political attitudes existing in China before 1949. Revolutionary values are essentially ideal prescriptions that have guided CCP socialization efforts for most of PR China's history; they have not been unchallenged even as an ideal, however, and actual practice has fallen short of such standards. Moreover, the content and urgency of revolutionary values have varied greatly, from dogmatic exaggeration during the Cultural Revolution to significant modification during the post-Mao period. Nevertheless, it is possible to isolate some common values to which the CCP has always been committed. The contrast identifies key themes that have exerted great influence on CCP socialization debates and policies and that establish a framework for evaluating the direction of change in Chinese political culture.1


Collectivism. Communism calls for a redefinition of the social units to which primary loyalties are due and from which authority flows. In traditional China, the dominant social institution was typically a kinship unit: individuals geared their actions to its maintenance and prosperity and accepted the authority of its leaders over a wide range of their social behavior. The family or lineage, however, was only the most obvious beneficiary of a particularism that favored exclusive and personal relationships over inclusive and public ones. In other words, individuals saw their loyalties and responsibilities largely in terms of their own particular experience, creating a web of obligations that would protect and benefit the insiders (those who shared a particular experience or relationship) at the expense of outsiders. Although kinship claims were normally most formidable in this network, it supported as well the claims of native village or locality, common school or work associations, and so forth, against the claims of external social groupings. Particularism restricted individualism as well as larger community interests, but it tended to place selfish interests—in the sense of those identified with one's limited personal associations—above those of the public realm. Local organizations could not easily ignore or flout the dictates of political authority, since imperial power was ultimately supreme in both theory and practice; however, they were the operative authority in most cases, and their hold over individuals was strong enough to offer real competition to the demands of the political system.

In the Communist ethic, collectivism replaces particularism as the determinant of both loyalty and authority. Political authority, at whatever level, is superior to the claims of constituent elements within the community: loyalties belong to the collective regardless of personal associations and ties. As Maoist slogans like "serve the people" and "fight self" suggested, this principle requires dedication to the public cause and a conscious suppression of inclinations to place selfish concerns above those of the collective. The shift here is partly one of degree, since in traditional China, too, the individual was expected to subordinate his interests to those of a larger group. The difference is that under socialism the collective is a wider and more inclusive one. For example, the locality, which in imperial times was a relatively large and inclusive group as seen from individual perspective, is in the revolutionary view one of the lowest collectives in an ever-widening sphere of political community that blends into the national political system and even an international political movement. The shift is also qualitative, however, in its insistence that political authority is supreme in all areas of life and that the individual's obligation extends to all members of his community, not just to those with whom he has a personalized or particular relationship.

Collectivism was particularly stressed during the Cultural Revolution, while particularistic needs and desires have received greater recognition in the post-Mao period. The Cultural Revolution's slogan of "all public and no private" implied that the only legitimate motivation was the public good. Profit-making activities and material incentives such as bonuses were viewed as bourgeois influences. Government policies in the 1980s have reversed such judgments, claiming that the principle of socialism is "to each according to his labor." Material incentives are used to spur production, and individuals are encouraged to pursue profitable enterprises. However, collectivist values have not been abandoned. They are part of the "socialist spiritual civilization" that the regime promotes. Models of selfless behavior are often cited and praised, including the army hero Lei Feng, who was much touted during the Cultural Revolution. February has been proclaimed "socialist morality month," and at that time work units vie with one another to provide courteous and sometimes free service to customers. Collectivism tends to be interpreted as generosity and good manners rather than as a sharp class struggle, but it is still an important part of China's official ethics.

Struggle and Activism. The traditional orientation emphasized the maintenance of harmony in social relations. People were to be orderly and peaceful, avoiding or suppressing displays of antagonism. Reality fell short of this ideal, of course, as the system had its share of rebellions and individual hostilities; the insistence on suppression of conflict may, in fact, have encouraged violent and disorderly action when the restraining norms were broken. The tendency to restrain conflict was nonetheless powerful and was made relatively effective by insistence on submission to authority and an acceptance of "face-saving" or compromise solutions to disputes. The political realm was recognized as
particularly susceptible to conflict and, the values of its scholar-
elites notwithstanding, quite capable of harsh and arbitrary
action—hence the common image of the tiger of government.
Both prudence and social norms therefore dictated great caution
in dealing with conflict, which easily led the common man with
his relative political ignorance and powerlessness to political
passivity or avoidance of political issues.

By contrast, we have seen in the previous chapter that struggle
is a key revolutionary value. Society is permeated with class
struggle both as a consequence of exploitation and a condition
of social progress. Citizens are expected to participate actively
and voluntarily in this struggle, sharpening its features and
challenging openly those whose positions or actions stand in the
way of the socialist path. Commitment to political activism and
struggle must replace old inclinations toward passivity and
harmony. Since the Cultural Revolution, official emphasis has
shifted away from antagonistic struggle and toward activism for
modernization. The slogan "dare to rebel" has been replaced by
"stability and unity." However, metaphors suggesting military
struggle against an enemy still abound in the Chinese media,
and struggle techniques such as criticism and self-criticism are
still approved and utilized. Class struggle continues in the milder
but still important form of the struggle against bourgeois
influence.

Self-Reliance. Traditional authoritarianism and the strictures
against challenging its harmonious ordering of society led to a
heavy dependence on those holding positions of authority. Pa-
ternalistic protection from superiors was the primary guaran-
tee of security and gain. Pursuit of goals without elite approval
risked failure as well as possible displeasure from those whose
blessings counted most. Diverse practices of religion and super-
stition, through which most Chinese sought protection and
signs of good or bad fortune from suprahuman forces, supple-
mented dependency on human authority. If all protection failed,

a sense of fatalism could cushion the blow—although again we
should note that rebellion was a periodic response to adversity
and oppression. Self-reliance is the socialist virtue preached
against this dependency orientation. It insists that human efforts
can overcome all obstacles, and it urges the people to employ
their own initiative and capacities to accomplish the tasks that
face them. Dependence on religion, superstition, and higher
authorities is discouraged, as is resignation to one’s fate. The
proper outlook, in the new culture, is that individuals need not
and should not expect paternalistic protection and assistance
from any source, including the government.

In some respects, the principle of self-reliance has been
strengthened in the 1980s. There have been numerous campaigns
against the “iron rice bowl” of total job security, and individuals
who have succeeded through their own efforts are encouraged
and their successes are publicized. On the other hand, the principle
of self-reliance is no longer interpreted as self-sufficiency. During
the Cultural Revolution, units and regions were encouraged to
supply all of their own needs, and the leadership was very
cautious about dependence on foreign trade. China did not have
a significant foreign debt. Currently, an emphasis on commodity
production and cooperation has replaced self-sufficiency. Agri-
cultural and industrial units are encouraged to produce for
maximum profit (within plan guidelines), rather than to cover
all of their own needs. China now exports international trade
and credit to play a key role in modernization. In this area,
self-reliance remains a caution against excessive dependence on
the import of technology.

Egalitarianism and Populism. Hierarchical relationships were
viewed as natural and necessary in the ordering of traditional
Chinese society. The principles governing social hierarchy were
complex, involving mixed considerations of age, generation,
kinship, sex, wealth, scholarly attainment, and official status.
Nonetheless, individuals knew who their superiors and subor-
dinates were in various settings, so that demarcations of authority
and status was clear in most social relationships. Persons in
higher roles in the hierarchy expected deference from those in
lower ones and were characterized not simply by authority but
by privilege and symbolic superiority relative to those beneath

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them. The Chinese Communist view of social stratification is much more egalitarian, especially in the Maoist version of revolutionary values. Although recognizing the existence of classes, the inevitability of some division of labor in society, and above all the necessity of maintaining political authority, this view is hostile toward the elaboration and reinforcement of hierarchy. It seeks to minimize material and psychological inequalities generally and to eradicate what it regards as irrational subordination, such as that of younger generations and women. In the inescapable political and administrative hierarchy, it is hostile toward privileges, symbols, and economic differences that set elites apart as a special group and give them an aura of superiority extending beyond their specific political roles. Despite current policies, permitting the accumulation of wealth and larger wage differentials, egalitarianism remains a value in Chinese politics. Justifications of rural decollectivization emphasize its benefits to poorer peasants and thereby deny that it has led to polarization. Policies that allow some to get rich first are defended by saying that the social value of production exceeds the individual reward, and, therefore, society as a whole is better off. Regardless of the merit of such arguments, egalitarianism remains a potent political value in China.

The revolutionary orientation is similar to the traditional one in assigning elites a role as model for the most valued life-style, but the style itself differs greatly in the two cases. The ideal life style in traditional society was that of the scholar-official elite, whereas in the Maoist ethic it is that of the common man. The former placed the burden of attainment on the people, allowing elites to perpetuate their own way of life; the latter places a distinct burden of change on elites who are expected to model a style of life traditionally considered beneath them. In more specific terms, traditional culture valued intellectual attainment and pursuits, bureaucratic or managerial roles, mental labor, and the contemplative life; the Maoist ethic values practical work, participation in the “front line” of production, manual labor, and the active, physical life. Although not overtly materialistic, the former encouraged material gain to support pursuits of elite status and some conspicuous consumption to demonstrate its attainment; the latter encourages self-denial, savings, and frugality, making a virtue of what was and remains an economic necessity for most of the people. The recent formulation of revolutionary values has modified these Maoist themes, becoming more tolerant of mental labor, rewards for the skilled, and desires to enjoy higher living standards. Nonetheless, it remains significantly more populist than the traditional view.

This outline greatly simplifies the contrast between revolutionary values and traditional political culture and says little about actual political orientations in contemporary China. Neither model has been so pure and static in its application, and neither represents adequately the complex mix of attitudes that now prevails in Chinese political culture. Yet, despite its limitations, the outline does suggest why political socialization has such a prominent place in Chinese politics. At issue here is not simply the transferral of allegiance to a new regime but the creation of a new political community in which all individuals will transform their images of public life and their roles within it. The values affirmed indicate the general direction of desired change and the magnitude of the task. They also help explain why the CCP has tried to expand the scope of socialization—to include adults as well as children, elites as well as masses—and to establish political control over all socializing agents.

Realization of a socialist political community may be remote and possibly utopian, but there are some conditions that favor the struggle to attain it. With its relatively homogeneous cultural tradition and common written language, China does not face severe ethnic or cultural cleavages. The national minorities constitute only about 7 percent of the population and live largely in frontier and mountainous areas. They figure prominently in questions of national security and integration but have little effect on general policies relating to political socialization.

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Cultural variations among the Han Chinese are probably a greater problem. For example, the adoption of standard Chinese (Mandarin) as the official language in dialect-speaking areas, particularly the provinces of southeastern China, created tensions between local and outside cadres and special complications in education and communications. Variations in lineage organization, with their impact on land ownership patterns, have led to different timing and results in land reform and collectivization. On balance, however, the Chinese sense of cultural unity and identity overshadows these local variations and tends to support the acceptance of a new political culture that places such emphasis on national uniformity. The Chinese government traditionally has played a direct role in setting the moral and cultural tone of society. The principles advanced now are new, but the nationwide articulation of an official doctrine by representatives of the political system is not.

Moreover, changes already under way in Chinese society have blurred the confrontation between traditional and Maoist political cultures. The demise of state Confucianism, the imperial bureaucracy, and the examination system early in this century removed the political system's institutionalized support of the old culture. Political upheaval, economic change, the growth of modern schools, and the emergence or importation of new ideas encouraged social ferment and mobility. A "family revolution" began to disrupt the old society's dominant socializing agent.

To a great extent, the political orientations encouraged by the unfolding revolution were supportive or anticipatory of those demanded by the CCP. The mobilization of mass support for transcendental causes such as national unity and independence, the practice of KMT one-party rule with its intolerance of political opposition, and a growing conviction that China needed a new dispensation of political authority were preparing the way for reception of the Communist political style. As one scholar has suggested, the Chinese people in 1949 were in a sense ready for the CCP's demand for political commitment, if only to resolve the terrible divisions and uncertainties of preceding decades.

The old orientations had not disappeared, of course, but the institutions that had maintained them were in flux, and there was at least some receptivity to the official political culture of the new government.

Finally, we should take note of the manifest political resources of the CCP. Backed by substantial experience in mass political mobilization, widespread acceptance of its legitimacy, a dedicated cadre of party members and supporters, and demonstrated military superiority, the Communist government was able to establish a network of political organization unparalleled in Chinese history. With these resources vigorously brought into play, the prospects for inducing significant changes in Chinese political culture were at least credible, although not guaranteed.

It is important to recall, however, the difficulty of implanting a new socialization process in China. Powerful influences external to the Communist system were present in 1949 and inevitably were to continue in force for some time to come. The CCP clearly benefits, in its desire to remodel political attitudes, from the relative youth of the population. Over 55 percent of the population was under twenty-five in 1958, and by 1988 over 75 percent of the population had reached school age after 1949. In other words, the age structure of the population creates good opportunities for influencing the socialization experience. Yet in 1949, this was a future-oriented advantage that did little to resolve the immediate problem, which was that virtually the entire adult population had received primary socialization and education in a non-Communist setting. There was nothing the CCP could do to alter the fact that the parents, teachers, and workers of the first decade would reflect a pre-Communist socialization process, necessarily transmitted to some degree to the next generation. Moreover, even the most rigid control of the

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social environment could not exclude some extrasystemic influences. For example, KMT and American propaganda directed at the mainland, the passage of Chinese back and forth from the mainland (especially through Hong Kong), and the presence of foreign travelers and residents in China ensured some external inputs of information. Most significant during the 1950s were Chinese contacts with other Communist countries, especially the Soviet Union. Hundreds of Russian teachers and thousands of Russian experts served in China in this period, while some tens of thousands of Chinese had studied in the Soviet Union by the early 1960s. As the CCP admits, the influence of feudalistic, capitalist, and revisionist ideas remains long after the establishment of the socialist system.

Deficiencies in the tools of socialization were another formidable problem, given the 1949 level of economic and technical development. Schools, teachers, and books were in short supply for an effort aiming at universal education. CCP political biases aggravated these shortages through destruction of library resources judged politically and through suspicion of existing mass communications media. The rate of illiteracy—exact estimates are not available, but estimates are as high as 85 to 90 percent of the population in the early years—was an obvious liability, as were the differences in spoken languages in different parts of the country. Socialization occurs regardless of such deficiencies, of course, but it was not easy for the CCP to transfer the burden of political socialization to those public institutions where its control was most secure.

Underlying all of these problems is the fact that the structure of human relationships does not necessarily govern their content. The resources of the CCP came to bear most forcefully and effectively on social structure, changing the institutions of Chinese society and their relationship to each other. There is no need to review here the specific changes in question, the most relevant of which will be discussed in subsequent sections. Generally, the CCP has changed the structure of political socialization by reducing the role of kinship organization and by expanding greatly the scope of public, politically dominated mechanisms of socialization. However, this cannot guarantee that the content of attitudes associated with declining institutions will disappear or that the content of those associated with new relationships will follow the expected pattern. The CCP itself is a case in point. A new institution in Chinese society, carefully structured to embody the political orientations desired by its leaders, the party nonetheless failed to live up to Mao's expectations. If the vanguard of the revolution could not rid itself of the influences of the past, how effective has been the reform of less politicized institutions? The Cultural Revolution is, of course, the crucial episode for analysis of this question. We will return to it after discussion of the agents of socialization including the family, the educational system, the communications network, and political and social experience.

**AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION**

**The Family.** The Chinese family has been and continues to be a stronger social unit than the Western family. Bonds and obligations among family members are stronger and more explicit, divorce is rare, and the family is the basic unit of the rural economy. Relationships, whether of kinship or of friendship, play an extremely important role in daily life. Chinese Communist policy is based on the family unit but has also remolded it by changing its context and by challenging its power. In doing so, the CCP is continuing sixty years of family reform begun by Western-oriented urban progressives; however, it is also confronting the particularistic resistance of the family with collective values and claims to total allegiance.

The traditional Chinese family was the controlling institution of daily life, a position confirmed by the high regard of Confucianism for familial responsibilities and ritual. Marriage was primarily a family event, so the questions of the alliance of families and financial advantages often dominated arrangements. Family structure was strongly patriarchal; the head of the family was the unquestioned ruler, and wives were very vulnerable subordinates because they became a part of the husband's family and were isolated from the support of their own parental families. Corporal punishment of wives and children was common. The purchase of wives for the purpose of begetting children was upheld by the Chinese Supreme Court in 1919, and the generally progressive Chinese Civil Code of 1931 did not prohibit polyg-

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Even today, many older Chinese women can be seen hobbling about because their feet had been bound when they were children. Local society in traditional China was organized in terms of particularistic relationships, of which kinship relations were the most important. Especially in Southeast China, lineage organization often provided the structure of power below the county level. The large extended families of landlords, officials, and merchants provided disciplined, loyal personnel for maintaining the family’s prosperity and defending its power. Family size was smaller at the lower end of the economic ladder, and its solidarity was buffeted by famine, migration, infanticide, and the selling of children.

Even before large-scale Western influence, the abuses of the traditional family system prompted reform measures from the Taiping rebels. By the turn of the century, Western missionaries and Chinese progressives were arguing against footbinding and for free choice in marriage. Ba Jin’s famous 1920s novel, *Family*, depicted the dilemmas of a large Chinese family in transition, and Western works such as Ibsen’s *Nora*, which dealt with similar themes, were popular. The founding members of the CCP were enthusiastic supporters of family and reform for women. Some of Mao’s earliest articles were against the suppression of women. Family reform, including equal property rights for women, free consent in marriage, and accessible divorce have always been a part of CCP policy. The formation of women’s associations, first in the base areas and later in the PRC, played an important role in the reform of familial structure and behavior. The effect of the party’s commitment to equality for women can be seen in the enrollment of 84 percent of primary-school-age girls, as compared to an average of 56 percent in developing countries. Nevertheless, reality falls far short of ideals of sexual equality, and at all levels China remains a male-dominated society.

Unlike some extreme Bolshevik reforms in the early years of the Soviet Union, the family revolution supported by the CCP was not a revolution against the family. Some features of the old system were marked for destruction: the organizational power of the lineage; traditional marriage practices that symbolically and in practice helped perpetuate the subordination of women and youth to family elders; and those values articulated in both state Confucianism and popular religion that made kinship obligations paramount within the sphere of social relationships. However, aside from destruction of lineage organizations that extended their influence over several families and even whole villages, Communist policy with respect to basic kinship structure has not been particularly radical. The unit of distribution in land reform was the family, and it remained the basic unit providing for the welfare of the young and the old, especially in the countryside. Although divorce is allowed, it is greatly discouraged, and the major tactics in dealing with problems such as wife beating and philandering are persuasion and arbitration. Except for some short-lived experiments with common mess halls and dormitories during the Great Leap Forward, normal domestic functions are left to the family. Many families are strengthened by better living conditions and increased life expectancies, resulting in larger and multigeneration families. Restricted geographical mobility and housing shortages help prevent some of the disintegrating effects normally associated with modernization. Although the destruction of traditional characteristics deserves emphasis, so does the effort to establish what may legitimately be called a modern family system.

With reference to political socialization, the basic intent of Communist policy has been to transfer major responsibility to the public realm and to secure compliance within the family to norms established by political authority. Since the public institutions of socialization will be discussed later, we focus here on efforts to shape and define the family’s role in the new society. Broadly speaking, there have been several fairly distinct stages in the post-1949 development of CCP attitudes toward the family.

The first stage, from 1949 to the Great Leap Forward, was one of attempted neutralization of the family’s traditional power by

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13 An interesting account of Mrs. Archibald Little’s campaign against foot-binding can be found in Nigel Cameron, *Barbarans and Mandarins* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 361–70.
explicit attacks on familial authority. The most important step was adoption of the "marriage law" in 1950, followed over the next few years by a campaign to propagate and enforce its provisions. Basic provisions of the law included the following: the establishment of marriage as a civil act entered into only upon "complete willingness" of both parties and registered by government authority; the prohibition of "polygamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference with the remarriage of widows, and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriage"; the establishment of full legal equality of both sexes in home and social matters; the granting of divorce on both parties' consent, or on one party's demand if backed by legal approval. Over 500,000 divorces were filed for each of the first five years after the new law. The marriage law also offered legal protection for children against abuse by their parents, a principle given teeth by the marked rise of young activists to positions of political responsibility. The assault on subordination of youth to elders was publicized dramatically in denunciations by youth of alleged political crimes of their elders, including close relatives. The confiscation and redistribution of lineage lands and holdings, coupled with the establishment of new organs of local government, eroded the power of extended kinship organizations. These efforts were by no means completely successful or even uniformly implemented. The marriage law campaign encountered such resistance that implementation was somewhat relaxed after 1959. On the other hand, the direction of CCP law, policy, and propaganda was unmistakable. The influence of the old kinship system might continue informally but only in a context of legal restrictions and political intimidation.

The first wave of family reform receded during the institutionalization of the middle 1950s, but the Great Leap brought a second wave that challenged briefly the structure of the nuclear family itself. Although a radical restructuring of the family was not a primary goal of the Leap, the mobilization of 1958 was a serious challenge to the single-family home. Expansion of the labor force took many women out of the home, while some work projects required splitting of families, residential change, or overnights away from the family. Communal mess halls were to provide meals, permitting confiscation of many home utensils, and communal nurseries and old-age homes were to care for the very young and very old. Yet the commune experiment did not continue along these lines. The most radical features of communal living were never established uniformly and were moderated during the winter of 1958–1959. The Great Leap's political threat to the family was replaced by the physical threat of poor harvests over the following three years. Hard times are reflected in a dramatic reduction of births; the number of surviving children from the worst year, 1961, was only 42 percent of the number from 1964, a recovery year.

With the post-Leap retrenchment came a new official view of the family's role in socialist society. Earlier an object of suspicion to be neutralized or even sacrificed in the course of revolution, the family was now regarded as a possible ally of the state in socialist construction. One of the best indicators of the new attitude was a relatively sympathetic portrayal in literature of kinship relationships and traditional authority figures such as fathers and "old peasants." From the official viewpoint, expressed in retrenchment policies and editorial comment as well as in literature, the relaxation of earlier pressures on the family was not an abdication to traditional values as such. Rather, it was an acknowledgment that social change is a long-term process that can be promoted by models of correct behavior within the reformed institutions of the old society. The family and the village could become positive agents of socialization, reinforcing state policy by their encouragement of production skills, hard work, community service, and respect for authority.

However, the CCP's attempt to co-opt the family's socializing influence ran a serious risk. How could it be sure that a warmer attitude toward traditional social institutions, even if partially reformed, would not encourage demonstration of old values as well as new? In fact, evidence in the early 1960s revealed the

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12Ibid.
13For documentation and analysis, see Ai-li S. Chin, Modern Chinese Fiction and Family Relations: Analysis of Kinship, Marriage and the Family in Contemporary Taiwan and Communist Chinese Stories (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Studies, MIT, 1986).
continued existence of kinship influence in local politics, arranged marriages and sale of brides, corruption and personal aggrandizement and other feudalistic practices. This tendency was not condoned by the leadership, nor could it be attributed solely to social policy since it thrived on the revisionist economic reforms of the period. Nonetheless, a certain tolerance of traditional kinship practices was implicit in the effort to capitalize in the family’s stabilizing influence.

Attitudes toward the family mirrored the basic dilemma of the 1960s—how to reconcile maintenance of authority and stability, with continued revolution—and were, therefore, necessarily involved in the socialist education campaigns and the Cultural Revolution. As might be expected, the early stages of the Cultural Revolution brought sharp attacks on relationships suggestive of traditional prerogatives. Once more, the independence of youth was encouraged, sometimes taking the form of denunciation of parents and elders. The family was not a target of special hostility, but neither was it immune from revolutionary struggle; it was to “revolutionize” itself, fearlessly rooting out any evil tendencies that might persist or arise within it. Besides families that were disrupted by the fates of individual members, many were disrupted by ideological conflict and by a desire to be dissociated from relatives who were vulnerable to criticism. Despite the increase in intrafamily tensions during the Cultural Revolution, the basic family pattern followed the trends of the early 1960s.

The organized power of the lineages was gone, the status of youth and women had risen significantly, and the state or collective had established its formal authority over kinship units. Yet the nuclear or stem family remained the primary residential and child-rearing unit, continued to serve as an important eco-


22 Poignant case of the effects of class struggle on a family is presented in Liang Hong and Judith Shapiro, Son of the Revolution (New York: Vintage, 1983).

23 The authoritative study is Parish and Whyte, Village and Family Life.

than changes in marriage regulations. The household responsibility system, introduced in 1979 and confirmed as a long-term policy in 1984, permits families to contract resources from their production team, deliver an agreed product to the team, and keep the surplus. In effect, although the family does not become the owner of team resources, it does resume its role as a production unit as well as a unit of consumption. From the time that cooperatives were formed in the 1950s until 1979, the unit of production was larger than the family. The family was respected as a social unit and a unit of consumption, but production decisions, task assignments, and remuneration were collectively determined, and family income was closely linked to the income of the team as a whole. Now there is no limit set on family income, and a number of peasant families have become quite wealthy. The control of resources and the prospect of family success or failure binds its members together much more closely than before and strengthens its authority structure. This in turn weakens local party control and the capacity of the party to mobilize energies for its projects. The resurgence of superstition in rural areas is a symptom of ideological and/or organizational weakness. The new policies also introduce a potentially volatile polarization between wealthy and poor families. Even if everyone benefits from modernization policies, more successful peasants may expand their wealth exponentially because of opportunity for reinvestment of profits, and they are encouraged to become involved in local leadership. One would expect that a growing gap between rich and poor, powerful and weak, would create egalitarian pressures at the local level. Of course, it can be expected that the CCP will react to emerging problems with new policies, but the current leadership would want to retain the basic thrust of current policies while ameliorating negative consequences, rather than to change policy direction.

One policy that puts the regime at odds with the private desires of Chinese families is population policy. There have been several phases in Chinese population policy. In 1949–1953, the government took a favorable position on population growth and so restricted abortion and prohibited sterilization. From 1958 until the 1970s, there was a recognition of a population problem, but control measures were ineffective. In the meantime, increasing life expectancies and prosperity coupled with decreasing infant mortality were causing a population explosion that peaked in 1968–1972. In rural areas, births were encouraged not only by traditional views that a large family was a source of wealth and security in old age, but also by distributive policies in the communes. By the early 1970s, Mao Zedong, who initially was critical of population control, supported a nationwide drive for late marriages and stronger birth control. These policies began a significant decline in the rate of population growth. In the 1980s, however, the regime is faced with a very difficult situation. The baby boom generation of the 1960s comes to marriageable age in this decade, and their desire to have children is augmented by prosperity and stability, rapidly improving housing, and strengthening of the family as a unit of production. However, because the child-bearing cohort is so large, even one child per family would result in a population increase of 200 million by the year 2000, and two children per family would produce an increase of 400 million. Consequently, the regime has adopted a strict policy of one child per family except in specified unusual circumstances. This policy has had the unintended effect of encouraging female infanticide because only male children continue the family line. The government has responded with a vigorous campaign for the rights of women and children. The contradiction between the private good of the family and the public necessity of population control may remain the greatest source of tension between the government and the family in the 1980s.

The family's emergence as a cooperating rather than target institution in Communist society is due in part to its residual strength, its capacity to meet human needs that cannot be satisfied elsewhere. Elites have also discovered that extreme disruption of family life, as in the first push toward marriage reform or in the mobilization of 1958, is counterproductive. In other words, there is an economic rationale to the implicit toleration of some traditional practices, a toleration that seems to enhance social stability and economic production, just as retaining family responsibility for certain welfare costs reduces public expenses in these areas. Finally, reforms in other areas (education, collec-

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**Footnote:** For a short official account of China's population policy, see Qin Xinhong, "Evolution of China's Population Policy," *BR*, vol. 27, no. 3 (January 16, 1984), 17–19.
tivization of the economy, and creation of new political organizations) both shape and limit the family's socializing role. As time goes by, parents influenced by other socializing agents are more likely to reflect the official ethic, while institutional changes reduce the family's role relative to public organizations. All of these considerations help to explain why the CCP has compromised some of its revolutionary values, such as the drive for full equality of women in marital practices and roles, in exchange for stabilization of the family's place in the new society.

The Educational System. The system of public education that has emerged in China since 1949 is one of the state's most extensive and effective agents for altering Chinese political attitudes. Success in establishing and expanding the system has been impressive. Primary schools now admit 93 percent of their cohort, a figure that is close to that of industrialized countries, thirty percentage points better than the average for the developing world, and remarkable considering that in 1949 admission was at 25 percent. Junior middle schools admit 50 percent of their cohort, up from 5 percent in 1949. One-third of junior middle school graduates go to senior or specialized middle schools, and one-tenth of senior middle school graduates go to college.26 With a total enrollment approaching 250 million, the Chinese educational system services about 40 percent of all students in the developing world.27 There are also massive television educational programs, adult programs, and teacher retraining programs.

The educational system has been both the beneficiary and the victim of the regime's interest in political socialization. For twenty years, from 1957 to 1977, the primary purpose of education was one of propagating revolutionary values, such as the dignity of manual labor and the importance of the collective. The egalitarianism of the Maoist period made it the time of greatest expansion of educational opportunity, but at the same time its anti-intellectual bias caused a severe slip in quality. Since 1978, education has been reoriented toward the service of economic modernization, and ideological work has assumed a less important although still prominent role. The change in educational priorities has led to a shift of emphasis from the quantitative extension of education to its professional quality. Primary school enrollment has dropped in response to decreasing numbers of school-age children, but the construction of secondary school enrollment shown on Table V.1 is the result of consolidation and the closing of substandard schools. Education continues its socializing mission, however, it does so in accordance with the new priorities of the post-Mao regime.

This is not to say that a system that once produced devoted Maoists is now educating young modernizers. Education can never be a wholly successful instrument for establishing attitudes favored by future elites. The influence of other socializing forces, conflict among elites over the functions and content of education, and limitations on the capacity of schools to accomplish what is demanded of them ensure that students will never conform to any single attitudinal pattern. Still, the educational system carries a heavy long-term responsibility for change. Unlike the family, which affects everyone at an impressionable age but is difficult to penetrate, the schools are subject to a high degree of state control. In contrast to the communications network and generalized political experience, which have their greatest impact on adults in rather uneven and unpredictable ways, the schools provide a mechanism for sustained and structured contact with most school-age citizens.

The Chinese educational system rivals that of the United States in complexity and local variation; and, moreover, its policies have changed dramatically over the years, so generalizations about the system must be very general indeed.28 It includes five major branches: preschool programs, primary schools, middle schools (including junior and senior levels, plus a variety of vocational and technical schools), institutions of higher education, and various television, part-time, and spare-time schools that overlap in level with the more standardized full-time schools.

27World Bank, ibid., vol. 3 p. 146.
### Table V.1 Enrollments and Graduates by Level of School (in Thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary schools</th>
<th>Middle schools</th>
<th>Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak year prior to 1949</td>
<td>23,685</td>
<td>4,623</td>
<td>1,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>24,391</td>
<td>2,841</td>
<td>1,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>51,190</td>
<td>5,942</td>
<td>3,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>83,400</td>
<td>16,225</td>
<td>9,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>114,500</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14,218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Cultural Revolution: All schools closed for at least two years, with primary schools the first to reopen, universities the last. The closures produced a noticeable lag in graduates from middle schools and universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>59,079</td>
<td>146,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>59,079</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>96,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>9,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the system is a centralized one, governed throughout by regulations and/or control from central ministries that establish national standards for administration and content, it has much variety within it. Quality of institutions at the primary level varies from urban key schools, where students enjoy the best available teaching and material resources, to rural schools that have no glass in the windows, that have local peasants as teachers, and that are equipped only with textbooks, tables, and benches. Particularly at preschool, primary, and part-time and spare-time levels, there are some nongovernmental schools established by local units or volunteers; although subject to governmental approval and regulation, and possibly recipients of subsidies, such schools inject an element of citizen participation into educational operations. Lengths of term and courses of study are not uniform for all schools of the same level, and there have been frequent revisions of central educational policies since 1949.

In terms of political socialization, progress toward universal education has been the system's most consistent objective. To shift the burden of socialization toward the public realm and to establish widespread mass literacy to facilitate continued political education and upgrading of skills, the schools must approach universality of enrollment for school-age population groups. Universal education for the entire population is, of course, a difficult goal. In 1956, with an illiteracy rate of 70 percent among young people, a twelve-year program for the elimination of illiteracy was adopted. In 1983, with illiteracy remaining at 34 percent of the adult population, the campaign against illiteracy was renewed, and a target date of 1990 was set for the achievement of universal primary education. Of course, a 46 percent reduction in illiteracy is a monumental accomplishment, especially considering the difficulty of achieving literacy in the Chinese language. In practice, a high and increasing proportion of enrollment of school-age children also represents significant progress. Although primary school enrollment is decreasing as the age cohort is decreasing (due to birth control), the percentage of the cohort entering primary school is gradually increasing. However, given the intense concern of Chinese elites for universal attitudinal change, what might be considered "significant progress" by some does not guarantee the satisfaction of the elite—hence the frequency and centrality in Chinese politics of controversy over the educational system.

The primary schools carry the major burden of efforts to achieve universal education and the basic literacy associated with it. Before the Cultural Revolution, the standard primary course was a six-year program, which began at about the age of seven and customarily was divided into four-year junior and two-year senior primary schools. The current structure is a five-year unified program followed by junior middle school. Enrollment increased sharply during the 1950s, reaching 86.4 million in 1958 (see Table V.1)—a figure representing 67 percent of the primary school age group (seven to twelve years) at the time. In effect, the percentage receiving full primary education was certainly lower than this. Some average students would be included due to late starts, and enrollment as such was no guarantee of completing the six-year program. In many rural areas, completion of only the junior primary course was apparently the norm. Moreover, 1960 probably marked the high point of attendance in the regular schools prior to the Cultural Revolution (at least as a percentage of school-age population), as enrollments slowed or fell in the early 1960s, while population continued to grow.

Middle schools expanded even more rapidly during the 1950s but remained accessible to a very small number of people. Their basic function was to provide advanced academic, vocational, and political training to select students who formed the pool from which China's new elite would be recruited. This task rested mainly on the regular middle schools, which trained the

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See World Bank, *Socialist Economic Development*, vol. 5, pp. 123–280 for data. Minimal literacy in Chinese requires the memorization of at least 1,000 characters. Since the characters are complicated and not phonetic, this feat is more similar to memorizing 1,000 telephone numbers than it is to being able to recognize 1,000 alphabetic words. Reasonable literacy requires knowledge of 5,000 characters, which takes 40 percent of class time for five years of primary school.

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Provisional; and Price, *Education in Communist China*, p. 128. The continued growth of primary and middle enrollments down to 1965, shown in Table V.1, probably indicates inclusion of various part-time school enrollments in the totals for that year.
The vast majority of new teachers, technicians, and low-level government cadres. Middle school enrollment is difficult to estimate, owing to the variety of schools operating at this level; but regular middle schools probably reached a peak enrollment of about 10 million in 1958–60. Thus, only about 10 percent of primary graduates continued on to regular middle school, and most who did so completed only the three-year junior middle school course; about one out of six junior middle school graduates went on to senior middle school.31

The most rapid expansion in the early and mid-1960s occurred in higher education. Admissions increased from a miniscule .3 percent of the age cohort in 1949 to 1.6 percent in 1958, a fivefold increase within a decade. The number of universities and colleges expanded from 205 to 791. The late 1950s were a golden age for going to college. By 1957, there were more university openings than there were senior middle school graduates.32 In 1960, higher education achieved a peak enrollment of almost 1 million, a figure not surpassed until 1979. Adjusted for population, the 1960 figure may not be attained until the late 1980s.

In general, the regular school system greatly expanded educational opportunities during the late 1950s; however, the expansion was imbalanced in favor of advanced education in urban areas. Planners were intimidated by the sheer magnitude of the task of providing universal education to rural areas, and the tasks of modernization demanded the rapid expansion of specialized training. The rationale for educational policy was a mixture of traditional Chinese respect for education, the progressive belief throughout the twentieth century that modern education was the key to solving China’s problems, and the influence of the Soviet model. By the mid-1950s, educational progress was clearly out of balance, and the system lacked a clear revolutionary focus. The system was seen as giving relatively advanced and prolonged education to the few (encouraging in them hopes for a purely official career), while limiting the educational benefits to rural areas and the working population.

Two major lines of reform appeared in response. One was proposed reform of the regular system itself, with calls for reduction in years of study, less emphasis on specialized academic programs, and the injection of some working or production experience into the regular school schedule. The other was a strenuous effort during the Great Leap Forward to expand worker and peasant access to education and to reduce illiteracy. Besides redirecting the attention of the educational establishment in this direction, two important new policies were introduced. The first was the policy of “management by the people with the assistance of the government.” This was an arrangement whereby localities would establish their own schools, building the buildings themselves and providing food for the teachers. This lessened the dependence of educational expansion on central planning and financing. As a result, enrollment increases reported for 1958 were astonishing: 34 percent in primary schools and 42 percent in middle schools in one year.33 The second policy was to expand spare-time and part-time (half-work, half-study) schools. Such schools had existed in various forms since the early 1950s, but their intensified promotion as an alternative to the regular full-time schools was a distinctive feature of the Great Leap Forward. Spare-time schools are essentially courses in adult education frequently organized by local production units to provide basic training in literacy, occupational skills, and politics for the working population. Part-time or half-work, half-study programs are diverse, operating at many levels under different forms of management and offering different combinations of study and work experience. Aimed mainly at young people, they attempt to offer an educational program nominally approximating that of the regular schools but without separating the student from his or her production responsibilities. The best example is the agricultural middle schools, which flourished in the late 1950s as a response to the regular schools’ failure to provide adequate education for rural youth.34 In 1958 alone, enrollment in part-time primary schools went up 333 percent, middle schools 85 percent, and higher education 100 percent.

31. The 1958 enrollment statistics and much of the discussion of changes to educational policy are based on this.
As the 1958 enrollment statistics indicate, educational reform was caught up in the illusion of instant progress that characterized the Great Leap. The collapse of the Great Leap, the economic crisis and retrenchment policies that followed, and the general inertia or resistance of many within the school system required massive retrenchment and reorientation in education. In theory, the regular schools committed themselves to a more proletarian line, giving prominence to politics and the working class in their policies and requiring their staff and students to participate in productive labor. In practice, these measures were routinized to minimize their impact. Test performance was the major criterion for admission and achievement: in practice, this meant that middle class children succeeded disproportionately. The spare-time and part-time schools survived, continuing to serve at least some of their intended functions by bringing political and practical education to millions excluded from the regular schools; however, they remained subordinate to the latter in academic quality and social prestige. Tensions between Maoist egalitarianism and incipient stratification led to a frontal assault on the educational establishment in the Cultural Revolution.

In part, the Cultural Revolution brought a return of the educational policies of the Great Leap in a more extreme form. Proletarian values were paramount. All educational institutions were supposed to operate on a half-work, half-study basis; students were required to spend two years in manual labor before going to college; and teachers were sent to “May Seventh cadre schools” to reestablish their links with the masses. Entrance exams and even academic performance were replaced as primary criteria for advancement by evaluations of personal revolutionary qualities. The primary, secondary, and tertiary curricula were reduced to five, four, and two to three years respectively, with 10 percent of class time occupied by political study. While university enrollment was reduced drastically, primary enrollment increased and secondary enrollment quadrupled. The educational trend of the 1950s was completely reversed, and the opposite imbalances were created.

Another, more destructive, aspect of the Cultural Revolution was the effect of its emphasis on class struggle in the educational system. By the end of 1966, the entire school system was closed. The primary schools reopened in the spring of 1968, the middle schools in the fall of 1968, and the universities in 1970.39 But the loss of up to four years of education was not the most serious harm done. Intellectuals were reviled as the “stinking ninth category” of class elements; campuses and schoolyards became battlegrounds for mortal factional wars; and priceless historical objects were destroyed in the name of proletarian culture. The Cultural Revolution denied normal educational advancement to an entire generation of Chinese youth. The deprivation is especially cruel because the post-Mao leadership places great emphasis on educational qualifications.

Educational policies since 1978 appear to be a return to those of the 1950s, but they are also a response to the accomplishments and imbalances of the intervening twenty years. Higher education is again emphasized, as in the 1950s; however, the great expansion of primary and secondary education in the Maoist period has made the emphasis more reasonable and urgent. The earlier expansion also calls for qualitative retrenchment, especially necessary because of the chaos and anti-intellectual values of the Cultural Revolution. Findings that 53 percent of elementary school teachers and 70 percent of junior middle school teachers were unqualified led to massive inservice retraining programs. In 1983, one-fifth of all teachers were involved in some form of further study. Qualitative retrenchment also led to a closing of many middle schools and a consequent reduction of middle school enrollment, as shown in Table V.1. The most controversial reform has been the reestablishment of key schools, that is, elementary and middle schools with priority treatment in educational resources and competitive enrollment policies. Key schools were originally established in the 1950s but were criticized during the Cultural Revolution for elitism and disbandment.

Not all change has been constrictive, however. Expansion continues in educational budgets, graduate schools, universities,

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39 Ibid., p. 326.
television education, and kindergartens. The Central Radio and Television University, established in 1979, had 410,000 students by the end of 1982, 35 percent of the regular university enrollment. In both expansion and retrenchment, the educational system is responding to the needs of a more sophisticated economy.

The role of the educational system in CCP-directed political socialization remains important, but it has been confused by the reversal of Cultural Revolution values, the de-emphasis of ideology, and the reemphasis of the training mission of education. Successful students have reason to be positively inclined toward modernization, since their education will qualify them for a leading role. But the ideological flip-flops of the 1970s have produced a cynicism concerning ideological propaganda among college-age adults. Among younger students, the influence of current priorities is visible. In a primary school survey in Shanghai, the four most preferred occupational assignments were: scientist/engineer, PLA soldier, worker, and "obey assignment by the homeland." Among graduating senior middle school students in Shanghai, the top choices were: engineer, doctor, technician, journalist. 9 However, at both levels, agriculture was by far the least desirable occupation; and, in the grade school, politics was by far the least popular subject.

Although students do not simply accept the values preached to them, the schools have had a great influence on political socialization in post-1949 China. By any comparative standard, they have been highly politicized in terms of large blocks of time devoted to explicit political education, the injection of political information and desired political attitudes into basic subjects of instruction (most prominently, into the materials used in the standard readers), an effort to permeate the classroom with official views of public and private morality, and the establishment of party supervision and control over the system as a whole. As a result, certain political themes have been a heavy and inescapable part of the school experience. None of them is surprising, given the nature of the system, but the most salient of them should be noted. One is patriotism, the attempt to transmit basic information about China, its accomplishments and resources, and to instill feelings of love, loyalty, and respect for it. Another


*These surveys are translated in David Chu, Sociology and Society.
orientation toward individual political initiative and action. The major tension of post-Mao socialization is between the collectivist structure and values of society and the material incentives upon which modernization policies are based. There is conflict on the fundamental question of how prominently political socialization should figure in the general educational process. At the root of this is the "red-expert" problem: the question of how to balance competing demands for political education in the service of attitudinal change and for technical education in the service of economic transformation, as well as how best to manage national development given limited educational resources. As the subsequent discussion will argue, these are conflicts that continue to plague the political socialization process. Yet their very existence and the seriousness with which elites debate them suggest that the new educational system is making its mark on the Chinese political culture.

The Communications Network. Political communications in China, as in other societies, include an immense variety and volume of messages. Although China may be considered a relatively closed system in which communications patterns and media are usually restricted by government controls, its tendency to politicize so many areas of human action ensures a heavy flow of communications about politics. Our interest here is primarily in media policy, inasmuch as media policy both reflects the regime's attitudes toward information availability and shapes the content of publicly available information. Other major sectors of political communications, such as the expression of political interests and the demands and exchanges relating to the making and implementation of decisions, will be examined in subsequent chapters.

The public communications network in China is almost exclusively an official (state or party) operation, subject in its content and management to the control of central political authorities. The organization of this official monopoly on public communications is complex. State agencies administer most major media—such as the New China News Agency, radio and television stations, the film industry, and most publishing enterprises—but the CCP and its supporting mass organizations also publish important newspapers and periodicals. General newspapers are directly under the party committees at the respective level. For example, the People's Daily is an organ of the Central Committee, the Shaanxi Daily is an organ of the Shaanxi provincial party committee, and the Xi'an Evening News is an organ of the Xi'an municipal party committee. Regardless of the administrative source or level of operation, however, all media are subject to the general controls and policies established by the CCP Central Committee's Propaganda Department. Through its sections for specific communications areas and its authority over propaganda departments within lower-level party organizations, it seeks to ensure that all media follow central party policy in the dissemination of information and ideas through the printed and spoken word.

Party supervision of all public communications cannot guarantee in practice that the media always speak with one voice. The division of operational control among state, party, and mass organization units at various administrative levels has produced some deviation from the central line. Moreover, the central line as such has been ambiguous or disputed at times, resulting in intended or unintended conflicts between messages put forth by different sources. The Propaganda Department itself was torn apart in the first year of the Cultural Revolution,

"Political Socialization and Communications"

highlighting a particular vulnerability of the media to changes in political line. The departures from total control do not alter two generalizations that follow from the attempt to achieve it. The first is that virtually all information disseminated through the network is that which central leadership or subordinates acting on their perceptions of central intent have approved for public release. The public is told what the leadership wants it to know; competing or contradictory messages have no organized vehicle for response. Thus almost every news item in the Chinese press has a quasi-official quality; it is there because it relates positively to current policy. Politically neutral news, such as accidents and minor disasters, are ignored, and published news that conflicts with current policy is usually a sign of dissonance or of impending policy change. The other generalization is that a clear sense of hierarchical authority permeates the system and is in fact essential to its effective operation. Communications from more authoritative sources will outrule those from subordinate ones; contradictions and confusions require direction from above for resolution. In the absence of consistent messages from the highest authorities, lower communications agents and the body politic as a whole tend toward inaction or conflict.

A second characteristic of political communications in China is the governing influence of ideology and its special vocabulary. As Schurmann points out, the “closing” effect of official control over communications is not simply secrecy or censorship—much significant information is transmitted publicly—but rather the requirement that communications be cast in the language of the official ideology. The ideologically specific meaning of concepts and terms becomes a separate language system for public discourse; it provides a unifying bond and mechanism for those who “speak” it, while at the same time screening out those who do not or those concepts that have no place in it. As with all languages, employment of it involves not simply the use of certain words but internalization of the manner of thinking that makes those words intelligible. As a result, much of what passes through the communications system is aimed in the first instance at elites or subelites who have the capacity to understand it and the responsibility to disseminate it with appropriate explanation and reference to local circumstances to the general population.

Finally, the style of public communications is distinctly pedagogical. Questions are posed, arguments listed, and conclusions drawn; reason and persuasion attempt to guide the recipient to a specific position; slogans and catchword devices (such as the use of numbered sets of points, commonly identified by numbers only once the points are known) lend themselves to memorization and repetition abound; good and bad “models” illustrate how policies should be implemented—which experiences should be emulated and which shunned. As the Great Leap slogan put it, “the whole nation is a classroom,” and the communications system plays a vital part in the education or reeducation of the nation’s population. Although the media is much less ideological and pedagogical in the post-Mao period, these features are still strikingly present when contrasted to Western media. In a major policy statement issued in 1985, Hu Yaobang strongly reaffirmed the media’s role as “the mouthpiece of the party” and rejected suggestions that media operate as autonomous, profit-making enterprises.

Political communications in China vary in their intended audience and the kind of medium employed. In terms of the intended audience, we may distinguish among foreign-oriented media, “internal” (neibu) or secret media, specialized media, and mass media. The category of mass media may be further divided into print, radio, and television. The major foreign-oriented media consist of shortwave broadcasts in six languages, Xinhua news releases, various magazines (especially Beijing Review), and the English language daily newspaper China Daily. The last has a significant domestic readership as well; two-thirds of its readers are Chinese. It began publishing in May 1981, and in its first two years had 64,000 subscribers.

Ironically, only China’s many internal media have the primary function of providing information to their audiences. Because the audience of internal media is restricted, the information in

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45 Renmin Ribao (People’s Daily), April 15, 1985.

the media does not have to be as closely controlled. The internal media system is very extensive and has many uses, but details of its operation are of course unavailable to outside observers. Many inhouse journals are classified internal; for instance, the Shaanxi Provincial Journalism Research Institute publishes an internal quarterly, *Journalism Research*, which is primarily for professional journalists. Likewise, textbooks that have not yet been cleared for publication may circulate on an internal basis, and many party levels have their own restricted publications. Some internal publications include less inhibited discussions and disputes concerning current policy. The basic principle for determining circulation of internal publications is "need to know"—work units have access to internal material appropriate to their function.

The most interesting internal publications from the point of view of political socialization are those that make available more news of the outside world. Two are especially noteworthy: *Reference News* (*Cankao Xiaoxi*) and *Reference Materials* (*Cankao Zhiliao*). The latter is by far the most restricted. It is published twice a week in 80–90 page issues, the equivalent of 100–150 typed pages per day, and consists mostly of translated items from the foreign press. It is similar to the United States Central Intelligence Agency's Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, except that the Daily Report is unclassified while the Reference Materials is highly restricted. By contrast, *Reference News*, a daily, four-page compilation of foreign wire service reports, is probably the world's most popular "secret" media. Sometimes, the articles translated in *Reference News* are distorted, but by and large it is a faithful rendering of material from world news services; it does include material critical of China. Its circulation of 8.5 million is considerably larger than that of *People's Daily* (5.2 million), and comparable to the combined circulation of the ten largest U.S. newspapers. Through *Reference News*, the educated Chinese citizen has available a considerable variety of high-quality international news.

Specialty publications are by far the fastest-growing category of Chinese media. Their circulation grew by 320 percent in 1982 alone, although a good deal of that growth was due to inclusion of Chinese equivalents of *TV Guide* which, as in the United States, have the largest periodical circulations. Besides the consumer and sports magazines, the specialty and professional publications play an increasingly important role in providing relevant information to various sectors of society. In time these specialty and professional periodicals will probably strengthen the collective identity and self-consciousness of different sectors in Chinese society.

Mass media consist of publicly available general news sources. These come in a great variety and have a definite pecking order. Although television and radio have larger audiences, the print media, as the news of record, have the most prestige. Within the print media, the hierarchy is set by the status of the party committee to which the newspaper is attached. *People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao, Jen-min Jih-pao*) is the authoritative national newspaper, the equivalent of the Soviet Union's *Pravda*. However, *People's Daily* is generally considered a dull newspaper, and its important articles are reprinted in all other newspapers. Provincial-level newspapers have a combined readership approximately twice that of *People's Daily*, and the readership of lower-level newspapers is twice that of the provincial press. The fastest growing segment of the mass print media is the municipal evening newspapers. These usually feature more lively and investigative reporting than the more stodgy provincial and national press, and of course they present more local news and entertainment information.

Bordering on the specialty media are national newspapers such as *Worker's Daily*, *Liberation Army Daily*, *China Peasant News*, and the *China Youth News* (*Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*), the organ of the Communist Youth League. The most important semispecialty periodical is *Red Flag* (*Hongqi*), which is the theoretical journal of the Central Committee (CC) and provides ideological guidance to the CCP. Although generally available, only those with a considerable interest in CC theoretical and political concerns would read it regularly. More readable information about national politics and personalities is provided by

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the new journals Semi-Monthly Talk (Banyue Tan) and Observation Post (Kaochuan).

Radio is probably the most widely used media in China, although television is rapidly increasing its audience share. The radio news system extends from central broadcasting through the province down to a wired radio network that reaches almost the entire rural population. Each level carries the national news and then adds its own news, entertainment, and educational programs. Very precise standard Chinese is used in most radio programming, but many provinces also broadcast in minority languages and local dialects. Audience interest in programming varies widely. In a Beijing survey, 76 percent of urban listeners were interested in the news, while only 59 percent of rural listeners were. By contrast, 62 percent of rural listeners liked serialized novels, but only 57 percent of urban listeners did.46

Television is rapidly assuming importance as an information medium comparable to its role in the West. In Beijing, 86 percent of urban workers' families and 33 percent of peasant families had televisions in 1982.47 Of course, Beijing could be expected to be far ahead of the rest of China in television ownership, but the broadcast network is improving (with the help of a Chinese communications satellite launched in 1984), and private ownership of televisions is growing very rapidly. Although news is the most popular item in urban areas, peasants are even less interested in television news than they are in radio news and are correspondingly more interested in movies and drama. The latter are also well received by urban audiences, and when a very popular dramatic series is shown, such as a martial arts thriller broadcast in the spring of 1984, it seems that all of China is tuned in.

Media in China have undergone tremendous changes since the founding of the PRC. As Table V.2 indicates, the dominant trend has been one of growth; however, the Cultural Revolution severely affected some aspects of media development. It had some effects on the volume of print media, but its most severe effect was the restriction of variety and content. At least one-third

\[\text{Table V.2 Media Growth in China}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Book Titles</th>
<th>New Book Titles</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Radio Stations</th>
<th>TV Stations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>12,153</td>
<td>7,049</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>49 (1949)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>20,133</td>
<td>12,272</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>61 (1957)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4,094</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>4,889</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>13,716</td>
<td>10,533</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


of the books printed between 1966 and 1968 were copies of five compilations of Mao's works, including the "Little Red Book" of Mao quotations of 2 billion copies.48 In essence, the Cultural Revolution reduced centrally controlled media to its propaganda function, and control of the media remained a major strength of the leftists until Mao's death in 1976. Since 1978, the informational component of media has expanded well beyond its pre–Cultural Revolution heights, although the control of the party, the boundaries set by ideological orthodoxy, and the pedagogical tone of most news/propaganda stories are still present.

Of course, the question concerning the credibility of media is not answered by data concerning its availability. Do Chinese citizens fit the 1950s image of brainwashing, so well described by the following observer?

The head of a good Chinese citizen today functions like a sort of radio receiving set. Somewhere in Peiping [Beijing] buzzes the great transmitting station which broadcasts the right thought and

\[\text{Calculated from Statistical Yearbook of China and Jacobsen, Systems of Internal Communication.}\]
the words to be repeated. Millions of heads faithfully pick them up, and millions of mouths repeat them like loudspeakers.36

Or are the Chinese sophisticated and somewhat jaded consumers of propaganda, much like American consumers of advertising? Answering this question requires survey data of the Chinese media audience, and hitherto there have been no studies that would confirm or deny conjectures. However, in 1982 the Journalism Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences carried out a large-scale sample survey of the Beijing media audience, including questions concerning the credibility of news. These results, which are translated in Table V.3, show a highly critical but not totally alienated audience. Although the differences between the categories of respondents are interesting, in general the majority finds the news "basically believable"; however, only a minority asserts that it is totally credible. The reasons given for distrusting the news relate to the distortion and stereotyping that is endemic in propaganda. Evidently, the regime pays a high price in audience trust for the subordination of media to policy. On the other hand, access to foreign news through Reference News or directly through Voice of America, BBC, and Radio Moscow as well as rumor and their own experience apparently convince citizens that they are not simply being presented a dream world by the official media.

Mass media other than news media include films and live dramatic performances. The Chinese film industry is active, although it is still developing and is peculiarly vulnerable to political shifts. Enough films and facilities have been produced since 1949 to make viewing common in the cities. Rural viewing has been expanded greatly by traveling projection teams and efforts to set up permanent projection facilities in communes. In contrast to newspaper reading, which may be a chore even for the literate, film viewing is easy and entertaining. It has tremendous potential for government communication with the masses, even though most peasants still see only a few films a year. Dramatic performances (plays, opera, ballet, and variety shows) are frequent and popular in the cities, with traveling troupes offering less frequent rural performances.


Although it is impossible to say exactly what impact the political communications network has on Chinese political attitudes, a few comments about variations in the intensity of the communications experience may shed some light on this question. First, it is safe to assume that reception of political propaganda is nearly universal and fairly frequent for all Chinese citizens. That is, virtually all are exposed regularly to the messages of at least some of the formal media—primarily press, radio, and films—all of which have a high political content. The cumulative effects of this reception probably have raised the general level of knowledge about political personalities and affairs, created a greater sense of identification with the national political system, and encouraged among citizens greater receptivity to the demands and values of political elites. However, the degree of attitudinal change as contrasted to a greater awareness of and knowledge about politics may be minimal, simply because ordinary propaganda does not require a response. No matter how frequent and extensive its coverage, media propaganda permits the recipient to remain passive. If passivity is a cover for resistance, then repeated exposure to the message may even have negative effects.

The preceding discussion has identified some of the audiences and media that are involved in the Chinese communications network but has said nothing about one of its most important and distinctive forms—face-to-face contact in meetings or small-group encounters. Although such meetings are much less frequent and intense than they were during the Cultural Revolution, they are still an important part of life at least for state workers and cadres. In any case, all party cadres are expected to stay in frequent, informal contact with the masses of their unit and explain and justify party policy. Several factors may account for the Chinese emphasis on direct, personal contact in political communications. One factor is surely the problem of illiteracy, which, as noted, affects the use of formal media as well by elevating radio and film use relative to that of the printed media. Another factor is the example of the Soviet Union, where every factory has its agitation teams to deliver the party's message personally to fellow workers.

The CCP's historical experience of mass mobilization, under circumstances in which face-to-face contact was sometimes the only possible means of communication, also influences its contemporaneous style. Apart from these societally specific influences,
### Table V.3 The Credibility of Chinese Media among the Beijing Audience

**Question:** What is your view of the news reports carried in newspapers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believable</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not greatly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believable</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not greatly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believable</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbelievable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't say</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th></th>
<th>Scientist</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't say</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reasons given for incomplete credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>&quot;The content of some news reports does not correspond to reality,&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>&quot;In some reports everything is all good or all bad.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>&quot;Sometimes only good news is reported.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>&quot;Some reports are unreal.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>&quot;All of the above.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>&quot;Can't say.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Areas in which the news is not completely credible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>&quot;Reflecting the voice and demands of the masses.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>&quot;Successes in production and raising living standards.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>&quot;Can't say.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>&quot;Improvements in party style, the party serving the people.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>&quot;Socialism is good, capitalism is bad.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>&quot;Praise of models and encouragement of new morality and directions.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>&quot;Criticism of bad tendencies and attacks on economic criminals.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>&quot;Various aspects together.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>&quot;Propaganda for Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and policies.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses are from a representative sample of the Beijing population to a survey conducted in the summer of 1982. This set of questions had 1,887 respondents.

there is the fact that face-to-face contact is a highly effective means of communication in any society. These factors have combined to produce in China a communications system that favors direct, personalized communications.

The resource that makes this possible is an army of political cadres and activists sufficient in number to penetrate every working and/or residential collectivity in China. In the early years of the PRC, when party and mass organization ranks were thin and the formal communications network was yet to be established, the CCP trained "propagandists" and "reporters" with specific responsibility for carrying government messages to the people. As administrative and political posts were filled, and as the regime gained experience in coordinating mass movements with the growing communications network, these specialists became unnecessary. Responsibility for direct contact with the masses came to rest on members of the local subline: basic-level cadres, designated or natural leaders of work or residential groups, party or Youth League members not holding higher cadre posts, persons with middle school or higher education, demobilized soldiers, and others whose personal motivation had led into activism without special background or experience. Higher-level cadres supervise their work and, when necessary, supplement it with personal visits. These low-level cadres and activists are expected to grasp political issues revealed in the formal media and call them to popular attention, explaining and persuading as necessary to secure mass support. They may do this through regular discussion and study groups that examine current news and issues, through special meetings called for problems of particular urgency, or simply through the give-and-take of daily conversation. Of course, there is no guarantee that the full potential of this form of communication is realized, due to variations in ability and motivation of the intermediaries; however, the possibility of establishing personal contact with and response from individual citizens is one of the great strengths of the network.

The most intensive political communications in China occur in what the CCP calls "rectification," "struggle," and "thought reform." Here, particular individuals or groups are criticized in a highly structured setting that allows no escape from confrontation with norms prescribed by the elite. Rectification campaigns, such as the 1984-1985 party rectification campaign, aim at various levels or sectors of the elite, especially CCP members. Normally, they identify certain categories of shortcomings and subject officials to close scrutiny to determine which among them might manifest the deficiencies under attack. Although a few negative models might be named at the outset, the political disposition of most members of the target group depends on their response during the course of the campaign. Rectification (that is, acknowledgment of errors and renewed commitment to the orthodox party line) and not purge is the result for most. Yet some will be found seriously deficient, the consequence being demotion or purge and more hostile struggle. Struggle and thought reform are the extreme forms of political education brought to bear on individuals whose political guilt is already established, whether through a rectification campaign or through information developed in other ways. The structural and psychological dynamics of struggle and thought reform are too complex for analysis here, but there is little question about their capacity to produce extreme disorientation in the subject, while not necessarily creating a permanent attitudinal change in the desired direction. It must be remembered that relatively few Chinese have been on the receiving end of these techniques—at least since the early postliberation years, when whole social groups such as landlords or intellectuals were designated for struggle and reform. Rectification is basically a form of communication and control among the elite. Struggle and thought reform are political and psychological assaults on even more limited numbers, primarily deviant elites and those identified as enemies of the regime.

To summarize, China has acquired the superstructure of a modern communications system and continues to develop its infrastructure. Coverage is most complete for the cities and for the more literate and better-educated citizens. Political communications rely heavily on face-to-face contacts that supplement

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the formal media, particularly by encouraging individual response. The overall impact of communications is greatest for elites, who experience its most intensive forms more frequently and at a higher level of interaction and who are more likely to encounter the full range of media output. In terms of socialization, the system is most effective in expanding knowledge about politics and brightening sensitivity to political issues, although its reception is by no means uncritical. Its role in inducing attitudinal change is more questionable, but in face-to-face contact, it has a mechanism that can penetrate to the level of individual attitudes and that probably has encouraged more participant orientations toward politics.

**Political and Social Experience.** Socialization is not a process that ends with childhood or formal education. It continues throughout life, as the pattern of daily life and perceptions of major events reinforce, challenge, and alter the orientations formed in earlier years. The leaders of post-1949 China have tried to capitalize on this fact, using their power to structure public organization and activity in ways that provide an environment supportive of the political culture they hope to establish. Mao Zedong, in particular, insisted on the necessity of “combining theory with practice,” of providing or even forcing opportunities for the testing and practice of abstract political concepts. From the Maoist perspective, it is not enough to study political ideas and principles; they must be applied in social action before they truly become part of one’s social being. The CCP’s attempt to create political and social experiences that will assist internalization of the desired political culture is most evident in political campaigns and organizations at the basic level and in the compulsory dilution of elite status and privilege. We also want to consider briefly the impact of more generalized, unstructured political experiences on the Chinese population.

One of the CCP’s most ambitious goals has been to involve every Chinese citizen in regular, organized political activity at the basic level, largely through mass movements, representation in basic-level government, membership in mass organizations, and participation in the management of primary production and residential units. All of these are multifunctional political phenomena. They are structures for the implementation of central policy, for political recruitment and control, and to some extent for local interest articulation and decision making. Their function of socialization is important and at times paramount. The point is simply this: in pre-Communist China, most citizens had no role in political life and were divorced in any positive sense from the processes of formal government; the Communist goal, on the other hand, is to ensure that every citizen begins to experience some political roles by participating in rallies, meetings, discussions, and elections that relate to public affairs. In most cases, real initiative and control in these activities rests with higher authorities, and no doubt some participants simply are performing assignments for which they have little understanding or enthusiasm. Yet these are not overriding limitations with reference to socialization. Even if the setting is structured and the conduct of the activity ritualistic, the participant is learning something about the governmental process, the possibilities of political association, and his or her relationship to politics. The act of participation may foster positive awareness of political identity even if its real efficacy is low.

These phenomena are not uniformly effective, however, in providing meaningful political experiences. The system of elections and basic-level congresses flourished briefly in 1954–1957 and had an important symbolic role in affirming the popular base of government, but it was disrupted by the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution. Local branches of the nationally organized mass organizations, such as the unions and Women’s Federation, have offered opportunities for mass involvement in specialized projects (for instance, labor insurance and welfare, child care, mediation of local disputes), although they have been

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very much a part of the national bureaucratic hierarchy and
accordingly were pushed aside during the Cultural Revolution.
Afterward, these forms of institutionalized mass participation
not only reappeared but were strengthened in their operations.
The strengthening of the electoral system and responsibilities
of the people's congress system, which was described in Chapter 3,
is not an isolated phenomenon.

Mass campaigns can be viewed as an alternative to institutionalized mass participation, although it should be remembered
that the two are mutually exclusive only in their extreme forms:
The socializing impact of the mass campaigns is ambiguous. As
the focal point of political life and the vehicle for the most
intense political activity, they have done more than any other
mechanism to involve the population in the full range of political
situations the system offers. They have probably increased the
salience of politics for all, generated (at least on occasion) enthusiasm
for collective action for many, and led substantial numbers into genuine political activism. Their negative effects also have
been great, however, due to their frequently excessive demands
and politically threatening nature. Most Chinese have seen their
own lives disrupted by one or more of these campaigns or know
of people who have suffered heavily from them. The most
constructive settings for political socialization probably been the production and residential groups that have encouraged
considerable popular participation in the management of their
affairs (such as work assignments, public improvement projects,
remuneration systems, etc.). While higher-level authority
and policy penetrates these groups freely, they have provided the

most stable setting for open discussion and action on community
problems.

Elites and subelites have participated more heavily than
the masses in the activities described thus far and, in addition, have been the target of several measures designed to force a reduction
in their status and privilege. Some of these have been explicitly
egalitarian, such as the abolition of rank insignia and titles in
the PLA by Lin Biao and reduction of wage differentials during
the Cultural Revolution. By far the most ambitious, however,
was the practice of xiafang (assignment to lower levels) and
related efforts to give cadres, students, and intellectuals experience
in manual labor. Voluntary and compulsory programs of this
sort thrived during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural
Revolution, and some voluntary efforts, much reduced, have
continued in the post-Mao era. Like the mechanisms for mass
participation, xiafang was a multifunctional policy aimed at
reducing bureaucratic staff and transferring underutilized urban
resources to the countryside as well as establishing more populist
orientations. The socialization function was still important,
however, for both the privileged strata directly affected and the
masses who observed the results. For those already employed in
various bureaucracies, xiafang meant temporary or permanent
assignment to a lower level or a system of participation in
manual labor at regular intervals. For students, it meant an
initial work assignment in rural or frontier areas (increasingly
over the 1960s a permanent assignment) or some formula for
interrupting academic study with work experience. Whatever
the specifics, the practice sought to give those holding or aspiring
to official positions a taste of what manual labor is like, to

52 This disruptive potential is illustrated by the increased flow of emigrants
from the mainland to Hong Kong that has occurred in the later stages of nearly
all major campaigns. The occurrence of some negative socialization experiences
does not mean, of course, that campaigns are counterproductive as a whole. For
a careful evaluation of campaign accomplishments and shortcomings, see
Charles P. Cell, Revolution at Work: Mobilization Campaigns in China (New
socialization processes, see Sidney Greenblatt, "Campaigns and the Manufacture
82–139. For a fascinating case study of one student's movement from early
enthusiasm to later disillusionment in the Cultural Revolution, see Gordon A.
Bennett and Ronald Montaperto, Red Guard: The Political Biography of Dai
Hsiao-er (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971).

53 Theoretical and developmental underpinnings of xiafang, and its multi-
functional character, are analyzed in Pi-chiau Chen, "Overurbanization, Ru-
nication of Urban-educated Youths, and Politics of Rural Transformation," Co-
mparative Politics, vol. 4, no. 3 (April 1975): 561–86; and Repschler W. Lee,
III, "The Hsa-fang System: Marxism and Modernization," China Quarterly,
no. 28 (October–December 1966): 40–62. A comprehensive study of the transfer
of urban youth to the countryside is Thomas P. Bernstain, Up to the Mountains
and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977). Xiafang's impact on bureau-
cracy is assessed in Khien Theraivivaya, "The Hsa-fang System: Bureaucracy
overcome any notions in their minds that educational or political credentials exempt them from discomfort and hard work, and to persuade the masses that elites in the New China will not be permitted to isolate themselves from the sometimes harsh realities of the common man’s life situation.

Xiaofang has encountered resistance not only from elites who have no sympathy for its objectives or believe it a waste of their talents but also from peasants or basic-level cadres who may see it as disruptive and ineffectual or who may feel that those sent down still get the best work available. Breaking down barriers of status cannot be painless in a society where scholars and officials traditionally held such privileged positions and where political authorities today command such power. Any measure designed to counteract the separation of elites and masses would produce resentment and disorientation. For many, the social learning experience was probably counterbalanced by the resentment of being forced into internal exile. Moreover, the policy meant the continuous disruption of the work, research, and academic careers of the people involved. Given the shortage of technically qualified personnel, it did not make sense in terms of modernization to have a sizeable percentage doing menial jobs. Therefore, to the great satisfaction of many, xiaofang policies were gradually reduced and then discontinued in 1977. However, some youths sent to the countryside during the 1960s and 1970s continue to demand return to their cities of origin. Despite their politically embarrassing protests, the government thus far has refused to honor their demands.

Political attitudes may also reflect life experiences not structured, sanctioned, or anticipated by the government as socializing devices. The most dramatic example is the economic crises of 1959–1961, due in part to natural disasters, which shook popular confidence in the CCP and encouraged a retreat into traditional political orientations. More generally, the alternating pattern of mass movements and the apparently interminable search for new “enemies” and “renegades” may lead to a certain political weariness even among those basically sympathetic with the overall direction of government policies. Perhaps the constant striving for a political ideal that is never reached will ultimately create a counterculture of public accommodation and private cynicism. However, we should not assume that the general pattern of post-1949 events has had a negative impact on the bulk of the population. Despite economic fluctuations and the evident unpredictability of politics, the standard of living and China’s international standing have improved. Although certain groups may be disillusioned with politics, there is no real challenge to the CCP’s legitimacy. Even many dissidents see themselves as loyal reformers of the current system rather than as antagonistic radicals. Most Chinese have accepted the present government—we cannot answer with confidence the crucial question of how different motivations and degrees of commitment distribute themselves among the population—and consequently, they have unavoidably participated in the establishment of a collectivized society, the sacrifice of some personal interests in favor of national goals as defined by elites, the effort to elicit political activism at the grass roots, the practice of a populistic social ethic, and all the personal and group struggles generated by these changes.

**SOCIALIZATION AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

Agents and processes of political socialization became a prime issue and a target for reform in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Why were the Maoists so dissatisfied with a system that seemed to penetrate society thoroughly and to show plainly the influence of Mao’s hopes for a new Chinese political culture? What were the results of the assault on the established system? What does the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath suggest about long-term patterns of change in Chinese political culture?

The first point to emphasize is that the attack on the socialization process was by no means a total one. Although campaign rhetoric sometimes suggested an across-the-board failure by the “authorities following the capitalist road” to promote socialist values, the Maoists, in practice, showed little desire to alter policies and institutions in certain key areas. For example, as noted earlier, the Cultural Revolution brought little concrete change in policy toward the family, indicating that the advance of socialism had so circumscribed the social influence of this institution that it was no longer a center of controversy. The disruption of the communications system, which was one of the campaign’s most startling features, seems in retrospect to have been a symptom rather than a motivating factor of the conflict.
that is, it was due to a struggle to control the communications network rather than to change it. The Maoists recognized early that they could not succeed without control of the public media, which were largely dominated by their opponents in the state and party bureaucracies. The effort to reverse this situation brought purges of party propaganda departments, suspension of key organs such as People’s Daily and Red Flag, physical seizures by the PLA and Red Guards of printing and broadcasting facilities, the emergence of a variety of unofficial and unauthorized Red Guard publications, and general decline and confusion in the output of authoritative information. However, once the capitalist-leaners were purged and some social order restored, the new leadership began to reconstruct an even more centralised, authoritative communications system, as Table V.2 indicates.

Dissatisfaction with the established pattern of political socialization centered, then, on the educational system and the general quality of public life. The details of the educational critiques and policies of the Cultural Revolution have been discussed earlier, but in simplest terms, the Maoist argued that the revisionists were structuring mass participation and organization to serve their own bureaucratic requirements and interests rather than to maximize popular political activity and bring cadres and citizens closer together. Liu Shaoqi served as the scapegoat for the principal example of this tendency. Much of the criticism against him was hyperbolic in tone and divorced from the context of his actions and statements, but there is little doubt that he represented a political style that emphasized the prerogatives of authority and the need for discipline and obedience from the rank of file. Charges that Liu wanted people to serve as “docile tools” and “stainless screws” and that he supported the idea of “joining the party to become an official” convey the spirit of Maoist fears that his administration encouraged a “subject” rather than “participant” political culture for the masses and an elitist orientation within the entrenched bureaucracy. In the socialist education campaigns and the early stages of the Cultural Revolution, the Linists apparently tried to limit mass criticism, to direct it away from the real centers of power, and to mobilize the established mass organizations for their own defense rather than for opening up the mass movement. The lessons likely to be gained from political action under these circumstances were of course in conflict with the expressed values of the official propaganda media. From the Maoist perspective, an effort to stimulate mass activity and crack the apparent invulnerability of elites and large-scale organization was necessary to make social practice supportive of the desired values.

The upheavals of 1966–1967 shuttered the institutional context of political socialization. Schools closed in the summer of 1966, not to reopen for formal instruction for two or three years. In the interim, educational facilities became staging areas for political debate, organization, and struggle, and in some cases command posts for student combat. Cadres at every level came under mass criticism, frequently leading to public humiliation and dismissal. The old mass organizations fell into disarray or inactivity, while new associations of Red guards and other so-called “rebel” groups sprang into action sometimes forming citywide federations and commanding real power and constituencies at the local level. As the communications system ceased to provide authoritative direction, these groups began to develop their own information, platforms, and publications in the midst of a barrage of competing political messages. This exercise in spontaneous mass action was not, however, to continue for long. Alarmed by the threat of anarchy and civil war, heightened by factionalism within its own ranks, the Maoist coalition began to suppress disorder.

For ordinary citizens, the Cultural Revolution also brought significant changes in socializing experiences. One change was increased popular participation in primary units, especially through the revolutionary committees set up in factories, schools, offices, hospitals, neighborhoods, and so forth. Mass representatives on these committees provided a vehicle for acting on Maoist themes, such as popular supervision and criticism of cadres, that the Cultural Revolution had advanced. The decentralizing tendencies of the campaign also made participation in primary units more significant by giving them a greater role in managing social services and making decisions in production and worker remuneration.

A second shift affecting the general population was a new cultural policy associated with Jiang Qing. The range of cultural expression was curtailed, with a sharp drop in the variety of

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books and periodicals published relative to the pre-1966 period. Magazine titles dropped from 790 in 1965 to 22 in 1968, while the number of newspapers dropped from 343 to 49 in the same period (see Table V.2). Public performances were limited mainly to a few revolutionary dramas, presented over and over on stage and in film. Worker-peasant art and creativity was praised, individual virtuosity downplayed, and most traditional and foreign cultural influences viewed with suspicion. Populism, nationalism, and Maoist revolutionary themes pervaded not only culture narrowly defined but also much of the general tone of Chinese public life.

Finally, the Cultural Revolution left a certain combativeness or struggle orientation that had not been so marked before the great campaign. Chapter 6 will address this trend more carefully; however it is important to note that in 1969–1976 there were many signs of popular conflicts or tensions, indicating that factionalism developed during the Cultural Revolution remained and that many were still willing to air disagreements publicly. While some of this discontent was directed against the Cultural Revolution policies, its spirit was in line with the campaign slogan "it is right to rebel."

POST-1976 SOCIALIZATION

The events that followed Mao’s death altered the pattern just described. Although new socialization processes are still evolving, with uncertain long-term effects, the major post-1976 changes can be summarized. Let us begin with education, which is the most significant area of change in socialization and where, by the fall of 1978, a new policy had taken shape.

At the heart of the new educational policy was a centralizing, regularizing trend aimed at raising academic standards. Time devoted to academic subjects increased, with a corresponding decline in the earlier stress on political study, labor experience, and practical applications. Classroom discipline, respect for teachers, and academic grading and examination systems were promoted. Educational authorities re instituted the policy that had existed before the Cultural Revolution of designating certain schools as key schools, with higher academic standards and an admissions policy that would channel the academically stronger students into them. Tracking within schools emerged, with official endorsement, dividing students into faster and slower classes according to academic performance.

The new policy had its greatest impact on universities, which began to recruit rapidly on the basis of new college entrance examinations given for the first time in December 1977 (producing nearly 300,000 new college students in 1978). Relaxation of the requirement for precollege work experience permitted many middle school graduates, apparently 20–30 percent of the new admissions, to enter college directly. By the 1980s, almost the entire entering cohort were fresh senior middle school graduates. Graduate study resumed, with much publicity given to research scholars and the necessity for advanced theoretical research. The new leaders invoked Mao’s name in blessing these changes, saying that he had never opposed examinations or academic study as such; the educational policy of the Cultural Revolution was generally linked to the Gang and denounced as sabotaging China’s modernization.

Official commentary acknowledged that these changes would favor children from cadre and intellectual families and from urban areas due to their advantages on the examinations determining entrance to key schools, faster classes, and higher-level schools. They acknowledged, too, that elimination of the three great differences—between town and country, worker and peasant, and mental and manual labor—would be delayed as a result. In this compromise on the broadest of Maoist socialization ideals was a fundamental shift of perspective. The defense of the shift argued that the differences cannot be eliminated quickly in any case, that they will disappear only as a result of material changes stemming from modernization, and that the new educational policy will contribute to their ultimate disappearance by hastening modernization; further, since modernization requires advanced science and technology and high performance in all intellectual sectors, those who work in these areas are really “laboring” people, too, working for socialist progress just as workers and peasants were. In other words, the egalitarian, classless society of the future can only be a product of material change, not of ideological rhetoric divorced from objec-
tive reality, so that the promotion of material change and modernization has first priority in the attainment of communism.

This invocation of the primacy of material factors, with its repudiation of ideological sloganizing and emphasis on subjective factors, was related to other changes in socialization practices. One of the most obvious changes was in the broader cultural and intellectual sphere; it experienced a marked opening to less politicized expression, a revival of many long-dormant academic and cultural publications, and some interesting debates on subjects virtually taboo during most of the previous decade.

The slogan of "let a hundred flowers bloom" took on new meaning in this atmosphere, which nourished a more open interest in foreign and traditional culture. Although in 1978 the regime moved to reaffirm ideological control by requiring allegiance to the "four fundamental principles," and in 1983 attacked many progressive ideas in the "oppose spiritual pollution" campaign, there are no signs of a return to the ideological terrorism of the Cultural Revolution. The "oppose spiritual pollution" campaign showed the power of forces scandalized by the rapid social and intellectual changes since 1977, but it also showed their weakness. The campaign was much milder in its methods than earlier, comparable campaigns. Moreover, it ran into considerable resistance at every level and was abandoned prematurely.

Greatly expanded study and research exchanges with foreign countries, although justified mainly in terms of the priority of scientific and technological development, has profound long-term implications for the socialization experiences of Chinese intellectuals. In 1984, it was reported that over 38,000 Chinese had gone overseas to study since 1978, approximately 26,000 funded by the government and 7,000 privately funded. By 1984, 14,000 had already returned to China. This six-year total already doubles the number of Chinese students abroad from 1961–1977. Moreover, only 10 percent of the older cohort had pursued advanced studies, compared to 78 percent of the current group. The returned foreign students may be expected to favor even more rapid modernization, and, just as importantly, the prospect of going abroad will induce more cosmopolitan interests and orientations among students and intellectuals. At the same time, the increasing presence of foreign teachers and students at Chinese universities brings exposure to and sometimes confrontation with the values and expectations of Western academics.

Finally, the "four modernizations" policy had potentially far-reaching effects on the political and social experience component of Chinese socialization. Emphasis on order and discipline, the abolition of revolutionary committees in primary units (and later, in 1979, in local government units), and the reinstitution of the old mass organizations all pointed toward more structured and regularized forms of participation. The defense of professional and technical authority (especially in factories and schools) coupled with official praise for individual professional achievement seemed likely to encourage sharper awareness of social stratification. Greater use of material incentives and acknowledgment of consumer demands raised further questions about the possible growth of revisionism and materialism in Chinese society. Of special concern is the household responsibility system in agriculture, which has led to much greater disparities of wealth in rural areas, although the regime claims that neither exploitation nor economic polarization is occurring. The revolutionary values discussed at the beginning of this chapter are still affirmed, but the significance of these values in controlling individual behavior and the definitions of the values themselves have shifted enormously from the Cultural Revolution. The new policies as a whole have shifted the thrust of socialization practices away from the highly politicized populism of the Cultural Revolution and toward themes more supportive of social order and discipline, economic performance, and professional-educational advancement and achievement.

We conclude with four observations that summarize, or possibly refine, the preceding discussion. First, there are elements of continuity in PRC socialization policy that counterbalance some of the fluctuations described. In rural China (where over 80 percent of the population resides), the structures of family and village life have been relatively stable since the early 1960s, despite some calls during the Cultural Revolution for radicalization of kinship and production units. The greatest policy inno-
vations at the family level in recent decades have been the household responsibility system and population policy. In terms of socialization, the most important changes have been the gradual development of better rural educational opportunities and communications facilities, deepening the incorporation of rural China into the national educational and communications networks. Post-1976 policies support continued expansion of primary education and continued efforts to modernize the countryside. They continue to support as well the spare-time, part-time schools that are particularly important in the countryside and are pushing new adult education programs. Work experience and practical training have been reduced but not eliminated in the new school curriculum. In short, official socialization policies have maintained a steady emphasis on the needs of rural areas and their integration with the more modern sectors.

Moreover, despite the post-1976 cultivation of the intellectual elite and a shift of emphasis on the “red-expert” scale, the PRC remains a highly politicized and relatively egalitarian society by world standards. Social and economic inequalities existed throughout the Maoist period and may grow in its aftermath. Deviance from official norms was possible before Mao’s death and may be more common in the future. Nonetheless, highly politicized official norms still dominate the educational, communications, and organizational networks, exerting strong pressures toward political sensitivity and conformity. The content of these norms has never been static, with changes particularly evident since Mao’s death. But there are also core themes—acceptance of party leadership, service to state and society, the illegitimacy of gross inequalities, and emphasis on collective over individual goals and obligations—that are well entrenched in the official political culture that dominates the socialization process.

Second, the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath suggest that cumulative Maoist socialization efforts have had a significant impact on popular political orientations, in terms of mass identification with the national political system, awareness of political issues, and willingness to participate in the politics of primary units. The strength and spontaneity of Red Guard involvement in the Cultural Revolution, largely in affirmation of Maoist values, was testimony to the impact of Maoist socialization on the younger generation educated since 1949. Whatever the degree of motive of participation in that campaign, it represented an open questioning of or assault on political authorities, an experience not likely to be forgotten by any who experienced it. The simmering basic-level politics that followed over the next decade, with unrest in schools and factories and large-scale demonstrations such as the 1976 Tiananmen Incident, indicate active participatory tendencies in Chinese society—tendencies that are not necessarily antiestablishment but that are not necessarily confined to unquestioning support of political elites either. Whether these will endure under a post-Mao leadership that is more hostile toward factionalism and disorder than was Mao remains to be seen, but it is not likely that they will disappear without a trace, without a more direct confrontation between participatory and order themes than has yet taken place.

Third, Chinese socialization processes have produced among the citizenry a mixed subject-participant political culture in the terminology of Almond and Powell, meaning that most citizens fill “subject roles” in which they identify with the national political system and are involved in implementation of its policies, and that some fill “participant roles” of attempting to influence policy making. The emergence of this political culture in a society previously characterized by little popular involvement in politics is the most significant product of post-1949 political socialization. Beyond that, it is difficult to specify the dimension of the mix and, in particular, to assess the frequency and character of participant orientations. A few additional comments are in order, however. First, the subject-participant mix, whatever its order, however. First, the subject-participant mix, whatever its configuration, does not guarantee unanimous support for political elites and their policies; broad citizen identification with the system has not precluded diverse kinds of opposition and dissent, ranging from passive resistance to active criticism. Effective opposition is rare, given elite resources, but the spread of subject and participant roles does not produce uniformity of attitudes.
toward different leaders and policies. The second point is that participants at roles are more common among the urban and better-educated strata, which are the recipients of the most intense forms of political education. The Cultural Revolution was primarily an urban phenomenon, as were most post-1949 episodes of pronounced popular political activism—land reform being a major exception. In assessing the significance of this pattern, we must remember that the spread of education and modernization will increase the proportion of the population exposed to more intense politicization experiences.

It should be remembered that the analysis of popular political roles and attitudes is complicated by the fact that opportunities for participation are concentrated in very small-scale units. For most Chinese, the main arena for political action is a primary unit: production brigade or team, factory or enterprise, office, school, or neighborhood. Participation in the affairs of such units can be highly political and can cement ties to the national political system, but it is also difficult for the analyst to observe this participation systematically. Moreover, these units are defined by nonpolitical functions and are permeated with highly personalized relationships (kinship, neighbor, peer group, small-group leader or follower, etc.), making it difficult to say exactly when and how their activities are "political."

Fourth, the clash of political cultures, that is, the confrontation between different images of what the Chinese political community should be, is unresolved. Despite the bankruptcy of the Gang of Four, it should not be assumed that Cultural Revolution values have been eliminated from Chinese political consciousness. The return of Deng Xiaoping showed the resilience of his values despite vehement attacks; and the values of revolutionary class struggle are undoubtedly harbored by many just as stubbornly. The fact that there is no legitimate opposition in China gives a misleading impression of unanimity. In the meantime, in part as a result of its policies, forces have emerged that pressure the government's position from the right, desiring more bourgeois freedoms, less ideological control, and more participatory politics. The regime's middle road of modernization, controlled by orthodoxy, is difficult to define. Its two greatest assets in political socialization will be the length of time it has to educate and influence the Chinese population and the persuasive power of its successes in modernization.