

Hegemony and Workers' Politics in China

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Abstract

Workers' protests in the 1980s and 1990s, numerous and widely distributed though they may be, remain spasmodic, spontaneous, and uncoordinated. While the reasons are numerous, this paper focuses on the role of workers' hegemonic acceptance of the core values of the market and the state. Data from interviews and a Q-analysis survey in Tianjin from 1995-99 are used to explicate the existence of this hegemony. Several of its sources, some general, some specific to China, are then discussed. The findings are situated within recent scholarship on labor politics in China, and the prospects are discussed.

A world to win.

– Karl Marx

Pessimismo dell' intelligenza, ottimismo della volontà.

– Antonio Gramsci

The Puzzle

China's workers have lost their world.¹ It was, by and large, a locus of relative privilege within Maoist state socialism: a zone in which they could enjoy stable, secure income; socially provided housing, medical care, and education, guaranteed lifetime employment, a work environment that was far from draconian, and that often involved considerable workers' power, and social and political prestige. Starting in the 1950s Chinese workers benefited from a way of life and a standard of living to be envied by their fellow proletarians in other poor countries.

The structural reforms begun in 1978 have slowly but inexorably terminated those prerogatives. Employment security has become a thing of the past: Dorothy Solinger concludes

¹ My thanks to the many colleagues who commented on earlier versions of this article, including Kevin O'Brien, Dorothy Solinger, and all the participants in the Cornell University East Asia Program China Colloquium – especially Sherman Cochran, Mark Selden, Vivienne Shue and Sidney Tarrow – which so kindly invited me to produce and present the first draft.

bear the present delays and shortfalls in medical expense reimbursement.⁹ One-fourth said that their position as “masters of the enterprise” had declined from 1992 to 1997, and that was before some of the profoundest changes in the labor market and enterprise longevity took root.¹⁰

Many Chinese workers have not taken these changes lying down. The fiercest protests during the maelstrom of 1989 came from members of the working class, some of whom violently attacked security forces.¹¹ Nor were workers as intimidated as other classes by the crackdown. In the second half of 1989, when a political atmosphere of intense surveillance and repression prevailed, hundreds of strikes broke out in most provinces involving tens of thousands of workers. Four Xi’an cotton mills were shut down as early as 6 June 1989.¹² During the second half of the year, over 15,000 workers engaged in over 700 incidents of industrial action in state and collective firms throughout the country, protesting management’s “failure to guarantee basic living conditions”¹³ – and that counts only those outbreaks that made it into official reports. The working class thus succeeded in challenging the state even at the moment the state was most

⁹ 9 ÷ - _ • ÷ __ § _¥ø_μ~ _È, p. 1243.

¹⁰ 10 ÷ - _ • ÷ __ § _¥ø_μ~ _È, p. 1250.

¹¹ It is probably no mere coincidence that, after weeks of indecision, the crackdown came hard upon the heels of the first stirrings of the self-mobilization of labor. Nor is there anything accidental about the fact that working class protesters met with much harsher repression than did students, intellectuals, and other members of the urban middle classes. As the popular protests climaxed, in Beijing an audacious young man named Wang Weilin, who did not appear to be a worker, made history by stepping, briefcase in hand, in front of a line of tanks travelling down Chang’an Avenue. The tanks stopped. But in Shanghai, when workers with the same bold spirit placed themselves in front of a train, up to twenty were run over. Three of the infuriated workers who attacked the train driver for his brutality were executed. After the crackdown, student and intellectual dissidents were hunted down in nationwide dragnets, hauled before kangaroo courts, and sentenced to jail. But dozens of workers were summarily executed by a state that, in doing so, demonstrated the it feared the power of the working class more than any other. “China has differentiated between intellectuals and workers in its handling of the aftermath of Tiananmen. At least 40 workers were reported executed, while young student leaders have received prison sentences ranging from two to six years.” (“China Vowed to Have No More Trials of Dissidents,” UPI, 19 March 1991 [in *China News Digest*, 21 March 1991]).

¹² Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), 16 June 1989.

¹³ FBIS, 19 July 1991.

intent on intimidating society.¹⁴ As the political situation began to relax after 1992, worker protest intensified. In 1992, official statistics reported more than 540 demonstrations, 480 strikes and 75 assaults on government offices.¹⁵ In 1993, strike activity in Fujian tripled over the previous year.¹⁶ The Ministry of Labor admitted that in 1994:

the number of large-scale labor-management disputes exceeded 12,000. In some 2,500 cases, workers besieged plants, set fire to facilities, staged strikes, or detained bosses or leaders. Such events directly threatened the personal safety of party leaders in various factories and mines. In the Jixi Mining Bureau, enterprise leaders did not dare go to the pits for fear that they might be attacked by the workers.¹⁷

In 1996, the number of protests rose 50% over the previous year.¹⁸ By the late 1990s, demonstrations and strikes had become endemic throughout the country.

This pattern of protest is important, and it has begun to receive systematic scholarly analysis, including in these pages, to which we shall return.¹⁹ This paper, by contrast, focuses on

¹⁴ In the fall of 1990, furloughed workers began to be recalled to their factories even though there was no work for them to do. According to a Beijing Labor Bureau official, “We’re paying to keep them in the factory. They can sweep the floor or attend classes to occupy their time. Just don’t let them idle at home for fear that they would become emotionally unstable”. (*China News Digest*, 21 March 1991) In the summer of 1996, two long-time members of the Communist Party – one an intellectual, one a worker, both holders of significant positions of leadership within their respective work units – confided to me that “the government doesn’t seriously fear the students; it most fears the workers.” Interview, 9 July 1996.

¹⁵ FBIS, 10 March 1993.

¹⁶ FBIS, 31 March 1994.

¹⁷ 卅±¥ • (*Dangdai*), 15 May 1994.

¹⁸ FBIS, 22 July 1997.

¹⁹ See Cai Yong Shun, “The Resistance of Chinese Laid-Off Workers in the Reform Period,” *China Quarterly* 170, pp. xxx; and William Hurst and Kevin J. O’Brien, “China’s Contentious Pensioners,” *China Quarterly* 170, pp. xxx. See also Feng Chen, “Subsistence Crises, Managerial Corruption and Labour Protests in China,” *China Journal* 44 (July 2000), pp. 41-63; Ching Kwan Lee, “From the specter of Mao to the spirit of the law: labor insurgency in China,” *Theory and Society*, forthcoming 2002. See also Antoine Kernan and Jean-Louis Rocca, “Social Responses to Unemployment and the ‘New Urban Poor’: Case Study in Shenyang City and Liaoning Province,” *China Perspectives* 27 (January-February 2000), pp. 35-51; Ching Kwan Lee, “The ‘Revenge of History’: Collective Memories and Labor Protests in Northeastern China,” *Ethnography* 1,2 (2000), pp. 217-237; Ching Kwan Lee,

the reverse side of the coin. Workers' protests in the 1980s and 1990s, numerous and widely distributed though they may be, remain spasmodic, spontaneous, and uncoordinated. Strikes and protests have not yet produced significant strike waves and protest movements. The vast majority of Chinese workers, including the unemployed, remain politically passive. In the ACFTU survey of 1997, a year of relative political relaxation (before the onset of the political deep-freeze that started in late 1998), 96% of respondents said they had not participated in any sort of labor protest at any time during the previous five years.²⁰ The several dozen Tianjin workers I interviewed between 1995 and 1999 were unanimous in saying that though labor protests in their city were frequent, only a very small minority of workers participated in them. Mostly, they averred, the protesters were, as Hurst and O'Brien highlight here,²¹ retired workers whose pensions were not being paid regularly or fully. So far as can be ascertained, local governments have developed a fairly standard and, so far, effective repertoire for dealing with such protests: they conduct an investigation, and, if the protesters' claims seem valid, they find some way of palliating the situation through negotiation followed by promises of remuneration or actual disbursements. Particularly nettlesome ringleaders are sometimes arrested, but in general there are no reprisals against most of the protesters.²² The Chinese economy and the state's radical restructuring of it – for this is no mere “reform” – roll on.

Why is China's working class not mounting a coordinated challenge in the face of the fundamental transformations that have so profoundly afflicted so many workers and that threaten so many more who have not yet felt the axe? The question is all the more perplexing in view of the working class's power during the Maoist period – power reflected both in the privileged

"Pathways of Labor Insurgency," in Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (eds.), *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 41-61.

²⁰ See Perry and Selden, *Chinese Society*, p. 1244.

²¹ Hurst and O'Brien, "China's Contentious Pensioners."

²² For a textured discussion of the state's response to worker protest, see Lee, "Pathways of Labor Insurgency."

position it achieved and in the fierceness and frequency with which it expressed and defended its interests when it saw the need and had the opportunity. In terms of the former, workers' incomes and standards of living far exceeded those of farmers starting in the 1950s. Moreover, levels of inequality between workers on the one hand and managers and government officials on the other were extraordinarily low in absolute terms as well as when compared with other countries, a situation that actually continued well into the Dengist period.²³ In the Maoist period, workers' social and political status was very high. It was not uncommon for young people offered the opportunity for university education to choose factory work instead.²⁴ Cadres often treated workers with respect and kid gloves. For example, during the Great Leap Forward, many officials took smaller food rations than those allotted to workers.²⁵ Moreover, the Chinese working class's power was also manifest in the aggressive forms of collective action that workers undertook to advance their interests in 1957 and again during the Cultural Revolution.²⁶ Why then has a class that was so well treated, mighty, confident, and active in the recent past essentially rolled over or, better, allowed itself to be rolled over, in the last two decades?

There is no shortage of potential explanations: *e.g.*, political repression, workers' lack of political resources, a shortage of political opportunities, lack of leadership,²⁷ political incorporation of would-be leaders and activists, workers' dependence on firms for wages and social services, the fragmentation of the Chinese working class, and the state's skillful use of benefits and other policies and stopgap measures to ameliorate the workers' worst misery. Each

²³ Wenfang Tang and William Parish, *Chinese Urban Life under Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5, 90 and *passim*.

²⁴ Interview, Hong Kong, 1975.

²⁵ Interview, Tianjin, 1997.

²⁶ Elizabeth Perry, "Shanghai's Strike Wave of 1957," *China Quarterly* 137 (March 1994); _____ and Li Xun, *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (Boulder: Westview, 1997).

²⁷ Cai Yongshun highlights this in his contribution to this issue.

of them has some purchase on the problem. This article begins to explore a rather different line of explanation – one that has not received much attention in the small literature on Chinese workers’ politics under structural “reform”: that workers have become subject to hegemony of the market and of the state.

Hegemony

For Gramsci, hegemony obtains when a politically dominant class has persuaded a politically subordinate class of its own “moral, political and cultural values.”²⁸ At the risk of succumbing Postmodernism’s regrettable tendency to take the Marx out of Gramsci, here I will bracket the question of how class relations may be implicated in workers’ hegemonic acceptance of the market and the state – specifically, whether and in what ways this hegemony is a matter of class domination, and whether this hegemony has been built by a class or class coalition with inimical interests to those of the Chinese working class. I also want to elide the thorny question of whether the values of the market and the state are in fact inimical to the interests of the working class – an issue that involves serious matters such as comparative referent (*i.e.*, inimical compared to what?) and time frame. In adopting the concept of hegemony, I mean at this point only to assert that the values of the market and of the state that many Chinese workers have come to accept over the past twenty years are associated with institutions that have, over that period, already done serious harm to the working class as a whole and to many individual workers – sometimes in absolute terms compared with the past, sometimes only in relative terms compared with other classes and groups – and that the market and the state threaten to continue to do so into the foreseeable future. To put the matter most simply, China’s workers are clearly subordinated to the state, and just as clearly subordinated to other classes and groups in society through the market. Both the state and the market have done measurable net harm, in relative and sometimes even in absolute terms, to much of the Chinese working class. Yet over the past two decades, many – probably, most – of China’s workers have come to accept the core values of the market and of the state as legitimate. Why and how has this happened, and what are the prospects for this hegemony and for a counterhegemony that would oppose the state and the market?

²⁸ James Joll, *Antonio Gramsci* (London: Penguin, 1977), 129.

The values workers have about the market and the state are closely intertwined, of course. The state has, after all, ushered in, legitimated and fostered the market and in turn sought to legitimate and secure itself through the market. For analytical purposes, however, the analysis that follows will treat them as distinct.

The evidence in this paper comes from interviews I conducted from 1995-1999 with several dozen workers, and from a small survey I did and analyzed with the somewhat unusual Q-methodology. Both were done in Tianjin, a city that has not been at the forefront of industrial “reform” policies such as privatization or globalization compared with the likes of Guangzhou and Shanghai, and whose economic performance has been somewhat ahead of national trends but not extraordinary so.²⁹

Interview Data

The workers I have interviewed are a rather diverse lot: old, middle-aged and young; male and female; skilled and unskilled; from state, collective, joint-venture and private firms; employed and unemployed; better- and worse-off. Yet despite their heterogeneity, it is striking that all of them, including even a retired worker and former factory cadre who continues to hold pronounced Maoist sensibilities, evinced a broad acceptance of the values of the market and of the legitimacy of the state.

First, even those who were faring poorly in the new market environment believed nonetheless that competition and market allocation of employment and income were both right

²⁹ From 1991 to 1999, gross value of industrial output in Tianjin grew 14.2% per year, compared with 10.9% nationally. It is more difficult to find consistent time-series data on household income over this period, but the following may provide a rough guide: in 1999, urban “real income” (人均实际收入) in Tianjin was ¥7,671, which was 368% higher than the average urban “cash income” (人均现金收入) of ¥2,087 in 1991. Comparable national figures are ¥5,889 and ¥1,996, a 295% increase. Tianjin’s average urban real income in 1999 was significantly below that of Shanghai (¥10,989), Guangdong (¥9,206 [*n.b.*, this is **not** Guangzhou, which would surely be higher]), and Beijing (¥9,239). Sources: 国家统计局, 《中国统计年鉴》2000 (±±±±: 国家统计局, 2000), p. 319; 国家统计局, 《中国统计年鉴》1992 (±±±±: 国家统计局, 1992), p. 288.

and were more effective than the planned economy, even though many had done well under the latter. The following was fairly typical of my interviewees' sensibilities.

Enterprises' development should not all proceed the same way. I support reform. It is necessary. Competition is right.

This sentiment was surprising coming from a 47-year-old worker whose building materials factory was economically endangered, who was not readily reemployable, and who also had serious complaints:

Competition is right. But what should we do about the workers in bankrupt enterprises? I think the government should have a policy to guarantee the workers' basic livelihood. There are lots of things about which I am dissatisfied. I go to work every day, and make contributions to the factory, but my wages are so low. My wife goes out to work, and together the two of us try to support our family. But we barely have enough to eat, and can't save anything. Our life is pretty tight. The factory leaders ought to have some sympathy for the workers, but they're not like that.³⁰

One sea-change for workers brought about by marketization occurred when, starting in the middle to late 1980s, their wages and livelihoods became dependent on the economic health of their particular enterprise rather than on the state more broadly. As enterprises became more fully independent economically, for the first time workers in prosperous firms experienced high wages, better employment security, and more ample benefits than those in firms in more dire straits. For workers, the economic health of their enterprise was often a matter of the luck of the draw. If they happened to find themselves in a sector that was faring badly, or in a plant with particularly incompetent management, they would lose out, often seriously, compared with their more fortunate fellows. *Prima facie*, this new economic structure provided an objective material basis for a sense of injustice among workers on the losing end. Yet very few of my informants had developed such sentiments. When I raised the issue in interviews, most of my interlocutors developed a puzzled, faraway look indicating that they had not thought about their circumstances

³⁰ Interview, 28 May 1999.

quite that way before. It was difficult to get them to understand the changed situation to which I was inviting their reaction, even though they lived it on a daily basis. That itself is evidence of market hegemony. When I succeeded in doing so, which was not always possible (an indication of the depth of this particular aspect of market hegemony), the following responses were typical.

Yes, it's unfair that some people lose out simply because their enterprises are doing badly. I felt this. But I didn't express it. Partly this is because I saw that enterprises all over Tianjin were suffering. Mine wasn't the worst.³¹

The change [from all workers being treated the same to some doing better and some doing worse because of the condition of their factories] happened in 1995. Yes, now that I think of it, this was a big change, and it was hard for workers to accept. Yes, of course it's unfair. But if you don't accept it, you still have to accept it (f „ _a_ ” < “_μ_” <). There's no way around it (_a_ _I_ ®).³²

The last two sentences reflect an important aspect of hegemony: the view that a situation is natural and inevitable – that, in Gramsci's terms, it becomes common sense. My interviewees clearly evinced this sensibility.

Others grounded their acceptance of the situation in the logic of the market:

Workers' dependence on the uneven economic fate of their factories started for me in 1988. It's fair that factories that can sell their products should do better than those that cannot. But no, I suppose it's not fair that the workers should have to suffer because of these differences.³³

Once they began to think about the new enterprise-based inequalities among them, whom or what did workers hold responsible? Many drew a blank.

In the 1970s all workers were paid around the same. Now the differences are pretty large. I feel this is unfair. Some people earn too much money, and some earn too little. They are all workers, so why should the

³¹ Interview, 10 June 1999.

³² Interview, 7 June 1999.

³³ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

differences be so great? So ordinary people don't understand why the differences should be so great. I can't say whose responsibility this is. There are lots of ways of understanding this...
I don't know why workers who do a good job have to be laid off...
Maybe it's that the country is too large and overpopulated – I can't figure it out. There definitely are lots of unreasonable things going on. Ordinary people can't say clearly what's happening.³⁴

Yes, of course it's unfair that I worked for a factory that was doing poorly while others did not. I have a classmate who today has ¥100,000,000.
[Question:] Who has responsibility for this?
I don't blame the government. I just blame the situation (œ ÷ œ Û). But what can you do? Things are still better today than they were before the reforms started. Even those worse off than me would say so.³⁵

As these accounts make clear, these workers had a great deal of trouble determining who or what was responsible for the change. Significantly, they interpreted my questions about responsibility in terms only of possible ameliorative efforts, not cause. This exchange is typical:

It's not fair that the workers should have to suffer because of these differences.
[Question:]: Who is responsible for this suffering?
The union is useless in this regard.
[Question:]: Is the government responsible?
Yes, the government is responsible for assuring a livelihood for workers.³⁶

Like many of my interlocutors, this bright, experienced thirty-year-old man simply did not grasp the question about who or what might have brought about the situation in which his livelihood had come to depend on the economic fortunes of his enterprise, or that the state and its policies of structural reform might have done so.

Most workers conceptualized the issue of their dependence on their firms' economic condition not in terms of its underlying causes, but rather by focusing directly on the causes of

³⁴ Interview, 28 May 1999.

³⁵ Interview, 29 May 1999.

³⁶ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2). Tellingly, even here he let the state off the hook. "But what can the government do? There are so many workers who are doing poorly that there is nothing the government can do about it." We return to the question of the state and hegemony below.

their firms' particular economic condition. Where it was poor, they tended to blame a number of factors, but usually not the state. Some chalked up their declining situation to fate or bad luck.

Many workers just feel that they have a bad fate (__, 'À), that they went through the wrong door (__¥Ĭ__) – *i.e.*, if they had joined another industry when they first started work, things would be all right.³⁷

Often they blamed their managers rather than the state.

The main responsibility for the factory's problems is the factory. The government's policy is to let everyone get rich. Whoever is capable will have food to eat. The government doesn't want to see factories do poorly, and doesn't want workers to lack for food. But some [factory] leaders' methods are mistaken. If you're a worker, what can you do? China's workers don't fear exhaustion, but only want to have work to do, to have hope. They don't fear being really tired; they are just afraid that their factory will not do well.³⁸

Some workers in my plant did express their dissatisfaction about the factory's economic problems. Mainly it was people whose livelihoods were hurt most by the layoffs, and whose personalities were such that they would speak out. They sought out the plant leadership [to complain]. No one sought out the government. I didn't feel that the government has responsibility for solving this, since there are enterprises all over the city in this situation. Moreover, the reason for the problem wasn't the government, but the enterprise leadership, which wasn't too smart.³⁹

Even those who are doing poorly after being laid off do not hold the government responsible for their welfare. They hold their enterprises responsible, and they think that the government's responsibility is limited only to making sure that enterprises live up to policies. You can't hold the government responsible; there are so many laid-off workers, and the government can't support them all. Workers generally know this.⁴⁰

³⁷ Interview, 25 May 1999.

³⁸ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

³⁹ Interview, 10 June 1999.

⁴⁰ Interview, 7 June 1999.

In the past our leadership helped other districts build small factories. We gave them our technology free of charge. Now these factories' costs are lower than ours, because they have fewer people and because their business methods are very flexible. Whoever sells their products gets a commission; but our leaders never do this. Our leaders are numbskulls (f ' _" ±»_æ _©ª Ø); they don't think flexibly. So now our products don't have buyers.⁴¹

Some did blame local government officials, though.

Yes, of course it's unfair that my wages are lower and I have to endure wage arrears just because I happen to work in a plant that is not doing well. Does the state have responsibility? The state's policies are good. It's the implementation that is no good. Sometimes middle-level officials mess things up...

Some people just turn bad after becoming officials.⁴²

I still think Deng is good. It's just that many of the people below him are not so good – *i.e.*, they are just out for themselves.

[Question:] But isn't such behavior an inevitable result of the market, which Deng brought in?

Yes, it's a contradiction.⁴³

Yet holding local officials responsible is a different matter from blaming the state. As several of these accounts state explicitly, generally my interviewees did not blame the state for their problems, or even expect the state to solve their problems, whatever the cause may be. One exception may be older workers – those who came of age in the heyday of the centrally-planned economy oriented to rapid, heavy industrialization.

Many older workers – especially those who worked in the 1960s and 1970s – do hold the state responsible for their livelihood. But many others do not.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

⁴² Interview, 28 May 1999.

⁴³ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

⁴⁴ Interview, 25 May 1999.

This last assertion, uttered by a thoughtful, analytically-minded, and rather critical retired worker-*cum*-shopfloor cadre with decidedly Maoist commitments, was borne out by my interviews, as we have already seen above. To reiterate what one older woman worker who has seen her family income plummet because of her layoff said:

I didn't feel that the government has responsibility for solving this, since there are enterprises all over the city in this situation... [T]he reason for the problem wasn't the government...⁴⁵

Workers' behavioral responses to the crises they face also evince the hegemony of the market. Many adopted market-based coping strategies.

Yes, of course it's unfair that some workers lose out just because their factories are doing badly. But most workers think that the way to deal with the inequality is to try to make more money for themselves... At first, most workers were afraid of being laid off. But then after it happened most found out that it wasn't so bad; that they could make do in various ways. Many are better off now... Most workers in my old plant found some way to make a living. You have to eat, after all. Some go into petty business, some find jobs on the labor market.⁴⁶

All the laid-off workers in my plant found other work making about what they made before or more.⁴⁷

Others said that workers' dependence on their ailing firms increased labor incentives.

If the plant does badly, people know they won't have work to do. So everyone works hard. When there's a lot of work in the plant, people go all out.⁴⁸

A common response was for workers to develop all manner of advice for turning their firms around, and often to proffer it to their management.

⁴⁵ Interview, 10 June 1999.

⁴⁶ Interview, 7 June 1999.

⁴⁷ Interview, 8 June 1999 (2).

⁴⁸ Interview, 28 May 1999.

Our factory has two labs, both of which have lots of administrators and experiment personnel; but they have nothing to do. No new products come out of there. We feel that the bosses should make them go do some other work, or at least put them all together so the other building can be vacated and used for a factory or rented out. Our factory has a great location, and the rent could pay some of our workers' salaries... We workers complain to our factory manager about this all the time. We just talk to him when we bump into him in the plant. We can speak very frankly. We tell him to close down one of the labs, because the people who are supposed to be doing research there just sit around and play cards. But he won't do it. He likes to have two laboratories around. We workers shouldn't have to pay for this. But the manager runs the factory like a patriarch.⁴⁹

Some workers put their entrepreneurial ideas for their firms into action.

When things are going badly for the factory, everyone thinks of a way to help out – through friends and relatives – to get business for the factory. The plant also encourages people to help the factory to market its products. It gives out bonuses according to how much workers helped out with marketing.⁵⁰

Many aspects of the thinking adumbrated in these accounts – the difficulty workers having conceptualizing a causal or even an ameliorative role for the state, and the way they focus their complaints and even their market-oriented responses on their enterprises rather than on themselves as individuals – reflect the continuing power of work-unit collectivism in workers' world views. We shall return to this question in the conclusion.

Finally, workers' views about protest reflect their hegemonic acceptance of the economic, political and existential realities in which they find themselves.

There are so many workers who are doing poorly that there is nothing the government can do about it. There is no point in protesting. I have heard that some workers create disturbances. But there's no use in doing so. The workers in our factory have not done so. Every worker is

⁴⁹ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

⁵⁰ Interview, 28 May 1999.

trying to think of a way to make money, to change their position. If you create a disturbance, you can't make much money.⁵¹

We older workers would not make trouble. If we have opinions, we raise them to the higher levels, and after it investigates the government will take some measures to address the problem.⁵²

We were owed six months' accumulated wage arrears – not six months straight, but six months' altogether. Workers were unhappy about this, and some protested to the management – not to the government. But everyone knew that the factory didn't have money, so what's the point? I was too embarrassed to raise opinions about this.⁵³

Here is further evidence of work-unit-based thinking: these workers focused their protest on their enterprise, not the government, which owned it. And the energy and expectations brought to the protests by the minority who engaged in them were low, since they knew their enterprise's coffers and its capacity to help them were low.

Protest is understood, probably correctly, as behavior engaged in by people who are desperate and who have no other recourse through the market or through normal channels.⁵⁴

The people who protest down at City Hall are old workers who are not receiving their pensions and who have no other way out.⁵⁵

In some factories retired workers have not received their pension benefits or their medical expenses cannot be reimbursed. Some of these people create disturbances. No one from my factory has done so.⁵⁶

At first my fellow workers were afraid of being laid off, but in general they didn't make trouble. Those with special problems did protest to the

⁵¹ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

⁵² Interview, 28 May 1999.

⁵³ Interview, 7 June 1999.

⁵⁴ Aside from the interview accounts below, this point is also made in Feng Chen, "Subsistence Crises."

⁵⁵ Interview, 25 May 1999 (2).

⁵⁶ Interview, 28 May 1999.

management, and generally they were just kept on in the plant. For most workers, though, after they were laid off they found they could do other things, so it was OK.⁵⁷

Confirming a core theme developed by William Hurst and Kevin O'Brien,⁵⁸ one said:

Very few workers go down to government offices to make trouble. Those who do generally are either retired workers who are not getting their pensions, or else workers with special problems such as illness, injury, or some special problem in their family's livelihood. There are several hundred thousand laid-off workers in Tianjin now, but only a few tens of thousands engage in this sort of thing; it's a tiny percentage.⁵⁹

In other words, protest is an extraordinary response to workers' problems; ordinary responses revolve around the market or appeals through channels. And hegemony is, of course, a way of defining the ordinary.

Moreover, even when political conflict, including contentious politics, does break out, it can reflect and even reinforce hegemony. David Laitin conceptualizes hegemony in terms of the creation of a dominant political cleavage agreed upon by all combatants, including those who stand to lose from battles drawn along such a line:

[Hegemony] involves a concept of culture "not as values which are upheld but, rather, as 'points of concern' which are debated."⁶⁰

A successful hegemony, then, doesn't yield "order"; rather, it yields a set of conflicts that automatically and common-sensically stand at the top of the political agenda.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Interview, 8 June 1999 (2).

⁵⁸ Hurst and O'Brien, "China's Contentious Pensioners."

⁵⁹ Interview, 7 June 1999.

⁶⁰ David Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change Among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 29.

⁶¹ Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, p. 107.

Chinese workers' protests reflect the hegemony of the market and of the state against which they are protesting. The most common slogans reported at protests demand food, not social change. Even the kind of food demanded can evince workers' acceptance of inequality: in one case, they chanted: "We don't demand fish, meat and eggs – we only demand a mouthful of rice."⁶² At their most political-sounding, workers' demands are more often focused on the behavior of and revenge against individuals, not on the policies and structures that underlie that behavior. "What do we workers hope for? We hope there will be another Cultural Revolution and all those corrupt cadres will be killed."⁶³ These workers do not associate themselves with the truly radical demands of the Cultural Revolution for economic democracy and equality or for draconian restrictions on markets. Their demands are, rather, well within the hegemony of the state, which itself has been dishing out capital punishment for a handful of notorious cases of corruption.

Survey Data

In order to put the interviews into a wider and more systematic context, in 1997 and 1998 I collected data designed to shed light on how China's workers organize their social and political thinking as a whole. The goal was to begin to reveal how workers link their ideas on a variety of subjects, to see whether how coherent their overall pattern of thinking is, and, insofar as it is, to piece together its substantive content and texture. To this end, I developed a survey instrument using reconstructive methodology, in which people are asked to agree or disagree with statements drawn not from the researcher's head but, rather, from the discursive world in which the subjects themselves live. Their responses were analyzed with *Q*-methodology, using factor analysis to study subjects' overall sensibilities or outlooks by seeking out the internal

⁶² Feng, "Subsistence Crises":51.

⁶³ Feng, "Subsistence Crises":51.

patterning of the full range of their responses. Reconstructive methodology and *Q*-methodology are described in the appendix.

The research identified four coherent patterns of thinking among the Chinese workers surveyed, each based on a factor that was extracted from the data. The first could be called “passive acceptance of socialist reform”. In this outlook, the market is basically fair (31,6).⁶⁴ Unemployment is a worry (14, 55), but layoffs are tolerable (27) and the labor market provides a way to cope with them (55). Workers are bored (59) and generally ambivalent about work and the labor process, believing that workers’ morale was higher in the past (13). Worker control in the enterprise remains a worthy goal (44), and leaders should be more concerned about workers (33). But managerial authority is also to be feared (20, 42). There is ambivalence about the ability of the work unit ($\mu \cdot E^a$) to provide social services and needed goods (57), though it is still somewhat important for housing (39). Moreover, the work unit is still broadly a space of some equality (52). It is conceived more as a formal institution than as a genuine social space (7,5). Outside the work unit, inequality is regarded as rather high (29), but nonetheless within acceptable bounds (21). But the working class’ position in society is low (9). On the whole, when it comes to determining one’s situation, the role of the individual is growing *vis-à-vis* that of class forces (37). In this way of thinking, there is ambivalence about altruism (19). Institutional representation for workers is necessary (54), which accords with the desire for more concern by factory leaders. Economic reform is necessary, but within a continued commitment to socialism (35,51). Piece rates are socialist and fair (17). Socialism can protect workers from excessive exploitation (53). There is definite ambivalence about workers’ capacity to effect change, including enterprise performance (46). Workers lack the capacity to organize (34). All in all, then, it is thought best to be apolitical (25).

⁶⁴ Parenthesized numbers refer to the question numbers in appendix table 2 (which are also the ones used on the original Chinese questionnaire, albeit in a different, randomized order).

Factor two involves an outlook that could be described as “latent, pessimistic syndicalism-collectivism”. The market is basically fair (31,6), though reservations exist about some aspects (35), such as piece rates (8, 17) and contracts (23). Unemployment is a concern, but wages are a more significant one (14, 27). Perhaps for this reason, the labor market is less welcomed (55). Work is still a source of pride (48) and interest (59), and workers’ autonomy in the labor process remains valued (47). But the centrality of workers appears to be slipping away: their ability to solve production problems is viewed as a bit more limited (22), and the goal of workers’ control remains but is held less strongly (56, 44). Managerial authority is fearsome (20), though workers can still refuse some forms of abuse (42). The situation on the shop floor is thought to have been better in the past, but the present isn’t so bad by comparison (13). This way of thinking is more focused on the factory than the wider state: institutional representation would be valuable (54), but more important is greater concern by factory leaders (33). There is considerable ambivalence the importance of the work unit (39), its capacity to provide (57), and fairness within it (52). It is more important as a social network (5) than as a social security institution or center of life (7). Class is viewed in ways broadly similar to “passive acceptance of socialist reform”. Here, though, there is a bit less enthusiasm about reform (35), and socialism remains important (51, 53). When compared with the role of leaders, what ordinary people do matters more (45). Workers are seen as a bit more efficacious than in “passive acceptance,” especially on life and work within the plant (40) but also *vis-à-vis* the state (30). Still, pessimism prevails about workers’ organizational capacities (34) and their ability to promote enterprise development (46). It is also thought best to be basically apolitical (28).

Factor three describes a way of thinking that can be termed “market realism”. It is the most dubious of the four outlooks about the fairness of the market (31, 6), but also the most accepting of inequality (50, 29). It is also the least worried about unemployment (14) and employment security (55). Work holds some interest (59), and strict labor discipline is the least accepted (though it still is accepted) (3). There is some commitment to workers’ control in the

enterprise (44), and not much fear of managerial authority (20). The dimmest view among the four ways of thinking is taken of the past in comparison with the present (13). The same applies to the work unit, in terms of its capacity to provide (57), its centrality to life (7), and the danger of dependence on it (18). "Market realism" involves the lowest level of concern with exploitation (41) and does not view the working class' position as so depressed (9). Yet, oddly, it also ranks the relative power of individuals *vis-à-vis* class forces is the lowest (37). It involves the greatest hostility to altruism (19). Institutional representation for workers is necessary (54), but the dimmest view is taken of the party (4). Yet the country should also not be run by a worker (10). Leaders have the greatest role compared with ordinary people role in shaping outcomes (45). Thinking on reform and socialism is broadly similar to "latent collectivism." A generally low view is taken of workers' political efficacy (40, 30), and there is pessimism about workers' organizational capacities (34) and their ability to promote enterprise development (46). Basically, "market realism" too is apolitical (28).

Factor four could be dubbed "alienated individualism." The market is fair (31), and contracts are thought more credible than under the other outlooks (23). Unemployment is not as big a concern as wages (14), and there is only moderate anxiety about job security (55). Work is most disliked (59) and regarded as most arduous (24, 32), so feelings of alienation run highest (48). Workers' morale was better in the past (13). They are thought to have the lowest level of influence in the factory (56), and worker influence is also the least valued (44). This way of thinking is the most anti-authoritarian and least worried about managerial authority (42, 20, 26). The work unit is regarded as least valuable (39); the security and sense of place it offers would be nice (57, 7) but there is also considerable fear about dependence on it (18). Feelings of alienation from fellow workers run highest (5). The greatest emphasis is placed on individual initiative compared with class forces (37), and the least on altruism (19). Leaders are more responsible for outcomes than people (45). Political alienation runs high: there isn't much interest in institutional representation (54, 4), and this outlook is the most apolitical (28). It holds

the lowest estimate of workers' political efficacy (40). It is most welcoming of reform (35), and takes the dimmest view of socialism (51).

To put these four outlooks' differences in relief, they all agree with roughly equal conviction that workers work hard (24), and that they are the source of economic value (41). What is most important about the work unit is its bottom line (38). They agree that the socialist goal of workers being the "masters of the enterprise" is not being realized (56). Yet socialism limits exploitation (53). The amount of inequality is viewed with ambivalence (29). They are all fairly apolitical (25).

Each of these outlooks involves a complex and textured, yet coherent, admixture of positive and negative postures toward various aspects of the structural reforms. None is fundamentally oppositional. Three hold that the market is fair, and while the fourth is more dubious on this point, it is also the most accepting of inequality. To take the most potentially explosive issue, concerns about unemployment are real, but they are tempered by a sense that the levels are tolerable, that other issues (especially wages) are more important, and/or that there are ways to cope. Three of these ways of thinking are explicitly apolitical, and the one ("market realism") that is somewhat more open to the idea that politics could matter is also the most alienated and pessimistic. Taken together, these world views appear to contain little that could undermine the market or the state.

The Sources of Hegemony

How did the thinking of most Chinese workers, even the most immiserated and politically active ones, become subjected to the hegemony of the market and the state? To give some order to this inquiry, I will divide the discussion into categories of market and state hegemony, and, within those, to explanations rooted in general factors common to many markets and states, and to those specific to China.

Market Hegemony

General Factors

Markets have well-known structural features that contribute to their acceptance by those who are nonetheless dominated within them. They atomize those they subject, offering the prospect of individual solutions, which in turn undermines the potential for forming collective solidarities that could challenge the market. This certainly is happening in China. The workers I interviewed who had any strategy for coping with the difficulties imposed on them by the market tended to think that their best approach was an individual one: to work harder, to seek out a new job, to get more education. (Such individual market-based strategies were more common than the collectivist, unit-oriented market-based ones discussed above.) Such an approach is, one can hypothesize, more likely to appear in a city like Tianjin (not to mention Beijing, Guangzhou or Shanghai), where the economy offers some realistic prospects along these lines, than in China's more economically decimated rustbelts in parts of Manchuria or the west. Markets also fragment classes, which makes broad class-based coalitions more difficult to fashion.⁶⁵ In younger and middle-aged Chinese workers' dismissive accounts of protests as mainly a pastime for immiserated retirees, and in middle-aged and older workers' plaintive accounts of how easy it is for younger workers to find jobs if they are laid off – accounts echoed confidently by the younger workers – the obstacles to a broad working class movement come into clear focus.

Markets also divert away from politics the energies of lively, smart people with leadership potential. The most dynamic workers I interviewed were, not surprisingly, those who were managing nicely in China's new economy, by achieving and maintaining good positions in their firms or through private entrepreneurship. Moreover, it is well known that factory cadres

⁶⁵ Elizabeth Perry has argued that in twentieth-century China class fragmentation has facilitated mobilization by subgroups or strata of the working class. That may be true, but it may also help account for the working class's ultimate failure to become hegemonic. See Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); _____, "Shanghai's Strike Wave of 1957,,"; _____ and Li, *Proletarian Power*.

are often precisely those best able and most inclined literally to capitalize on the new market opportunities that open daily in China. Perhaps, then, the model developed by Cai Yongshun, in which laid-off factory cadres become leaders or coordinators of collective action, is more the exception than the rule – though of course in politics such exceptions are often precisely what make history when history is made.⁶⁶ Conversely, among my interviewees those in the direst straits tended to be the dimmest bulbs and the most depressed spirits – decidedly not the sorts capable of fashioning a localized protest, not to mention a social movement.

Markets also create experiences that mitigate against opposition to them. Where and when they work well, they create a pool of consumer goods that, while not lifting all ships, can have a decidedly soporific effect.⁶⁷ They can convince even those who are sinking that the palpable tide may eventually lift them. Among the workers I interviewed, many who were suffering nonetheless had the general economic development of the past two decades in mind when they averred that “reform” was still a good thing, and that there could be no return to the Maoist period, no matter how fondly they recalled the stability, camaraderie, high public-spiritedness, and clean government of those days (which many did). They saw the “success” of the market in the prosperity and rapid growth that is so palpable all around them even if it is out of their reach. Some expected that they would benefit by way of enhanced opportunities for spouses or children; others thought growth was robust enough to hold out a reasonable hope of something coming their way, such as the much-hoped-for foreign buyer for their enterprise.

China-Specific Factors

⁶⁶ Cai, “The Resistance of Chinese Laid-off Workers in the Reform Period.”

⁶⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

Many Chinese workers brought high hopes and spirits to the triumph of the revolution in 1949 and to the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.⁶⁸ And many still hold fond (if selective) memories both about the past and about its relevance to solving some of today's problems – e.g., the workers who want to deal Cultural Revolution-style with their corrupt managers and local officials⁶⁹. By and large, though, the Cultural Revolution did not fulfill their hopes, and even those who still think it a noble experiment generally also regard it as a failure because of its overwrought politicization, its perversions of class-based political struggle, and its social and economic havoc. This view still helps fuel the hegemony of both the market and the Dengist state, producing both a palpable sense that there is no alternative to the “reforms” as well as some favorable comparisons of the present with the worst of the past to balance the more positive memories of days gone by.⁷⁰

Likewise, national (and nationalistic) comparisons, made only more apposite by the coincidence of Dengism with the age of rapid globalization of information technology that have brought glittering images of prosperity abroad before the eyes even of China's poorest, have helped foster support for market-based development in China. The fact that Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have prospered so well under capitalism – never mind that they in fact adopted a heavily statist variant – was specifically used by the Dengist leadership to mobilize support for its “reforms” in the early 1980s. And the fact that China is doing so well compared with Russia

⁶⁸ See Stephen Andors, *China's Industrial Revolution* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); Perry and Li, *Proletarian Power*.

⁶⁹ See page above. In another example, in March 1997, an angry “mob of workers waited at the factory gate. They loaded [their factory manager] Huang onto the back of a flatbed truck and forced him into the painful and demeaning “airplane position” – bent at the waist, arms straight out at the sides. Then they marched 10 kilometres through the rain to downtown Nanchong [Sichuan] and paraded him through the streets. ‘It was just like the Cultural Revolution,’ says a Nanchong journalist who was forbidden to run the story.” Matt Forney, “We Want to Eat,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 June 1997.

⁷⁰ Feng (“Subsistence Crises,” p. 44) also mentions workers' sense that there is no alternative to the structural reforms.

and much of Eastern Europe and Central Asia is, for many workers, the proof of the market pudding.

The hegemony of the market over even those suffering from it in China should not, perhaps, come as a surprise. For market-oriented values and social networks showed extraordinary resilience throughout even the Maoist period. Despite the vehemence with which the state attacked them, especially after 1956, markets repeatedly and irrepressibly sprang back to life even in Mao's day. In the wake of the disasters of the Great Leap Forward, many villagers returned land to those, including many "class enemies", who owned it before collectivization, sometimes having preserved exact knowledge of the old boundary markers and holdings. Although many of those who quickly became active merchants and entrepreneurs in the early 1960s were criticized for "speculation" and other capitalistic activities in the Cultural Revolution, the suffering and repression heaped on them did not discourage them from going right back into business in the early 1980s. The market was a potent and durable institution that proved capable of withstanding everything the Maoist state could throw at it for three decades. This resilience may help explain, however undialectically, why Chinese workers laid low by the market can nonetheless see it at least as inevitable.

State Hegemony

In General

Nicos Poulantzas has explicated the complex ways that the capitalist state acquires hegemony out of the structural separation of the economic and the political, and, accordingly, the state's relative autonomy from the bourgeoisie.⁷¹ In China, the state surely has drawn strength and longevity from the fact that it has persuaded many workers that it is no longer responsible for their specific economic situations or even capable of doing much to ameliorate their problems.

⁷¹ Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: Verso, 1973).

As we have seen above, insofar as they blame anyone or anything, the workers I interviewed generally tended to attribute their problems to their firms' management or to local leaders rather than to the state as an institution. Many also apprehended China's high level of unemployment as a problem that overtaxes the state, rather than as one caused by the state.

Yet the state's autonomy from the economy is only relative, in two senses. First, while the workers I interviewed do not regard the state as responsible for their specific vicissitudes, they do give it credit for the overall prosperity and growth that China has achieved since 1978. They also view the state generally as offering a modicum of protection from the worst effects of the market, through the layoff allowances, unemployment benefits, and subsidies to the poor that it routinely, if unevenly, dispenses directly or that it funds indirectly through enterprises, as well as the special allotments it arranges to mollify protesting workers.

China-Specific Factors

The Chinese state has worked to reinforce the structural bases for its hegemony with a drumbeat of ideological interpellation. Hegemony operates most profoundly, of course, at the level not so much of what people think as of the categories in which they think. The press induces China's workers to think in terms of relatively harmless categories. In one very common example, a *Workers Daily* story on state enterprise "reform" tried to appear objective by presenting survey data. But all the questions were framed in terms of the specific characteristics of enterprises.

When asked to choose whether they preferred to work in state-owned, private, joint venture, or stock companies, 58% chose state-owned... They were then asked whether they would approve if their factory were doing pretty well and were made to take over a money-losing plant. 55% said

they would approve, 30% disapproved, and 15% said they would have to look at the situation to decide.⁷²

Such a story induces workers to think about their problems in terms of the ownership forms or the economic fortunes of their firms and not in terms of the market or of state policies themselves. Another typical story directed at workers blamed their plight in part on the unwillingness of enterprises to provide training, which directs workers' thinking to human capital rather than to capital or to the capitalistic state.⁷³

Likewise, the state works hard to persuade workers that their problems come not from the state but from the market and their own failure to adapt to it. This same survey "found" that workers thought the second leading cause of enterprises' (and therefore, workers') problems, after "poor leadership", was "poor conditions in the market".⁷⁴ The state also continues to hector workers about how they ought to accept market-based logic in their own lives. For example, *Workers Daily* published a reader's debate over a story it had published about a model worker named Ren Zhenye, who turned down a cash prize that accompanied his honor. One of Ren's critics argued:

For him not to accept it reflects a spirit of not asking for anything. But it has bad side effects. Not to accept it plays into the spirit of eating out of the same pot, in which some people rest easy on the fruits of others' work, in which some people work more but don't get more, all of which depresses the labor activism of many people. If people like Ren are paid more, this protects the people who work and contribute more, which in turn disturbs the people who waste their days.⁷⁵

⁷² “70% of Workers Urgently Hope for the Acceleration of State-Owned Enterprise Reform to Lead to Incremental Improvements in State-Owned Enterprises”, *Workers Daily*, 14 January 1997.

⁷³ Zhou Ningguang, “Young Workers, ‘Lightweight Workers,’ Where Should They Sail?”, *Workers Daily*, 20 June 1996.

⁷⁴ “70% of Workers Urgently Hope”.

⁷⁵ *Workers Daily*, 18 January 1996.

Here we begin to see a more insidious rhetorical approach that divides the working class. For another example, the *Workers Daily* depicted young workers as lazy “good for nothings” (‘a æ ç), lacking pride in their work, and unwilling to upgrade their skills. In a fascinating twist, it blamed other mass media for promoting an ethic of high living.⁷⁶ Many other accounts blame (male) urban workers’ problems on rural migrants and women, who are frequently urged to return from whence they came. In an extraordinary combination of subtlety and twisted brashness, the *Workers Daily* has even tried to divide employed from unemployed workers. For example, it published another “debate” in which one reader argued that while unemployment may be unfair to the unemployed, efforts to prevent unemployment for some, especially those for whom there is no work, would be unfair to the unemployed!⁷⁷

The state makes at least two other kinds of ideological appeals to the working class. First, it argues that the current situation facing workers coincides with modern international norms. For example, Britain’s “workfare” program was cited favorably in support of a plan to deny any benefits to workers who do not join training schemes.⁷⁸ Likewise, the 1995 Labor Law is justified on the grounds that it is similar to legislation of other industrial countries.⁷⁹ Second, it has argued that there is no alternative either to the “reforms” or to the problems that they have brought in tow for workers. “At some stages of development, unemployment represents and is a necessary stage for social progress,” a *Workers Daily* reader wrote in its pages.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ “«ç § ” (“Young Workers”).

⁷⁷ “æð “µf — ‘/f f _?” (“Where are the Difficulties in Employment?”), _ § »À»’ ±® (*Workers Daily*), 10 July 1997.

⁷⁸ “«™ _¥ “™ _®i çìð_ø ‘ § ± ÷ _»?” (“Why Should a Labor Preparation System Be Established?”), _ , _ »’ ±® (*Enlightened Daily*), 16 July 1997.

⁷⁹ Interview with trade union officials, Kunming, 4 December 1995.

⁸⁰ Yet to the paper’s credit it also printed a riposte from another reader on the question of history.

These days the newspapers and television are always saying that the reason workers are unemployed is that they don’t have enough skills and enough ability to make a living. I say that a phenomenon cannot be separated from its historical conditions. For many decades, our country advocated “if you have a line of work, you should love it and

Aside from ideological appeals, a number of political factors have helped the state develop and maintain its hegemony over the working class. Its bold and decisive reversal of the overbearing political radicalism of the Cultural Revolution remains important, especially to those who lived through it. The state's willingness to respond positively or at least not aggressively in the face of many local protests both mollifies flash points and helps persuade other workers that it can play a positive role for them. Likewise, the state's willingness to open up limited space for grumbling and even criticism – some of it, as above,⁸¹ published in the official press – helps workers blow off steam and is meant to persuade them that the state is not an utterly implacable enemy. Finally, the fanfare with which the state publicly attacks corruption may actually help place it in common cause with workers angry at their shady bosses and complicit local officials. Workers I interviewed seemed to believe that corruption was systemic, and thus largely beyond the capacity of the state to ameliorate. That position can, paradoxically, contribute to state hegemony insofar as it helps relieve the state of significant responsibility for eliminating corruption in workers' eyes. As in their views of the market, they did not hold the state responsible for creating the political economy that lies at the root of corruption.

Conclusion

The Chinese working class – those who work in industrial settings for a wage, or who have done so for most of their working lives until they were laid off or terminated – are an

become good at it". Well, I am an automobile worker. I don't want to boast, but my skills are first-rate, and in the past I was named a good worker. Now suddenly they say that if you only have one skill you can't be counted as a good worker. You have to learn lots of skills to ward off the danger of unemployment, they say. So, should I regard my work as my rice bowl, or as a way to lose my rice bowl? If a society doesn't acknowledge history, if it doesn't encourage honest workers, if it fails to acknowledge that unemployed workers gave their all to contribute to today's flourishing society, if it just tells them curtly to drop out, to get laid off, is this fair? Can this convince us in our hearts? (æŃ “µf — ‘/f f __?’” [“Where are the Difficulties in Employment?”])

The reasons why *Workers' Daily* chooses to print this sort of complaint are impossible to gauge. Surely, though, the fact it that does so cannot but help encourage down-and-out workers to read the paper, where they are exposed to its generally, if sometimes subtle, pro-reform drumbeat.

⁸¹ See previous note.

extremely diverse lot that is, moreover, in rapid flux. China's workers are responding to their lived experiences in a wide variety of ways. Many are participating in various forms of collective action, some of which are documented. Cai emphasizes the structural opportunities for protest provided by workers' and local leaders' knowledge that workers can appeal to local leaders' superiors for relief which, if granted, would undermine the local leaders. He also stresses the importance to successful collective action of effective grassroots leadership.⁸² Feng traces the roots of worker protest to subsistence crises, thereby echoing a major theme in the peasant moral economy literature pioneered by James Scott.⁸³ Hurst and O'Brien focus on the special circumstances that impel pensioners to protest and provide the resources and opportunities for them to do so.⁸⁴ Lee, taking issue with Burawoy and Lukács' analysis of the soporific effect of post-state socialist market transition, argues that in China the legacies of state socialist egalitarianism and Maoist-era radicalism provide ideological bases, linguistic discourses, and repertoires for proletarian protest.⁸⁵

Balancing all this ferment is a set of countervailing forces identified in various literatures that dampen working class collective action. Scott has argued that in general workers are more subject to the ideological hegemony of the state than peasants, because they are more easily saturated with the state's discursive and symbolic messages.⁸⁶ Burawoy and Lukács focus on the atomizing effects of the market transition, which holds out the prospect of individual rather than collective solutions to workers' problems. They also highlight the way the transition undermines state socialist shopfloor régimes, associated with the shortage economy, that

⁸² Cai, "The Resistance of Chinese Laid-off Workers in the Reform Period."

⁸³ Feng, "Subsistence Crises"; James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: : Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

⁸⁴ Hurst and O'Brien, "China's Contentious Pensioners."

⁸⁵ "From the Specter"; Michæl Burawoy and János Lukács, *The Radiant Past: Ideology and Reality in Hungary's Road to Capitalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁸⁶ James Scott, "Hegemony and the Peasantry," *Politics and Society* 7,3 (1977), pp. 267-296.

reinforced worker solidarity.⁸⁷ Cai mentions the obstacles to the emergence of grassroots protest leadership, the problems workers have coordinating collective action across enterprises, and the state's skill in phasing in layoffs so as to disperse the shock over time.⁸⁸ To all this can be added, of course, the repressive apparatus of the state and its denial of any space in civil society for working class self-organization – a not wholly convincing argument, since, as we have seen, many workers engaged in bold forms of collective action in the second half of 1989, when the state was at its most repressive.

The analysis presented here can be grouped with this second set of factors. It partakes in a general way of Scott's argument about workers' susceptibility to ideological hegemony, but expands it by emphasizing the hegemony of the market as well as the state. It has quite a bit in common with Burawoy and Lukács' argument about Hungary, though it does not focus on the shopfloor⁸⁹ and it emphasizes that Dengist-era market and state hegemony is rooted as much in a dark as in a radiant view of the past.

The argument of this paper is most definitely not meant to minimize, much less refute, scholarship that focuses on and emphasizes the importance and potential of worker protest. Such collective action is all too real, and, particularly in a crisis, it could develop into a far more potent force than it has proven to be to date. The point of this paper, though, is to attempt to explicate one set of factors that appear to be arrayed against such a development. They are not insurmountable by any means.

These findings of about the forces of hegemony over Tianjin workers and their effects in producing general working class political passivity can be squared, at least in a preliminary

⁸⁷ Burawoy and Lukács, *The Radiant Past*.

⁸⁸ Cai, "The Resistance of Chinese Laid-off Workers in the Reform Period."

⁸⁹ In future work I expect to do so. My preliminary hypothesis is that the kinds of "hegemonic" shopfloor practices identified by Burawoy as characteristic of Fordist capitalism also prevail in reform-era state enterprises in Tianjin, with the attendant hegemonic effects discussed by Burawoy in his pioneering scholarship on the Fordist-era workplace. See Michæl Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); _____, *The Politics of Production* (London: Verso, 1985).

and hypothetical way, with scholarship that focuses on protest. Tianjin is no economic avatar, but it is doing a good deal better than the hardluck towns in which Lee and Hurst were able to do their impressive fieldwork. The subsistence crises identified as key by Feng did not obtain in my sample of Tianjin workers. There are such workers in Tianjin, but far fewer in relative and probably even absolute terms than can be found in the hard-hit Liaoning or Shanxi rustbelts. Likewise, my sample did not include pensioners deprived of their benefits, though they too exist, of course, in Tianjin; and, as Hurst and O'Brien would predict, the old-timers protest there as well.⁹⁰

How durable is the hegemony of the market and of the state over the thinking of the working class? One issue raised above is the continuing power of work-unit collectivism over the thinking of many workers. To be sure, the material bases of work-unit life are eroding: workers are being laid off, housing markets are rising, many enterprises are no longer paying social benefits (and some benefits are beginning, haltingly and incompletely, to be provided by city governments), and labor markets are developing. Over time, then, the capacity of work-unit collectivism to shape workers' *weltanschauungen* may well erode.⁹¹ Even if it does, though, the hegemony of the market and the state may find new defences and forms. Collectivistic forms of market hegemony, especially those that fail, can readily metamorphose into individualistic ones. As for state hegemony, work units are only one of many possible institutions that can legitimate the state or insulate it from society; others include the rule of law, new forms of intermediate organizations, and the market itself.⁹²

The stunning rapidity with which hegemony of the market and the Dengist state emerged over the past two decades could affect that hegemony's future either way. On the one

⁹⁰ Personal communication with a source who must remain anonymous.

⁹¹ See also Lü Xiaobo and Elizabeth J. Perry, *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

⁹² Lee emphasizes the centrality and implications of the "rule of law" in the state's present approach to the working class. See "From the Specter."

hand, it might suggest that working class thinking is capricious, responding primarily to the immediately preceding crisis (in this case, of the Maoist period) and/or to the positive aspects of the macro-economic and political changes of the Dengist period. If this is so, then the hegemony of the market and the state might be fragile, particularly in the event of a serious and sustained economic crisis. On the other hand, the fact that many of the core political and economic values of the Maoist period were tossed aside so quickly might suggest that they had not really taken root. In this case, market and state hegemony would appear more durable.

For Gramsci, hegemony and counter-hegemony are built by political movements, a project requiring extraordinary patience, skill and determination, as well as a civil society in which to grow. So long as the People's Republic continues to survive as China's state in anything like its present form, there seems almost no likelihood that a robust working class political movement capable of building a counterhegemony against the market or the state could emerge. And if the state falls, the ensuing political situation would, in all likelihood, be confused and unstable enough to provide a poor environment for a durable, vigorous anti-market social movement of the kind that, for example, the Italian Communist Party aspired to be, and in some ways was, from the 1950s through the 1980s.

Of course, as a Marxist Gramsci also knew that economic crisis could undermine hegemony and create opportunities for the development of counter-hegemony. The state's hegemony is built upon its ability to guarantee and claim credit for China's stunning economic expansion since 1978. Were that economic growth to end in a serious, sustained economic crisis, workers might respond with outbursts that could threaten the survival of the People's Republic of China. But even in that scenario, it is difficult to see how the hegemony of the market would be undermined. In the last days of the Soviet Union, striking coal miners saw the market as their salvation from the grips of a corrupt state and a political economy that had failed them.⁹³ While

⁹³ Stephen Crowley, *Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-communist Transformations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

the comparison with China is inexact, since Chinese workers are already living in – and many are suffering under – an established market system, the tendency under capitalism for economic crises to find expression primarily as political crises can be observed in a wide variety of countries and contexts. In China as elsewhere, a deep economic crisis would be far more likely to incubate a movement against the state – which is, after all, an overt, palpable target – than against the market itself. The latter is, after all, far more diffuse and amorphous an object of political struggle. Mobilization against the market also requires a robust left in command of considerable political resources, something not at all likely in the context of a China that has been moving against its own left and which, in the scenario being adumbrated here, would just have thrown out its communist party. That that party had presided over a systematic transition to capitalism would probably make little difference even to immiserated workers – *i.e.*, they would, at a moment of crisis, be more likely to blame it for being too left than too right. In short, even if state hegemony were to fail, market hegemony would probably survive, and might even be strengthened, at least in the short or medium run.

For a latter-day Gramsci interested in elaborating a working class political movement, then, China today provides good cause for the “pessimism of the intellect” professed by the master, and a sore test of the “optimism of the will” he strove so nobly to affirm.

Appendix

Q-methodology is designed to focus on the overall sensibility or outlook of a population. Its objectives are: to try to understand the complex structure of subjects' thinking as a whole – *i.e.*, the ways in which they link their ideas on a variety of subjects; to evaluate how coherent their overall pattern of thinking is; and to piece together its substantive content and texture. *Q*-methodology's unit of analysis is not the individual subject, but the coherent patterns of thinking that may exist in the population of subjects. It differs from ordinary quantitative opinion and attitude surveying (*R*-methodology), where the unit of analysis would, in this case, be some set of views and/or characteristics of Chinese workers, and where the goal would be to elucidate which kinds of workers have which beliefs. *Q* begins with the hypothesis that there are discrete, coherent and comprehensible ways of thinking within a population, and tries to find them. It does not prejudge how many there are, how coherent each of them may be, or of what they may consist substantively. These are, rather, what it tries to discover.

Q-methodology is intensive with respect to individual subjects. It focuses on the internal patterning of **individual** subjects' responses to a relatively large set of questions (*cf.* *R*, which concentrates on the responses of a large number of subjects to relatively small sets of questions)⁹⁴. While in *R*-methodology the researcher disaggregates individual subjects into their parts (*e.g.* their age or gender and their opinions on some subject), *Q* does not do so, because it is interested in the subjects' overall patterns of thinking. Thus, *Q*-methodology can operate with a small sample, in contrast with *R*-methodology, which requires a large sample in order to be able to achieve some confidence in linking particular characteristics to particular views within a sample and then in extrapolating those linkages to a wider population.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *R*-methodology questionnaires may, of course, contain as many items as *Q*-methodology ones. But *R*-methodology looks at subjects responses to smaller, discrete subsets of questions one at a time; *Q*, by contrast, always analyzes the entire set of responses at once.

⁹⁵ For the methodological justifications on this point, see Steven R. Brown, *Political Subjectivity: Applications of Q Methodology in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980,66).

Even though *Q* operates with a small number of subjects, it necessarily involves some sampling. It hypothesizes that there are discrete patterns of thinking in a population, which can only be comprehended by analyzing the thinking of individuals whose own patterns of thinking reflect those patterns in the population. In *Q*, the sample should be chosen to reflect in a broad way the general characteristics of the wider population. But issues of representativeness of specific traits are less important than in *R*, since the *Q*-methodologist is not attempting to link the findings to particular characteristics of subsets of the population (*e.g.*, whether men or women of certain age ranges hold different opinions or attitudes).

Because *Q*-methodology is oriented to elucidating overall patterns of thinking, it is not surprising that it has been taken up in recent years by scholars influenced by post-structuralism and discourse analysis. With its orientation to patterns of subjectivity, it has proven a useful tool for those interested in putting their subjects in a more central place methodologically – in uncovering their patterns of thinking, outlooks, or *weltanschauungen*, in letting the subjects speak in their own voices, and in limiting the analyst's role more to that of a listener, organizer and recorder for them. John Dryzek and Jeffrey Berejikian have, for example, set about what they call “reconstructive inquiry”, whose goal is to “determine...how individuals...themselves conceptualize...their own political roles and competences.”⁹⁶ In the reconstructive approach, “categories are sought in its subjects, rather than specified by the analyst... The idea [is] that the analyst should attend closely to subjects' own constructions of politics...”⁹⁷ To find a way to do this while still maintaining a quantitative approach, Dryzek and Berejikian assembled their survey using statements “drawn from those actually made by individuals involved”.⁹⁸ Since my objective is to try to apprehend some of the ways that China's

⁹⁶ John S. Dryzek and Jeffrey Berejikian, “Reconstructive Democratic Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 87, 1 (March 1993): 48.

⁹⁷ Dryzek and Berejikian: 49.

⁹⁸ Dryzek and Berejikian: 50.

workers conceive their situation and link their specific views and ideas, it seemed important to find a way to let them to speak as much as possible in their own terms. Reconstructive methodology therefore seemed appropriate and potentially promising.

In order to explore what Chinese workers are thinking using *Q*-methodology and reconstructive theory, I developed a survey questionnaire comprising sixty items. They cover a range of topics in which I am interested, based on some of the theoretical approaches that I believe can explain significant aspects of working class consciousness.⁹⁹ Following Dryzek and Berejikian's reconstructive methodology, I developed the specific items not out of my own thinking, but rather using language drawn directly from the world of the Chinese proletariat – words, phrases and formulations that originated with them or at least were likely to feel as naturalistic and familiar as if they had. Specifically, I combed the original Chinese-language transcripts of my own in-depth interviews with workers for items to place in the survey. To supplement these, I also scoured Chinese newspapers that are regularly read by workers (mainly the *Workers' Daily* from 1995-97 and Tianjin's *Evening News* from 1997), television programs, political slogans, and government documents, publications, announcements, and surveys, selecting statements that seemed particularly expressive and commonplace. I collected over two hundred statements on the range of subjects in which I am interested, and selected sixty – mostly from my interviews – that seemed most likely to enable workers to express their thinking on those subjects. I then arrayed them in random order on a questionnaire, placing next to each a scale from -6 to +6 on which the subjects could express their level of disagreement or agreement. Finally, since *Q*-methodology does have to be broadly mindful of the question of representativeness, the questionnaire also included just a few items on the subjects' background: their gender, their age, the ownership sector of their enterprise,

⁹⁹ In this still relatively formative stage of my thinking and inquiry, those range pretty widely, including labor process, class, ideology, neo-institutionalism, and the state.

whether or not they were laid off at the time they were surveyed, and the economic condition of their enterprise.

Because of the ways in which the language in the questionnaire items was constructed, it contained some ambiguities – or what appear to the analyst, with her or his own external perspective, to be ambiguities. As Dryzek and Berejikian say so aptly, ambiguity “is the nature of political language.”¹⁰⁰ But any effort by the analyst to reduce putative ambiguity in advance would undermine the reconstructive project, by forcing the subjects to speak through (by responding to) the analyst’s “clarified” language rather than that of the subject’s own world. The *Q*-methodologist can hope that such ambiguities will be “resolved by each subject and reflected in his or her placement of a statement in relation to other statements.”¹⁰¹

In this study, the questionnaires were administered by a research assistant to twenty-nine industrial workers in Tianjin in the fall of 1997. An *N* of twenty-nine, which is untenably small for *R*-methodology, is within the lower end of the range required for *Q*-methodology.¹⁰² The twenty-nine responses represent only the first batch of data that I received.¹⁰³ Data from a second administration of the questionnaire that is yet to be integrated into the analysis will increase the *N* by several dozen. These findings, then, are preliminary. The subjects were selected through indirect social contacts by my research assistant, who did not know most of them personally. Since *Q*-methodology does not strive for strict statistical representativeness of a larger population, this mode of selection is not as problematic as it would be for *R*-methodology.

At the time they were surveyed, the twenty-nine respondents were all industrial workers. They ranged in age from nineteen to fifty-four. Twenty were male, eight female, and

¹⁰⁰ Dryzek and Berejikian: 51.

¹⁰¹ Dryzek and Berejikian: 51.

¹⁰² Dryzek and Berejikian, for example, used thirty-seven.

¹⁰³ I have data from a second administration of the questionnaire that is yet to be integrated into the analysis. It will increase the *N* by several dozen.

one failed to complete that question. Fourteen worked in state-run enterprises, eight in “collective” firms, one in a foreign-domestic joint-venture plant, and four in private industrial enterprises. Twenty-one reported that their enterprises’ economic condition was average (“a _ ,), four poor (_ a _), and none good (_). Twenty-seven were employed, and two laid-off. In order to try to maximize the truthfulness and frankness with which subjects responded, an informal site off factory grounds was used, and neither I nor any government or enterprise official was present.

The data were coded in the normal way, with each respondent treated as a case and the score on each question treated as a variable. But then the matrix was transposed, because *Q*-methodology treats the overall thinking of each of the respondents – not their responses to individual items – as the object of study. The transposed matrix was then subjected to factor analysis, a statistical technique designed to find underlying patterns among the many variables across cases of a data set.¹⁰⁴ Factor analysis extracts an indeterminate number of factors, which are statistical clusters of scores.¹⁰⁵ Each factor has an eigenvalue, a statistic representing the total amount of variation in the matrix explained by each factor. It is the analyst’s job to examine the results of the factor analysis to decide how many of the factors – which are nothing more than statistical relationships – actually stand for anything, and what it is they stand for, in the real world that is supposedly being reflected in the data set and the statistical manipulations performed on it.

To begin to make those judgments, I examined the output of the factor analysis (table 1). Looking at the eigenvalues, three break-points stand out: after factor #1, after factor #2, and after factor #4. Since this is an initial exploration of preliminary data, I decided to use the first four factors (rather than just the first one or two), in order to be more inclusive. Together they

¹⁰⁴ There are several ways to conduct factor analysis. In this case, a varimax rotation of a centroid solution -- which is the most standard -- was used.

¹⁰⁵ The number of factors that will be extracted from a data set depends on the specifics of the data; taken together, all the factors will explain all the variation in the data.

explain almost half of the statistical variation in the entire matrix. By making this choice, I was being guided by the statistical analysis of the quantitative data to an hypothesis that there are four potentially coherent patterns of thinking among the workers being surveyed. But at this point that hypothesis remained purely an artifact of statistical analysis: the factor analysis by itself does not spit out a list of what those patterns of thinking are. What they might be, and how coherent they are, remained to be uncovered with the help of the statistics. In order to do that, I searched for individual subjects whose own patterns of thinking corresponded well to those of each factor. Then, for each factor, I selected and averaged those subjects' scores on all the items in the questionnaire, and took the averages as an approximate representation of the pattern of thinking to which the factor was pointing. In operational terms, subjects with high factor loadings (i.e., coefficients indicating the weight assigned by the factor analysis to that subject's scores on each factor) on specific factors were selected from the factor matrix. To define a high loading, I took as a reference point Steven Brown's criterion of $2.58\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}\right)$, where N equals the number of Q statements¹⁰⁶ – in this case, .34.¹⁰⁷ Where subjects loaded higher than .34 on more than one factor (among the first four), I categorized them within a particular factor only if their highest loading was at least .1 higher than their next one. Subjects who did not meet either of these criteria were omitted. I then computed the mean scores of the subjects categorized under each factor on each item. Those means appear in table 2. To facilitate analysis, the items have been placed in topical order (rather than in the randomized order in which they appeared on the questionnaire).¹⁰⁸

Table 1. Factors, eigenvalues, and variation explained

¹⁰⁶ Brown, 263.

¹⁰⁷ N=59. One question of the sixty was erroneously printed across two pages on the survey, resulting in few responses. So it was discarded in the analysis.

¹⁰⁸ Obviously, some items fit under more than one category, a fact which complicates the task of interpreting the data., but does not change the statistical analysis or the interpretation.

Factor #	Eigenvalue	Percent of variation explained	Cumulative Percent of variation explained
1	6.40388	22.1	22.1
2	3.48802	12.0	34.1
3	2.23521	7.7	41.8
4	2.12539	7.3	49.1
5	1.68500	5.8	55.0
6	1.48684	5.1	60.1
7	1.29556	4.5	64.6
8	1.24289	4.3	68.8
9	1.12291	3.9	72.7
10	.99954	3.4	76.2
11	.85977	3.0	79.1
12	.80836	2.8	81.9
13	.76061	2.6	84.5
14	.68423	2.4	86.9
15	.54908	1.9	88.8
16	.51078	1.8	90.5
17	.40684	1.4	91.9
18	.39801	1.4	93.3
19	.37112	1.3	94.6
20	.32049	1.1	95.7
21	.22987	.8	96.5
22	.21617	.7	97.2
23	.18002	.6	97.9
24	.17309	.6	98.5
25	.14429	.5	99.0
26	.11582	.4	99.4
27	.08922	.3	99.7
28	.05754	.2	99.9
29	.03946	.1	100.0

Table 2. Mean scores by factor

Statements (with question # from questionnaire)				
Labor process	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
8. Piece rates are fair. The more you work, the more you make.	3.69	2.75	2.50	6.00
24. When there is work to do, workers usually work hard.	2.92	2.25	2.50	4.00
59. Being a worker is really slow going; a day's work is just like a monk banging his bell all day long.	3.38	-1.50	-1.00	4.50
32. In setting regulations such as piece rates and quotas, the management takes into account whether the workers can meet the quota by working pretty smoothly, so that it is not necessary to toil very hard.	0.15	-0.25	0.50	-3.00
47. What annoys workers most is when the higher levels frequently inspect their work.	1.08	2.75	2.50	-0.50
22. Workers do a pretty good job of finding ways to cope with shortages of inputs or other problems that come up in production.	1.77	1.00	0.00	5.00
3. Stricter labor discipline penalizes lazy workers and helps improve the factory's economic performance.	3.62	4.67	1.50	3.50
48. Workers take pride in their work.	3.23	5.00	-0.50	-3.00

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

Market	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
31. In general market competition is fair, because it provides a space within which individuals can put their abilities fully into practice.	4.15	3.75	0.00	4.00
55. No doubt <i>ace</i> ?is important, but even more important is one <i>ice bowl</i> ? Under the market economy, where there <i>no ror</i> <i>rice bowl</i> ? I <i>l</i> go anywhere there are opportunities -- no matter if it <i>a state-</i> owned, collective, or private enterprise.	3.38	2.25	1.00	2.50
23. Contracts are not real contracts; things are always in flux.	1.69	3.25	1.50	-6.00
6. The market does a pretty good job of setting appropriate wages according to the law of value.	2.33	2.50	0.00	0.00
50. It <i>not</i> fair for workers in different workshops in the same plant to get different wages just because some workshops have more orders for their products.	-0.31	-1.50	-3.00	2.50
29. Nowadays the differences in wages and other compensation in different enterprises, sectors and regions are too great. This undermines the working class?unity.	1.85	1.00	-1.50	0.00
14. Unemployment is a bigger concern than wages.	3.00	1.00	-4.50	-3.00
27. Being laid off isn't so bad, since workers can get a little money from the factory while also finding other work.	3.31	1.75	-3.50	-0.50
12. Unemployment is an unavoidable effect of reform.	1.62	1.25	-0.50	3.50

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

<u>Authority relations in the firm</u>	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
56. Workers are still masters of the enterprise.	0.69	-1.00	0.50	-2.00
44. Workers should be masters of the enterprise.	4.62	2.75	3.00	-2.00
11. Factory leaders don't fear the workers.	1.85	4.75	-2.00	2.00
42. If the factory asks me to do overtime but doesn't pay overtime, I won't do it.	1.62	2.50	2.50	5.00
20. Workers don't dare find fault with the factory manager. If they're not careful, they can suffer.	3.54	4.25	-1.00	-1.50
26. In the eyes of some cadres, workers are just labor power to be ordered about.	1.23	2.50	1.50	4.50

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

Work unit ()	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
39. Workers have a difficult time getting married if their enterprise doesn't provide housing for them.	2.69	1.25	3.00	-1.50
57. I still think that the iron rice bowl is good; it protects me rain or shine, and gives me a secure feeling.	-0.46	-0.75	-3.50	4.00
18. Getting housing, medical insurance and pension from the enterprise makes me too dependent on my enterprise.	-0.85	0.75	2.50	2.50
52. Housing, medical insurance and pension from the enterprise are distributed equally, which is fair.	3.54	-1.25	0.50	1.00
7. Workers regard the factory as their home.	3.23	0.50	-3.50	4.00
16. Even if I am laid off for a year or more and I can't find another temporary job, I am still a member of my unit.	-0.08	1.25	3.50	2.00
5. After work I hang out with my fellow workers.	1.54	3.25	2.00	-1.00
38. What workers care about most is the enterprise's bottom line.	4.42	4.00	5.50	5.00

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

<u>Class</u>	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
21. The gap that has opened up in China between the rich and poor is unavoidable, but it is still within controllable bounds.	3.15	1.50	1.50	2.00
37. The working class is the main force, but that does not determine the position of any one individual. When it comes to individuals it depends on whether you change your point of view, study, and go find work.	4.38	4.50	1.50	5.50
36. Leaders don't respect workers' talents and knowledge.	3.08	1.00	2.00	4.00
41. Enterprises' money is made off the workers.	5.46	5.50	2.50	5.00
9. Workers are being given less and less consideration these days. They are left out in the cold, and their social and political position is low.	3.08	3.00	-3.00	1.50

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

<u>State</u>	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
54. The union and the workers' representative assembly are organizations for representing the workers' interests. Their role must get stronger.	5.00	3.50	3.50	-4.00
4. If young workers join the Party, that can stabilize the workers' ranks.	0.46	0.75	-3.00	-2.50
2. Contracts help protect the workers' interests in the factory.	0.62	1.50	0.00	-0.50
10. China needs a real worker to be leader.	1.38	2.25	-3.50	0.00
15. Gifts are dispensed to workers at holiday time every year, but it is not done with a generous spirit.	1.08	1.50	-2.00	-4.50
33. Workers have most difficulty understanding how the enterprise leaders can not have frequent contact with or concern for the masses of workers.	3.31	4.00	0.50	-0.50
<u>Reform</u>				
35. State-owned enterprises must thoroughly reform, or else they have no future.	5.25	3.50	3.50	6.00
51. It is better to reform socialism than to abolish it.	5.23	5.25	4.50	1.00

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

Ideology	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism"
53. China is still a socialist country, so the management can exploit the workers too much.	2.85	2.75	2.50	2.50
17. Socialist economic principles are fair. Its basic principle is pay according to work. So piece rates and other material incentives are fair socialist measures.	3.46	-0.25	2.00	1.00
13. I think that these days workers' activism in production isn't nearly as great as it was in the 1950s and 1960s. Workers' ability to work together is also weakening.	3.92	2.25	-4.00	3.00
19. Workers should emphasize righteousness and deemphasize their self-interest.	-0.46	1.50	-4.50	-1.50

Table 2. Mean scores by factor (continued)

Efficacy	Factor 1 "Passive acceptance"	Factor 2 "Latent collectivism"	Factor 3 "Market realism"	Factor 4 "Alienated individualism'
45. It isn't just the leadership that is responsible for what happens in society; the people are responsible too.	2.69	4.25	-2.50	-1.50
60. People should control their own destiny.	5.69	6.00	4.50	6.00
1. Bureaucratism and corruption can't be avoided, so there's no need to make a fuss about it.	0.62	1.25	1.50	-0.50
25. Participating in political activity is not as good as doing something real.	2.67	3.00	3.50	2.00
28. Engaging in politics or slowdowns is very dangerous; the further you hide yourself the better.	0.04	1.50	-1.00	4.00
40. If workers think that something unreasonable is going on in the plant, they have ways to get the leadership to do something about it.	2.56	6.00	0.50	-4.00
30. The government fears worker unrest.	1.85	5.00	1.00	-1.00
34. The workers definitely have opinions about the factory, but they just complain and that's it; they definitely don't have the consciousness to organize well to bring up problems or defend their rights.	4.00	4.25	4.00	4.00
46. Workers can't do much to improve their enterprise economic situation. It depends on the leadership ability, the government actions, and the market.	1.65	0.25	1.00	-0.50