

## Background



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- Late 1960s China, during the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution.
- Time of Cold War tensions, social instability, and political turmoil.
- The research analysed how cultural change was connected with economic productivity between 1966-1969.

## Finding #1

- The specific location of where economic change took place was always correlated with where cultural change took place.
- Rural: In 1966, *Peking Review* noted that an increase in rural production directed their work “in the fields of culture, education and health in order to push forward the cultural revolution.”
- Urban: As thousands of young revolutionary students (Red Guards) protested in the urban streets, many small businesses and shops changed their name due to China’s colonial past. The Red Guards believed that one could not live in a communist society until every aspect of colonial capitalist culture was abolished.
- Rural: 1967 ended with records smashed and high prosperity in various sectors. In both 1968 and 1969, *Peking Review* noted a correlation between rural prosperity and student involvement. Students left school to pursue work at farms. *Peking Review* stated that the young workers gained new insights into proletariat thought.

- Social change, power, and economic growth are interconnected.
- The Chinese state is very aware of the importance of so-called soft power in the international realm and for their legitimacy globally.
- We have to read internationally circulating literature critically in order to understand how narratives are formulated and how domestic developments are broadcasted to the rest of the world.
- We now live in a moment of pandemic restrictions and a battle for information. Thus, being able to read state-produced news reporting critically is an important skill.

## Methodology

- Read several hundred archived articles of the PRC state-owned English language international Chinese media outlet *Peking Review*. *Peking Review* is published in about 150 countries worldwide
- Deciphered the logic and argumentation that connected culture to the economy.

## Finding #2

- Who lead and directed mass mobilization?
- In 1966, *Peking Review* stated every single citizen of China had a role to play in the cultural revolution. However, young students became central to cultural and economic change. By the end of 1967, there had been a total of 11 million Red Guards.
- In 1967, *Peking Review* stressed that the masses of workers understood better than anyone the concept of grasping the revolution.
- *Peking Review* hyper focused on the People’s Liberation Army throughout most of 1968. A mantra of “political power growing out of the barrel of the gun” was evident, suggesting that without a strong army, society is weak and vulnerable.
- Finally, the year 1969 was mostly focused on the PLA leading the way in revolutionary struggle, with slight changes back to the working class. Despite these various trends, it must be noted that it was Chairman Mao Zedong who was *really the epitome of leadership and revolution*.

Mao Zedong and his followers



## How Culture was Connected with the Economy during the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution



Red Guards, 1966



The Peoples Liberation Army  
Propaganda Poster

## Why learn this?