

University of Nottingham
School of Contemporary Chinese Studies
Brownbag Seminar
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Is China _____ flat?
**A minor contribution
to counterfactual geography**

Philippe Forêt
pforet@bluewin.ch

CHINA AS AN ISLAND



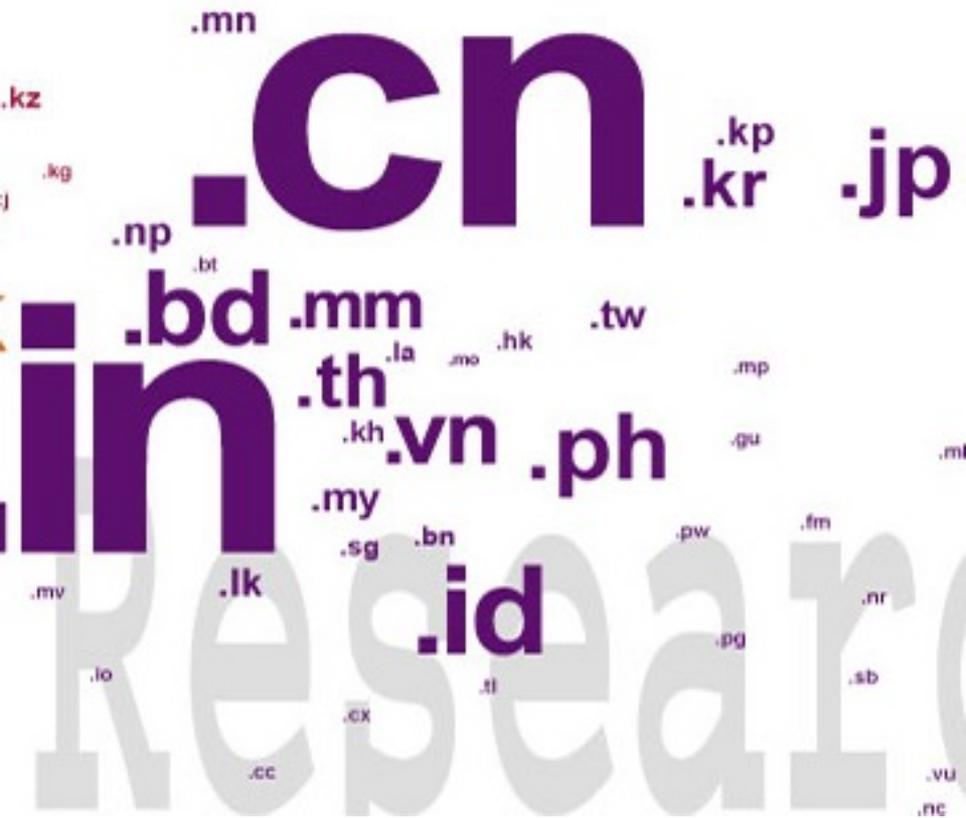
Scenario A

CHINA AS AN OCEAN



Scenario B

CHINA AS A WEBSITE



Scenario C

Hypothesis:	The transition from What if? to plain facts
Concepts:	Linear and flat
Methodology:	Application of G. Deleuze's concepts to the metaphorical analysis of thematic maps and to T. Friedman and N. Klein's lectures
Findings:	China in the levelled playfield of the global economy
Significance:	Life in a parallel world and death in this world

Deleuzian linearity: contextual definition of “line”

The French philosophers Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Félix Guattari (1930-92) gathered two seminal texts in *On the Line*.

In “Rhizome,” Deleuze and Guattari

- introduced a new kind of thinking, which is both non-dialectical and non-hierarchical,
- substituted pragmatic and free-floating logic to our usual binary, oppositional, and exclusive logic model,
- and offered an early template to understand the internet.

In “Politics,” Deleuze and Guattari

- envisaged society as a series of lines,
- reinvented politics as a process of flux whose outcome is always unpredictable,
- and suggested that the creativity and multiplicity of its flows can redirect and question capitalism.

Deleuzian linearity: application of the “line” concept to Chinese history

According to *On the Line*:

- China always rebounds after most of the country is destroyed.
- China starts up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines, when it is shattered at a given spot.
- A rupture occurs in China whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight. After each rupture, there is a danger that China will stratify again everything, from Taoist resurgences to communist concretions.
- China experts can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and bad.

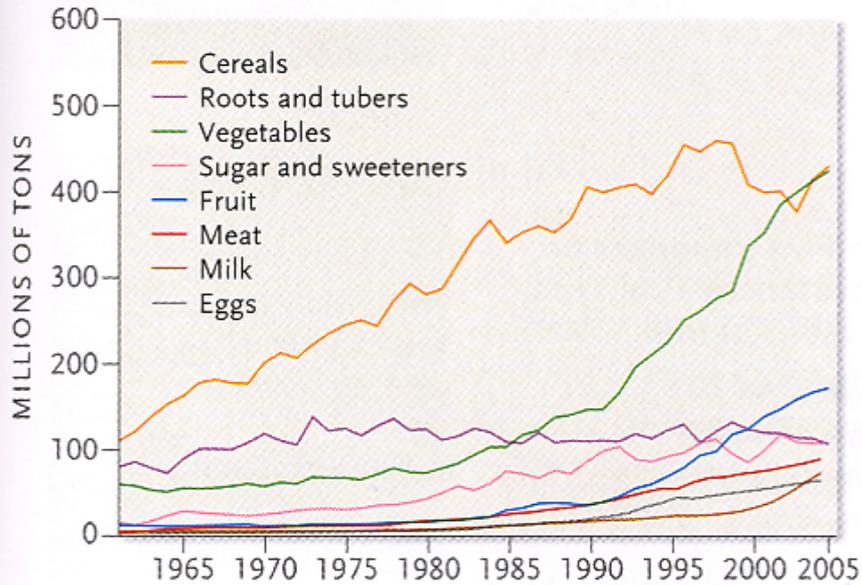


4D

Four dimensions in the East Asian school of cartography

Seoul by 1895

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION OVER TIME



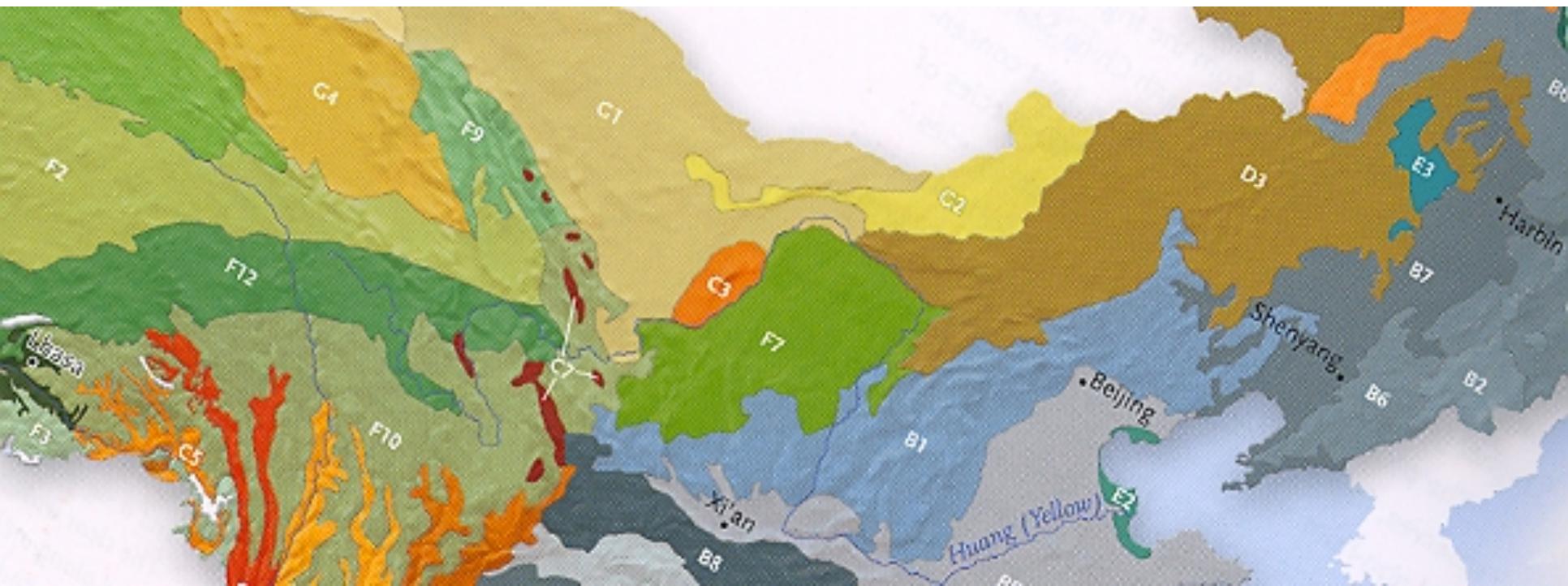
2D

The lines of progress towards the two dimensions of modernity and its representation

China has valued the making of flat spaces, traditionally for food production and today for profit-making in the well-connected global economy.

China's vision of state-building has always been at odds with the physical reality of a country rich in hills and mountains.

We have had so far thirty centuries of unsustainable development.





Juxtaposition of several dimensions in the same locale:

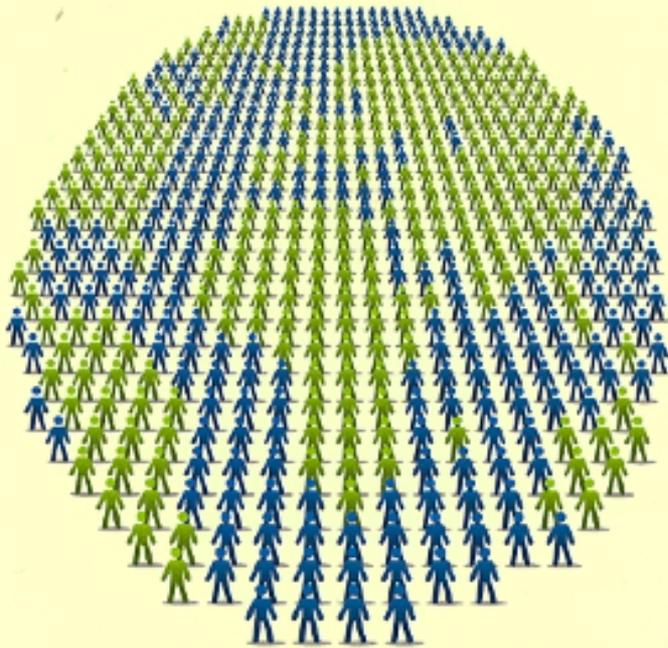
From 4D in the chaotic and intimate foreground to 2D in the rational and vertical background.

Diamond Hill, Hong Kong



A flat environment:
Festival Walk, Kowloon Tong

A shopping mall designed with
- the minimum of connections
between floors,
- large undifferentiated open
spaces,
- horizontal accumulation of
commercial activities.

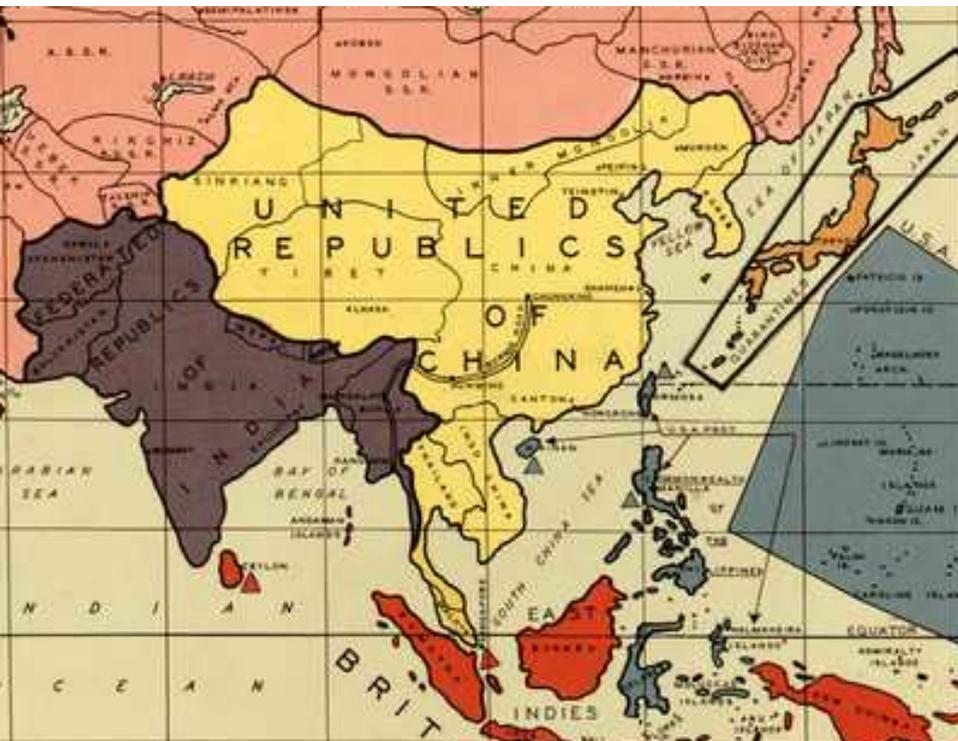


THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
**THE WORLD
IS FLAT**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

FURTHER UPDATED AND EXPANDED // RELEASE 3.0 // PICADOR

What is China's place in
Friedman's flat world?



The juxtaposition of flat geopolitical entities within a perfectly uniform world can be rich in contradictions.

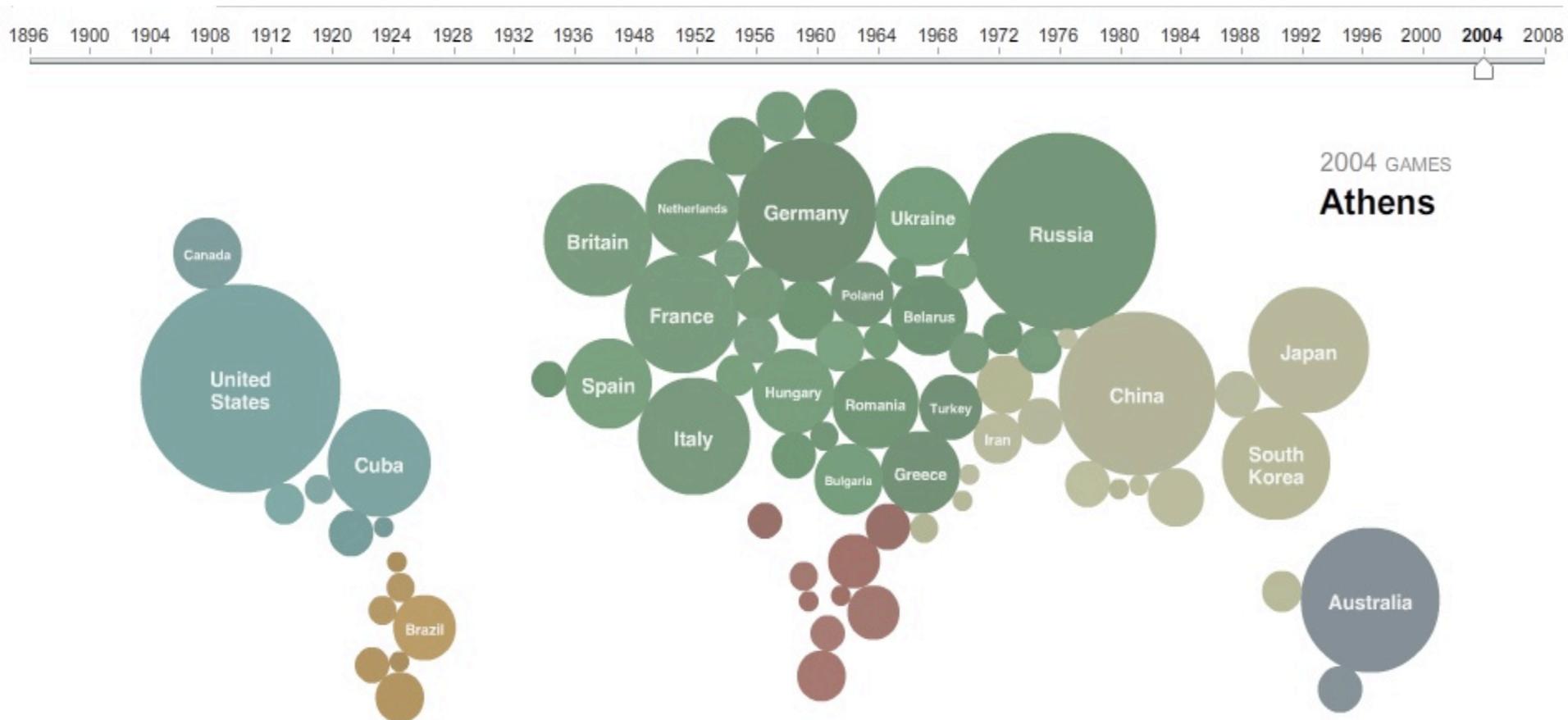
A 1942 detail of an American-dominated post-war world.



Moreover, changes in the variables mapped can yield unpredictable revelations on the size and significance of flat China.

On this map the size of each country depends on the number of languages spoken.

... which can be convenient,
depending on the message you wan to convey.



NAOMI
KLEIN



THE
SHOCK
DOCTRINE

'IMPASSIONED, HUGELY INFORMATIVE,
WONDERFULLY CONTROVERSIAL,
AND SCARY AS HELL' JOHN LE CARRÉ
THE NO.1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

Holes in a flat world have
recently received their theory.

“Never cede the century to a country that censors Google!”
Thomas Friedman’s grandmother

THE INTERNET’S “BLACK HOLES”

Belarus, Burma, China, Cuba, Iran, Libya, Maldives, Nepal, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam



Fifteen countries are black holes in the World Wide Web. News is not free to circulate there. These enemies of the Internet are nonetheless here in Tunisia and are talking without any shame about freedom of expression. www.rsf.org

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Conclusion

China will continue its long-term levelling enterprise despite, or because of, the shocks it creates worldwide.

Widening holes in the Chinese flatness will create new relief that will result in landslides.

Short bibliography

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