But in the century that followed, it has become the biggest manufacturer in the world, now producing many of the goods used by people everywhere.

Have a look at this chart showing the rise of China's gross domestic product per capita, a measure of its economic output per person. This measure of rising production demonstrates China's growth as probably one of the biggest success stories of globalization.

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

Arguably, this growing wealth has had a big impact on the lives of the Chinese people.

**1:52**

*Chart showing the share  
of China's population in  
poverty since 1990*

*Image of a Chinese city  
with central questions  
above*

Here's another pretty revealing chart. It shows the decline in the percentage of China's population living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015. That decline from above 60 percent of the population to about three percent represents millions of people raised out of poverty in that 25-year period.

But what does all of this change feel like to the Chinese? Has this intense economic growth improved their lives?

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

These are the questions we ask in this video, and for answers I turn to Dr. Crystal Chang. She is a professor in the Global Studies department at UC Berkeley, where I happen to be a student.

Professor Chang, who governs China today?

**2:37**

*Francesca Hodges and  
Crystal Chang converse,  
facing camera*

Today, China is governed by the Chinese Communist Party.

Would you describe this governmental system as democratic, authoritarian, or neither?

I would describe the Chinese political system as authoritarian.

*Image of a CCP event with text above highlighting the CCP's authoritarian rule*

When the CCP took control in 1949, they established the People's Republic of China, and it is authoritarian. The party retains full control over all aspects of Chinese political life, considerable influence over the economy, and very close surveillance over China's 1.4 billion people.

*Francesca Hodges speaks, facing camera*

Why do the Chinese people support or allow the party to govern?

**3:14**

*Images of China in the 1970s*

So let's start with what life was like in the 1970s. This was the Cultural Revolution. This was a time when the country was ravaged by political chaos and social chaos, and at that time the country was very poor, and after the reforms China's middle class grew, incomes grew, and people's lives materially got much better.

*Crystal Chang speaks, facing camera*

And so I tell you that story because there's sort of an implicit social contract between the Chinese people and the government which works like this.

*Image of a CCP parade with text on the left outlining the country's social construct*

As long as the government continues to improve people's material livelihoods and provide social stability, the people allow the government to continue to be ruled by the Communist Party, and so as long as that relationship holds, the people are fine with Communist Party rule.

*Francesca Hodges speaks, facing camera*

Considering China's massive economic expansion, would you say that China has benefited from globalization?

**4:09**

*Crystal Chang speaks, facing camera*

I would say China has benefited greatly from globalization.

At first, it attracted a lot of foreign direct investment because China offered cheap labor and a lot of favorable policies, so a lot of companies from around the world went to produce goods in China.

*Images of Chinese economic growth and growing consumer base*

Then as the country became richer, it became a desirable market, right? There were many jokes about how, what would it be like to sell every Chinese consumer a pencil, and then it was like, what would it be like to sell them a phone, and then, what would it be like to sell them a car, right? So China has the largest automobile market in the world today. You might be surprised to learn that General Motors, an American company, sells more cars in China than it does in the United States.

**4:55**

*Crystal Chang speaks, facing camera*

So yes, China has been a huge benefactor of globalization, and according to a lot of big surveys, like the Pew Global Attitude Survey, Chinese people are much more—they look on globalization much more favorably than Americans do today.

*Image of a Chinese waterfront*

How does the party maintain unity and popular support?

*Images symbolizing Chinese propaganda and censorship*

Good question.

So the Chinese government uses old-fashioned propaganda, actually, to maintain a very coherent message, and as a result they also censor the news, and they try to focus in on a very consistent narrative, which is 'everything good in your life is because of the party'. That's through the education system, through what people watch on television, what they consume on the internet.

*Crystal Chang speaks, facing camera*

And there is a lot of censorship on the Chinese internet for any dissent or any opinions that do not fit within that narrative.

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

**5:58**

*Crystal Chang speaks,  
facing camera*

*Images depicting  
opposition against the  
Chinese government*

You just mentioned that there was dissenting opinion against the Chinese Communist Party. Where does this opposition lie?

Well, Francesca, that's a great question. There really isn't significant opposition, and every time there's a small social movement, it is squashed by the party.

We saw this in 1989 with the Tiananmen protest led by students and then workers. We've seen this with other small movements like the Falun Gong, which is a spiritual, quasi-religious movement. We've seen this with small Tibetan uprisings and uprisings in Xinjiang. Every time there seems to be a small movement growing, the government quells it pretty substantially.

*Francesca Hodges and  
Crystal Chang converse,  
facing camera*

Referring to one of those social movements, what is happening in Hong Kong as of June 2019?

**6:38**

*Crystal Chang speaks,  
facing camera*

*Images of recent protests  
in Hong Kong*

Yeah, so in Hong Kong, you get a pretty good idea of what happens when citizens challenge the state.

Over the last several years, actually, there have been a series of protests. Way back when Hong Kong was returned to China, the original agreement between the British government and the Chinese government was that Hong Kong people would at some point be able to have an election of their chief executive, but unfortunately the Chinese government has really not honored that decision.

And they have implemented now a new national security law which basically prohibits all people in Hong Kong and in China and even in the rest of the world, the language of it, from getting involved in Hong Kong politics or commenting on Hong Kong politics at all. And they've used this new law to put several of the young leaders in jail. It's really quite sad to see from the outside.

**7:36**

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

*Crystal Chang speaks,  
facing camera, with text  
on the right defining  
crucial terms*

Speaking about a different social movement in a different geographic location, what have Uyghurs Muslims been experiencing in recent years?

Yeah, so going back quite a few years now, there have been a few incidents of more radicalized Uyghurs who've acted out against Han Chinese, which is the ethnic majority in China, and it did lead to a few deaths.

And in reaction to those isolated incidents, the Chinese government has instituted a very broad campaign to basically, what the Chinese would call, re-educate Uyghurs Muslims, and we know now that over a million Uyghurs Muslims have been put into labor camps, including women and children.

**8:23**

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

Dr. Chang seemed to paint two different pictures of the Chinese state, as a force that had improved people's lives but also as an autocratic, interfering government that forced people to conform. I couldn't figure out whether overall life had improved for the Chinese people over the last century, so I asked Dr. Chang a few more questions to get her overall assessment.

*Francesca Hodges and  
Crystal Chang converse,  
facing camera*

Professor Chang, would you say that life has improved for the average Chinese citizen over the past few decades?

I would say without a doubt for almost all Chinese people life has improved dramatically over the last century. If we think back to 1911, China was in tatters, right?

*Images showing Chinese  
struggles in the early 20<sup>th</sup>  
century*

The central government had essentially lost control over many parts of the country. Economically, people were not doing well. China's political system was being infringed upon by foreign countries, including the United States. It was soon to be invaded by Japan. So if we compare today's China with that time, most people's lives have dramatically improved.

*Images of modern-day  
China*

Not only that, but parents today feel confident that the lives of their children will be better than their own lives. That's huge, right? I think in the developed world that is no longer true in many countries.

**9:41**

*Images showing  
government surveillance  
and control in China*

However, it's still important to note that the government's control and surveillance over society is intensifying, and it is infringing on the lives of people who have dissenting opinions whether that's in Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or some of China's leading universities. In those places, people are worried about their future. At least, they're worried about the ability of Chinese people to speak their minds or to give feedback to how their country is governed.

*Crystal Chang speaks,  
facing camera*

That window is closing. So there's no such thing as free speech or freedom to organize in China. For most Chinese, they're okay with that, but for those who want to speak out, things are only going to get more restrictive.

**10:24**

*Francesca Hodges speaks,  
facing camera*

Dr. Chang's answer suggested that in her analysis, life had improved for the majority of Chinese people under the rule of the Communist Party. The social contract she mentioned earlier that the people would support the government as long as it improved their lives was working for most people, but not for everyone.

Those who wanted more political freedoms or to continue their cultural or religious practices were forced to conform.

It's a different system than from the United States and from most European countries, but because of China's huge population and economic significance, it's an important part of the global picture now in this era of intense globalization.