Table 1
Chinese Public Opinion, 1987

Questions:
1. What is your view and attitude toward the government? (Trust/Distrust)
2. Do you think that the political system needs to be reformed now? (Necessary/Unnecessary)
3. What is the citizen judgment of the political situation over the last ten years? (Satisfied/Dissatisfied)
4. How do you judge the utility of the local people's congress? (Very useful/Somewhat useful/No use)
5. How do citizens view the 1986 student demonstrations? (Tolerant/Critical)
6. No matter what I would not participate in a demonstration. (True/False)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>Question 5</th>
<th>Question 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>68.39</td>
<td>21.27</td>
<td>57.39</td>
<td>23.21</td>
<td>68.94</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>69.66</td>
<td>18.37</td>
<td>44.82</td>
<td>28.45</td>
<td>65.89</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>68.33</td>
<td>19.22</td>
<td>78.89</td>
<td>12.66</td>
<td>66.24</td>
<td>9.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadre</td>
<td>85.34</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>80.41</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>75.99</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>56.73</td>
<td>37.30</td>
<td>56.17</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>70.09</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main point for our present purposes is that private opinion in mainland China, even on political questions too sensitive to be raised in the media, is fairly well developed. It is also rather critical of the government, though it shares the government's values of stability and, at least in 1987, was not inclined toward political action.

External Political Discourse

The last field of discourse to be considered is that of external political discourse, namely, discussion of Chinese politics aimed at influencing Chinese politics but originating beyond the government's control. This arena has also seen much development, with special advances in 1977-79 and after 1989. In the first period, reformers supporting Teng Hsiao-p'ing had close relations with parts of the Hong Kong media, and the "insider stories" reported in Cheng Ming and Chi'shih nien-tai (The Seventies) influenced domestic politics in turn. External reporting played a major, complicated role in the Tienanmen demonstrations and their world effect. Since June 4, however, external political discourse has had a greatly increased significance, though it is impossible to know at this point what long-term effect it will have on Chinese politics.

Three major venues of external political discourse should be mentioned. The intellectuals and overseas students who enthusiastically supported the Tienanmen events and who were exiled or have not returned to mainland China comprise the core of the first. Regardless of its immediate domestic impact, this group has affected the attitude of host countries toward mainland China, and its reform plans for democracy and federalism may well become important articulations of radical progressive policies. The second venue is foreign concern about human rights and related issues. Because these concerns have linked domestic politics with foreign policy, they have forced the government to deal publicly with issues that it might otherwise have avoided. On the other hand, such foreign interference complicates some issues by adding an external dimension. The third venue was given special prominence by Governor Chris Patten's proposals for democratic reforms in Hong Kong. Because Hong Kong presents a unique case of external, insulated politics in the process of becoming internal (but still somewhat insulated) politics, Hong Kong would have been a very interesting outpost for Chinese political developments in any case. Governor Patten's proposals leaned heavily on the current, external situation, highlighting Peking's (Beijing's) current lack of control and making questions of political transition more problematic.
Even if external political discourse cannot persuade the political leadership to change, it can affect its agenda of issues that require public positions to be formulated, and, as domestic politics changes, such agenda-setting might set the horizons of future politics. However, while the external venue protects the participants, it also complicates their relationship to the mainstream of Chinese politics. On the one hand, they are outsiders in a political culture that has usually had an internal orientation. On the other hand, their proposals may become too rigid and too remote from the practical realities of politics.

If we summarize the changes in all four fields of discourse, it is clear that the pragmatic character of the post-Mao era has effected basic changes in mainland China's ideological and intellectual environment despite its continuing control over political discourse. Moreover, the four fields of discourse mentioned above are not so separate in reality. There is no great wall between policy advice and political pushing and shoving. Policy research institutes played a special role in the politics of the Peking Spring, and they suffered as a result. Even more obvious is the fact that the growth of private opinion will spill over into both public action (such as participation in demonstrations) and it will also induce a new style of public-oriented politics among the leadership. Although the relative freedom granted to expert discourse and private opinion reduces the oppressiveness of the continuing control of political discourse, it ultimately creates an intellectual context in which there are political pressures from all sides that want to express themselves.

Orthodoxy and Liberalization

Professor Adam Przeworski describes a democratic transition as the outcome of a bargain between two sides, each with two players.\textsuperscript{10} On the government side there are the conservatives and the reformers, while on the societal side there are the moderates and the radicals. Democratic transition has two preconditions: the reformers and the moderates must come to an agreement, and they must control their respective camps; that is, the reformers must secure the compliance of the conservatives, and the moderates must secure the compliance

of the radicals. Then a transition from an authoritarian regime to a
democratic one can take place, with the reformers and the moderates
both hoping to do well in the new elections, the conservatives receiving
assurances that they will not be victims of the new regime, and the
radicals accepting the transition as a necessary first step to their ul-
timate goals.

There is one fundamental problem in applying this model to a
regime with a political orthodoxy: the bargain cannot take place. The
orthodoxy does not permit the articulation of the societal positions,
and there is no mechanism for discussion between government and
opposition. The regime must be in a situation of prolonged weakness
in order for societal forces to articulate themselves, and the very act
of meeting and bargaining with the opposition already amounts to an
acknowledgment of their right to participate in politics, and therefore
is already an abandonment of the political orthodoxy. These con-
ditions existed in Poland. The strength the Catholic Church there
prevented a consolidation of Communist orthodoxy, and labor move-
ments were handled by a mixture of concessions and control. The
“Round Table” bargaining of early 1989, which included Solidarity
and worked out the compromises for the upcoming election (held on
June 4, 1989), was the only democratic transition in the Communist
world to fit the Przeworski model of bargaining. The events in main-
land China on June 4 put mainland China at the other end of the
spectrum, and explicit bargaining is perhaps the least likely scenario
for democratization.

The two major possibilities for democratic transition in mainland
China are the two that have occurred in Communist countries other
than Poland. The first is a process of reform and liberalization that
culminates in the Communist party adopting democratic measures,
and the other is the occurrence of a political crisis in which the regime
chooses to compromise with the demonstrators rather than suppress
them. The two possibilities are not exclusive, but it is worth noting
that in Europe it has been the more authoritarian regimes that have
ended in crisis (East Germany, Romania, Czechoslovakia), while the
more reformist regimes have had smoother transitions. A tentative
conclusion from the European experience would be that liberalization
does reduce and channel disruptive societal pressures, even if it does
not dissolve systemic alienation. Oppression increases the potential
for a disruptive crisis.

The problem of whether or not liberalization in mainland China
could gradually cross a democratic threshold seemed much easier be-
fore 1989. Clearly the repression exercised on June 4 created a greater alienation of many people from the leadership. Also, the rejection of Communist regimes in elections and demonstrations throughout Europe raises the question of how alienated the Chinese public might be from the current regime, and what might they do if given a chance to express themselves politically.

Liberalization and Systemic Alienation

The view of liberalization held by most reformers within the leaderships of European Communist countries and by most informed observers before 1989 was that, as the leadership adopted more popular and less repressive policies, it would receive greater popular approval. As its popularity grew, it could then risk a relatively free election and expect to win. The electoral victory of reform Communism would then allow it to move even closer to the nonauthoritarian policies and methods of social democratic parties. This proved not to be the case. Although the existing leaderships of both countries were responsible for the adoption of democratic reforms, they lost badly in the ensuing elections. In the case of Hungary, the reform communists lost to groups who were not well organized and who did not have well-known leaders. In Mongolia, Bulgaria, and Romania the reform communists did better in the first rounds of elections, but they lost control of the political agenda and in Bulgaria they were defeated in later elections. Reform communists have come back into power in later elections in Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, and Russia, but under vastly different conditions of societal crisis. They could not recreate a smooth transition.

Why were the voters so ungrateful to the reformers? Why did they take the most radical alternatives available to them, rather than the more prudent course of gradual change? It is easy to say that they were rejecting totalitarian government, but in fact the governments they rejected were far from oppressive, and these same “totalitarians” had themselves introduced democratic elections. Part of the reason lies in the particular politics of each country, but I think that a general cause was a lack of identification with a political system that did not permit meaningful participation.

---

Pragmatic Orthodoxy and Liberalization in Mainland China

The logic of systemic political alienation would be as follows. If the citizens do not feel that they have participated in selecting the leadership, then they do not view the current leaders and their policies in terms of alternatives that they have rejected. Even if policies are liberalized and conditions are good, the public simply sees this as good luck rather than as the accomplishment of current leaders, because it is out of their control and they have not considered alternatives. By contrast, in democratic countries the leadership is rewarded and punished even for economic situations that are clearly beyond its control. The public in Communist countries does not like this situation of lack of political control, even if it appreciates the reformers as individuals. Therefore, given the chance to express itself, it rejects the reformers not because they are reformers but because of their continuity with the past. Meanwhile, the public is inexperienced and naive vis-à-vis the non-Communist alternatives presented by democratic politics, and so it is impressed by the novelty of new parties and media figures and by the magnificence of their promises.

Mainland China also faces the problem of systemic alienation. Even if people are impressed by the economic progress of the last fifteen years, they do not necessarily attribute successful policies to the current leaders. The demonstrations of 1989 were complicated phenomena, but they certainly showed that the public was not conservative in considering alternatives.

The 1987 opinion survey cited earlier asked whether or not the Party's leadership was necessary. The responses were obtained as listed in table 2.

On the one hand, the table shows a high degree of acceptance of Party leadership. Roughly 90 percent of respondents consider it necessary. But 10 percent in each category are already dissatisfied, and another 30 percent are only in favor of Party leadership at the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Is Party Leadership Necessary?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers:</td>
<td>Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Always necessary</td>
<td>63.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Necessary for this stage but maybe not in future</td>
<td>25.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Used to be necessary but not now</td>
<td>11.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


December 1994
present time. When does “the present stage” change? When an alternative is available? When a crisis occurs? The middle category can be considered a swing opinion group. Undoubtedly the whole spectrum of opinion has shifted significantly away from the Party since 1989 because of the large-scale public demonstrations that the center ultimately suppressed. Even if the demonstrators were not hostile to the government at the time, the fact that they had identified themselves with a movement that was negated by the regime must have increased systemic alienation.

*Fear of Alternatives*

Counterbalancing the effect of systemic alienation is a factor that was largely absent in the collapse of European Communism, namely, fear of what might happen if the current political system is rejected. There are three reasons why this fear would be more lively in mainland China than in Europe. First, the fact that the European economies were stagnant while mainland China’s is booming means that people might think twice before approving of radical changes in policy. Secondly, the Cultural Revolution was a fairly recent reminder that chaos is possible, that students are not always right, and that criticizing the Party can lead to trouble. Lastly, the example of what has happened to European Communism since 1989, and especially the collapse of the Soviet Union, certainly gives Chinese citizens reasons to be concerned about the casual abandonment of their political system.

It is impossible to know how these concerns might interact with or counterbalance systemic alienation. Certainly political order and avoidance of chaos is a high value in Chinese political culture, but would it lead to more cautious public attitudes and participation if the public had an opportunity for participation? It is hard to guess in advance to what extent concerns about the future might translate into support for the present political structure. Perhaps people would simply be more worried. A sense of threat does not necessarily lead to a willingness to compromise. But it must be remembered that the East Europeans, especially the Poles, expected massive Western assistance and improved economic performance, and these will not be factors for the Chinese public. Regardless of whether the experience of European Communism will make the public more cautious, it almost certainly will make reformers within the government more cautious.

It can be expected that liberalizers do not want to put their own power at risk, and after the unexpected outcomes in European Communist transitions, the risks involved in transition, both for national
welfare and for the liberalizers themselves, must seem greater than before. Nevertheless, as we have seen in the area of public discourse, liberalization creates societal pressures that push it forward. The closer the regime comes to the edge of democratization, the greater its own doubts must be, and yet the greater the societal (and world) pressure to keep on going and to cross the threshold. After the collapse of European Communism, the leap from the last stage of liberalization, in which the regime anticipates societal interests but maintains control to the first stage of democratization, in which the regime puts itself at risk, but under favorable conditions, must seem larger, more threatening, and less attractive. Under these tense circumstances it is not surprising that a crisis can become the midwife of a new political situation.

Crisis and Liberalization

It is impossible to predict the likelihood or outcome of a major popular demonstration like that of spring 1989. On the one hand, the difficulty and risk of participation has been proven, and better preparations have been made for crowd control. In addition, some unique factors occurred in succession in 1989—the death and funeral of Hu Yao-pang (Hu Yaobang), the May Fourth anniversary, and Mikhail Gorbachev’s visit—that provided an unusually long inhibition of exercising government control. On the other hand, it is quite imaginable that situations will occur in which the central government will appear to be unable or unwilling to control demonstrations. There are certainly some people willing to take the risk of leadership, and once a demonstration starts the risk of merely participating is rather small. Moreover, it is rather easy to imagine a division within the government on how to handle demonstrations, and it is also possible that the media would again give mixed signals to the rest of the country concerning the official acceptability of demonstrations.

The basic challenge of popular demonstrations is that they confront a regime that is authoritarian in its structure and gradualist in its policies with a force that is popular and unstructured and makes demands that require radical policy changes. As Tang Tsou’s analysis of Tiananmen makes clear, it can easily happen that no compromise is really possible, in that the minimum conditions of each side do not overlap. 12 On the other hand, neither side will want to repeat the

12 Tang Tsou, "The Tiananmen Tragedy: The State-Society Relationship, Choices, and

December 1994
tragedy, and so both sides in future popular crises now have a model
both of what to do and what not to do.

Conclusion:
Dilemmas of the Self-Limited State

The existence of a liberal democratic state is as much an ex-
pression of the relationship between a limited public power and other
societal interests as it is a question of the internal constitution of the
state. A totalistic state, one in complete control of all societal ac-
tivities, may be benign, but it cannot be liberal.

Teng Hsiao-p’ing’s pragmatic orthodoxy has led the Chinese party-
state to give rein to material incentive and initiative in Chinese society,
and in the half-generation since 1979 this has produced remarkable
growth and diversification in Chinese society. The mechanism of the
reforms has been that of Party leadership rather than compromise with
other societal forces, but the Party’s leadership options are continually
reshaped by the outcomes of its previous policies. The CCP now con-
fronts a society that is still structured around its political leadership,
but the material life and strength of the society has grown immeasurably
more complex. The Party’s options are limited by this new context
even if it has no “social contract” with what it has created.

In the sphere of ideology, the Party’s continuing monopoly of
political discourse is conditioned by the emergence of expert discourse,
private opinion, and external political discourse. Even if we ignore
for the moment the considerable changes in the content and range of
political discourse, the general intellectual function of political discourse
has been transformed since the days when the words of “three news-
papers and one magazine” set the language of every study group in
mainland China. This is most clear in the few cases where the regime
has tried to mimic the ideological control of earlier times, for instance,
in the rural “socialist ideological education campaign” of 1990-92.13

Political orthodoxy has become an empty church for at least six days

---

of the week, and not everyone is listening on the seventh.

The diminution of the salience of political orthodoxy is appropriate for the pragmatic content emphasized by Teng Hsiao-p’ing. His “second revolution” is quite a bit different from the first.¹⁴ It avoids abruptness, engages in institutional development, and rarely backtracks from reforms once they are adopted. His emphasis on economic development and on seeking truth from facts justifies a greater role for expertise in policy advising, and it turns public scrutiny away from private matters. There is not as much need for ideological purity at the primary stage of socialism, and the next stage does not arrive for a hundred years. The gradualness of reform is natural to pragmatism because a pragmatic ideology is less certain of and less committed to its next step than a more dogmatic ideology. If one is searching for the next step to take, it should be a relatively small one. The resulting societal diversification would be difficult to reverse, and in any case Teng Hsiao-p’ing has not shown any inclination to reverse it.

Nevertheless, a pragmatic orthodoxy is still an orthodoxy in form. It reflects the Party’s political monopoly in the arena of ideology, and by requiring compliance from the public it prevents a sense of citizen participation and responsibility in politics. Even though the public is happy about the new policies and would rather concentrate on economic matters, the Party’s political and ideological tutelage creates a systemic alienation. In turn, systemic alienation makes the public’s behavior less predictable and therefore makes the transition from Party monopoly to democratic forms more risky. Neither continued gradual reform nor popular crisis presents an easy solution to the problem of democratic transition, but of course gradual reform is more desirable since it does not risk chaos. The transition from orthodoxy to a more open political arena remains a leap.

So the very difficult challenge of the politics of ideas in mainland China, from the point of view of an enlightened center, is how to expand the political realm and decrease the oppressiveness of orthodoxy while at the same time minimizing challenge and preventing crises. Clearly there is no easy solution. The question is whether the theoretical impossibility of squaring the circle can be resolved into a practical process of infinite approximation.

¹⁴Indeed, in Teng’s first usage of the term “second revolution” to describe his policies he contrasts his reforms with the violence of the Cultural Revolution: “I consider reform to be a kind of revolution, although certainly not a revolution like the Cultural Revolution.” See Teng Hsiao-p’ing wen-hsuan 3:82.
CONTENTS

ARTICLES

The Problems of Isms: Pragmatic Orthodoxy and Liberalization in Mainland China
Brantly Womack 1

Peking's Policy of Opening Up to the Outside World
Chao Chun-shan 22

How Flexible Is Peking's Foreign Policy?
Chih-yu Shih 44

Cross-Strait Relations and Their Implications for the United States
Robert G. Sutter 69

Cross-Strait Economic Relations and Their Implications for Taiwan
Ramon H. Myers & Linda Chao 97

SPOTLIGHT ON CURRENT EVENTS

Taiwan's Mayoral and Gubernatorial Elections 113

APEC's Move Toward Free Trade 117

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

119

INDEX OF VOLUME 30

121