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CIVIL SOCIETY IN POST-MAO CHINA

by

Yuguo Zhang
B.A., The Chinese People's University for Offices, 1985

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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of
Political Science

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Name: Yuguo Zhang
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: Civil Society in Post-Mao China
Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Michael Howlett

Dr. Peggy Meyer
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University
Senior Supervisor

Dr. F. Q. Quo
Professor
Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University
Supervisor

Dr. Jan W. Walls
Professor
Department of Communications
Simon Fraser University
External Examiner

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Abstract

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the Communist system was undergoing a remarkable transformation, civil society, a realm outside the Communist party-state structure, began to attract many political scientists' attention. Specialists on East Europe cited the emergence of civil society as one of the factors contributing to the downfall of socialism in that region. A number of sinologists applied this concept to an analysis of developments in China.

The main focus of this thesis is to analyze the emergence of civil society in post-Mao China. This thesis elaborates a civil society model in contra-distinction to the totalitarian model and then applies this civil society model to the analysis of China. It explores the roots of civil society in traditional China, analyzing its strengths and weaknesses. It argues that the seeds of civil society could be found in traditional China but not a full-blown civil society.

In its analysis of post-Mao China, this thesis focuses on the emergence of civil society in three spheres: the political, social and economic. This thesis finds both positive and negative factors affecting the development of civil society in post-Mao China. Democratic movements, the growth of a non-state economy and a growing number of semi-autonomous social organizations reflect the emergence of a nascent civil society in post-Mao China. However, Chinese political tradition and the coercive powers of the Chinese Communist Party are two major factors hindering the emergence of an institutionalized civil society in China.
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Introduction

During the mid-1980s when Mikhail Gorbachev put forward his new thinking with perestroika and glasnost, a large number of independent social groups and dissident groups emerged and played a very important role in the process of the fall of the Soviet communist regime. Meanwhile, similar cases could be found in other Eastern European countries, such as the Solidarity Movement in Poland, the Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia, as well as the "Second Economy" (autonomy in economic life) in Hungary. Most significantly, in the case of Poland, Solidarity had a direct impact on the collapse of the Polish communist system. For most scholars who study communist politics in transition, this political phenomenon is what they term an emerging civil society.

When the communist parties in these countries first took power via armed revolution, a new type of regime based on a so-called proletarian dictatorship was established. In reality, however, communist regimes, whether in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe or other communist countries such as China or North Korea, had never established people's democratic political systems as they claimed. Essentially, these communist regimes and communist political systems can be characterized as totalitarian. Totalitarian, as a form of non-democratic government, implies that the whole society is politically, economically, ideologically and socially controlled by the state with no room for independent social groups and autonomous social activity. In communist countries, the underlying manifestation of communist totalitarianism is the integration of the communist party and the state, i.e., party-state politics. At all levels of the political structure, the party's organizations are linked to and dominate the governmental institutions. The communist party directly or indirectly controls the executive, legislature and judiciary and all state political life. The purpose of party-state politics is not only political control, but also control of the economic, social, and cultural spheres. The party-state attempts to
completely "conquer" society by politicizing the entire society, leaving no space for social autonomy.

The notion of civil society does not allow the state totalitarian control over society. It requires a separation between society and state and a limitation of the state's power over society. In contrast to the communist totalitarian model, the model of civil society envisages a social domain in which autonomous social organizations can exist independently without control or interference of the party-state authority. The ideal of civil society also envisages autonomy of social organizations such as labour or student unions, religious and intellectual organizations, academic institutions, arts and cultural groups, and so on. The revival of civil society in the former Soviet and Eastern Europe in the 1980s may be understood as a historic trend in which society was trying to break away from the party-state.

Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato point out: "The early modern concept of civil society was revived first and foremost in the struggles of the democratic oppositions in Eastern Europe against the authoritarian socialist party-state."¹ To be sure, in Western political theory, the term civil society is often used as an analytical tool or a concept, rather than an ideal or goal. However, when some East European scholars and Western thinkers use the concept of civil society to look at the transformation of communist totalitarianism, in fact, it is not just used as an analytical tool, but also as a democratic ideal and social goal in opposition to the communist totalitarian system. For example, in his current work From Neo-Marxism to Democratic Theory,² Andrew Arato attempts to reconstruct democratic theory based on civil society, rather than classical Western political theory. In the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the notion of civil society was usually employed by scholars as both a significant concept and political ideal against the

political philosophy of communist totalitarianism, and in practice, the development of civil society has increasingly undermined communist totalitarian rule.

On the relationship between civil society and democratization in the historical transformation of communist systems, one can hardly find a causal link between an emerging civil society and a declining totalitarian regime. In other words, we cannot simply conclude that civil society is the unique cause of the downfall of communist regimes. As two Hungarian scholars suggest, we can hardly explain the fall of the communist regimes as being the result of an increase in popular pressure.\(^3\) Certainly, the transition of the communist totalitarian system was a complex process affected by both internal and external factors. Yet, the development of civil society was a major bottom-to-top factor that played a significant role in the fall of some East European communist totalitarian regimes, especially in Poland, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia. Thus, the study of civil society in communist regimes may help us explore how this factor from the grassroots undermines communist totalitarian rule.

From the perspective of political development, political democratization is seen as a key issue in the transition of communist systems. For some political theorists, a well-formed civil society is treated as the very first step on the path toward a full democratic political system. Martin K. Whyte writes: "the existence of a civil society can be considered as the infrastructure or as a precondition that makes the development of formal democracy possible. with formal democracy, once established, serving to protect and expand civil society."\(^4\) Accordingly, the study of civil society can also help us view the initial stage of democratization of former and existing communist countries.

Political scientists have realized the significance of civil society and made a great contribution to the study of civil society in the former Soviet Union and East European


communist countries. Similarly, analysis of the emerging civil society has increasingly became a major focus in the study of the political transformation of contemporary China. Following the 1989 Democratic Movement, concepts relating to civil society, such as "nascent civil society", "emergence of civil society", "public sphere", "society and party-state", attracted the attention of Western scholars, especially American sinologists. In April 1991, a special panel on "civil society in the People's Republic of China" was set up at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in New Orleans, USA. The theme "Did China ever enjoy a civil society?" was a major focus at an academic forum that was held in November 1991 at the Wilson Center in Washington D.C. In May 1992, a symposium on the topic "Chinese civil society and the public sphere" was held at the University of California, and some papers from this symposium were collected in the journal Modern China (April 1993).

Communist China now is in transition. Three major factors are playing a significant role in this historic transition, i.e., top-to-bottom, outside-to-inside and bottom-to-top. The first factor refers to both political and economic reform initiated by the communist leadership. The second encompasses the political, economic and cultural impact of the western world on China. The third factor is what we call civil society -- a society based on the grassroots which exists outside communist totalitarian control and gradually undermines the totalitarian rule of the Chinese communist regime. The study of civil society in China can provide us with a deep understanding of why and how an emerging civil society in China is contributing to the transition of the Chinese communist totalitarian system and, to what extent and to what degree the development of civil society is having a direct or indirect impact on the decline of the Chinese communist totalitarian system.

This thesis applies the concept and the modern ideal of civil society to examine the development of civil society in post-Mao China. Chapter One clarifies the concept and the

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6 ibid.
ideal of civil society by dealing with 1) two classical political philosophers' contributions to the study of civil society; 2) the modern concept and the ideal of civil society used to study the emergence of civil society in communist countries and 3) some generalizations and hypotheses that can be applied to the study of civil society in China. Chapter Two deals with elements and phenomena of civil society in traditional China, such as kinship societies, private academies, secret societies, study societies and student organizations. It argues that some seeds of civil society existed in traditional China. Chapter Three examines three spheres of the emerging civil society in post-Mao China. Chapter Four focuses on the 1989 Beijing Democracy Spring as a case study of the emerging civil society in the political sphere in contemporary China. It surveys the 1989 Democratic Movement and examines the roles of three social groups: students, intellectuals and urban workers. The final chapter elaborates the significant findings of this thesis and discusses the prospects for civil society in post-Deng Xiaoping China. It also explores both positive and negative factors that will affect the development of civil society in post-Deng China.

This thesis elaborates a civil society model against the CCP totalitarian model and an analytical pattern that can be applied to study civil society in China. The theoretical sources of this thesis include contributions of some East European thinkers and Western scholars (especially US and Canadian sinologists) as well as observations of Chinese émigrés. Some of the data in this thesis comes from Chinese books and journals published in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.
Chapter One
The Modern Concept and the Idea of Civil Society
- A Critical Review

A concept is an abstract and generic idea generalized from a particular instance or from a specific historical phenomenon. Each concept has its own historical origin and conceptual development. In the recent transformation of communist systems in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the concept of civil society has been widely used to examine the downfall of these communist totalitarian regimes.

The main purpose of this theoretical chapter is to clarify the concept of civil society and to find some generalizations or hypotheses that can be used to study civil society in China. The basic logic of this theoretical chapter is: first, to examine the classical approach to civil society and the ways in which current scholars apply the classical approach to an analysis of the transformation of communist politics; second, to explore the modern concept of civil society by focusing on some contemporary political specialists' contributions to this subject; and finally, to elaborate a theoretical model of civil society that can be applied to study civil society in China.

Classical Approaches and Current Critique

John Locke (1632-1704), like most liberal political philosophers, sees the idea of "state of nature" as a starting point of state theory. He points: "To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their action..."1. In the state of nature, Locke suggests that natural law is the highest principle to govern society, and this natural

law not only "obliges every one and reason" but also "teaches all mankind who will consult it." On the basis of his theological respective, natural law is interpreted as the "will of God", a "fundamental law of mankind".

Locke maintains that when men move out of the "state of nature" and get into a commonwealth, a new kind of political realm emerges, that is, civil society, an "arena where the inconvenience and insufficiencies of the state of nature are rectified though the mutuality of contract and consent." In Locke's political thought, a state of nature is one in which there is not a symmetric reciprocity, in which the stranger is seen as a definite threat. Hence, the state of nature must be replaced by an association of individuals that must be based on the consent of individuals. "The consent of individuals" implies "compact of association" by which the state of nature can be transformed into a civil society. At this point, it is obvious that Lockean civil society is theoretically based on his social contract theory.

Locke is quite of aware of the importance of freedom of social activity in a civil society. Free social activity, for Locke, is a precondition for civil society. Furthermore, he attempts to clarify the line between state and society, although a Lockean civil society does not have a very clear boundary from a "political society" or a "political state". Cohen and Arato argue that Locke seeks to differentiate between government and society. He distinguishes between surrendering power to society and to the government whom society sets up over itself, and even more emphatically between the dissolution of society and the dissolution of the government. 

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The notion of Lockean civil society reflects the character of his age when the political system in England was shifting from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy with a commonwealth state. In these historical circumstances, a Lockean civil society and absolute monarchy were essentially incompatible. As Locke argues, "It is evident that absolute monarchy which by some men counted for the only government in the world, is indeed inconsistent with civil society, and so can not be a form of civil government at all."7 Hence, Lockean civil society may be conceived as the first stage of political modernization, or, in Keith Tester's words, as a guarantee of political modernity.8

Zbigniew Rau, a native of Poland who served as legal advisor to the Executive Committee of the Solidarity Trade Union and, who is currently teaching Soviet government and Eastern European politics at the University of Texas at Austin, made a significant contribution by applying the notion of Lockean civil society to explain the emerging civil society in East European socialist countries. In his article, "Some Thoughts on Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Lockean Contractarian Approach",9 Rau has made a careful study of Locke's Two Treatises on Government (he already finished the Polish translation of this work). In defining Lockean civil society, Rau points out:

Briefly stated, Lockean civil society is a collective effort to enforce the individually realized natural concept of justice. In other words, it is a voluntary organization of individuals, set up as the result of the social contract, and centered around moral purposes, to which they desire to give a political dimension in public life... In sum, Lockean civil society is a moral community stated in extremely rational terms.10

The most significant finding of Rau's analysis of Lockean civil society is the concept of "collective effort for social justice". When applied to specific cases in Eastern Europe,
"collective effort" is translated as independent social groups and independent movements. More specifically, to Rau, "collective effort" refers to the efforts of non-governmental associations, such as Solidarity in Poland or Charter 77 in the former Czechoslovakia; "social justice" is interpreted as justice in the political realm: an ideal of democracy, liberty, social autonomy and independence.

G.W. Hegel (1770-1831), according to Cohen and Arato, was the first one who created the modern theory of civil society. He was "most successful in unfolding the concept as a theory of a highly differentiated and complex social order".11 Hegelian civil society can be understood only within the context of his complex system of political philosophy.

For Hegel, the term Geist (spirit) is treated as the core of his system of idealistic philosophy. The Geist which already existed before human history is a fundamental substance of this world. It "strives to realize itself both 'subjectively' through our own self-realization, and also 'objectively' through the dialectical transformation that constitutes history".12 The Geist has three phases: logic, natural and spiritual. In the spiritual phase, there are three sub-phases, i.e., subjective spirit, objective spirit and absolute spirit.

The phase of objective spirit involves three dimensions: abstract right, morality and ethical life (Sittlichkeit). Sittlichkeit is itself differentiated into a three-part framework of family, civil society and state.13 In an ethical sense, family, civil society and state are related to each other in the way of "negative process". Family, a "natural sexual union",14 is seen as a natural background for civil society. Individuals who grow up in and finally "leave" the family, then enter into a realm of "economics and economic relationships",

that is Hegelian civil society. Consequently, civil society is the result of the "disintegration of family", or a "negation of family". In Hegelian civil society, two contradictory principles exist simultaneously, i.e., the principle of particularity and the principle of universality. The only path through which the contradiction between "particularity" and "universality" is reconciled, to Hegel is, the Corporation that organizes particular interests, needs and satisfaction as universal.

However, the Corporation cannot essentially avoid the conflict of particular interests. Hegelian civil society, on the one hand, is a set of rational institutions for producing freedom and a realm by which life, liberty and property can be protected, and on the other hand is a "battlefield" where selfish interests clash. As Adam B. Seligman argues, civil society, for Hegel, is conceived as an arena of mutually conflicting particular interests, in which individuals cannot overcome the particularity to attain the universality. Consequently, the ethical or normative order in Hegelian civil society is finally "realized" only through its transformation into the Hegelian state, a realm of the truly ethical world. To Hegel, only the state can essentially and fully realize the "Idea of Freedom" by overcoming the conflict of particular interests or the contradiction of "particularity" and "universality". In Hegel's ethical life, the state is the highest normative order, and a civil society is merely seen as the second ethical root for the state (the first one is the family). The Hegelian state is a very totalitarian one which enshrines the

16In his work *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes: "The concrete person who is himself the object of his particular aims, is, as a totality of wants and mixture of caprice and physical necessity, one principle of civil society. But the particular person is essentially so related to other particular persons that each establishes himself and finds satisfaction by means of others, and at the same time purely and simply by means of the form of universality, the second principle here". Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, T. Knox, trans., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1952, pp. 122-123.
18Ibid.
21Ibid.
leadership principle and government by authority rather than by people's consent, which idolizes power as the supreme principle of human values.22

Peter G. Stillman, an associate professor of political science at Vassar College, examines Hegelian civil society by focusing on Hegel's Philosophy of Right. In his article: Hegel's Civil Society: A Locus of Freedom, Hegelian civil society is defined as "the realm of economics and economic relationship, the system of needs; of the law; and of the 'police', and the 'corporation'--the public authority having the responsibility of implementing and enforcing legislation; and the corporation being voluntary associations of those sharing vocation, purpose, or interest."23 Stillman maintains that the essence of Hegelian civil society is to actualize "the principle of the self-subsistent infinite personality of the individual, the principle of subjective freedom."24 He writes: "For Hegel, recognition is a central aspect of life. It involves self-definition; it leads to self-esteem, satisfaction, and psychological wholeness."25 Quite obviously, Stillman's focus in examining Hegel's political philosophy is not on the Hegelian state. Instead, his main focus is on some fundamental principles in Hegelian civil society, such as "individuality", "particularity", "self-recognition" and "voluntary association". This reflects Stillman's attempt to focus on "democratic aspects" of Hegel's political thought in opposition to communist political doctrine.

It is important to note that both Locke and Hegel were aware of the existence of a boundary between civil society and the state. However, Locke did not suggest an idea of "civil society versus (or against) the state", because Lockean civil society is essentially compatible with a commonwealth state (a state with a constitutional monarchy). Hegel has realized a tension between civil society and the state. He believes that conflict within civil

24Ibid. p. 624.
25Ibid. p. 634.
society could delegitimize the state. Thus, Hegelian civil society is eventually replaced by the Hegelian state with a kind of totalitarianism.

As we have understood from the above discussion, what some Eastern European scholars attempt in their study of classical civil society theory is mainly to rebuild an ideal of individuality and collective autonomy. Despite some historical limitations of Lockean or Hegelian civil society, these classical approaches to the study of civil society have provided current scholars with a basic assumption, an underlying political idea, to support the modern concept of civil society, that is, the assertion of the existence of an arena in which personal and collective interests, such as life, liberty and property, can be protected. This arena, to Locke, is an association of individuals by Contract, and to Hegel is a free association among individuals mainly depending upon the Corporation. This is a modern interpretation of the classical study of civil society.

**The Modern Concept of Civil Society**

When current scholars use the concept civil society, they do not move very far away from the fundamental implications of the classical concept in political theory, i.e., an association of individuals or the free association of man. The concept of civil society is usually defined as "independent self-organization", "plurality of social institutions", "complex association of individuals" or "self-organization in opposition to the state".

Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield define civil society as "the independent self-organization of society, the constituent parts of which voluntarily engage in public activity to pursue individual, group interests within the context of a legally defined state-society relationship."26

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Richard R. Weiner states: Civil society is understood as being composed of a plurality of social institutions such as productive units, households, voluntary organizations and community-based services legally guaranteed.27

Chandran Kukathas and David Lovell suggest: Civil society amounts to a complex association of individuals joined with one another in relations shaped by personal interest, economic interdependence, and legal and customary rules. It is a civil association including churches, clubs, business enterprises and so on.28

Frentzel-Zagorska argues: Civil society is usually defined in opposition to the state. It is a structure of the self-organization of society located outside the institutional framework of the state.29

In order to further clarify the concept "civil society", it is useful to explore the two words "civil" and "society". First, the word "civil" can be interpreted as "of or relating to citizens" or "of people-to-people or among the people" and, more specifically, it can be translated as "non-governmental" or "non-state-controlled" or "unofficial". Second, the word "society" generally is interpreted as an association of men and women. It may represent either any aggregate of human beings (a totality of individuals) in a broad sense or a specific voluntary association organized by individuals (citizens) in a narrow sense. Thus, the concept civil society can be defined either broadly or narrowly. It may be conceived as a non-state-centered domain, a realm existing outside the state structure in a broad sense. And narrowly defined, civil society may be simply understood as any given non-governmental association or group, i.e., a specific unofficial organization, such as a labor union or an intellectual association or a dissident group. In sum, the original

implication of the concept civil society can be described as a realm outside the state framework or as a specific unofficial or civil organization outside state control. Essentially, the fundamental implication of the term "civil society" refers to a society outside the state structure.

In fact we can hardly distinguish between the two when we use the concept of civil society. A realm outside the state structure is not an abstract concept. It always embodies various kinds of non-governmental organizations and their activities. Without those various civil organizations and their activities, one cannot imagine the existence of an unofficial realm outside the state. More precisely, a realm outside the state can be treated as the totality of all civil organizations and their autonomous activities. Hence, the broad and narrow definitions of civil society are essentially associated with each other, and one cannot separate the two when one talks about civil society.

The term civil society is used in this thesis to refer to a non-state-centered society, a realm not only outside the state framework but also outside state control and interference. In examining such a realm outside of the state structure, we must look at some specific non-state-controlled social groups or organizations. Furthermore, all private and social organizations and their activities can be relevant to the concept of civil society so long as they are private, independent and autonomous from state interference and control. In his work: Civil Society, Keith Tester makes this point very clear. He writes:

The label of "civil society" can be applied to all social relationships which involve the voluntary association and participation of individuals acting in their private capacities...In a simple and perhaps even simplistic formula, civil society can be said to equal the milieu of private contractual relationship...As such, civil society is clearly distinct from the state.³⁰

The Modern Implications of Civil Society

In recent analyses of communist systems in transition, the idea of civil society was revived as a theoretical tool to counter communist totalitarianism. Elizabeth Kiss argues: "In East-Central Europe, to emphasize the idea of civil society provided a powerful theoretical tool for criticizing communism." More explicitly, Giuseppe Di Palma states: the theory of civil society was retrieved as an existential counter image to communism's unique hegemonic project. Accordingly, the modern idea of civil society can be understood as a part of "democratic theory" in opposition to communist totalitarianism.

In modern civil society theory, the fundamental idea of civil society is "social autonomy versus state control". This idea emphasizes the existence of an independent and autonomous domain outside the party-state structure and a separation between state and society. This "social autonomy versus state control" approach was often employed by scholars to study the relationship between society and state in communist countries. As Martin K. Whyte argues: "the essence of the term civil society involves the idea of the existence of institutionalized autonomy for social relationship and associational life, autonomy vis-à-vis the state. Thus the existence of a well-formed civil society implies a degree of separation in the relationship between state and society."  

The ideal of "social autonomy versus state control" is based on the hypothesis of free association among people and of organizational autonomy or independence. Freedom of association refers to the fact that individuals have an absolute right to set up their own organizations and to pursue their own organizational objectives, such as protection of collective interests. "Autonomy" or "independence" implies that a civil organization must

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be "self-motivated", "self-directed" and "self-regulated". In this sense, we may see individualism (individual is supreme in a given society) as a foundation of the ideal of civil society.

As for the idea of "social autonomy versus state control", we should note that, both in theory and in reality, the state structure itself is a component of the system of society in a given aggregate of human beings. In other words, the state is part of the entire society and we cannot absolutely separate the state from society. However, this does not mean that the state structure is the center of the entire society. In a communist totalitarian state where the party-state completely controls the society, there is not a pure "civil" society due to the " politicization of society" and the "overlap between state and society". Thus, the assertion of a separation between state and society in a communist totalitarian state can only be understood as establishing a boundary between the party-state and autonomous social life, and as limiting the power of the party-state.

The modern idea of civil society envisages not just a separation between the party-state and social autonomy, but also a notion of "civil society against the state". In my words, the idea of "civil society against the state" can be interpreted as an "anti-state approach" to modern civil society theory. In the study of communist regimes in transition, this "anti-state approach" has been widely used to look at some independent social organizations and their roles in the downfall of communism. For example, in her article "Civil Society in Poland and Hungary", Janina Frentzel-Zagorska defines Solidarity as a "spontaneous organization of the emerging civil society against the distrusted ruling elite which was treated as illegitimate".

In conclusion, the essence of the modern idea of civil society is to suggest the existence of a realm outside or against the existing party-state and a realm through which (civil society) personal and collective interests can be protected, through which state control over the whole of the society can be prevented, through which state power can be limited, though which social justice and legitimacy can be derived from the grassroots level, and finally through which an embryonic form of democratic society may be shaped step by step.

**Functions and Scope of Civil Society**

What role does civil society play in the communist party-state? What are the social functions of a civil society? In her article "Constitution and Functioning of a Civil Society in Poland", Maria Markus suggests four functions of civil society:

- elaboration of those normative structures through which group identities and interests are defined;
- elaboration and expression of the encompassing collective identity of the given society, including the definition of its traditions, its hierarchy of values and norms of social behavior;
- control over state politics from the viewpoint of their consistency with the socially constitutive value systems;
- self-defense of the society in cases where this consistency is violated.\(^{36}\)

Maria Markus' perspective on the functions of a civil society focuses mainly on the protection of group (organizational) identity and interests, limitation of state politics, and the self-defense of society. From an anti-state approach, one could argue that the last two - limitation of state power and self-defense of society - may be considered as the essential functions of civil society under communist totalitarian rule. This thesis suggests that, under a communist totalitarian system, the fundamental social function of a civil society is to create significant popular pressure to minimize the party-state and maximize society.

Although the function of civil society cannot be described as overthrowing the communist totalitarian system, a civil society unquestionably creates a social environment in which a democratic society can be established.

How big is the social realm outside the party-state? What is the scope of a civil society? On this question, Zbigniew Rau has provided us with an excellent analysis. He suggests that the social realm outside the party-state network (what he calls "spheres of social life that open to civil society's activity") involves at least five aspects of social life: economy, communications, politics, education, science and culture and religious life.

These activities are characterized in the following way:

- Civil society's activity in the economy is visible in the operation of such institutions as banks, corporations, or stock exchanges, which are involved in investment, production, trade, and so on.
- In the sphere of communications, civil society is active through a network of media, public opinion.
- In politics, civil society is expressed through political parties, electoral coalitions, and lobby groups, which attempt to gain or maintain state power and put pressure on those in power from outside the state structure.
- In education, science and culture, civil society is expressed by the existence of schools, learned societies, and foundations, which develop intellectual life.
- In the area of religious life, civil society operates through churches, religious institutions, and groups, shaping the spiritual development of their members.

Zbigniew Rau makes a very clear division between civil society and the party-state by arguing that those social spheres under the organizational or financial control of the state, such as a "central bank", "nationalized company", "state-run television channel", "state-controlled party", or "state-run school" do not belong in civil society. According to Rau, it is quite obvious that the notion civil society seems to be a multi-dimensional term involving almost all aspects of social life. This multi-dimensional interpretation of the

38 Ibid, pp. 5-6.
scope of civil society implies that civil society has multi-dimensional conflicts and tensions with the communist party-state, and civil society should be fully divorced from the communist party-state.

Current Analysis of Civil Society in China

The essence of CCP party-state politics is a complete monopolization over Chinese society, i.e., the CCP communist totalitarian regime attempts to control the entire society politically, economically and socially. In the last decade when the CCP totalitarian regime has been declining, both scholars and democratic activists in China have been seeking a democratic doctrine to use in opposition to party-state totalitarian politics. "Democracy", "liberty", "human rights" and "rule of law" were terms widely used in criticizing the CCP totalitarian regime. The idea of civil society is quite a new notion for most Chinese scholars, and only a few of them have used the concept of civil society to study the transformation of the CCP totalitarian regime. Furthermore, some Chinese scholars maintain that analysis of civil society in China is a mislinkage between Western political philosophy and the concrete Chinese situation.39

For some western sinologists, the theme of the emerging civil society in China has become a major focus in the study of the declining CCP totalitarian regime. According to Heath B. Chamberlain, current analysis of the emergence of civil society tends to fall into one of three categories:

1) Revolutionary Perspective, "those that treat civil society as the product of a 'revolutionary moment,' a sudden forging of a united front among disparate social

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elements, taking shape essentially "at the barricades," such as the work of Lawrence
Sullivan (1990), Clemens Ostergaard (1989) and Jonathan Unger (1991);

2) **Anti-elite Perspective**, "those that see it as a recently emergent 'counter elite
structure', restricted mainly to urban-based intellectuals and students, yet firmly established
and potentially expandable", such as Merle Goldman (1991), Andrew Nathan (1990),

3) **Historical Perspective**, "those that view it in a longer-range historical perspective,
as a phenomenon clearly evident decades (if not a century ago) and now, after years of
forcible suppression, reasserting itself", such as T. Gold (1990) and R. Keith Stopper
(1982).40

Regardless of their differences, all three approaches, according to Heath B.
Chamberlain, see emerging civil society in China as "existing outside the orbit of the
state", as "beyond the control of government", as "autonomous vis-à-vis state officials."41
Chamberlain's summarization of the current study of civil society in China indicates that
the emergence of a civil society in this communist regime is also conceived as a counter
image to CCP totalitarian politics, which is, therefore, similar to the study of the emerging
civil society in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

This thesis elaborates a theoretical model of civil society which can be applied to the
CCP totalitarian system and used to elaborate the scope and the analytical units in the
study of civil society in China. The first elaboration may provide us a theoretical model
based on the ideal of civil society to criticize the CCP totalitarian model. The second
elaboration may provide us with a systematic method for the study of civil society in
China.

41Ibid, p. 204.
The CCP Totalitarian Model Versus Civil Society

This thesis suggests that the modern idea of civil society is a significant ideal that can be developed as a new type of modern "democratic theory" (civil society model). If we compare the CCP totalitarian model with the modern civil society model, we find that the modern idea of civil society is a powerful theoretical instrument being used against the CCP totalitarian model. Table One shows that the civil society model is fully a counter image to the CCP communist totalitarian model. It is clear that the twofold division of the CCP totalitarian model and the civil society model highlights the underlying conflict and tension between the CCP party-state and a civil society.

Table One  The Alternative Images of the CCP Totalitarian Model and the Civil Society Model: Some Underlying Assumptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The CCP Totalitarian Model</th>
<th>Civil Society Model</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politics</strong></td>
<td>Party-state politics</td>
<td>Popular participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communist one-party-system</td>
<td>Multi-party system</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political autocracy</td>
<td>Political rights and freedoms,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Party Leadership&quot;</td>
<td>Political democracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economy</strong></td>
<td>Centrally planned economy</td>
<td>Free economy and market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>State ownership system</strong></td>
<td>Private ownership system,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Socialist Road&quot;</td>
<td>Economic privatization.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State and Society</strong></td>
<td>Maximum state and minimum society</td>
<td>Minimum state and maximum society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politicization of society</td>
<td>Socialization of politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control of various social groups</td>
<td>Free association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
<td>Ideological monopolization.</td>
<td>Free flow of ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Marxism- Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought&quot;</td>
<td>Ideological pluralism.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social justice</strong></td>
<td>Imposed from the top to the bottom.</td>
<td>Transferred from the bottom to the top.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State power</strong></td>
<td>Absolute power</td>
<td>Limited power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Control of the &quot;ruling minority&quot; (CCP)</td>
<td>Autonomy of the &quot;ruled majority&quot; (the people)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The current CCP totalitarian political philosophy, to some extent, can be characterized by Deng Xiaoping's "Four Cardinal Principles": 1) upholding the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, 2) upholding the socialist road, 3) upholding the people's democratic dictatorship and 4) upholding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Obviously, the first principle, the leadership of the CCP, is the foundation of CCP totalitarian rule. Party leadership implies that the CCP possesses the dominant power over state, government and society. To uphold the socialist road is to stress the state ownership system, an economic foundation for socialist China. This principle, in fact, is an assertion of CCP economic control. The third principle, both in theory and practice, is self-contradictory, because there is only a dictatorship of a small group of people, and there is never a so-called "people's democratic dictatorship". In fact, this principle just reflects the CCP dictatorship, since Chinese Communist rulers have claimed to be representatives of the people since 1949. The final principle denotes the ideological control of the CCP totalitarian regime.

In contrast with the CCP totalitarian model, a civil society model does not accept the "Four Cardinal Principles". In the light of the civil society model, 1) the CCP political autocracy and dictatorship should be replaced by a multi-party system with a reasonable degree of political competition and popular political participation in the decision making process, 2) the economic monopoly of the CCP totalitarian regime should be replaced by a "capitalist road" with a free economy and a private ownership system, and 3) Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought should be replaced by ideological pluralism.

One should stress that the civil society model elaborated above can only be seen as an ideal type model. The civil society model has drawn a picture of democratic society toward which the CCP totalitarian model "should" or "ought to" be transformed. In a theoretical sense, this ideal type can be a powerful theoretical weapon against the CCP.

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totalitarian model, and a useful way of viewing the conflict and tension between the CCP party-state and civil society.

**Three Spheres of Analysis in the Study of Civil Society in China**

Zbigniew Rau's broadly defined scope of civil society is very significant to find the locus of a civil society. On the basis of Zbigniew Rau's perspective, one could examine civil society in China by focusing on any one aspect or all aspects of "social life that opens to civil society" i.e., economy, communications, politics, education, science and culture or religious life. This thesis elaborates an analytical model that deals with civil society in China mainly in three different "spheres", i.e., political, social and economic. According to Rau, the scope of a civil society is much more than these three spheres. Yet, these three spheres, in fact, are major loci of civil society in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Two</th>
<th>Three Spheres of Analysis in the Study of Civil Society in China</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Unit</td>
<td>Dissident organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifestation</td>
<td>Democratic movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Popular demands for Political Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Democratization of state politics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To elaborate such a analytical model is helpful to define both the analytical focus and the analytical unit. As we can see from Table Two, each sphere has its specific analytical unit and civil society in each sphere has a different manifestation and developmental pattern. Moreover, this analytical model also provides us with a "systematic approach" to viewing civil society in China. This "systematic approach" differs from what has been done
by other current scholars in that it adopts a relatively broad focus in examining civil society in China.

Analysis of the political sphere essentially is an adoption of the "anti-state approach" (civil society against the CCP communist party-state) to studying civil society in China. The primary focus is opposition political groups or pro-democracy organizations with their own political goals. The concept of civil society in the political sphere may be defined as an independent political domain outside the CCP party-state structure and against the CCP totalitarian regime. Analysts of the political sphere frequently treat democratic movements in China as a "case study" in understanding the emergence of civil society in China.43 For most analysts, political sphere analysis is the major approach to the study of civil society in China, such as the "revolutionary approach" and the "anti-elite approach" summarized by Chamberlain.

Civil society in the social sphere refers to those social organizations which are relatively free from the party-state organizational network and exist legally outside CCP totalitarian control. Social sphere analysts focus mainly on the development of social organizations and how these unofficial organizations affect the CCP party-state. Gordon White, in his paper "Prospects for Civil Society in China: A Case Study of Xiaoshan City", maintains that social organizations (or mass organizations) should be an important analytical unit in the study of civil society in China.44

Economic sphere analysts examine civil society in China by focusing on the private economic domain or on non-state economic organizations outside the state economic structure. For example, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang defines civil society in the economic sphere as a realm of non-governmental private economic activities and sectoral economic

interests. On the basis of her definition, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang pays careful attention to a collective printing factory in Beijing, attempting to examine how a non-state economic organization plays a role in economic life.

To be sure, the emerging civil society in post-Mao China is a multidimensional social phenomenon. Without taking into account these three spheres, we can hardly have a general picture of the development of civil society in China. This thesis maintains that the major locus of an emerging civil society in post-Mao China is in the political sphere. In other words, an emerging civil society in post-Mao China is mainly a political phenomenon associated with China's political democratization. At the same time, this thesis suggests that an emerging civil society in post-Mao China can be also examined in the social sphere by looking at the development of non-governmental organizations. The expanding non-governmental domain is an important locus of an emerging civil society in post-Mao China, even though existing non-governmental social organizations are not fully outside CCP party-state control. In addition to the political and social spheres, this thesis also sees the economic sphere as a significant locus of the emerging civil society in post-Mao China. With the transformation of the CCP's traditional command economy (centrally planned economy) and the expansion of the non-state economy, a non-state centered economic structure increasingly affects CCP totalitarian control over economic life. Accordingly, we must not neglect civil society in the economic sphere when we examine emerging civil society in post-Mao China.

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Chapter Two
Seeds of Civil Society in the Chinese Tradition

If we consider all kinds of social life and social organizations outside the state as being relevant to civil society, we may find some significant elements of civil society in traditional China. If "civil society" is conceived as an institutionalized, well-formed and legalized domain outside state control or against state interference, then such a civil society never emerged or existed in imperial China. This chapter will not argue that there was a civil society in traditional China. Rather, it attempts to explore some seeds and elements of civil society in the Chinese tradition. The underlying argument is that the seeds of civil society can be found in three categories: 1) a realm that was relatively free from imperial state control but not completely independent of the imperial state structure, such as the clan (relatively free and autonomous organizations based on kinship in rural areas in the Qing), the Dong Lin (intellectual societies in the Ming and Qing) and guilds in Hankou and Beijing during Qing dynasty; 2) those clandestine organizations existing completely outside the state structure, such as Bai Lian Jiao (White Latus Societies, secret religious organizations) and Hui Dang\(^1\) (underground political organizations) and 3) those civil organizations emerging in the process of the decline of imperial China, i.e., at the beginning of this century.

Clan: A Kinship Society in Chinese History

In the thousands of years of the Chinese feudal system, the Chinese family was the basic unit of Chinese society. Due to the absence of a well-developed system of civil law to regulate relationships among individuals, kinship bonds and ties became the main foundation

\(^{1}\)In Chinese, Hui may be translated as "society", and Dang means "party" or "association". Thus, Hui Dang can be conceived as "organization" or "association".
of social relationships in Chinese traditional society, and the clan played a very important role in traditional social life.

The Clan (in Chinese Zu) refers to the network of kinship that involves almost every member related to the nuclear family. According to Hu Hsien Chin, Zu is defined as "a group descended from one ancestor who settles in a certain locality or neighborhood."2 Some western scholars also translate Zu as "sib"3 or as "lineage" that refers to kinship groups sharing the same surname and tracing their descent through the male line to a common ancestor.4 The Zu in Chinese history may be seen as a kinship society or group that consists of those who have the ties of blood relationship and those who do not have around the nuclear family. Historically, in Chinese rural areas (villages), although the Zu relationship was not the unique social relationship, the Zu did provide a high degree of cohesion in rural communities. All the village organizations, except possibly those based on economic status, were determined directly or indirectly by Zu relationships.5

The Zu had its own administrative structure and performed some social functions. Each Zu elected a senior member as its head (Zu Gang) and set up a Zu "government" to deal with daily affairs for the Zu society. Some large Zu were divided into branches (Fang) that were managed by sub-Zu Gang (Fang Gang). Zu activities mainly involved the following six aspects: compilation and revision of genealogical records; ancestor worship and the institution of ancestral halls, ritual land, and ancestral graveyards, material assistance to Zu members, education of young clansmen, punishment of misconduct and settlement of disputes, and finally, self-defense.6

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Each Zu usually possessed a piece of ritual land that constituted the economic basis of the Zu organization. The ritual land occupied a large proportion of the total land in the village. The land possessed by the Zu at times constituted 75 percent of all land under cultivation, but ordinarily the proportion was between 23 and 40 per cent.7

During the Qing (1644-1911) dynasty, the nuclear family was still a self-sufficient social and economic unit. In his analysis of socioeconomic organizations in Qing China, Richard Smith regards the Zu as one of the main aspects of the informal structure of the state in the rural area8. In the Qing period, the Zu undertook some important social responsibilities, such as providing welfare, maintaining local order, encouraging economic cooperation, and securing educational opportunities for Zu members9.

As a large civil domain in rural areas in traditional China, to what extent did the Zu possess organizational autonomy? As we have seen, the Zu in Chinese traditional society was a realm that existed outside of the imperial state, but it was frequently controlled and constrained by the government. Since the Zu had significant political, economic and social capabilities, the imperial government authorities "never abandoned their effort to limit the political and economic power of clans and to supervise closely their social activities."10 In examining the relationship between the Zu and the state in the Qing period, Richard Smith writes:

The state recognized the positive role of the clan in promoting orthodox values, providing social service, and maintaining local control. At the same time, however, it feared well-organized but unofficial corporate entities. Thus, on the one hand, the Qing government willingly rewarded meritorious clansmen and exhorted clans to compile genealogies and to establish ancestral shrines, clan schools, and charitable lands (Yi Tian). On the other, it sought whenever possible to make the clan system an adjunct of the official Bao-Jia local control apparatus by requiring officially sanctioned

7Ibid. pp. 36-37.
9Ibid. p. 69.
10Ibid. p. 71.
The Dong-Lin Academy in the Ming Period (1368-1644)

The academy (in Chinese Shu-Yuan) was an important part of the educational system and intellectual life in traditional Chinese society. Shu-Yuan may refer to both a private school and a private academic institute existing outside of the imperial governmental educational structure. As a private intellectual center, Shu-Yuan developed very rapidly during the tenth century when government schools and Buddhist monasteries were declining.

In the early Ming period, Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, highly encouraged the development of Shu-Yuan in order to evoke a cultural restoration in the wake of civil war. One-third of Shu-Yuan in the entire Ming dynasty were established during the Chia-Ching reign (1522-1566). The Guang-Dong provincial gazette in 1558 recorded: "Today everywhere throughout the country, schools have been established; and education is enlightened. Academies are like the family, village, and district school."

With the rapid spread of the private Shu-Yuan, intellectuals began to aspire to institutional autonomy and to seek social independence. As a result, the relationship between the intellectuals and the imperial government became more and more ambivalent. Furthermore, by the late Ming period, growing political despotism and corruption caused strong criticism from both upright officials of the imperial government and fair-minded intellectuals. Among the various Shu-Yuan in the late Ming, the Dong-Lin Academy was a significant example that reflected the conflicts and contradictions between intellectuals and the Ming imperial government.

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1. Ibid. pp. 70-71.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p. 37.
Gu Xiancheng (Ku Hsien-Ch'eng), the prime founder of the Dong Lin Academy, was born in Wuxi (Wu-hsi) Jiangsu province in 1550. By the time he was thirty years old, Gu Xian-Cheng had passed the Jin-Shi\textsuperscript{15} examination and become a high official in the imperial government. From 1583 till 1594, Gu Xiancheng served as a supervising secretary of the Board of Civil Office under the Ming imperial government in Beijing.\textsuperscript{16} Due to his upright and fair-minded personality, Gu Xiancheng became a leader of the "Righteous Circles" in the imperial government. In 1594, due to his conflicts with the emperor, Gu Xiancheng was dismissed from the imperial government and forced to become a commoner without any official post.

In 1604, ten years after his 'retirement' from office, Gu Xiancheng and his followers set up the Dong-Lin Academy and Gu Xiancheng was officially put in charge of the academy as its "president". Under the leadership Gu Xiancheng, the Dong-Lin Academy gradually became a very well-planned and well-organized private academy. According to the "Four Essentials" of Gu Xiancheng, the goals of the Dong-Lin Academy were described as:

1) To know nature, i.e., to have the correct notion about human nature;
2) To have a firm objective, which consists in emulating the action of the sages;
3) To respect the Classics and acquire the right principles by a sound study of them;
4) To have the right motive; i.e., that of moral advancement, in taking part the conference.\textsuperscript{17}

The Dong-Lin Academy was much more than a pure private academy. It also had an impact on the politics of the late Ming period. Although its rules for academic meetings forbade "criticism of authorities and local conditions", members of the Dong-Lin Academy, in fact, had a deep concern about state politics. An antithetical couplet (Dui Lian) of the

\textsuperscript{15} Jin-Shi was an academic title in China's traditional education. In the "scholar-official" system, scholars with the title Jin-Shi would have a high position in the imperial government.


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.
Dong-Lin Academy stated: we should be concerned about Jia Shi (family affairs), Guo Shi (state affairs) and Tian Xia Shi (affairs all over the world).18

In the later Ming period, the Dong-Lin played a considerable role as a center of political criticism and agitation and of non-governmental public opinion with a significant influence on the Court.19 Beyond their lectures, Gu Xiancheng and other members of the Dong-Lin Academy frequently criticized the central government.20 Gu Xiancheng himself had considerable influence on state politics. As Frederic Wakeman Jr. writes: "The primary extension of the Tung-lin (Dong-Lin) group into politics was the work of Ku Hsien-ch'eng (Gu Xiancheng) himself, via both a stream of letters sent to friends throughout the empire, and a series of widely disseminated pamphlets."21 Under the impact of the Dong-Lin Academy, a "righteous circles" group which was called the "Dong-Lin Party" gradually formed again in the imperial government. Undoubtedly, the emergence of the Dong-Lin Academy and the activities of the Dong-Lin Academy intellectuals in the later Ming provide us with a significant historical case study which illustrates the efforts of private academies to attain relative independence in intellectual life and to have some impact on imperial politics.

**Guilds in Beijing and Hankou during the Qing Dynasty**

In late imperial China while Chinese urbanized society was expanding, a new type of business organization - guilds (Hang Hui) - gradually began to emerge. As civil associations of people with similar interests or pursuit, guilds were a significant phenomenon in traditional China.

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19 Ibid.
In his study of Beijing guilds during the late 1800s and early 1900s, J. S. Burgess found five different types of Chinese guilds, namely: 1) the religious fraternity ("the secret anti-dynastic and revolutionary societies which have permeated the empire for a century past and more"); 2) the professional guild ("guilds that sell their services rather than manufacture goods...such groups as the actors, the barbers, the story tellers and the blind minstrels"); 3) the craft guild ("societies composed of workmen who make articles by hand"); 4) the commercial guild ("societies of merchants of one occupation who sell goods, retail or wholesale") and 5) the provincial guild (organization that "consists entirely of officials and merchants foreign to the province in which it is situated").

Guilds in Beijing grew up without legal recognition by the government However, in fact, the government still "gave tacit recognition to the guilds in allowing them to maintain their particular monopolies and in connection with taxation." With the tacit recognition of the government, guilds enjoyed relative autonomy in dealing with their own businesses. "The guildsmen are urged to settle affairs among themselves in their own way and, if possible, to have nothing whatsoever to do with the officials."

In his work, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796-1899*, William T. Rown suggests that despite of official control, there was not a "heavy-handed bureaucratic domination" in Hankow. Rather, guilds and other voluntary associations became progressively more powerful, and "these groups increasingly sought to identify their interest with those of a broader urban community." William T. Rown's study reaches a significant conclusion that a high degree of *de facto* social autonomy could be found in Hankow in the 19th century. He writes:

In nineteenth-century Hankow, it seems, there was an unusually wide gap between *de jure* and *de facto* systems of political

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authority. Thus a substantial degree of \textit{de facto} autonomy had emerged, the real power balance between officials and the leaders of local society; over the course of the century the balance shifted very much toward the latter.\textsuperscript{26}

In Hankow during the 1800s, there existed a \textit{de facto} social autonomy embodied mainly in the commercial society. William T. Rown found guilds, such as the salt guild and the tea guild, existed and operated relatively freely from the local authorities. They had substantial autonomy in handling their own business. As self-organized commercial organizations, guilds represented the interests of guildsmen and often negotiated with local governmental commercial controllers for protection of guildsmen's interests.

The Hankow Salt Guild (Hui-yen kung so) was one example. It consisted of two groups, the salt brokers and the transport merchants who "had a major say in running their own affairs" and could effectively influence the salt policy of the local authorities. William T. Rown claims: "A primary function of the kun-so was to articulate merchant interests vis-à-vis the General Superintendency (the commercial authority), and thus almost daily negotiations were carried on between the guild's headman and the superintendent or his staff"\textsuperscript{27}

H. B. Morse points out that, in contrast with Europe where the guildsmen were very closely related to local government, Chinese guilds frequently stood as a united body opposed to the encroachments of officials.\textsuperscript{28} He also found that there was friction between guildsmen and officials on the issue of taxation, and in the cases of conflict between guilds and government, guildsmen even resorted to measures such as "cessation of all business" to put pressure on the government.\textsuperscript{29}

Guilds in Beijing and Hankow demonstrate that there were evident seeds of civil society in the commercial sphere during the Qing dynasty. In other words, a \textit{de facto} commercial

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid. p. 339.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid. p. 119.
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid. p. 31.
society with high degree of autonomy already emerged before the republic. These guilds existed outside the state, and could deal with their own affairs without direct official interference. More importantly, guilds had a significant impact on the state's commercial policies. For instance, the Hankow Salt Guild was able to require the local authorities to modify their likin-collection policy.

Secret Societies in Late Imperial China

Secret societies were a popular phenomenon in Chinese tradition. The term secret society does not refer to a group of people, like the Mafia in western society, but rather to underground organizations that exist completely outside of imperial governmental control. Secret societies, called "organizations of bandits" by each Chinese imperial government, "illegally" pursued their political or religious activities. The secret society in the Chinese tradition was a purely civil or non-governmental realm outside the imperial state structure. Thus, in any analysis of civil society in Chinese history, one cannot neglect the existence of secret societies in imperial China.

According to Cai Shaoqin30, a Chinese specialist on secret societies in modern China, the modern secret society in China has four characteristics: 1) an organizational life in an underground state; 2) a secret goal for its own group interest; 3) pursuing some special political, social and religious activities that usually are opposed to the normal social order set up by the government; 4) resisting the rulers and the authorities under certain conditions.31 The records in the China No.1 Historic Archives demonstrate that the names of various secret societies in Chinese history amount to 215 and those secret societies may

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30Cai Shaoqin, professor in the Department of History at Beijing University, has studied secret societies in modern China for years. His work Zhong Guo Jin Dai Hui Dang Shi Yan Jiu (Analysis of the History of Secret Societies in Modern China) is a systematic study of secret societies in Modern China based on rich historic resources.

roughly be classified as two different types, i.e., those pursuing religious activities and those pursuing political activities.\[^{32}\]

Secret societies in the Chinese tradition date back to the ancient dynasties. Traditionally, China was an agrarian society in which most of the people were peasants. The writ of the dynastic authority could not reach villages located in rural areas due to their long distance from the seat of government. Consequently, many peasants joined secret societies and "banded together to counteract the power of local officials and gentry, and to protect their own economic and social interests".\[^{33}\] The most vigorous period of Chinese secret societies was in the Qing (Manchu) dynasty (1622-1911) when some of them not only struggled for the protection of their group interests but also established underground movements against the Manchu government and foreign invaders.

Although there were numerous secret societies in the Qing period, by and large they fell into two major categories: the White Lotus (Bai Lian Hui) system and the Triad (San He Hui) system. The White Lotus societies were established mainly in North China. They were usually called Jiao Men (sects), since their activities predominantly involved religion. The Triad societies existed mainly in South China and were called Hui Dang (political parties) because of their involvement in political activities.\[^{34}\]

**The White Lotus**  The White Lotus, one of the oldest religious societies, dates back to the twelfth century. The White Lotus was a big religious system in which there were many branches, such as: The Eight Diagrams (Ba Kua), The Big Sword Society (Da Dao Hui), The Boxers (Yi He Quan) etc. Although, most of these branches combined Buddhism and Taoism, in their beliefs and rites, their religious beliefs also diverged from the orthodoxy of these traditional religions. Members of the Eight Diagrams, for instance, quoted as their

\[^{32}\text{Ibid.} \text{ pp. 2-3.}^{33}\text{Jean Chesneaux, translated by Gillian Nettle. } \text{Secret Societies in China in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries}, \text{ Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1971. p. 32.}^{34}\text{Ibid.} \text{ p. 36.}\]
authority the "Ancient Mother who was never created." The emergence of the White Lotus reflects the pursuit of autonomous religious life in imperial China.

In fact, the White Lotus was involved not just in religious life, but also in some protest movements against the Manchu Dynasty. For example, the protest movement of 1876 launched by the White Lotus in Nanjing and Shanghai was aimed directly at the Manchu government, the state machine and the rich landowners, causing the Manchu authorities much anxiety.

The Triad  
The Manchu, as an offspring of the native Mongolian race, conquered the Chinese Ming Dynasty and gained possession of the Chinese imperial throne in 1644. For the Triad, "overthrow the Qing (Manchu) and restore the Ming" (Fan Qing Fu Min) was their main political goal and slogan. The Triad was a political system (a network of political organization) which had several names or offsprings, such as San He Hui (Society of the Three Elements in One, Heaven, Earth, and Man), Tian Di Hui (Heaven and Earth Society), Hong Men (Gate of Hong) or Hong Dang (Hong Party). Despite the fact that the Triad did not have any sort of centralized organization, almost every secret organization related to the Triad had, by and large, the same internal order, for instance, the ritual of initiation, the oaths, the signs and the secret language.

As a system of political organization, the Triad played a significant role in counteracting the imperial power of the Manchu. According to a Mandarin of the Canton region, in the middle of the 1840s, Triad members launched insurrections against the local Manchu government in the Canton area, and put great political pressure on the local Mandarin. Because the local Mandarins felt so frightened by the Triad, they failed to treat the Triad as a secret society. Instead, they dealt with the Triad members just as ordinary brigands.

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36 Ibid. pp. 102-104.
37 Ibid. pp. 16-29.
38 Ibid. pp. 81-84.
To some extent, secret societies in late imperial China may be understood as the "principal force of political opposition and religious dissidence" which played a historic role in the downfall of the Chinese imperial system. Before the Republican Revolution of 1911, republican groups co-operated closely with secret societies, and many founders and militants of the revolutionary groups came from the secret societies or were former members of secret societies. Even the founding father of the Republic of China, Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan) was previously a member of the Triad or at least one of its offspring in Honolulu.39

**Study Societies and Academies in the Late Qing**

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a historic period when China was transformed from an imperial state to a republic. During this period of historic shift, many study societies emerged and most of them played a positive role in promoting the social change of China's last dynasty towards a new republican China.

Statistics in Wang Erh-min's article "A Classified List of the Study societies of the Ch'ing (Qing) Period", demonstrates that there were 138 study societies from 1895 till 1911 and these study societies may be classified as nine types, such as: study society for renovating the spirit of scholars, constitutional society, scientific society and agricultural society, etc..40 These study societies existed independently of the Qing government and enjoyed organizational extension via their branch associations. At the same time, some study societies had to depend upon personal connections between their leaders and reform governors.41

Study societies in the late Qing were not just purely academic or educational organizations. They also were involved in dynastic politics, and some of them even aimed to

39Ibid. p. 139.
41Ibid. p. 60.
influence the throne to reform the central government. For example, Nan Xue Hui (Southern Study Society), which was founded in Hunan province in 1897, strongly advocated a radical curriculum of reform, the development of the urban economy and the improvement of local administration.42

Among study societies, the Rejuvenation Study Society (Qiang Xue Hui or Ch'iang Hsueh-Hui) led by Kang Youwei (K'ang Yu-wei) was the most important with a direct impact on dynastic politics. The Treaty of Shimonoseki of April 17, 1895 ending the war between China and Japan provided for the cession of Chinese territory. It immediately brought forth strong public criticism, especially among Chinese intellectuals. On May 2, 1895, Kang Youwei sent a memorial signed by three thousand provincial graduates (Ju Ren) to emperor Guang Xu, denouncing the treaty of Shimonoseki and petitioning for political reform. In the same year, Kang Youwei founded the Rejuvenation Study Society in Beijing. Another branch of the Rejuvenation Society was founded in Shanghai the next year.

The Rejuvenation Society's political purpose was to promote constitutional reform to transform the imperial and feudal political system into a constitutional monarchy. Kang Youwei in his letter to emperor Guang Xu suggested that imperial China ought to set up a parliament in order to connect with the people.43 In the Court, however, there were two opposing groups: the reformist group led by emperor Guang Xu and the conservative group led by the empress dowager Ci Xi (Tz'u-hsi). Kang Youwei's reform proposal was easily accepted by the emperor. On June 11, 1898, the emperor issued an edict, announcing his intention to reform the imperial government. Emperor Guang Xu, however, had the throne but had no real power. It was the empress dowager Ci Xi, the head of the conservative group, who possessed real power in the Court. The conservative group launched a palace coup on September 21 and in the same year, the emperor was put under

house arrest. After the failure of the reform movement, most Rejuvenation Society members were arrested and killed. Kang Youwei had to flee to Hong Kong.

Besides reform intellectual groups like Kang Youwei's Rejuvenation Society, there were many radical academic organizations which emerged and played a revolutionary role in the fall of imperial China. The most notable one was the Patriotic Academy (Ai Guo Xue She), founded in 1902. The Patriotic Academy was the offspring of the Chinese Educational Association which was created in 1902 mainly to promote the publication of modern textbooks. The Patriotic Academy was both a private school and a patriotic organization. It made a great contribution to the development of the revolutionary movement to create a republic. Students in the Patriotic Academy, as Mary Rankin describes, "wanted to control their own affairs, discuss current politics and advance theories, display their patriotism, hold meetings, and do a little studying in between."\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{The May Fourth Movement and Student Societies}

The establishment of republican China in 1912 marked the end of the Chinese feudal dynasty. During the 1910s, however, China was not a real republic, but rather, a new dictatorship under Yuan Shikai (Yuan Shi-kai) from 1912 to 1916 and a republic of the Beiyang warlords from 1916 to 1919. The founding father of the republic, Sun Zhongsan (Sun Yat-sen), had to fight again with the new dictator and the Beiyang warlord government in Beijing for a real republican China. It was in these political circumstances that the May Fourth Movement took place. The May Fourth movement was the first large-scale mass movement in modern China. It marked a new page of Chinese modern history.

At the beginning of May 1919, the Versailles peace treaty, bringing the First World War to an end, failed to treat China fairly. According to the Versailles decision, Germany's rights and privileges in Shandong province were to be transferred to Japan instead of being

given back to China. On May 4th, university students in Beijing organized a large protest demonstration against Japan and three pro-Japanese government ministers. In the next few weeks, students demonstrations spread throughout China, and student organizations were founded in some major cities. In Beijing between June 3 and 6, the Beiyang warlord administration arrested more than one thousand protest demonstrators. In response to the patriotic movement in Beijing, workers and merchants in Shanghai and other towns immediately went on strike, organized demonstrations and marches and held meetings. On June 12, under strong public pressure, the government had to release students and intellectuals under arrest and dismiss the three pro-Japanese ministers.\footnote{Zi Jianzhong, ed., Zhong Guo Ji Bai Nian Shi, 1840-1949, (One Hundred Years of Modern Chinese History). He Long Jiang, He Long Jiang Ren Min Chu Ban She (He Long Jiang People's Publishing House). 1985, p. 244.}

The May Fourth Movement, perhaps for the first time in modern Chinese history, involved mass struggle against the government in order to protect national sovereignty.\footnote{The most popular slogan in the May Fourth Movement were "externally. struggle for sovereignty" and "internally, throw out the traitors", see Zi Jianzhong, ed., Zhong Guo Ji Bai Nian Shi, 1840-1949 (Modern One Hundred Years History of China). He Long Jiang Ren Min Chu Ban She (He Long Jiang People's Publishing House). 1985, p. 241.} More importantly, the May Fourth Movement indicated that a mass movement of Chinese intellectuals and students could create significant popular pressure on the Chinese political system. Some analysts of the Beijing Democracy Spring in 1989 treat the May Fourth Movement as a very important historic case of Chinese student protest. For example, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom regards the student protests in 1989 as a rebirth of the May Fourth tradition.\footnote{See Jeffrey N Wasserstrom, "Student Protests and the Chinese Tradition, 1919-1989", in Tony Saich ed., The Chinese People's Movement, Perspective on Spring 1989. Armonk, M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1990, pp. 3-24.}

In the May Fourth period, many student and intellectual societies emerged and provided an organizational preparation for the movement. According to the four volumes, Societies and Organizations during the May Fourth Period, there were twenty-three well-organized student and intellectual societies in major cities which made a considerable contribution not
only to the May Fourth Movement but also to the historic transformation of modern China.\textsuperscript{48} The following two student societies at Beijing University were the most notable.

**New Tide Magazine and New Tide Society** By the autumn of 1918, in response to the New Culture movement\textsuperscript{49}, a few Beida (Beijing University) students decided to found a new journal and society of their own. In the first issue of the New Tide Magazine, published on January 1st, 1919, New Tide members criticized university authorities and complained about the absence of student publications. At the same, they claimed that as students they ought to spread the ethos of Beijing University to the rest of Chinese society. As the manifesto of New Tide Magazine states:

New Tide is a journal that is the outcome of collaboration among Beijing University students. Although our university had been in existence for twenty-one years, there has been, unfortunately, no precedent for a student-initiated publication... In the past, this university claimed to be engaged in academic training, but in fact all it ever did was to turn out civil servants... Now, however, our university is fortunate to be part of a world-wide trend, and therefore it can aspire to lead the path toward the Chinese society of the future. With this kind of spirit... the intellectual purpose of the university might yet spread all over China, might yet have great influence indeed.\textsuperscript{50}

On November 19, 1919, twenty-two members of New Tide Magazine held an organizational meeting and decided to establish the New Tide Society based on the New Tide Magazine board members. As a student self-organized study society, the New Tide Society strongly supported and actively participated in the New Culture Movement. In

\textsuperscript{48}Zhang Yunhou, ed., *Wu Si Shi Qi De She Tuan* (Societies and Organizations during the May Fourth Period), Beijing, Shenghuo Dushu Xinzhi Publishing House, 1979, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{49}In the mid-1910s, Chen Duxiu (the dean of humanities at Beijing University and one of the founders of the CCP) and his colleagues Li Dazhao, Hu Shi, Lu Xun etc., in their journal *New Youth Magazine*, advocated that, with the downfall of the feudal dynasty, a new kind of culture would be needed to replace some aspects of Chinese traditional culture. They stressed democracy and science as two key aspects in the pursuit of a modernized China. Under the influence of those "new culture" intellectuals, "new culture" later became a major focus among intellectuals and students. This was what we call the "New Culture Movement".

rethinking Chinese traditional culture, New Tide members believed that the thousand-year-old Chinese feudal tradition was the main obstacle to China's modernization. Accordingly, the New Tide Society appealed to students to "fight for spiritual emancipation" and "discard the examination-system mentality and embrace modern scientific thought". For New Tide Society members, Chinese traditional culture was so weak that it could not culturally sustain Chinese development. What then was to be the new "spirit" of China? The simple answer of New Tide members was Western ideas. The New Tide Magazine often contained introductions to Western ideology, for instance, explanations of the meaning of "behaviorism", "perception", "the unconscious" and other Chinese interpretations of Western political philosophers.52

The Beijing University Commoners' Education Lecture Society (BUCELS) was also a notable study society consisting of students and intellectuals at Beijing University. It was founded in March 1919, just two months before the May Fourth Movement. Unlike the New Tide Society, BUCELS members were concerned not merely about pure "academic education" on the campus, but also about the enlightenment of the common Chinese people. For BUCELS members, improving the knowledge of the common people and awakening their consciousness were seen as two fundamental objectives of their organization, written down in the Society's constitution.53 In the announcement calling for new members, the BUCELS founders pointed out:

There are two kinds of education: academic education and education that reaches out to the common people. The latter one happens through open-air speeches and through publications issued for that purpose. The foundation of a republic must be the education of the common people... If, however, only the offspring of the rich are able to enjoy education, while poor children have no chance to go to school at all, the foundation of our republic will be shaken. What is the remedy, then? Open-air speeches.54

51Ibid. p. 69.
52Ibid. p. 71.
54Ibid. p. 135.
In order to enhance the education of the common people and enlighten their mind, members of BUCELS usually took to street corners delivering speeches concerning Chinese politics, economy, culture and society. Their speech topics were very broad, such as: "The Significance of Education of the Common People", "The Relationship between the People and the State", "The President and The Emperor", "Modern Emperors Are Finally Doomed", "Autonomy of Local Areas", "Equality and Freedom", "The Private Property System", "Bank Currency", "Family Reform", "Family and Society", etc.55

The New Tide Society and the Beijing University Commoners' Education Society were societies organized entirely by the students. They can be considered the earliest independent student organizations in China. These student societies contributed to the historical development of civil society in China by sowing the seeds of civil society at Beijing University where intellectuals and students frequently have stood at the forefront of Chinese mass movements against either the republican regime (the 1935 December 9 Movement, for example) or the communist regime. This is what most Chinese intellectuals and students call "Beida Spirit".

**Dilemma of Civil Society in the Chinese Tradition**

The above discussion demonstrates the existence of some seeds of civil society. However, this thesis argues that, in general, Chinese tradition does not support the idea of civil society. Theoretically, the idea of civil society involves at least two fundamental points of political philosophy, i.e., individualism and separation between state and society. In Chinese traditional political values and political culture, there was not a theoretical source, like individualism or the idea of separation between state and society. One cannot find the word civil society (Shimin Shehui) in the classical Chinese language.

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55See full titles of street corner lectures given by members of BUCELS. Ibid. pp. 142-185.
Confucianism was the state official ideology for more than two thousand years. According to the Confucian idea, the value of the individual in the state is not important, and each individual has to obey absolutely the so-called political order established by the dynastic government. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, asserts that individuals should deny themselves in order to maintain the order set by the statecraft (Ke Ji Fu Li). Traditional China was a bureaucratic despotism. The state was ruled by an emperor who had absolute power over the people. In traditional China, the emperor was called Tian Zi (Son of Heaven) and his political legitimacy was based on his "mandate of heaven". In this sense, the emperor as the power holder was the arbiter of political orthodoxy, and any political opposition from the people was treated as political heterodoxy. Under such a political philosophy, the emperor was the core of the state and the state ruled by the emperor was the core of the whole society. Consequently, despite the existence of some socially autonomous groups relatively free from imperial control, Chinese tradition, in general, did not suggest a clear boundary between state and society. For example, traditional Chinese intellectuals in general did not play a role opposed to imperial power. Most of them tried to stay within the imperial structure, or at least, maintained personal ties with officials in the imperial government.

In traditional China, the family (not the individual) was the cell of society and, in any family there was only one person who had the highest decision making power. For example, the doctrine of "Three Obedience for Females" in Chinese tradition suggests that a female must be obedient to her father before marriage, to her husband after marriage, and to her eldest son after the death of the husband. In Chinese traditional values, the state was regarded as an extension of familial authority. In the Chinese language, the word state (Guo Jia) includes two Chinese characters: Guo means kingdom, Jia refers to family. Accordingly, the state was considered a big politicized family in which the ruler had as much authority to

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rule his nation as a father had to rule his family, in which the people had to obey the ruler just as family members have to obey their father without any challenge, in which the people did not have their own choice of government, just as children cannot choose their fathers. In this sense, for traditional Chinese values, political loyalty of the people to the state and to the emperor may be conceived as the loyalty of the child to his or her father. Thus, a civil society, as a realm out of the orbit of the state structure or as social autonomy out of the state's control was, to a certain degree, seen as social disorder just as a child's autonomy would been seen as undermining order in the family.

In Western tradition, Christian culture made a contribution to Western democratic political philosophy. The most notable example is Locke. His foundation of political philosophy is completely based on a theological approach to human beings. Locke believes that humankind is only the property and workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker, i.e., God, and human beings are created equal and independent; no one can harm another in his life, health and liberty. Hence, both the rulers and the ruled are equal in the eyes of God. In contrast to Western culture, individual rights and collective interests had to yield to the imperial rulers, and be restricted by the imperial state. Martin K. Whyte, in examining civil society in the Chinese tradition, has come to the same conclusion. He writes:

All individuals should be enmeshed in hierarchies and network of mutual obligation and property...the state and its officials should establish and enforce a political-moral orthodoxy that would provide guidance for the entire social hierarchy. In this view individuals were seen not as autonomous and possessing inalienable rights, as in the Western liberal tradition, but as malleable yet fallible, capable of proper behavior only when subordinated to the correct group influence and orthodox indoctrination.

It would be incorrect to argue that a full-blown totalitarian system existed in traditional China. First, "totalitarianism" is a modern concept which was developed in the twentieth century to define regimes such as the Leninist state or Stalinist regime which tried to totally control the political, social, economic and even cultural spheres. It was argued that only modern communications and transportation made this kind of totalitarian control possible. Second, in traditional China, the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population lived in rural areas which the imperial regime could not fully control. In other words, imperial power did not really reach all the way to the bottom of society in rural areas where the imperial rule had to depend on the cooperation of local gentry. Nevertheless, the reaction of Chinese imperial power to social autonomy and free association was extremely negative. The state was trying to dominate the entire society and, the imperial government promulgated a cruel decree against free association among the people. The penal code of the Qing dynasty made this very clear:

All persons who, without being related or connected by intermarriage, establish a brotherhood or association among themselves...shall be held guilty of an intent to commit the crime of rebellion and the principal or chief leader of such an association shall, accordingly, suffer death by strangulation.\(^{59}\)

**Conclusions**

Through examining traditional China, we may easily find some elements or seeds of civil society in the Chinese tradition. Yet a well-formed or legalized civil society cannot be found. These seeds never grew up to be an institutionalized civil society in opposition to the state. Essentially, kinship societies in Chinese history were merely "semi-civil-societies". Although, they had some autonomous life of their own, they were subject to tight control by the imperial government. The head of the Dong Lin Academy and the leader of the

Rejuvenation Society had to rely on their personal ties with officials in the imperial government. Otherwise, one can hardly imagine the "legal" existence of the Dong Lin Academy and the Rejuvenation Society in imperial China. Secret societies in Chinese history may be considered pure non-governmental organizations fully outside imperial power. However, they never got legal recognition from the imperial government, and they had to act in a secret way. The emergence of study societies in late imperial China and student societies in the early republic represented a nascent civil society at the turn of this century. However, such a nascent civil society was so weak and limited that it never had a chance to develop toward a well-institutionalized civil society.

Chinese traditional political values did not accept the ideal of civil society and an autonomous domain fully free from imperial power, but there were some significant elements or seeds of a civil society in Chinese tradition. We should not deny the existence of elements of civil society due to the lack of an ideal of civil society in Chinese tradition or the strong reaction of imperial power to civil society. At the same time, the elements of civil society in traditional China should not be exaggerated to the degree of saying that China has a tradition of civil society or saying there was an "already existent civil society" in imperial China. The conclusion of this chapter does not support the argument that civil society existed in the Chinese tradition and, the current development of civil society is a process of reemergence "after a long period of suppression by an antagonistic state system". As examined already, it is of course correct that we can find some seeds or elements of civil society in traditional China, or even a "nascent" civil society in traditional China. Yet, we can hardly argue that the Chinese have a tradition of civil society.
Chapter Three
Declining Party-State and Emerging Civil Society in Post-Mao China

Overlap Between Party-State and Society in Mao's China

The first republican system in China, founded in 1911 by the Nationalist Party (Guomindang), failed with Yuan Shikai's new dictatorship and the Beiyang warlords' rule. The failure of the first republican democracy occurred mainly because both Yuan and the Beiyang warlords, who controlled a large area and huge population in north China, in fact has some direct or indirect connections with the last imperial Court. They could hardly accept a new republican system, even though they claimed that they supported the Republic of China.

After the "Second Revolution" launched by Sun Zhongsan's Nationalists in the early 1920s, a republican form of government began to take shape in China. Under the nationalist government, various kinds of grassroots associations emerged. They included two major categories, i.e., traditional forms, such as clans and lineage, study societies, secret societies, surname associations and religious groupings, and modern forms, such as trade unions, unofficial journals and newspapers and professional associations. The relatively weak central authority of the nationalist government created an opportunity for the development of civil society. Throughout the republican era, however, the major focus for the Chinese people and nationalist government was not the creation of a strong society outside the state. Instead, a strong state with a powerful central authority was seen as crucial to maintaining domestic stability and defending China against Japanese invaders.

In 1949, when the CCP took power via a military revolution, Communist China was labeled a "people's state under a people's democratic dictatorship" (Renmin Minzhu Zhuanzheng). In reality, Communist China has never been a people's democratic state. Instead, it is essentially a totalitarian state with a CCP dictatorship over all of Chinese
In Mao's time, the CCP dictatorship was embodied as Mao's personal autocracy over the party and the state as well as society.

In Mao's totalitarian state, Maoist statecraft did not allow any type of social autonomy, such as free association, organizational autonomy or a private economy outside the state-planned economy. After 1949, all elements of civil society that had emerged in late imperial China and the early Republican period were suppressed. "The Communist revolution of 1949 created a new form of Chinese society where social structure is tantamount to state administrative structure, where the state became almost co-extensive with civil society, and where all social organizations came to be organized and administered by the state."1

The Maoist regime dominated the political, economic and social spheres. In the political sphere, party organizations were established in all political institutions at all levels. At the same, the highest party leader concurrently held the highest administrative position in a given political institution. In the social sphere, the party-state subordinated all social organizations to the state structure and made them subordinate units of party or government institutions. For instance, the Chinese Literati Association (Zhongguo Wenlian) was defined as a unit under the leadership of the Culture Ministry, and its Chairman was directly appointed by the Culture Ministry without any election. In the economic sphere, a highly planned economic structure provided no space for economic autonomy and a free market.

Mao's China (1949-1976) may be characterized as a trinity of Party-state-society, in which there was neither a boundary between the party and the state nor a separation between the state and the society. In this trinity system, all individuals were subordinate to party-state politics. Public participation and popular involvement in political life never took place in a non-state-controlled sphere. The primary type of popular participation was

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"party-state organized citizen involvement in public affairs through campaigns." During the Maoist period, popular involvement in social and political life was mobilized by the party-state and was not autonomous or spontaneous. The purpose of these mass movements was to strengthen party-state rule, not to allow the people to influence state affairs and articulate their interests.

During the "Hundred Flowers' Campaign" of 1957, Mao stated the party should "Let a hundred flowers bloom and let a hundred schools of thought contend". The People's Daily explained Mao's Hundred Flowers' policy as a golden opportunity to give Chinese intellectuals the freedom of independent thinking, the freedom to criticize and the freedom to express. Under the Hundred Flowers' Policy, Chinese intellectuals made numerous sharp criticisms against central and local party and governmental authorities. However, in the latter stage of the campaign, all those people who were involved in the Hundred Flowers' Campaign were labeled "bourgeois rightists" and met with serious political persecution in the "Anti-Rightist Movement" launched by the Party.

To summarize, in Mao's China, there were neither pluralist ideas beyond the communist "orthodoxy", nor any individual or organizational autonomy outside the Maoist state. Under Maoist paternalism, Chinese society might be described as a politicized household or a big organized "political family" in which the party-state completely overlapped with society, and left no room for a civil society.

New Opportunities for Civil Society in Post-Mao China

Unlike the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, China's political system at the time of Mao's death had dual characteristics. On the one hand, it was a totalitarian state with the capability to penetrate and at least partially control all areas of social, political and

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economic life, and on the other hand, it was a system in serious decay. With the declining Maoist totalitarianism in post-Mao China, two important variables made the emergence of civil society possible.

The first one is a top-to-bottom factor. In order to regain popular support, the new leadership, especially more moderate members of the elite, increasingly realized the importance of individuals in a party-state directed society. Accordingly, a limited autonomy of social life was allowed. With the shift from Maoist "class struggle" to socialist modernization, the top elite began to adopt a new policy of "reform and opening". For the communist leadership, reform and opening were considered a new developmental strategy for China's modernization. In reality, however, reform and opening inevitably created an environment in which civil society, mainly in the economic and social spheres, gradually developed. For instance, there emerged more autonomy for state economic units, development of private business and a collective economy as well as the rapid growth of unofficial social organizations.

The second factor that contributed to the emergence of civil society in China was at the grassroots level, i.e., a bottom-to-top factor. With the death of Maoist absolute authority over Chinese society, Chinese people gradually recognized the crucial role of individuals in their society. The people no longer regarded themselves as "accessories" or "appendages" of the party-state. Meanwhile, due to the spread of Western liberal ideas in China, the concept of popular sovereignty began to be accepted, especially in the intellectual community. In some democratic movements, political dissidents even challenged the political legitimacy of the CCP regime. This bottom-to-top factor was crucial in promoting the development of civil society in the political sphere.

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Some Western observers, such as Martin K. Whyte, maintain that the Cultural Revolution, by undermining the legitimacy of the CCP rule, encouraged the Chinese people to play a more active role in their society. This thesis disputes the view that the Cultural Revolution was a positive factor promoting a Chinese popular movement. On the surface, Red Guard groups seemed to attack all authorities of the CCP regime. However, when Red Guard groups shouted "down with all authorities", they frequently upheld Mao's absolute authority. Essentially, the Cultural Revolution was only a political movement mobilized by Mao and his followers aimed at Liu Shaoqi and other political opponents of Mao in the CCP political arena. If one examines the great tension between Mao and Liu in the early 1960s, one could define the Cultural Revolution merely as Mao's political game, a game of how to use popular forces to defeat his political opponents and pave a path through to Maoist paternalism. Many Chinese observers of the Cultural Revolution maintain that Mao used popular forces, such as Red Guard groups, as a political instrument in the power struggle, but did not encourage genuine popular political participation.

However, one could argue that the result of this mobilized popular movement undermined the CCP authorities, since many Chinese youth were forcibly sent off to live in rural areas and eventually realized that they were only Mao's instrument of political struggle. The Chinese youth who were sent to rural areas were described as the "lost generation" and their entire careers were negatively affected by the Cultural Revolution. To be sure, they lost their golden time and they become embittered and disillusioned with the system. At the same, the CCP regime and Mao also lost their legitimacy and popular support from the Chinese youth.

**Emerging Civil Society in the Political Sphere**

Civil society in the political sphere can be defined as an anti-party-state domain. This domain not only exists outside the CCP party-state structure, but also challenges the
CCP's political monopoly. The basic unit of analysis for civil society in the political sphere is dissident organizations and their activities. The main manifestation of civil society is popular movements for democratization. In communist China, since there is no politically institutionalized civil society (i.e. legal existence of opposing political groups and organizations), analysis of civil society at this sphere tends to depend upon case studies of democratic movements. In post-Mao China, three cases may help us to understand the emergence of civil society in the political sphere: the first is the Democratic Movement of 1978-1979, the second is the student demonstration of 1986-1987 and the third is the Democratic Movement of 1989. The following section will discuss the first and the second cases, and, the third one will be carefully examined in the next chapter.

The 1978-1979 Democratic Movement began in November 1978 when protesters in Beijing expressed a deep sense of resentment against the political persecution of the Cultural Revolution and a strong yearning for democracy and liberty. From November until March of 1979, a popular movement sprang up in some major cities. During the movement, a large number of dissident organizations, such as the Enlightenment Society (Qimeng She), the Thaw Society (Mengya) and the Chinese Human Rights League (Zhongguo Renquan She) were founded, and some unofficial publications, such as Exploration, Beijing Spring, April Fifth Forum and Masses' Reference News appeared.4

Wei Jingsheng, the moving force behind Exploration magazine, played a vanguard role in the democratic movement in terms of both practice and theory. In his remarkable article: The Fifth Modernization, Wei Jingsheng suggests: individuality is a crucial principle in a society. He states:

- Society is composed of different individuals and, according to natural instincts, each individual exists independently.
- People's sociality depends on individuality just like human societies necessarily depend on the existence of individuals.

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People's individuality enjoys priority over their sociality.\(^5\)

In a more theoretical way, Wei Jingsheng also notes an incompatible relationship between individuality and totalitarianism and a compatible relationship between individuality and democracy. He argues: "Totalitarianism regards suppression of individuality as its basic condition of survival; essentially, it is a form of enslavement. Democracy regards harmony with individuality as its basic condition of existence; essentially, this is a form of cooperation. Nobody can find any form of totalitarianism without suppression of individuality and enslavement of people".\(^6\)

As a pioneer of the Chinese democratic movement, Wei Jingsheng did not just focus on a democratic idea, he also strongly challenged the legitimacy of the CCP totalitarian regime. In his public letter to the top party leadership, he wrote: "We would like to ask high officials who instigate the arrest of individuals? Is the power you exercise legal? We would like to ask Chairman Hua and Vice-Chairman Deng-is your occupation of the highest offices of state legal?"\(^7\)

In this Democratic Movement, some radical dissident organizations even called on the Chinese people to overthrow the CCP political dictatorship. A poem of the Enlightenment Society makes this very clear:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Arise!} \\
&\text{You people of China!} \\
&\text{Attack all dictators and autocrats!} \\
&\text{The time has come for the final reckoning!} \\
&\text{And the final verdict!}\(^8\)
\end{align*}
\]

The reaction of the CCP regime to this democratic movement went through two different stages. In the early stage of the movement, when the protesters criticized the "Gang of Four" and Mao's mistakes in the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping tolerated

\(^5\)Ibid. p. 57.  \\
\(^6\)Ibid. p. 58.  \\
the movement. This was because the criticism and demands being made by the protesters helped Deng to repudiate the Cultural Revolution (Deng was a political victim of the Cultural Revolution) and to struggle with Hua Guofeng (Mao's successor). After Wei Jingsheng claimed that the Chinese people must be vigilant in preventing Deng Xiaoping from becoming a new Chinese dictator, Deng and the communist authorities, in March of 1979, decided to ban posters and dissident organizations and publications "opposed to socialism and the Party leadership". Wei Jingsheng was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment due to his "counter-revolutionary" behavior. Despite the failure of the Democratic Movement of 1978-1979, it sowed some seeds for subsequent Chinese pro-democracy movements. It is safe to say that by the late 1970s a nascent civil society already had appeared in the political sphere and this trend was embodied implicitly again in the student demonstrations of 1986-1987 and the 1989 Beijing Democratic Movement.

In the summer of 1986, the Chinese de facto highest political leader, Deng Xiaoping renewed his call for political reform.9 For Deng Xiaoping, political reform was merely a means for economic reform. In his own words: "Now when economic structure reform is underway, we feel it is necessary to reform the political structure. Without political structure reform, the development of productivity and the success of the four modernizations will be impossible".10 However, Chinese intellectuals and university students did not see political reform merely as a means of furthering economic reform. More important, they did not believe that CCP's political reform would create a real democracy. Instead, their political demands were aimed directly at political democracy. A well-known Chinese dissident intellectual and the former president of the China Science and Technology University (CSTU) in Hefei, Anhui province, Fang Lizhi states:

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9Deng Xiaoping's first call for political reform was in 1980 when he had just returned to power. Actually, Deng's first attempt for political reform was limited to the party-state leadership system, and had nothing to do with democratic reform.
If the democracy we are striving for remains one that is granted only from the top, then the democracy that is practiced in our society is not a true democracy... We should not place our hope on grants from the top leadership. Democracy granted from above is not democracy in a real sense. It is relaxation of control.\textsuperscript{11}

To some extent, these different attitudes toward political reform between the communist elite on the one hand, and intellectuals and students on the other, sparked the student demonstrations. In a speech to his students on December 4, 1986, Fang Lizhi emphasized: "Democracy is not granted from the top, it is won by individuals from below.\textsuperscript{12} The next day, approximately 1,000 students of CSTU participated in street demonstrations. They demanded a fair election for the head of the university's student union by protesting against the local authorities who appointed the head and just let the students vote "Yes". At the same time, student demonstrators also wanted to nominate their own candidates for the provincial People's Congress.\textsuperscript{13} The CSTU student demonstrations rapidly extended nationwide at an extraordinary speed. Student demonstrations swept 150 universities and colleges in 17 major cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Wuhan, Shenzhen and Kunming\textsuperscript{14}

The main focus of these nationwide student demonstrations were political concerns such as democratic political reform, widespread political corruption, independence of student unions and the political legitimacy of party-state officials. For example, when Shanghai Mayor Jiang Zemin visited Shanghai Jiaotong University on December 18, the students challenged the political legitimacy of the mayor by asking him whether he was elected by the people of Shanghai or just appointed by the CCP Central Committee.\textsuperscript{15} At Fudan University in Shanghai, student protesters posted Patrick Henry's slogan, Give me

\textsuperscript{14} Lawrence MacDonald, "Deng Lends Weight to Anti-Liberal Backlash", South China Morning Post, January 12, 1987, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{15} "Boos and Hisses for the Mayor", South China Morning Post, December 25, 1986, p. 4.
Liberty or Give me Death", to describe their dream of freedom and justice. In Beijing, despite the fact that the city authorities issued a new regulation (Ten Point Temporary Regulation) to control and regulate student demonstrations on December 26, thousands of students marched in Beijing with banners containing political slogans like "Long Live Democracy" and "Freedom to Demonstrate". There were a few "extremist" calls for an end to "one-party-autocracy" and for a "multi-party system.

Beside these political demands, the student also requested changes to improve their own situation, such as better food at lower prices and better living conditions on campus. However, these demands were not the main focus of the movement or a major goal of the students. The overwhelming majority of students and intellectuals wanted to demonstrate for China's democratization at a moment when the CCP regime was advocating political reform as part of its reform strategy. As Fang Lizhi stated: "Students are a progressive force for democratization. This has been the case in all past eras...Chinese intellectuals should demonstrate their own strength". This argument characterizes the relationship between CCP political reform and the student movement.

The student movement of 1986-1987 was the largest one since 1949. It was the first time the communist regime encountered such nationwide student demonstrations. As Benedict Stavis comments: "The demonstrations shocked the leadership at all levels. It became clear that China's youth had very different political values from the older generations. The demonstrations were, at one level, the 'coming-out' party of China's new generation". More importantly, the greatest significance of this student movement was that it laid a foundation for the Democratic Movement of 1989, and can be treated as a prelude to the 1989 pro-democracy movement.

**Emerging Civil Society in the Social Sphere**

Civil society in the social sphere refers to a social domain that exists with the party-state's permission. The basic analytical unit for civil society in the social sphere is social organizations which "legally" exist under the communist totalitarian rule, but are relatively free from party-state control. Since essentially these social organizations are not purely "civil" or "unofficial", we can only see them as a "quasi-civil society" or a "de facto" civil society.

China's reform and opening inevitably brought forth the pluralization of people's interests and demands. As a result, individuals in various social strata began to set up their own organizations outside the party-state framework. During the reform era, "a de facto zone of autonomous social organization had been expanding vigorously." China Daily News' statistics show that by 1989 there were 1,000 non-governmental autonomous organizations at the national level, and 100,000 at the local level.

Most of these social organizations were controlled by party-state institutions, but a few managed to establish a significant degree of organizational autonomy. For example, the Social Development Research Institute (SDRI), an academic organization financially sponsored by Beijing Stone Group, existed completely outside of the party-state network. Another example was the Beijing Social and Economic Research Institute (SERI) organized by Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming, who were seen as "professional revolutionaries" in China's pro-democracy movement. The SERI was affiliated with the CCP Beijing Municipal Commission, but its research programs, finance and personnel were not controlled by the party organization. The SERI with a high degree of organizational autonomy was a radically independent organization described as an

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20China Daily News (Beijing), September 2, 1989.
"independent kingdom under the nose of the communist party". Both the SDRI and SERI became deeply involved in the 1989 Beijing Democracy Movement, providing strong support to the student demonstrations in Beijing.

Certainly, the SDRI and SERI were exceptions which do not reflect the norm of social organizations in post-Mao China. In terms of the behaviorist approach, we should examine the development of social organizations in a macro sense. Due to a lack of data, however, we cannot draw such a macro image, but a case study of Xiaoshan will help us see a micro-picture of the development of social organizations in post-Mao China.

The Development of Social Organizations: The Xiaoshan Case Study

In analyzing social organization in reforming China, Gordon White has done notable research by examining social organizations in Xiaoshan City, Zhejiang province. His analysis of the Xiaoshan case provides us with further understanding of social organizations in China.

As can be seen in Table Three, Gordon White classifies the existing 99 social organizations in Xiaoshan into ten categories in terms of their different functions. Social organizations in the political category, such as the General Trade Union Federation, the Communist Youth League and the Women's Federation, characteristically are organized hierarchically from the national level downwards and established on the initiative of the party-state authorities. Their organizational structure is defined, their key personnel are selected and their financial resources are provided by the government. According to the doctrine of "autonomy versus state control" (the fundamental principle of civil society), none of these "political organizations" can be regarded as an element of civil society, simply because this type of social organization essentially is part of the party-state

mechanism. Thus we must not include this type of social organization when talking about civil society in Xiaoshan City.

Table Three: New Social Organizations Established in Xiaoshan Each Year, 1978–1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Social Organization</th>
<th>78</th>
<th>79</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>81</th>
<th>82</th>
<th>83</th>
<th>84</th>
<th>85</th>
<th>86</th>
<th>87</th>
<th>88</th>
<th>89</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Sports</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heath</td>
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<td>Social Welfare</td>
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<td>Religious</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excluding social organizations in the political category, Gordon White defined the rest as semi-official or popular organizations. In the case of semi-official organizations, their link with party-state organs is loose, and their finances can come either from the government or from their own revenue. The term "popular organization" means a type of "purely civil" organization without an overlap of personnel with the party-state. Except for the eight organizations in the political category, we can conceive of these semi-official and popular organizations (not directly controlled by the state) as "civil organizations" or even as what we frequently call "civil society". Using figures from Table Three we may create a new graph (Figure One) which shows the developmental trend of civil organizations in Xiaoshan City during the 1980s. Table Four demonstrates the rapid growth of civil organizations in Xiaoshan from 1978 to 1990.


23 Ibid, p. 76.
The rapid growth of social organizations in Xiaoshan certainly reflects an expansion of a civil domain in post-Mao China. Yet, this developmental trend does not suggest a rapid growth of organizations representing their members' collective interests in the political sphere. The functions of social organizations in the economic and scientific categories, for example, are oriented toward exchange of information, technology, management expertise and so on, not primarily toward representing interests of various social groups vis-à-vis the state authorities.24

Viewed from the perspective of their relations with the state, these rapidly growing social organizations could not exist without official recognition. They are subordinated to a network of state supervision. Furthermore, most leading positions of social organizations are filled by people who also hold formal positions in the affiliated party or governmental departments, e.g., the Individual Laborers' Association and the Private Enterprise Association in the municipal Industrial and Commercial Bureau, the Enterprise Management Association in the Economic Commission of the municipal government and the Agricultural Study Society in the Bureau of Agriculture. Their linkage to governmental institutions limits the organizational autonomy of these new social organizations and their influence on public policy and the municipal decision making process.

24Ibid. p. 75.
In his concluding remarks, Gordon White states: "1) these social organizations do not reflect a clear boundary between 'public' and 'private' spheres, rather they represent a mixed image between 'public' and 'private'; 2) these can not be seen as independent organizations, but they do exercise (to varying degrees) a limited sphere of autonomy which reflects their intermediary status; 3) these organizations can not be described as 'pressure groups' or 'interest groups'; 4) in general, membership in these organizations can not be described as voluntary".25

The Xiaoshan case study reflects both the rapid growth of social organizations and their weakness. Table Four shows that social organizations emerged in Xiaoshan City during the reform era, slowly in the early 1980s, and at a faster pace in the golden time of 1984-1989. Although, these new social organizations cannot be defined as a pure civil domain, they represent a relatively autonomous social sphere outside the party-state structure. At the same time, we should note that this case also demonstrates the weakness of civil society in Xiaoshan city, simply because, as Gordon White concludes, there is not a full separation between these social organizations and the party-state institutions. In other words, it is too early to say that a civil society in the social sphere has formed there. The only thing we can find in the Xiaoshan case is an emerging civil society with limits and weaknesses. If we were to extend the picture of the Xiaoshan case to other cities in China or even to the broad national context, we would probably reach the same conclusion concerning an emerging civil society in the social sphere in post-Mao China.

**Civil Society in the Economic Sphere**

Civil society in the economic sphere implies a non-party-state-centered economic domain outside the party-state economy. The basic analytical unit for civil society in the economic sphere is the non-state economic organization. In terms of the ownership of the

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means of production, China's economic system can be divided into three major branches, that is, state owned, collectively owned and privately owned. Among these three ownership systems, both the collective economy and the private economy do not belong to the state economic structure. Obviously, the private economy is a pure "civil" or unofficial economy. The collective economy has been officially defined as "an economic form in which the means of production are collectively owned by the workers. It includes both the urban collective economy and all forms of rural economy."26 This thesis treats both the private and the collective economy as a non-state economic domain: the locus of civil society in the economic sphere.

China's economic reform began in the rural areas. By the early 1980s, the "family responsibility system", a key policy of rural reform was introduced to organize rural work and to distribute rural income. Under the "family responsibility system", each individual household was allocated a piece of land and, in return was required to meet state quotas for taxes, grain deliveries and the like.27

The introduction of the "family responsibility system" was not just a significant policy for reforming China's agriculture, but also marked an end to the Maoist People's Commune (Renmin Gongshe) System established in 1958. According to Maoism, the People's Commune System was interpreted as the "best form for the transition from collective ownership to ownership by the whole people", or the "best form for the transition from a socialist society to communist society".28 Essentially, however, the People's Commune System was a rural administrative hierarchy which aimed to control rural society. Each People's Commune was hierarchically divided with a Commune (Gongshe) at the highest level, various production brigades (Dadui) at the mid-level and

various production teams (Shengchandui) at the bottom. At each level, party organizations were established to supervise the commune's administration.

With the abolition of the Maoist People's Commune System and the adoption of the "family responsibility system", the Chinese peasantry began to have more autonomy in rural economic life. More importantly, because the family in rural areas is no longer a part of the People's Commune (the party-state's machinery to control rural society), the peasant family has become a basic productive unit with considerable economic autonomy.

In urban areas, economic reform began with the reform of state-owned enterprises in late 1984. In Mao's era, a state-owned enterprise was more than an "economic unit". It was also a "political administrative unit", a "moral-educating unit" and a "social and political control unit". At the Third Plenum of the CCP Twelfth Central Committee in 1984, the CCP leadership provided state-owned enterprises with a much higher degree of economic autonomy in order to restore their vitality and accelerate their productive efficiency. Granting state-owned enterprises greater economic autonomy reduced party-state control of Chinese economic life.

From the aspect of the non-state economy, China's private economy and collective economy rapidly increased in the reform era and brought forth a significant change of the proportion between the state and non-state economic spheres. The GNP of the state economy decreased from 76% of total GNP in 1980 to 51.3% in 1991. At the same time, the collective economy increased from 23.5% of total GNP in 1980 to 36.9% in 1991, and the GNP of the private economy increased from 0.5% to 11.8%. As we can see in Figure Two, the weight of the non-state economy is currently almost the same as that of the state economy, i.e. 48.7% versus 51.3% of total GNP. By 1993, the state economic sector was

less than 50% of total GNP. It is quite apparent that a large domain of non-state organizations outside the party-state economic network had already emerged in reforming China.

**Figure Two: Proportion of GNP in the State Economy and Non-State Economy: 1980 and 1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In 1980</th>
<th></th>
<th>In 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wenzhou Case** Wenzhou is a harbor city located in the south-east region of coastal Zhejiang province. For many observers, the case of Wenzhou is a significant example of the development of a private economy in China. In his article, "Reform From Below: The Private Economy and Local Politics in the Rural Industrialization of Wenzhou", Yia-Ling Liu describes the characteristics of the development of the local economy in Wenzhou since 1978 as privatization, marketization and local deviation from state politics.\(^\text{32}\)

In the late 1970s when the party-state began to ease its control over economic life, privatization spread widely throughout almost every industry in Wenzhou. By the mid-1980s, there were approximately 10,000 private enterprises there. A few big private enterprises employed more than 100 workers. Some local private industries, such as transport, service and construction, have played a leading role in economic life.

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production value of private enterprises accounted for 58.8%, 60.5% and 59.5% of the total industrial output in Wenzhou in 1984, 1985 and 1986.33

Yia-Ling Liu suggests that the development of various private industries has produced a process of capitalization, "a transition from self-employed petty bourgeois commodity producer to capitalist entrepreneur that has gone far beyond the process in rural Hungary which features only small private household farming".34 Yia-Ling Liu found this newly emerged stratum has not been granted full autonomy in the economic sphere. The local CCP organization frequently encourages private entrepreneurs to become CCP members. From the perspective of the local government and party in Wenzhou, an entrepreneur with a party membership is easier to control, but for entrepreneurs, a party membership could provide them with political protection.

Although we cannot find a full separation between private entrepreneurs and party-state institutions in Wenzhou, unquestionably, this case indicates that the private economy has played a leading role there. According to CCP official statements on the Wenzhou case, the private economy has served to promote the establishment of an open and commodity-based economy. It has performed various functions which other forms of ownership cannot. In short, the private economy is a positive element in the overall development of China's productive forces.35

It is worth pointing out that the Wenzhou case is not a typical example in China. Private enterprise has developed to a greater extent in Wenzhou than in many other places in China. Moreover, even in Wenzhou where the private economy plays a significant role in economic life, the private economy still is restricted.

**Beijing Stone Group** is a notable example of the development of China's private economy. In 1984, Wan Runnan used a 20,000 yuan loan to set up Stone Company, a

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33Ibid.

34Ibid. p. 296.

joint venture with the Sijiqing township government in the Haidian district of Beijing. With its great capacity in computer technology, the Stone Group began to play a leading role in the Chinese word processing industry by the late 1980s. In 1989, the Stone Group occupied 80 percent of the domestic market of the Chinese word processing industry, managing 600 stores, 40 wholesale centers and about 100 maintenance and training centers.

Since its joint venture partner was a township government, the Stone Group was registered as a "collective enterprise". As a result, all properties of the Stone Group, at least in principle, belonged to the workers of the company, rather than to Wan Runnan. However, the Stone Group was essentially a private enterprise not under state control. Wan Runnan and other managers possessed fully autonomous power in dealing with its business, such as the output of its products, the price of its products, workers' wages and welfare and the like. The state economic institution, in fact, could not interfere in its own business operation.

In addition to its economic role, the Stone Group also played a significant political role. In the 1989 Beijing Democratic Movement, it donated a significant amount of funds to the students. In explaining the political role of the Stone Group, Wan Runnan states:

"Precisely because of this individual development of the Stone Corporation in China, we could exert tremendous influence upon many aspects of Chinese life. For example, because we developed this private entrepreneurip, many of the work units, the Danwei, came to us for help...Our influence also extended to the arena of education in China. Many primary and high school teachers would come to us asking for money to renovate their educational facilities...This is very significant for they realized that they did not have to beg for money from the central government."

A Collective Factory in Beijing

In her study of civil society in the economic sphere in China, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang has focused on a printing factory in Beijing. In terms of the ownership system, this printing factory which hired more than 300 workers was defined as a "collective enterprise". In theory, all means of production of this factory belong to its workers, but it has been under the supervision of the sub-municipal government (Quzhengfu) since its establishment. In her analysis, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang suggests that although this printing factory is not a fully autonomous economic unit outside of the state economic framework, it still has a great deal of autonomy from the state, and it tends to conduct its own business without state administrative interference.

In general, however, this printing factory case suggests that a collective enterprise in China cannot fully escape from CCP party-state control. Mayfair Mei-hui Yang argues that collective ownership of this factory does not mean it is a fully autonomous corporate group. Most of its important decisions have to be approved by the Industrial Corporation, a branch of the local district government which runs thirteen factories for the district. In fact, the Industrial Corporation is an official institution that has nothing to do with production. "It periodically sent cadres to inspect the printing factory compliance with state directives, such as those related to the promotion of workers' moral-political education and undertaking of 'Civilization and Etiquette Month' activities." Clearly, the Industrial Corporation, on the surface, is a link between the government and the collective economy, but in fact it is an instrument to control the collective economy.

From the printing factory case study, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang found that the development of civil society in China has dual characteristics. On the one hand, the CCP party-state still more or less controls the collective economy and the realm of civil society.

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38 Ibid. p.47.
in the economic sphere is still small and limited. On the other hand, China's collective enterprises are trying to escape state administrative linkage. She suggests:

As they (collective economy) gain great autonomy from the state, relations of exchange between economic corporate groups increasingly tend to take place without the vertical mediation of hierarchical administrative channels. Thus the horizontal integration of civil society is enhanced in the economic sphere, and civil society begins to detach itself from the state.39

In summary, with China's economic reform, civil society in the economic sphere now is taking shape. The communist elite in China probably never intended to lose their control over economic life. Yet, under the economic reform, the rapid development of both the collective and the private economy has seriously affected the economic monopolization of the party-state. Now that the economic reform is well under way, it seems that the CCP regime can hardly restore its "economic totalitarianism".

However, China's non-state economy has not yet become a fully independent and autonomous economic domain outside the party-state economic structure. Especially the private economy has to depend on the state-owned economy which dominates economic life. As Beijing Review states:

China's private economy has developed...during the transformation from a product economy of unitary composition into a planned commodity economy of coexisting multiple economic sectors...because the strong socialist public sector (the state economy) occupies the dominant place in the national economy, the private sector developing in this situation cannot but be related to, as well as influenced and restricted by, the public sector...40

**Control versus Autonomy**

Despite the emergence of a civil society in all three spheres in post-Mao China, the CCP totalitarian regime still is strong, especially in the political and social spheres, and

creates a tough obstacle to the development of civil society. The existing controls of the CCP totalitarian regime in all three spheres tend to make a well-formed or institutionalized civil society impossible in modern China. The CCP totalitarian regime still uses various instruments to prevent the development of a civil domain outside or against the party-state structure.

**Political Control** China's constitutional law legally allows the existence of more than one political party. However, all non-communist parties or groups have been controlled and circumscribed by the CCP. In today's China, there are eight non-communist parties and groups, known as "Democratic Parties and Groups (DPG, Minzhu Dangpai in Chinese)." Historically, the Democratic Parties and Groups were founded during the Republican time, and sought to become a third force beyond the Communists and Nationalists (Kuomintang). In the communist revolution, DPGs were used before 1949 as a tool of the CCP's "united front" (Tongyi Zhanxian) and after 1949 as a useful machinery for controlling a large number of social groups. In China, each DPG plays a leading role in its own sphere. The Siu San Society, for example, is very influential in the Chinese intellectual community, because anyone who wants to become a member must be an associate professor (or equivalent rank).

Like the CCP, DPGs are organized in a hierarchical system with their headquarters in Beijing and intermediate structures at the provincial and municipal levels. At the central level, the central committees of the DPGs are subject to direct control by the CCP United Front Ministry. At the local level, sub-branches of the DPGs are controlled by both their central committees and the local offices of the CCP United Front Department. CCP organizational control of the DPGs limits their organizational autonomy.

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41 The eight DPGs in China: Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalists; China Democracy League; China Democratic National Construction Association; China Association for Promoting Democracy; Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party; China Zi-Cong Party; Jiu San Society and Taiwan and Democratic Self-Government.

At the same time, the attitude of the communist regime toward the emergence of dissident groups and pro-democracy movements is extremely negative. Opposing political organizations never obtain "legality" under the communist authorities. According to the communist regime's terms, political dissidents are usually treated as "counter-revolutionaries", and charged as criminal offenders. The pro-democracy movement is regarded as "political instability" or "political turmoil" which needs to be eradicated. For instance, in the case of the democratic movement of 1978-1979, most leading figures of dissident organizations were arrested and subjected to a warrantless search by police.

Social Control The CCP regime has adopted an "affiliation system" (Guakao) to control social organizations that exist legally under CCP rule. In theory, China's Constitutional Law allows Chinese citizens "to enjoy full freedom of association". In practice, however, if a group of people wants to set up an unofficial organization, they must find a party or a governmental organization with which to be formally affiliated and, then initiate an official registration procedure with the State Civil Affairs Ministry at the national level or the State Civil Affairs Bureau at the local level.

It is easy to see that the "affiliation system" is a strong instrument by which all social organizations have to link with the party-state network. As Andrew Nathan points out: the embryonic growth of an independent civil society in China is obscured by the Chinese practice of Gua (Kao) - to hang or hook in. Every publication, every enterprise in China is protectively "hooked" into the party control network-sponsored by or registered with some party-recognized organization.43

Moreover, the "affiliation system" is not just an instrument to control unofficial organizations but also an instrument to prevent the emergence of social organizations in opposition to the party-state. It is impossible for dissident groups to find a party or government organization with which they can be "affiliated". For example, in early 1993 a

human rights group in Shanghai attempted to establish an organization for promoting human rights in China and sent its application to the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau for formal registration. Since they failed to find a party or government organization with which to affiliate, they could not set up their human rights organization.44

**Economic Control.** Undoubtedly, economic reform in post-Mao China has produced a huge space for economic autonomy. The weight of the collective and private economy now almost equals the state economy. However, the economic control of the party-state has not yet totally disappeared. First, the CCP regime still controls a great number of state-owned enterprises which play a major role in China's economic life. In recent years, some local governments began to sell some state-owned enterprises to Chinese individuals and foreign investors, but all these state-owned enterprises for sale are merely small or middle size factories without profit. Second, the CCP regime still retains some administrative control over the collective economy. Thus, China's collective enterprises cannot became fully independent and autonomous. Third, although China's private economy is an unofficial economic domain outside the CCP economic structure, the CCP regime still restricts it by limiting the scope of private business. The scope of the private economy is usually limited to the service sector, small business and household industry, excluding large industries, such as automobile, energy and transportation.

At the same time, some governmental institutions for economic control still remain at both the central and local levels. Even though these governmental institutions no longer dominate economic life as they did before, they still possess the power to control the state economy and to restrict the non-state economy. Chinese officials often control investment funding, raw materials, licenses, utilities(electric power, oil, gas, etc.) as well as transportation facilities needed by private enterprises. At the national level, for example, the State Planning Commission, a sub-organ of the State Council, still acts as the highest

official department to make economic plans and distribute investment funding and raw materials.

**Summary**

Based on the above discussion, we can conclude that a nascent civil society gradually became apparent in China during the reform era. In the political sphere, dissident organizations and publications emerged even by the late 1970s with a significant impact on the communist totalitarian regime. During the democratic movement of 1978-1979 and the student demonstrations of 1986-1987, the communist regime began to face a strong challenge from dissidents and student demonstrators. In the social sphere, the number of unofficial social organizations rapidly increased and gradually gained relative autonomy from the party-state network. In the economic sphere, the traditional state planned economy was eliminated and replaced by a "socialist market economy". A full economic monopolization of the party-state no longer existed. But the private and collective economic sectors increasingly flourished and had a significant impact on the party-state economic structure.

Obviously, an emerging civil society in reforming China was an undeniable fact, but the degree of its development varied from sphere to sphere. Civil society in the economic sphere was the most apparent both in the rural and urban areas. An economic domain relatively free from party-state control has already emerged. Economic autonomy of both the private and the collective enterprises has already become possible. A civil society emerged in the social sphere, but it was still limited and weak. Due to the "invisible" linkage between the party-state structure and those unofficial social organizations, there has not been a clear separation between the "state sphere" and the "civil sphere". In the political sphere, although we can find some elements of an independent political domain outside or against the party-state as in the case of the Democracy Movement of 1978-
1979, these dissident organizations existed only for a short period and were subjected to strong repression by the communist regime.

Despite the limitations and the weaknesses of the emerging civil society, and despite the remaining control of the party-state in the political, social and economic spheres, one cannot deny the fact that, with the enlargement of a non-state-centered domain, the CCP totalitarian regime has begun to decline, and now has less capability to completely control Chinese society politically, socially and economically. Certainly, it is still too early to speak of a well-formed civil society in post-Mao China, but it is safe to say that a nascent civil society is emerging.
Chapter Four

The Beijing Democratic Movement of 1989
- A Case Study of Emerging Civil Society in China

In examining an emerging civil society in contemporary China, political sphere analysts usually treat the Beijing Democratic Movement of 1989 as a significant case study in understanding the tension between the party-state and an emerging civil society. As some observers suggest: the 1989 democracy movement is best understood as the expression of a fundamental conflict between a state with totalitarian intentions and an emerging civil society in China.

An analysis of the 1989 democratic movement suggests that all three perspectives (revolutionary, anti-elite and historical) described by Chamberlain are partly correct. First, the 1989 case was a "revolutionary" phenomenon which reflected a sharp conflict between the ruler and the ruled. At this "revolutionary moment", Chinese people united in a confrontation with the party-state. Second, in general, the 1989 democratic movement was essentially an urban-based phenomenon partially focused on creating a counterelite structure. The 1989 case reveals an emerging civil society centered mainly around the intellectual-student community which increasingly demanded independence and autonomy from party-state control. Third, from a historical perspective, the 1989 democratic movement can be seen as a revival of some elements of civil society in Chinese history. As we discussed in Chapter Two, there were some anti-state seeds in both imperial and

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3See pp. 19-21 of this thesis.
republican China, such as study societies in late imperial China and student independent organizations in early republican China.

This thesis defined the 1989 democratic movement as a remarkable event for analyzing an emerging civil society in the political sphere in post-Mao China. To be sure, in the sense of "civil society against the state", the 1989 Beijing Democratic Movement provides us with a notable example from which we can see how an emerging civil society forms, and how it counters the CCP totalitarian regime. The purpose of this chapter is to carefully examine the 1989 Beijing Democratic Movement and the roles played by three categories of popular group (or dissident organizations): students, intellectuals and workers.

**A Survey of the Beijing Democratic Movement of 1989**

The 1989 Beijing Democratic Movement began with university students' reaction to the death of Hu Yaobang, former CCP Secretary General and an enlightened communist leader. Only a couple of hours after Hu Yaobang's death, big-character posters\(^4\) commemorating Hu Yaobang were posted on the campus of Beijing University and at dozens of other universities in Beijing. The general sentiment of these big character posters was that the one who should not have died, died, and those who should die, still live on.\(^5\) Why did Chinese students and intellectuals have such a strong reaction to Hu Yaobang's death? Why did his death spark the democratic movement?

How to treat Chinese intellectuals has been a contentious issue for years among the top leadership. The CCP top leadership was roughly divided into two factions, i.e., the conservative group and the enlightened group. As a leading figure of the enlightened group, Hu Yaobang created a very lenient and more tolerant policy for Chinese

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\(^4\) "Big-character posters", in Chinese Dazibao, are a popular traditional form to voice protests and concerns by posting articles on a wall.

intellectuals, even for critical and radical intellectuals. In a theory conference held in early 1979, Hu Yaobang (the Chairman of the conference) launched a campaign against the remaining Maoists. Hu Yaobang maintained at the conference that practice, not Maoist doctrine, should be used as the unique criterion of truth. Hu Yaobang also showed his willingness to contemplate some reduction of the party's political monopoly over Chinese society and to tolerate public criticism of party and government policies.

After the theory conference of 1979, Hu Yaobang enjoyed a good reputation in the intellectual community. In 1986, "socialist democracy" increasingly became a core issue of political reform. Intellectuals and students began to show their concern for China's democratization. Hu Yaobang and his enlightened followers initiated a new intellectual policy dubbed the "Three Kuan" policy characterized by three Chinese words: Kuan Rong (tolerance), Kuan Song (relaxing control) and Kuan Hou (benevolent). To a certain degree, this "Three Kuan" policy created a relaxed environment in which intellectuals and students could have more freedom to discuss the most serious political problems, such as limitation of state power, separation between party and administration, independence of the judiciary, minimized state power and maximized society. Some liberal intellectuals even suggested that the Western democratic system was useful as a theoretical reference for China's political reform.

From the standpoint of political liberalization, the year 1986 was described as a golden time. To a large extent, Hu Yaobang's "Three Kuan" policy brought forth a fresh air of freedom to intellectuals and students. Hu Yaobang's top-to-bottom liberalization helped create an atmosphere conducive to the student demonstrations of 1986-1987. For conservative members of the elite, including Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang had to take

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6Ibid. p13.
7For example, in his article, "Reform of the Political System and Political Democratization", Wei Haibo wrote: "To carry on a full democracy in China, we can not simply deny bourgeois democracy which is still effective in today's world...It can be used as a theoretical reference point as we perfect mechanisms for restricting political power in a socialist country", *Legal Study*, (Beijing). No.10, 1986. p. 52.
responsibility for the "bourgeois" liberalization. As Deng Xiaoping said: "In recent years, bourgeois liberalization really had existed...The party leadership was too weak...This is the big mistake of Comrade Hu Yaobang."8 By early 1987, Hu Yaobang was forced out of office.

After his dismissal as CCP Secretary General, Hu Yaobang was no longer active in the party's policy decision making, but he was still a member of the CCP Politburo and remained concerned about the party's intellectual policy. On April 8, 1989, Hu Yaobang attended an enlarged Politburo meeting to discuss the party's intellectual policy. In his well-prepared remarks, Hu Yaobang made a plea for stabilizing the intellectuals' position in political life. He also stressed that Chinese intellectuals were a great social force in Chinese society who must not be neglected. While making his speech, Hu Yaobang was subjected to a strong attack by some conservatives and was stricken with a heart attack.9 A week later, Hu Yaobang died.

Hu Yaobang's sudden death brought forth a shock wave among university students and the intellectual community and caused a tremor of activism throughout the campuses of Beijing. On April 17, two days after Hu Yaobang's death, students organized a march to Tiananmen Square and Xinhuaemen (residence of the party and the government leaders) to commemorate Hu Yaobang. In the early morning of April 19, about 1,000 students went to Xinhuaemen again to protest against conservative members of the elite. In front of the Xinhuaaman Gate, many students were beaten up by the police. In the evening, thousands of students gathered in Tiananmen Square and made their first statement. In the statement, the students demanded: 1) reevaluation of the student demonstrations of 1986-1987; 2) reassessment of Hu Yaobang's resignation; 3) repudiation of the 1987 anti-spiritual pollution campaign; 4) freedom of the press; 5) more funding for education, and

9Zheng Ming. (Hong Kong) May 1, 1989, pp. 11-12.
6) a crackdown on corruption. On April 22, the date of Hu Yaobang's official funeral in the People's Great Hall by the west Tiananmen Square, more than one hundred thousand students occupied the square and staged a sit-in despite of an official ban on demonstrations at the square that day.

In response to the student demonstrations, on April 26, the People's Daily, the mouth piece of the CCP, published a front-page editorial entitled "Take a Clear-Cut Stand Against Turmoil". The editorial asserted that the disturbances (student demonstrations) were manipulated by a "small minority of people with ulterior motives" whose purpose was to "poison people's minds, create national turmoil and sabotage the nation's political stability and unity". In order to create psychological pressure on the students, university authorities broadcast repeatedly the People's Daily editorial on campuses. Meanwhile, the Beijing authorities also declared that Tiananmen Square and some main streets in Beijing would be closed and banned further "illegal demonstrations". Additionally, the regime also threatened students by claiming that troops would be dispatched if necessary.

Despite the regime's threats and pressure, on the second day following the People's Daily editorial, an estimated two hundred thousand students launched a demonstration with slogans of "People's Daily lies to the people", "peaceful petition, not turmoil", "long live democracy and liberty". The student demonstrators marched all day through the main streets of Beijing. More than one million Beijing residents also lined up along the marching route to applaud and support the demonstrations.

The April 26 editorial sent a signal that the communist authority would take action to "quell the turmoil". However, the CCP leadership failed to reach a consensus on how to deal with the student demonstrations. The CCP leadership eventually split into two factions: proponents of a hard line led by Deng Xiaoping and supporters of a soft line led by Zhao Ziyang (CCP Secretary General). Proponents of a soft line did not consider the

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10 Ibid. pp. 94-95.
student demonstrations as turmoil or a disturbance. In his speech to representatives of the Asian Bank on May 4, Zhao Ziyang for the first time challenged the hard line by claiming that the student demonstrations by no means opposed the nation's system and China would not sink into turmoil. Zhao Ziyang emphasized that all questions raised by the students would be solved according to the rule of democracy and law.12

Due to the absence of a consensus in the top leadership on how to deal with student demonstrations, the regime failed to stop the student protests. Under these circumstances, the students decided on a hunger strike on May 13, two days before the summit meeting between Soviet leader Gorbachev and the top CCP leaders. The hunger strike quickly gained wide attention all across China. It put extraordinary pressure on the regime and had a strong emotional impact on the Chinese people. In their statement, the hunger strikers' group claimed:

What are we to do? Democracy is the most noble condition of human existence. Freedom is the inalienable right of all people. But for these we must exchange our young lives... A hunger strike is an act of last resort, and right now there is no alternative... We are using our lives to write our oath. It must clear the skies over the republic.13

In his meeting with Gorbachev on May 16, Zhao Ziyang disclosed that the top party leadership had passed a resolution that Deng Xiaoping would be the de facto supreme leader in dealing with important matters of the party and the government.14 Zhao Ziyang's remarks implied that Deng Xiaoping had already been involved in dealing with the student demonstrations (an important matter) and that Deng had to take responsibility for the failure of the party and the government to solve the crisis. The next day, a large scale demonstration consisting of students, intellectuals and workers was launched. The

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14People's Daily, May 17, 1991
demonstrators demanded the real retirement and resignation of Deng Xiaoping. Some angry protesters even shouted: "Down with Deng Xiaoping - the last Chinese emperor". The same day, Zhao Ziyang suggested again that the student movement could be calmed only if the CCP disavowed the April 26 People's Daily editorial, but his suggestion was countered by Deng Xiaoping.\(^{15}\)

A Politburo enlarged meeting was held at Deng Xiaoping’s residence on May 19. All five members of the Politburo Standing Committee, Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng (Prime Minister, hard line), Qiao Shi (state security chief, neutral), Yao Yilin (Vice-Prime Minister, hard line) and Hu Qili (party propaganda chief, soft line) attended. Two other aging conservatives, Yang Shangkun (China's President) and Li Xiannian (China's former President) were also present. After heated discussion, Deng Xiaoping called for a vote in favor of imposing martial law. Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili dissented and the other five voted in favor.

At midnight on May 19-20, all party, government and military leaders in Beijing held an emergency meeting. Only Zhao Ziyang refused to attend. At the meeting, Li Peng made a strongly-worded speech, calling on the leadership to "mobilize quickly and take resolute and powerful measures to curb the turmoil, restore order and maintain stability".\(^{16}\) Li Peng also urgently appealed to students to terminate all demonstrations, and to the people to stop their support for the hunger strikers. Following the emergency meeting, Li Peng officially declared that martial law would go into effect in the central area of Beijing at 10:00 am on May 20.

In fact, the implementation of martial law in Beijing was delayed for two weeks. Each time the Army dispatched a military column, it was blocked by tens of thousands of Beijing citizens. At midnight of June 3-4, under an order to use "all means to forcefully

\(^{15}\)Ming Pao. (Hong Kong) May 30, 1989

implement martial law", tens of thousands of soldiers with tanks began to enter Beijing, eventually occupying Tiananmen Square and killing at least three hundred people (official statistics issued by the State Council) in the streets and around Tiananmen Square. The massacre marked the end of the Beijing Democratic Movement of 1989 with a high price.

Independent Student Organizations

Following a successful student demonstration on April 20, 1989, the first independent student organization, the Provisional Federation of Beijing Universities' Students (PFBUS), was founded. Zhou Yongjun, a fourth year student of political science at the Chinese University of Politics and Law, was elected as chairman of the federation. In its first public statement, the PFBUS proclaimed that its fundamental goal was to conduct a dialogue with the top CCP leaders to discuss democratic political reform. At the same time, the PFBUS also tried to establish ties with other universities and colleges by sending 200-300 students to fifteen other major cities.

Due to his weakness in organizing student movements, Zhao Yongjun was replaced on April 27 by Wu'er Kaixi, a student at Beijing Normal University. In the mean time, PFBUS changed its name to "The Autonomous Student Union of Beijing Universities" (ASUBU), representing all universities and colleges in Beijing. As soon as Wu'er Kaixi become the new chairman of ASUBU, he raised three conditions for dialogue with CCP leaders: 1) any dialogue must be reported by the official media; 2) there would not be any reprisals against student leaders and; 3) the student movement must be fairly evaluated. He also listed seven questions to be discussed with CCP leaders:

- to confirm the achievement of Hu Yaobang in the fields of democracy and freedom;
- to reject the "anti-liberalization campaign";
- to publicize the financial holdings of high-ranking officials and their families;
- to create freedom of the press;

17 *China Spring*, No.73, June 1989, p. 20.
18 *Xin Wen Pao*. (Hong Kong) April 26, 1989.
-to increase the budget for education and improve the circumstance of intellectuals;
-to relax control over travel;
-to give a true report on the current student movement.  

Because of the silence of the central authorities in response to the students, ASUBU handed a twelve-point petition to the CCP Central Committee, the State Council and the National People's Congress. The petition set forth the students' conditions for dialogue and their refusal to accept the official students' unions which did not represent them. In its final words, ASUBU stated that they would continue their petitionary demonstration on May 4 if they failed to receive an answer.  

On May 4th, the anniversary of an important popular movement in Chinese history, an estimated 200,000 students marched to Tiananmen Square from various universities and colleges. It was similar to the April 27 large scale student demonstration when the students gained the support of tens of thousands of Beijing citizens. While the students gathered in Tiananmen Square, ASUBU presented a "New May Fourth Manifesto", calling on all Chinese students to uphold Democracy and Science--the fundamental spirit of the May Fourth Movement of 1919. The manifesto stated:

The new China was striding toward modernization on the one hand, but it neglected democratic construction on the other. The party and the government only emphasized the importance of science, but they never paid attention to democracy...The main objective of the student movement is to promote democracy, human rights and rule of law.  

An official dialogue between the CCP leaders and ASUBU took place on May 18th. Li Peng, Li Tieying (Politburo member, Minister in charge of the State Education Commission, hard line), Yan Minfu (member of the CCP Central Committee Secretariat, CCP United Front Minister, soft line), Chen Xitong (mayor of Beijing city, hard line) and  

Li Ximing (secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee, hard line) met with ASUBU's representatives including Wu'er Kaixi and Wang Dan. In the dialogue, the students reiterated their bottom line that the government must affirm the student movement as a patriotic democratic movement rather than an instigator of social turmoil as described by the April 26 People's Daily editorial. However, Li Peng maintained that the student movement had already caused confusion and disorder throughout the country. Actually, Li Peng did not see the meeting as a dialogue. He just focused on one question--how to get the hunger strikers out of Tiananmen Square. Finally, the conversation ended with no conclusion.

On June 6, two days after the massacre, ASUBU issued its final statement. The first section of the statement detailed all facts about the student movement and the military crackdown. ASUBU defined the student movement as a great patriotic movement that aimed at "democracy, liberty, anti-autocracy, anti-totalitarianism, anti-authoritarianism". The second section reflected the students' strong condemnation of the CCP militaristic government. It stated:

The bloodshed fully exposes their (the militaristic government) extreme brutal and corrupt nature. It also strongly proves that their government is not the people's government but the most savage, autocratic and authoritarian government in the world...Beijing is experiencing a reactionary reign of terror. However, history has for a long time proclaimed that the people will certainly win, democracy and freedom will certainly win. We Beijing students will never give in to evil forces; we will struggle with them to the end...
Down with authoritarianism!
Down with autocrats!
Down with fascists!
Long live democracy!
Long live liberty!

22"Li Peng's Conversation with Student Leaders", in Yi Mu and Mark V. Thompson, eds., Crisis at Tiananmen: Reform and Reality in Modern China, San Francisco, China Books and Periodicals Inc., 1989, pp. 168-176.
Long live our people.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Intellectuals in the Beijing Democratic Movement}

In orthodox Marxism, only the working class (proletariat) is considered to be the master of the state and intellectuals are defined as a special "social stratum" outside the proletariat. Chinese intellectuals have not been treated well by the CCP regime. In Mao's China, Chinese intellectuals' social status was ranked at the lowest level. This was not just due to the impact of orthodox Marxism, but also a reflection of Mao's personal prejudice against Chinese intellectuals. According to Mao, the Chinese intellectuals' outlook was fundamentally bourgeois since most of them came from non-working class families.\textsuperscript{24} Moreover, in Mao's eyes, intellectuals with a higher education were seen as a big obstacle to his obscurantism and the Party's ideological control. Thus, Chinese intellectuals frequently became victims of Party political campaigns in the Maoist period.

In the late 1970s, the post-Mao leadership began to change the Party's policy toward the intellectuals. Some enlightened leaders, such as Hu Yaobang, created a more relaxed climate for intellectual life. In 1983, the Party changed its attitude toward intellectuals and identified the intellectuals as a part of the working class.\textsuperscript{25} Despite their improving social status in the reform era, Chinese intellectuals still were treated as a special community with a certain distance from the party-state structure. Thus, conflict and tension between the CCP totalitarian regime and the Chinese intellectual community could not be avoided. Many intellectuals were attacked during political campaigns of the 1980s, such as the "anti-spiritual pollution campaign" of 1984 and the "anti-bourgeois liberalization" campaign of 1987.

Following the 1986-1987 student demonstrations, Hu Yaobang's downfall increased the tension between the CCP conservative elite and the intellectual community and brought a hard time for Chinese intellectuals. Hu Yaobang's sudden death not only quickly sparked the student demonstrations, but also caused a strong emotional reaction among Chinese intellectuals. In the early stage of the student movement, on the surface it seemed to be a student-directed movement. Behind the scenes, however, intellectuals provided a great deal of support to the students. On April 21, some intellectuals in Beijing sent an open letter to the Party Central Committee, the State Council and the National People's Congress, supporting the student demonstrations and calling for a dialogue between the government and the students but this letter was rejected by the authorities.26

In mid-May, when the students were on a hunger strike, some elite intellectuals again publicly showed their strong support for the student movement. In the first remarkable declaration formulated by Yan Jiaqi27 and Su Shaozhi28, the intellectuals warned the authorities: "all attempts by dictator to suppress the student movement with violence had all been shamefully recorded in the pages of China's history, and history had proven that all those who try to suppress student movements will come to a bad end."29 The declaration suggested that the political crisis confronting the communist regime could only be solved in the light of democratic political principles and that the legality of independent student organizations was the most important principle. The intellectuals also called for a struggle for freedom guaranteed by constitutional law, such as: freedom of speech, freedom of

27Yan Jiaqi, political scientist, former Director of the Institute of Political Science at the Chinese Academy of Social Science.
28Su Shaozhi, Marxist theoretician, former Director of the Institute of Marxism and Leninism at the Chinese Academy of Social Science.
thought, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and freedom to demonstrate. In the final words of the declaration, the intellectuals stated:

We, Chinese intellectuals who have a tradition of patriotism and are always concerned about the nation, should become conscious of our unshakable historic duty. We should stand up and push forward the movement for democracy. Let us struggle to build a politically democratic and economically developed modern state.

On May 23, the first independent intellectual organization, Beijing Intellectuals Autonomous Federation (BIAF), was established. In its first public statement, the BIAF demonstrated its forceful voice.

At a time when the fate of our nation hangs in the balance, conscience call us, the intellectuals who are usually modest, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous, can no longer be silent. Our reason tells us that we should no longer be divided. Intellectuals should organize in this great patriotic democratic movement.

Following the declaration of martial law, the intellectuals felt angry with the militarist government. The BIAF called on all Beijing citizens to organize themselves immediately and establish a unified network for co-ordination and mobilization. In an open letter, the BIAF strongly demanded an early end to martial law and the removal of troops from Beijing.

On June 2, four intellectuals announced a seventy-two hour hunger strike to protest martial law. They issued a "Hunger Strike Statement" at Tiananmen Square. In contrast to

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30 Ibid. pp. 92-93.
31 Ibid. p. 93.
34 Ibid. p. 139.
35 Liu Xiaobo: lecturer in the Chinese Literature Department, Beijing Normal University; Zhou Duo: lecturer in the Sociology Research Institute of Beijing University. Director of General Planning and Development at Stone Group. Inc.;
the students declarations, their statement was more theoretical and systematic in defining their idea of democracy. To some extent, this statement can be seen as a summarization of the intellectuals' political demands. Here I cite some of its main points:

1) Democracy is a political form excluding enemies and hatred; it requires mutual respect, forgiveness and cooperation in making its decision after discussion and voting. 2) The people lack the concept of political responsibility, we therefore want to gradually raise their awareness of citizenship. 3) Citizenship means, first political equality for everybody, and second rational involvement in politics-political obligation. 4) A good structure in a society comes from the participation of everybody living in it. 5) We appeal for the establishment of independent organizations by the people at all levels so as to form a political force to work with the government in policy making. 6) Democratic politics is realized by democratizing government operations and procedures. 7) We appeal to Chinese people to switch from empty talk of democracy at the level of enlightening to the solid practice of building a working democracy.36

**Independent Workers' Union**

In the 1989 Beijing Democratic Movement not only students and intellectuals but also urban workers were actors on the political stage. According to Wang Shaoguang, professor in the Political Science Department at Yale University, the immediate socioeconomic roots of the workers' unrest was the product of the confluence of three burning issues: rising inflation, widespread corruption and the declining social status of the working class.37 To be sure, these socioeconomic factors were important to the workers, but political concerns were also prominent. Looking at the workers' contribution to the

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1989 movement, one can see that the workers increasingly became a significant social force in the struggle against the CCP regime.

For the first few days after Hu Yaobang's death, a group of young workers, including Han Dongfang (a notable workers' leader), gathered at Tiananmen Square to discuss what workers in Beijing would do in response to the student protest. On April 20, Han Dongfang gave a speech at Tiananmen Square, calling for the establishment of an independent labour union to organize working class support for the student movement. Following his speech, the first independent workers' organization, known as the Beijing Workers Union (BWU), was founded. In its first handbill, the BWU blamed the "ruling elite" who issued various treasury bonds\(^\text{38}\) for trying to squeeze the people and complained about the uncontrolled inflation and declining living standards.\(^\text{39}\) The BWU also put forth three demands: a wage increase; price stabilization and the publication of the income and possessions of the top party and government officials and their families.\(^\text{40}\)

The second handbill, with the title "Ten Polite Questions for the CCP" raised a series of questions to the leadership. The workers asked: How much did Deng Xiaoping's son bet on a horse race in Hong Kong and where did the money come from? Did Zhao Ziyang and his wife pay the green fees for their weekly golf game? How do you judge the ongoing economic reform? How do you explain the increasing inflation? Why are people's living standards declining?\(^\text{41}\)

When the students began their hunger strike on May 13, the BWU issued a public appeal to all workers in Beijing. The appeal stated: "Only our working class can save the Democracy Movement by taking immediate action: 1) to use all non-violent means to

\(^{38}\)Unlike in Western society, the Chinese government usually forces the Chinese people to buy treasury bonds (national debt). Some state run economic units directly deduct a sum of money from their workers' payroll. The variety of treasury bonds creates some financial pressure on the workers.


\(^{40}\)Ibid.

\(^{41}\)Ibid. pp. 107-108.
prevent the troops entering Beijing city; 2) to organize a workers' picket group to maintain order in the capital and prevent illegal behaviour."

During the week of the hunger strike May 12-20, large numbers of workers from all sorts of factories--small, medium and large, private and state run, as well as foreign invested enterprises throughout Beijing--marched to Tiananman Square, voicing their support for the democratic movement. More significantly, some workers came from the largest state-run enterprises, such as the Capital Steel Corporation and the Yanshan Petrochemical Corporation. In these workers' demonstrations, the BWU played a leading role, even though it did not have direct organizational ties with the official labour union in these large state-run enterprises.

On May 18, the BWU's leaders publicly announced its formal establishment with a new name, "Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation" (BWAF). The most important document for understanding the BWAF is its "Provisional Memorandum" issued on May 28. This Memorandum stated: "We workers recognize that there is a need to set up an autonomous organization which will organize the realization of workers' participation and consultation in political life." In this memorandum, the workers established their own organizational principles that included:

1) The organization should be an entirely independent, autonomous organization, built up by the workers on a voluntary basis, through democratic processes, and should not be controlled by other organizations.
2) The fundamental principle of the organization should be to address political and economic demands based on the wishes of the majority of the workers, and should not just remain a welfare organization.
3) The organization should possess the function of monitoring the party of the proletariat - the Chinese Communist Party.
4) The organization should have the power, through every legal and effective means, to monitor the legal representatives of all

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42Ibid. p. 113.
state and collective enterprises, guaranteeing that the workers become the real masters of the enterprise.

Before the declaration of martial law on April 17, the BWU delivered a remarkable statement, declaring that, "The illegality and brutality of corrupt officialdom has reached an extreme. There is no place for truth. No reactionary force can suppress the outpouring of the people's anger. The people will no longer believe the lies of the rulers." After the government declared martial law, the BWAF quickly called for a general strike in Beijing to continue until the troops withdrew from Beijing city. The workers stated that they should have the right to drive out the dictators and bring down the dictatorship. Throughout the period of martial law, the workers demonstrated great bravery in struggling against martial law. The BWAF sent many workers with trucks to block the troops. In a confrontation with the army, some workers were killed. At midnight on June 3-4, the massacre began from the northeast corner of Tiananmen Square, where the headquarters of the BWAF was located.

Conclusions

The Beijing Democracy Spring of 1989 ended with a bloody crackdown. In the words of the CCP regime, this democratic movement is defined as "political turmoil" or a "counter-revolutionary rebellion". At the Eighth Session of the Seventh National People's Congress Standing Committee, Beijing mayor Chen Xitong delivered a speech authorized by the party and the government. In his remarks on the democratic movement, Chen described how "a tiny handful of people exploited student unrest to launch planned, organized and premeditated political turmoil, which later developed into a

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45Mok Chiu Yu and Frank Harrison, eds., *Voices from Tiananmen Square: Beijing Spring and the Democracy Movement*, Montreal, Black Rose Books Ltd. 1990, p. 115.
counterrevolutionary rebellion in Beijing, the capital. Their purpose was to overthrow the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and subvert socialist China."

In fact, the Democratic Movement was neither "political turmoil" nor a "counterrevolutionary rebellion". Essentially, it was a popular movement, a popular disobedient movement, a people’s struggle against the CCP regime and a political battle by the people for democracy. The 1989 movement may be conceived as the continuation of the 1978-1979 and the 1986-1987 movements, but it was not a simple repeat of the previous two. At least two characteristics of the 1989 movement differentiated from either the 1978-1979 democratic movement or the 1986-1987 student demonstrations.

The most fundamental characteristic of the 1989 movement was its popular support and "massive size". The movement initiated by Beijing students in its initial stage, developed as a popular movement in the later stages. From Beijing University, it spread to other universities, from the universities to the larger intellectual community, from there to the whole society. Marches involved hundreds of thousands, even millions of people. In both 1978-1979 and 1986-1987, the scope of participation in the movements was limited and narrow. For example, the 1986-1987 student demonstrations did not gain large popular support and there were no intellectuals and workers or ordinary citizens involved. In 1989, the democratic movement had an impact on all urban residents. Demonstrators and protesters included not just students, intellectuals and workers, but also journalists, doctors, businessmen, private enterprise owners, cadres in party and government departments, and even some policemen and students of army schools.

Another important difference was that in 1978-1979 and 1986-1987 most dissidents demanded only that a "good" government replace the bad one; calls for overthrowing the communist regime were relatively weak. In 1989, students, intellectuals and workers not only demanded enlightened politics, but also tried to create a new system with freedom,

\footnote{See Su Shaozhi. "The Origin and Results of China’s 1989 Democracy Movement". op. cit. pp. 74-84.}
human rights and the rule of law. The case of 1989 indicates that Chinese dissidents no longer expect that the communist state can be "fixed" by the communist regime itself and want to change the system through their own political participation. Some dissident organizations maintained that they had a political responsibility and obligation to contribute to China's democratization.

The significance of the 1989 case for civil society was the emergence of independent popular organizations. These organizations, such as ASUBU, BIAF and the BWAF, all used the term "autonomous" (Zizhi, in Chinese it means self-rule) as part of their organizational names. This significant phenomenon reflects these organizations' attempts to create an independent political domain totally separate from the party-state hierarchy. For example, looking at the BWAF's principle, we can easily see that Chinese workers had already begun to try to set up an independent labour union.

The 1989 case demonstrated that tension and conflict between the totalitarian regime and the popular forces had reached a high point. From a historical viewpoint, this 1989 confrontation between the state and civil society (which, in some ways, can be seen as a civil disobedience movement) was not just a continuation of previous pro-democracy movements. To some extent, the 1989 case can be considered as part of the Chinese tradition of civil (popular) protests dating back to the May Fourth Movement. As Chapter Two demonstrates, although, one could hardly find an institutionalized civil society in traditional China, there were various seeds of civil society in imperial China and the early Republic, especially independent student organizations and intellectual groups. If one links the 1989 movement with Chinese history, we find that this popular movement was not an isolated case. Rather it can be seen as a part of a long process of civil society's development in China.

Although the independent organizations that emerged in the 1989 Democracy Movement had a significant impact on the CCP regime, they also had significant limitations and weaknesses. The fundamental factor that made them weak and limited was
the CCP totalitarian regime which never recognized their legality. Without legal status, they could not gain real popular support by setting up organizational networks at the grassroots level in Beijing or throughout China. Moreover, these independent organizations emerged as part of the 1989 movement and disappeared at the end of the movement. In other words, they were products of the movement itself but not its initiators. Hence, they had neither a long term strategy for achieving their organizational goals nor a workable proposal for China's democratization.

It is also important to point out that the 1989 Beijing Democracy Movement was essentially a student-intellectual-directed or an urban-based popular movement. Despite the involvement of the popular masses, the students and intellectuals failed to establish an alliance that included all social forces, especially workers and peasants. In the early stage of the movement, the students even demonstrated some reluctance toward accepting the workers' participation in their protests and demonstrations.

Why no revolution in 1989? In her article "Casting A Chinese 'Democracy' Movement: The Roles of Students, Workers, and Entrepreneurs", Elizabeth J. Perry provides two sorts of explanations. The first is that the Chinese system enjoyed considerable popular legitimacy.\(^47\) The second explanation is that the 800 million rural dwellers were not concerned about the movement.\(^38\) It is probably true that the CCP totalitarian regime still has political legitimacy, especially among Chinese peasants. However, this thesis maintains that the fundamental reason for the failure of the 1989 movement was the integration between the party-state and the army and the willingness and ability of the CCP regime to use force (army and police) to suppress the popular movement. If the CCP regime had been unwilling to use military force or if the army had kept a neutral position, the 1989 movement probably would have brought forth a real democracy spring.


\(^{38}\)Ibid. pp. 147-148.
In short, the 1989 case suggests that a nascent civil society in the political sphere was emerging in reformist China. The failure of the movement (the CCP crackdown) proves that the declining totalitarian party-state was still stronger than the emerging civil society. Following the 1989 democratic spring, a political winter reoccurred in China, and the CCP regime once again restricted political liberalization. However, the most significant aspect of the 1989 Democratic Movement is that it has opened a new chapter in contemporary Chinese history. As Andrew G. Walder comments: "Beijing's seven tumultuous weeks of popular protest marked a new stage in China's post-revolution political history."49

Chapter Five

General Conclusion and Prospects for Civil Society in China

Concluding Remarks

This thesis explores the development of "civil society" in China using the concept of "civil society" both as an ideal to criticize the CCP's totalitarian political philosophy and as an analytical tool to examine the transformation of the CCP totalitarian regime. This thesis differs from other works in that it attempts to take a comprehensive approach to examining civil society during different periods and in different spheres. The advantage of this comprehensive approach is that it helps us delineate a historical and multi-dimensional picture of civil society in China. The significant findings of this thesis can be summarized as follows:

First, from a historical point of view, one cannot find a well-organized civil society outside the imperial state in traditional China. Moreover, it is difficult to find an ideal of civil society in Chinese traditional political values. What we can find in traditional China is some elements or seeds of civil society or a very weak and limited civil society. These elements or seeds cannot be described as a "civil society tradition in China". Among these traditional forms of civil society, kinship societies and secret societies were eliminated in Mao's China. They have begun to reemerge in post-Mao China. For example, kinship societies have reemerged in some rural areas and are beginning to perform important welfare functions. Some of the seeds of civil society in traditional China, such as intellectuals' and students' organizations, reemerged during the more open atmosphere of the late 1980s.

Second, we found that a nascent civil society in the political, social and economic spheres has been taking shape in post-Mao China. In the political sphere, the democratic movements of 1978-1979 and 1989 and the student demonstrations of 1986-1987 have undermined the CCP's totalitarian rule. Especially during the 1989 Democratic Movement,
the CCP regime confronted a strong popular movement which challenged its legitimacy. In the social sphere, a large number of non-governmental social organizations emerged and gradually obtained relative organizational autonomy from direct party-state control. In the economic sphere, the non-state economy rapidly increased and began to play an important role in the economic life of post-Mao China.

Third, this thesis also found that the emergence of civil society in post-Mao China has met a great obstacle posed by the CCP totalitarian regime. In the political, social and economic spheres, the CCP regime still retains a very significant degree of control. In the political sphere, the CCP regime has not allowed the legal existence of any opposing political forces. It uses the communist organization to control non-communist parties and groups (DPGs), and the armed forces to suppress any dissident groups or democratic movements. In the social sphere, the CCP regime adopts an affiliation system to control unofficial social organizations, and leaves no space for the full autonomy of social organizations. In the economic sphere, some governmental institutions not only maintain an administrative linkage between the party-state and collective enterprises, but also restrict the enlargement of the private economy and the scope of private business.

Finally, the general conclusion of this thesis is not to claim that there has been a well-formed or an institutionalized civil society in post-Mao China. Instead, this thesis suggests that there is only an emerging or a nascent civil society with weakness and limitations, and a declining party-state in contemporary China. Obviously, the declining party-state has partly lost its political, social and economic control, but it is stronger than the emerging civil society. At the same time, we also found that a great tension between the emerging civil society and the party-state remains, especially in the political sphere.

The emerging civil society in post-Mao China is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Civil society in the political sphere is the major focus for some sinologists who examine the transformation of the CCP totalitarian system. However, one cannot draw an overall picture without examining civil society in a relatively broad scope beyond the political
sphere. Current analysts, such as David S. and L. Sullivan (political sphere analysis), Gordon White and Martin Whyte (social sphere analysis) and Mayfair Mei-hui Yang (economic sphere analysis), are partly correct in the study of civil society in post-Mao China, but they fail to provide a general picture by enlarging their analytical scope. This thesis combines analysis of all three spheres and outlines a general image of civil society in post-Mao China. This general image can be described as: unquestionable for a nascent civil society in post-Mao China, but not yet for an institutionalized or well-formed civil society.

**East European Experience and China’s Concrete Situation**

Clearly, the revival of civil society first took place in East European countries. Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield suggest that the ongoing development of civil society in former communist countries in Central Europe underwent four stages:

1) defensive, in which private individuals and independent groups actively defend their autonomy vis-a-vis the party-state;  
2) emergent, in which independent social groups or movements seek limited goals in a widened public sphere which is sanctioned or conceded by the reforming party-state;  
3) mobilization, in which independent groups and movements undermine the legitimacy of the party-state by offering alternative forms of governance to a politicized society;  
4) institutional, in which publicly supported leaders enact laws guaranteeing autonomy of social action, leading to a contractual relationship between state and society regulated by free election.¹

If we use this development model to look at civil society in China, developments associated with the first stage can easily be found in post-Mao China. The development of civil society in China began to shift from the first stage to the second stage during the golden time of the late 1980s. However, after the Tiananmen massacre, the development of civil society was hindered by a new "political winter" created by the CCP regime. It is

¹Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield, "Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes. The Logic of Emergence", *Comparative Politics*, October. 1992. p. 1
quite obvious that the third and the final stages, i.e., mobilized and institutionalized civil society, have not yet come to China.

While it is useful to use this "stage theory" to view the development of civil society in China, one could argue that different countries have had different experiences in the struggle to create a civil society. In Poland, the tradition of an independent Catholic Church established a historical foundation for civil society in the religious sphere. At the same time, Solidarity played a crucial role in uniting workers and other civil organizations in confrontation with the Polish communist regime. In Hungary, its "second economy", an unofficial economy outside the state economic structure, provided a firm foundation for the development of civil society in the economic sphere. In the former Czechoslovakia, there were some independent political groups.

If one compares China with these three former communist countries, one can easily find that there was an absence of autonomous religious institutions, independent workers' unions and political organizations. Additionally, China's non-state economy is still weak and its network of social organizations is limited and restricted. In short, civil society in China is not as strong as it was in some Eastern European countries.

Why was civil society in Eastern Europe much stronger than in China? To answer this question, we need to take a historical perspective to view the origins of the communist systems in Eastern Europe and China. In Eastern Europe, the Leninist totalitarian system, to a large extent, was imposed at the end of the Second World War by an external force, the Soviet army. The struggle against the Leninist regime was defined as a struggle for national identity and national tradition, a struggle against external interference. For example, in discussing the functions of a civil society in Poland, Maria Markus noted that one of the functions of civil society was to express the definition of Polish tradition, its hierarchy of values and norms of social behavior. Accordingly, a tension between the

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2See Chapter One of this thesis, p.16.
totalitarian state and civil society had existed since the establishment of the communist system in Eastern Europe, and civil society revived rapidly when Soviet control ended. In contrast to Eastern Europe, the CCP totalitarian system was "peacefully" borrowed from the former Soviet Union, and was imposed by a "home-grown nationalist movement". Most important, the CCP totalitarian regime was a combination of Leninist totalitarianism and Chinese political tradition. In other words, the CCP totalitarian regime was not just derived from the Leninist state, but also based on Chinese imperial tradition in which the state always conquered civil society.

There are significant obstacles in Chinese political culture to the ideal of civil society. For a thousand years, the Confucian political legacy has taught Chinese "you must constrain yourself in order to obey the imperial state". In Chinese traditional political philosophy, one can hardly find an ideal of civil society. As argued in the second chapter, Chinese traditional values did not support a separation between society and the state. In today's China, most Chinese are still quite unfamiliar with the concept of civil society. At the grassroots level, the separation of state and society, individualism, political independence, social autonomy, self-rule and other ideas related to civil society have not yet been rooted in the Chinese value system. An institutionalized civil society is part of a democratic system that needs to be sustained by the people culturally and ideologically. In the long run, the establishment of an institutionalized civil society in China needs a precondition, i.e., a change of Chinese political culture. To be sure, political culture is changeable. Yet to change a political culture is a lengthy process and nobody knows how long it will take.

China is essentially a country governed by man, not the rule of law. In such a society, most social groups and unofficial organizations as well as non-state economic units depend on their connections with the party-state and its officials. Some scholars use the "clientelist approach" to explain this linkage between state and society. For instance, Dorothy J. Solinger uses this approach to examine a dependent relationship between
bureaucrat and merchant. She found that Chinese merchants can hardly pursue their business without connections with state officials. This approach is certainly correct, since it reflects the essence of Chinese society. Unlike Western society, the operation of Chinese society is based on a network of personal relationships, rather than a legal system. In this personal network, people in non-state organizations, such as private enterprises and social organizations, inevitably have to establish and maintain ties with officials of party or government institutions. This is one reason why various social and economic groups still lack full autonomy and can hardly divorce themselves from the party-state.

In addition to Chinese political culture and social tradition, another serious obstacle to the revival of civil society in today’s China is the CCP regime itself. “Upholding the leadership of the Communist Party”, a fundamental principle of Deng Xiaoping’s Four Cardinal Principles, does not allow independent and autonomous activities outside the party-state network. Moreover, the absolute monopoly of the Communist Party over the army provides real power for the communist regime to maintain its authoritarian rule. “Don’t be afraid of students, because we still have several million troops” were Deng’s words in dealing with the 1989 student demonstrations. This demonstrates that the emergence of civil society met with a great counterforce in the communist regime. The Communist Party took state power via a military revolution in 1949, and it will continue to use the army to maintain its dictatorship when the emergence of a civil society threatens communist rule.

The essence of the CCP regime can be defined as a trinity of party, government and army. The tight control of the CCP regime over the PLA (the People's Liberation Army) provides the CCP regime with real power to conquer Chinese society. To date, the army and police have remained loyal to the CCP regime. If a rift does not develop between the

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party and the army, the PLA will continue to support the party-state in conflicts with popular movements, making the revival of civil society quite uncertain.

Prospects for Civil Society in China

The failure of the 1989 Democratic Movement has created some new political restrictions. However, a military crackdown can only suppress a democratic movement in the short term. It cannot eliminate the growing elements of a de facto civil society in China in the long run. The Tiananmen crackdown of 1989 brought with it an end to the democratic movement, creating short term "political stability" for the communist regime. Yet the price of such short term "stability" was very high in terms of loss of popular support and undermining of the regime's legitimacy. After the Tiananmen crackdown, elements of civil society were not eliminated. Instead, in recent years, elements of civil society have been increasing, rather than decreasing. This remarkable trend may provide us with some insights about the prospects for civil society in China.

The 1989 crackdown has not prevented the reemergence of popular movements. University students, intellectuals and urban workers continue to launch demonstrations, protests and strikes against the communist regime. According to an official document issued by the Public Security Ministry, there were 540 instances of student demonstrations and urban workers' protests in 1992, and 400 cases of workers' strikes as well as 75 cases of attacking Party and government offices. These events took place not only in major cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, but also in provinces all across China. These remarkable figures indicate that the communist party-state is facing a potential political crisis.

The most notable phenomenon of civil society in the political sphere is the reemergence of independent organizations existing underground. Most of them are

political organizations opposed to the communist regime. According to the human rights journal, *Asia Watch*, underground organizations continued to emerge after the 1989 crackdown. These include the China Liberal Democratic Party, China Liberal Workers Union, China Social Democratic Party, China Progressive Party and the Chinese Citizens' Autonomous Federation. These new underground political organizations advocate political pluralism and the establishment of a multi-party system. For example, the China Liberal Democratic Party, initiated by a group of radical intellectuals in 1991, declared that its basic objective was to overthrow the communist totalitarian regime and to establish a pluralist political system.

In addition to these elements of civil society in the political sphere, in the economic sphere, one significant variable that has a positive impact on the revival of civil society is the rapid growth of a non-state economy, including both a collective economy and a private economy. In the last decade, the significance of the non-state economy has steadily increased. In the year 2000, according to Chinese economists, the weight of the state economy will decrease to 25% of total GNP, while the non-state economy will increase to 75% of total GNP. It is safe to predict that with the development of the non-state economy, the communist regime will inevitably lose its economic control. In the social sphere, a large number of social organizations already exist in China. Although this social domain has not yet escaped from the party-state structure, it provides a possibility of separation between an "autonomous domain" and a "state-centered sphere".

In China, another four significant factors will also affect the development of civil society. First of all, at the top leadership level, there are still some potential "top-to-bottom" factors that could bring a new spring in post-Deng China. As we have noted, Hu Yaobang's enlightened intellectual policy helped create the conditions that led to the

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student demonstrations of 1986-1987 and Zhao Ziyang's lenient attitude toward student protests indirectly contributed to the endurance of the democratic movement of 1989. No doubt, if there will be a top-to-bottom liberalization, it may provide a crucial moment for the revival of a civil society.

It is quite uncertain whether there is a new Hu Yaobang or a new Zhao Ziyang, or even a Chinese Gorbachev in the top political elite. Yet, it appears that overt and behind-the-scenes political conflicts continue at the top leadership level. After the Tiananmen crackdown, Deng Xiaoping selected Jiang Zeming, the former mayor of Shanghai city, to establish a so-called "cross-century leadership". In fact, this new leadership is a very weak one that can hardly maintain elite stability. After Deng's death, a new round of elite power struggle seems to be inevitable. In the anticipated intraelite conflict between liberal reformers and conservatives, if a new soft line leadership encourages democratic political reform and a real free market economy in order to gain popular support and accelerate the national economy, then the revival of civil society in China will become possible. Yan Jiaqi predicts that as long as a new group of liberal leaders forms in post-Deng China, systematic political reform will be put on the agenda and society will probably gain much more freedom.9

Second, with China's economic reform and development, the economic power of provincial and local governments, particularly in wealthy coastal areas such as Guangdong, Fujian, Shanghai and Shenzhen, is growing stronger in comparison with the central party-state authorities. "Despite Beijing repeated efforts since 1988 to reassert central regulatory control, provincial and local authorities have continued to go their own way in fiscal and monetary policy, issuing commercial regulations, assessing and collecting local taxes and incidental fees, providing discretionary incentives to lure business and

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investment away from other regions". In examining the division of economic power between the central and local levels, Lou Jiwei, a Chinese economist at the Shanghai Municipal System Reform Office, argues that local governments began to obtain "greatly enlarged powers in allocation of output and credit, adjustment of prices, management of fiscal revenue, domestic and foreign trade, and wages and employment".

Maria Hsia Chang characterizes China's probable future as "regionalism", "federation" or "disintegration". What she describes may be too extreme to predict accurately China's future. However, in the economic sphere, decentralization of power seems to be an inevitable trend in China. It is safe to predict that the trend of decentralization of power will inevitably undermine the CCP's totalitarian rule. Furthermore, the experience of the former USSR indicates that economic decentralization seems to have some impact on political democratization.

Third, Chinese peasants have become increasingly important actors on the political stage. In post-Mao China, citizens in urban areas, especially in some coastal provinces, have begun to get rich. The increasing gap between rural and urban areas fuels peasant discontent. At the same time in some rural areas, local authorities are becoming more arbitrary than before. Although communist China has not experienced a large-scale peasant upheaval like peasant the rebellions in traditional China, we can find some evidence of peasant discontent that is defined as "turmoil" by the CCP regime. For example, on June 5th, 1993, hundreds of peasants in Renshou county of Sichuan province

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protested against local officials who tried to levy too much tax from the peasants, and eventually angry peasants burned out the building of the local government.\textsuperscript{14}

Another notable phenomenon in today's China is that tens of millions of labour migrants who have left the farms are looking for employment in urban areas moving from city to city across the country. This migration of rural labors is usually called the "floating population" (Liu Dong Ren Kou). In her article "China's Transients and the State: A Form of Civil Society",\textsuperscript{15} Dorothy J. Solinger defines this "floating population" as a special form of civil society. She maintains that the floating population in China is a kind of sprout of civil society, since "they are recruited into cities largely by private and personal agents".\textsuperscript{16}

Chinese peasants have suffered from the CCP system for years. During the reform era, living standards in rural areas were changing, but the majority of the rural population still lived in poor conditions. The tension between peasants and the regime remains. Despite the fact that the peasant still is not a major actor in China's political and economic life, the role of Chinese peasants cannot be neglected in China's future.

Fourth, China's open door policy has created some external factors with a significant impact on the CCP's totalitarian regime. Foreign investment has increasingly undermined the CCP's state economy and, some joint and wholly foreign owned ventures in China are playing an important role in Chinese economic life.\textsuperscript{17} Recent statistics show that more than one hundred thousand foreign ventures were funded during the reform period (1979-1993).\textsuperscript{18} These foreign ventures have had an impact on Chinese society beyond the economic sphere, and have affected China culturally and ideologically. For the CCP elite, the only purpose of the open door policy is to attract foreign investment and high

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.} p. 112.
technology in order to help China's economic development. However, Western ideals and values have accompanied foreign capital. They are having an effect on the Chinese.

More important, with the development of modern communications, the CCP's totalitarian regime can no longer monopolize the flow of information. Foreign radio broadcasts and satellite systems open Chinese eyes to the outside world. Furthermore, China is one of the only remaining communist countries in the world. Some Western countries hope to encourage its democratization. All these external factors will inevitably contribute to the emergence of civil society in China.

Some scholars maintain that China's economic development will inevitably bring with it a sort of "political democracy," or in other words, civil society at the economic level may cause the development of civil society at the political level. More precisely, they suggest that economic change and the development of civil society in the economic sphere are the only path to a well formed and institutionalized civil society--a precondition for a democratic society in China's future. Obviously, this assertion involves a theoretical assumption about the relationship between economic development and political change, and it can be divided into two questions: 1) whether an authoritarian or totalitarian regime is compatible with economic development and 2) whether economic prosperity will bring forth a free and pluralist society. These two questions must be explored to clarify "how China's current socialist market economy and economic development affect political change toward an institutionalized civil society".

As for the first question, we can find two different perspectives, i.e., a compatibility hypothesis and an incompatibility hypothesis. In his work The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries, Jagdish Bhagwati suggests that authoritarianism is compatible with and necessary for economic development. He argues that "No policy of economic development can be carried out unless the government has the capacity to adhere to it...Quite often, however, democratic government lose equanimity and determination in the
face of opposition". In contrast to Jagdish Bhagwati's compatibility approach, William Dick's observation suggests that authoritarianism is not compatible with economic development. His rich data clearly do not support the argument that authoritarian governments perform better than nonauthoritarian governments during the earliest stage of development.

This thesis supports the incompatibility hypothesis and argues that authoritarianism or totalitarianism is essentially incompatible with economic development in the long run. Economic development usually takes place in a free society and needs a social environment in which a real market-oriented economy can exist. Some might argue that the four "Asian Dragons" support the compatibility approach. However, as Pei Minxin suggests "In fact, the experiences of economic development under authoritarian government have in many cases been pitiful; only a very few authoritarian governments have been successful in terms of economic growth". This thesis argues that there were some external factors that made a great contribution to the economic development of these four Asian Dragons. For example, if the USA had not provided its foreign aid and its market to Taiwan, Taiwan would have not gained its rapid economic growth. Hence, we believe that the CCP regime cannot essentially carry though China's economic development in the long run in the absence of significant political reform. Without political change, the so-called "market socialism" will not be successful.

As for the second question, Seymour Martin Lipset noted that in European and some English-speaking countries there was a correlation between a high level of economic development and a democratic political system. He maintains that economic wealth will

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sustain democracy. Yet, Samuel P. Huntington argues that this assertion is difficult to prove, since 1) both democracy and wealth could be caused by a third factor and 2) democracy could give rise to economic wealth.

In examining China's democratization and economic reform, Gordon White believes that China's "economic reforms have brought major, irreversible political change to Chinese society". He points out: China's political change caused by economic reforms at least include 1) a considerable decline in the authority of the party leadership; 2) a serious decay of the authority and integrity of hegemonic political institutions; 3) a shift in the balance of power between state and society. It is of course correct to claim that China's economic reform and development have, to some degree, contributed to China's political change, and economic prosperity will bring forth some political change. However, the impact of economic factors on political democracy should not be exaggerated to the extent of saying that China's economic development is a precondition for China's democratization.

What this thesis tries to argue is that, although, economic factors certainly have an effect on a political system, one cannot claim that economic development will have a decisive impact on the transformation of the CCP regime. We may accept that economic development has some positive impact on the CCP regime, but we can hardly accept an "economic determinist" approach to the relationship between economic development and political democracy. In other words, there is not a causal link between economic prosperity and political democracy and China's economic reform and development will not automatically create a democratic society. Accordingly, civil society in the economic and political spheres seems to have not a simple "cause versus consequence" correlation, and

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probably the only link we can make between China's economic development and political development is a "hand-in-hand" relationship.

China is entering into a new historic era involving both economic and political transformations. In the economic sphere, following Deng Xiaoping's remarkable southern inspection tour to Shenzhen (a successful economic special zone in south China) in early 1992, the communist leadership began a new radical economic reform aiming to move toward a so-called "socialist market economy". In the political sphere, the communist regime is unable to maintain total political control as it once did. Although an institutionalized civil society has not yet become possible, a gradual development of civil society seems to be a historic trend in China. In the process of the development of civil society, we cannot expect that the top-to-bottom political and economic reforms will produce new democratic politics and a pluralist society, and totally eliminate the communist totalitarian party-state. So long as the existing communist regime remains in China, the only path to a pluralist society in China is to set up a bottom-to-top system that will include a well-organized civil society. As Andrew Arato points out, as long as the Soviet-style system remains, structural reform from below is the last hope for democratization.25

The development of civil society in China can be described as that a nascent civil society is emerging in a zigzag way in today's China, while at the same time, the CCP totalitarian regime is declining gradually. To establish an institutionalized civil society and the total collapse of the CCP totalitarian regime will be a long process. As David Shambaugh points out:

The erosion of the party-state authority in China is not, however, a recipe for its imminent collapse or a democratic inspired revolution. Decay is a gradual process. The instruments of

statecraft and control grow progressively blunter, but it takes time.26

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