

ABSTRACT
CHINESE THEORETICAL VIEWS OF ECONOMIC REFORM

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Instituted after the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese program of economic development known as "reform" includes three major elements. First, "openness" means dropping the former goal of self sufficiency in order to participate in international trade and attract foreign technology. Second, "decentralization" is a move away from state-level control and administration in an attempt to debureaucratize and to reduce corruption. The last element, called "enterprise," replaces planning, uses a market system to determine prices and production levels, and allows individuals to institute profit-seeking businesses.

Content analysis of Chinese publications reveals that "capitalist" elements of reform are reconciled with Marxist theory via various techniques including the "criterion of productive forces" (a-theoretical pragmatism), the contention that "western" and "capitalist" are not necessarily the same thing, and the simple admission of error in Marx and in past interpretations of Marx. Further, capitalist elements are minimalized while it is contended that the system is, at base, still very much socialist.

Reform has improved living standards but has also caused an overheated economy. From the Chinese view, policies instituted in September of 1988 should be seen as attempts to solve the problems of reform rather than as theoretical or ideological turnarounds.