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Introduction

The extent to which the People's Republic of China exhibits elements of "civil society" is an urgent, complex and contested topic of enquiry. There are scholars who argue that China, either in its history or at present, contains clearly defined elements of civil society.[1] Other schol-

1   Andrew Nathan, *China's Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), chap. 7; David Kelly and He Baogong, "Emergent Civil Society and the Intellectuals in China," in Robert Miller, ed., *The Development of Civil Society in Communist Systems* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), 24-39; William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796-1889* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984); William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796-1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City, People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986); Barrett L. McCormick, Su Shaozhi and Xiao Xiaoming, "The 1989 Democracy Movement: A Review of the Prospects for Civil Society in China," *Pacific Affairs* 65 (1992), 182-202; Martin Whyte, "Urban China: A Civil Society in the Making?," in Arthur Lewis Rosenbaum, ed., *State and Society in China: The Consequences of Reform* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 77-102; Nina Halpern, "Economic Reform, Social Mobilization, and Democratization in Post-Mao China," in Richard Baum, ed., *Reform and Reaction in Post-Mao China: The Road to Tiananmen* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 38-59; and Heath Chamberlain, "On the Search for Civil Society in China," *Modern China* 19 (1993), 199-215.

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ars reject this interpretation, and see in China little more than political-cultural continuity.[2] The question of "continuity" versus "change" is, by its nature, a matter of perspective, and to speak in absolute terms is impossible.

We do not adopt a definitive position in the "continuity versus change" controversy, and avoid the kind of detailed historical analysis such enquiry would demand. We offer instead an operationalization of selected attitudinal aspects of civil society, which we call "critical citizenship" and which we test by means of data drawn from a 1987 national sample of Chinese people. One key element of critical citizenship—as we shall explain in greater detail later—is the propensity to discriminate between three objects of political orientation: the broad political community, the regime and the authorities. Our study establishes a set of hypotheses which, if falsified, would cast serious doubt upon the existence of critical citizenship as we define it. However, our analyses demonstrate support for the hypotheses. Moreover, there is evidence of particularly strong levels of critical citizenship among Chinese youth, levels which decline, progressively, with each age cohort. Despite this evidence of critical citizenship as a growing phenomenon, we remain open to the possibility that aspects of critical citizenship have deeper roots in traditional Chinese political culture. Irrespective of the precise longevity of these characteristics, their prominence in 1987 is worthy of elaboration, and it is this which occupies most of our discussion.

Tradition and Transition in Chinese Political Culture

In traditional Chinese political culture, state and society were regarded as essentially the same, and individual interests were thought to be indistinguishable from those of the state-society. Politics was regarded as a matter of ethics or moral conduct, and the ideal leaders were an exemplary elite who achieved legitimacy through high moral standards.[3] The Communist Revolution, with its emphasis on a Leninist vanguard party and the complete domination of the state over society, ironically reinforced the traditional facets of Chinese political culture. To serve society meant serving the state, and, by implication, the Communist Party. By the same token, loyalty to the country meant loyalty to the party and

2   Lucian W. Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988); Lucian W. Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture," *Asian Survey* 30 (1990), 331-47; Zhengyuan Fu, "Continuities of Chinese Political Tradition," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 3 (1991), 259-79; and Frederic Wakeman, "The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate," *Modern China* 19 (1993), 108-38.

3   Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1985), chaps. 3 and 7.

Abstract. In this investigation of civil society in China, the authors develop a new concept: "critical citizenship," defined as the propensity of citizens to discriminate in their support for the political community, the regime and the authorities. Critical citizenship is employed to indicate the presence of civil society in contemporary China. Using survey data gathered throughout China by Min Qi, the authors test hypotheses about the propensity of Chinese citizens toward critical citizenship. They conclude that the Chinese indeed discriminate in their support for the three objects of political attention, and that youth are particularly likely to manifest critical citizenship.

Résumé. Traitant la question de la société civile en Chine, les auteurs développent un nouveau concept, « la citoyenneté critique », qu'ils définissent comme la propension des citoyens à exercer un esprit critique dans leur appui pour la communauté politique, le régime et les pouvoirs publics. C'est le concept de la citoyenneté critique qui détermine la présence de la société civile dans la Chine contemporaine. En utilisant les données que Min Qi a recueillies en faisant des sondages partout en Chine, les auteurs vérifient leur hypothèse au sujet de la propension des citoyens chinois à exercer leur citoyenneté dans un esprit critique. Ils tirent la conclusion qu'en effet les citoyens chinois font preuve d'un esprit critique dans leur appui pour les trois domaines politiques mentionnés ci-dessus et que ce que nous appelons la citoyenneté critique se manifeste surtout chez les jeunes.

its leaders.[4] It was unpatriotic to criticize leaders and government policies. In other words, the boundaries between the political community, regime and authorities continued to be blurred.

In the Maoist era, Chinese intellectuals tended to view their role vis-à-vis the state in quite traditional terms. Their ultimate mission was to serve the party-state, and most regarded the Communist authorities as progressive revolutionaries working toward similar goals. In their minds, the notions of community, regime and authority were inextricably intertwined. In this context, it is not surprising that in the 1980s, when some writers began to articulate openly the need to distinguish between *zuguo* (the motherland and the people) and *guojia* (the government or the state), it was regarded both as a breakthrough and as something of a political challenge.[5]

Beginning in the early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping introduced a series of reforms in China which, in an economic sense at least, facilitated a more liberalized society. The introduction of market forces and a new openness to the West ushered in an era of rapid economic and social

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4   Merle Goldman, Perry Link and Su Wei, "China's Intellectuals in the Deng Era: Loss of Identity With the State," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel Kim, eds., *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 125ff.

5   Bai Hua's screenplay, *Unrequited Love*, is about a patriotic intellectual's devotion to his country and how this is repaid with repression and brutality from the regime and its officials. The punch line delivered by his daughter at the end reads: "You love the motherland, but does the motherland love you?" In a 1985 article, journalist Liu Binyan argued that loyalty to one's country, society and even the Communist Party does not require allegiance to the leaders and their policies. The regime's reaction to the relatively mild ideas of Bai Hua and Liu Binyan was hostile; both were severely criticized and held to be "unpatriotic." In fact, Bai was the major target of a nationwide campaign against "bourgeois liberalization" launched in 1981 (see Goldman et al., "China's Intellectuals in the Deng Era," 132ff.).

change. These developments were accompanied by accelerated urbani-
zation, the spread of means of communication and transportation, and
closer contacts with the outside world. In many respects, therefore,
China has been developing into a modern society.[6] In addition, the role
of the state has somewhat diminished, and the distinction between pub-
lic and private is now more clearly drawn. New, voluntary, social organ-
izations have been formed, and with the emergence of many new social
and economic relations, Chinese political culture is undergoing a period
of transition.

Chinese youth, in particular, seem to manifest the greatest shift
away from traditional culture. They have recently developed an intense
cynicism about the regime's ideology, goals and values.[7] For them, the
official ideology, goals and traditional channels of upward mobility
have simply lost their appeal. Chinese youth are beginning to make dis-
tinctions among objects of political attention and to evaluate them dif-
ferentially. Illustrative of their propensity to discriminate among politi-
cal objects is the slogan, "We love our country, but we hate our govern-
ment," which appeared in the demonstrations of May-June 1989.[8]
While loyalty to China as a political community remains of paramount
value for them, Chinese young people are increasingly prone to divorce
such loyalty from their orientation toward the regime and the authori-
ties, despite the intense efforts of the authorities themselves to limit crit-
icism and dissent.

In a comparative study of political cultures, Ronald Inglehart[9] ob-
serves that in China, while younger respondents show a materialistic
drive for "personal gratification," older respondents stress "social
duty" and a kind of premodern lack of interest in materialist values.
Through their adoption of these modern and materialistic socio-
economic orientations (but, importantly, not postmodern or postmateri-
alistic), China's younger generation is developing a commensurate indi-
vidualistic and liberal civil culture in which the roles of the state and the

6   As Andrew Nathan argues, in terms of GNP per capita, industrialization, urbaniza-
     tion, education and communication, China is not necessarily more backward than
     some Western countries. See his *China's Crisis*, chap. 7. On the relationship be-
     tween the availability of television and cultural change in China, see James Lull,
     China Turned On (London: Routledge, 1991).
7   For illustration of this trend, see, for example, Arthur Lewis Rosenbaum, "Intro-
     duction," in Rosenbaum, ed., *State and Society in China: The Consequences of
     Reform*, 24, and Kelly and He, "Emergent Civil Society," 31. For similar analyses
     of Chinese students, a pivotal subgroup among young people, see, in particular,
     Stanley Rosen, "Students and the State in China: The Crisis in Ideology and Or-
     ganization," in Rosenbaum, ed., *State and Society in China*, 167-86.
8   See Goldman, Link and Su, "China's Intellectuals in the Deng Era," 125.
9   Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton: Prince-
     ton University Press, 1990), 155-157. See also Rosen, "Students and the State in
     China," 168-83.

regime are diminishing. Although Inglehart's interpretation must be treated with caution, as it is based on a small data base of 94 respondents drawn exclusively from an area of China adjacent to Hong Kong, our empirical findings, discussed later in the article, support his profile.[10]

Despite the economic changes in Chinese society, the Dengist leadership has, in effect, taken up where Mao left off, by insisting on equating patriotism with "loving" the socialist new China under the leadership of the Communist Party.[11] Ideologically, the so-called Four Cardinal Principles (fidelity to socialism; Chinese Communist Party leadership; the dictatorship of the proletariat; Marxist-Leninism Mao Zedong thought) introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1979 and later enshrined in the constitution, not only establish the limit between what is admissible and what is not, but are also the benchmark for determining loyalty to the country. Although the leadership conceded that leaders and officials can be corrupted and that citizens are allowed to express a certain degree of disapproval, the regime still insists that loyalty to the Chinese people and the motherland cannot be separated from loyalty to the ideology and goals of the Communist party-state.

Official intransigence notwithstanding, there are indications that a nascent civil society has been emerging in China since the early 1980s. A number of scholars have recently drawn attention to the acceleration of political participation, protest and efficacy, notably among China's urban population.[12] The concept "civil society," however, remains elusive, value-laden and ambiguous.[13] For instance, immediately after the

10   According to Andrew J. Nathan and Tianjian Shi, the Chinese State Statistical Bureau was conducting survey research on behalf of Ronald Inglehart at the time of writing of their article. See their "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China: Findings from a Survey," in Tu Wei-Ming, ed., *China in Transformation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 119. To the best of our knowledge, these data are not yet available.

11   Lucian W. Pye, " How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 29 (1993), 127.

12   See, for example, Jianhua Zhu, Xinshu Zhao and Hairong Li, "Public Political Consciousness in China: An Empirical Profile," *Asian Survey* 30 (1990), 995; Nathan and Shi, "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China," 95-123; Rosenbaum, "Introduction," 9-11 and 17; Whyte, "Urban China," 85-96; Halpern, "Economic Reform," 38-59; and Walder, "Urban Industrial Workers," 103-20.

13   A critical exploration of the different uses of the term is to be found in Heath Chamberlain, "On the Search for Civil Society in China," 199-215. See also Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," *Government and Opposition* 26 (1991), 3-20. The Chinese seem to take two divergent approaches to the issue of civil society. Theorists residing in China are concerned with the creation of a modern citizenry with "civic consciousness," but this notion has quickly been coopted by the officials to stress the law-abiding citizen and "socialism with Chinese characteristics." Exiled dissidents, on the other hand, are so disenchanted by the party-state that they are anxious for a private realm separate and independent from the state. See Shu Yun Ma, "The Chinese Discourse on Civil Society," *China Quarterly* 137 (1994), 180-93.

Tiananmen events in 1989, several writers took the sudden solidarity of the protest movement which united different social groups in a common front against the authorities as evidence of the emergence of a civil society.[14] Subsequent research, however, shows that this solidarity and heightened social consciousness were vastly exaggerated.[15]

Another indicator of an emerging civil society in China over the past 15 years is the ostensible separation of state and private entities, the proliferation of associations, clubs, unions and mutual aid societies.[16] Given the powerful corporatist[17] and interventionist traditions of the Chinese state, however, this indicator alone is insufficient. It is for this reason that our research is based not upon the mere existence of separate private and public institutions and associations, but upon the Chinese people's differential orientations toward them.

The definition of civil society offered by Heath Chamberlain[18] transcends isolated events and superficial changes:

Civil society may . . . be understood as a community bonded and empowered by its collective determination to resist, on the one hand, excessive constraints of the society and, on the other, excessive regulations by the state. . . . By the term community I mean to stress that civil society coheres. It is more than an aggregate of individual producers driven by self-interest; it is more than a "floating population" suddenly uprooted from home or workplace. . . . Civil society is animated and sustained by widely shared beliefs and attitudes . . . concerning relations among individual citizens, and between this community of citizens and the state. These attitudes and beliefs touch upon such crucial matters as resolving conflicts, setting the outer limits of dissent and deviance, and determining proper modes and style for pursuit of particular interests—all largely "private" matters, handled openly, in the "public" forum, in a "civil" manner.

14   See, for example, Lawrence Sullivan, "The Emergence of Civil Society in China, Spring, 1989," in Tony Saich, ed., *The Chinese People's Movement* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 129-44.
15   See, for example, Nathan and Shi, "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China," 95-118; Elizabeth Perry, "Casting a Chinese 'Democracy' Movement: The Roles of Students, Workers, and Entrepreneurs," in Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Elizabeth Perry, eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 146-60; and Timothy Cheek, "From Priest to Professionals: Intellectuals and the State Under the CCP," in Wasserstrom and Perry, eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture*, 124-41.
16   See Whyte, "Urban China," 78.
17   Mayfair Yang, "Between State and Society: The Construction of Corporateness in a Chinese Socialist Factory," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 22 (1989), 31-60; Robert Miller, "Civil Society in Communist Systems: An Introduction," in Miller, ed., *The Development of Civil Society*, 1-10; and Anita Chan, "Revolution or Corporatism? Workers and Trade Unions in Post-Mao China," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 29 (1993), 31-61.
18   Chamberlain, "On the Search for Civil Society in China," 207-08.

What distinguishes a civil society from an authoritarian or totalitarian one is not merely the existence of a separate and formally free domain of private association, but the existence of a voluntary political community, a regime of choice and deliberation and incumbents of that regime who are open to scrutiny, criticism and replacement.[19] In a key sense, then, civil society is defined by its refusal of the authoritarian or totalitarian propensity to meld party, state and people. Citizens in a civil society, therefore, are critical—they exhibit a propensity to discriminate among levels of the political system. If China has developed, or is developing, a civil society, we should expect to see some evidence of discrimination among objects of political orientation. Hence, in this article, we conduct an empirical exploration of the proposition that Chinese people are becoming differentially oriented toward facets of their political experience. More specifically, we expect to see high levels of support for the political community, mixed feelings about the regime and negative orientations toward the political authorities.

Community, Regime and Authorities—A Conceptual Framework and a Hypothesis

In *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, David Easton distinguishes between the political community, the regime and the political authorities.[20] In brief, the political community consists of the citizens of a polit-

19   Richard Madsen rightly criticizes civil society studies which indiscriminately label any separation of state and social activity as "civil society." See Richard Madsen, "The Public Sphere, Civil Society and Moral Community: A Research Agenda for Contemporary China Studies," *Modern China* 19 (1993), 183-98, especially 189.

20   Here is how Easton characterizes each of the objects of support (David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* [New York: Wiley, 1965]): "The Political Community . . . will refer to that aspect of a political system that consists of its members seen as a group of persons bound together by a political division of labour. The existence of a political system must include a plurality of political relationships through which the individual members are linked to each other and through which the political objectives of the system are pursued, however limited they may be" (177).
     "The regime as sets of constraints on political interaction in all systems may be broken down into three components: values (goals and principles), norms, and structure of authority. The values serve as broad limits with regard to what can be taken for granted in the guidance of day-to-day policy without violating deep feelings of important sections of the community. The norms specify the kinds of procedures that are expected and acceptable in the processing and implementation of demands. The structures of authority designate the formal and informal patterns in which power is distributed and organized with regard to the authoritative making and implementing of decisions—the roles and their relationship through which authority is distributed and exercised" (193).
     ". . . 'authorities' . . . include members of a system who conform to the following criteria. They must engage in the daily affairs of a political system; they

ical system; the regime consists of the underlying ideologies, behav-
ioural norms and constitutional and institutional structures in a system;
and the authorities are those individual and collective incumbents who
occupy political roles.

Following Easton, it seems reasonable to anticipate that, if China is
developing a civil society, the Chinese people will be manifesting a pro-
pensity to differentiate critically among the objects of political support.
If this expectation is confirmed, we would further expect, following
from our comments in the previous section, that the propensity to differ-
entiate among levels of the political system would be inversely related
to age. We reason that the younger the citizen, the greater the manifesta-
tion of civil orientations. More specifically, we hypothesize that:

1. Orientations of Chinese people toward their political community are
   more positive than toward their regime or authorities;
2. Orientations of Chinese people toward their regime are less positive
   than toward their political community, but more positive than toward
   their authorities;
3. Orientations of Chinese people toward their authorities are less posi-
   tive than toward their regime or their political community;
4. While support for the political community does not tend to vary with
   age, support for the regime and the authorities increases with age;
   and
5. Distinctions between orientations toward the three levels of the polit-
   ical system are greater among younger age cohorts than among older
   age cohorts.

Min Qi and the Empirical Analysis of Chinese Political Culture

To test the above hypotheses, we used data gathered in an extensive
national survey of Chinese political opinion.[21] In 1986-1987, Min Qi
collaborated with a group of young Chinese intellectuals who had re-
cently returned from a period of study at the University of Michigan.
Taking advantage of a temporary climate of open enquiry, they con-
ducted a survey of public opinion in China in which they asked some
5,000 respondents questions inspired by the landmark civic culture

must be recognized by most members of the system as having the responsibility
for these matters; and their actions must be accepted as binding most of the time by
most of the members as long as they act within the limits of their roles. Specifi-
cally, we refer to such occupants of authority roles as elders, paramount chiefs, ex-
ecutives, legislators, judges, administrators, councilors, monarchs, and the like"
(212).

21   Min Qi, *Zhongguo Zhengzhi Wenhua: Minzhu Zhengzhi Nanchande Shehui Xinli
     Yinsu* [*China's Political Culture: The Social Psychological Obstacles to Demo-
     cratic Politics*] (Kunming: Yennan Renmin Chubanshe, 1989).

study of Almond and Verba in the late 1950s.[22] We do not know a great deal about the administration of the questionnaires. It is apparent, however, that they were administered face to face, and that, in employing a quota sampling technique, there was some discretion on the part of the field researchers as to who would be interviewed. Min Qi acknowledges certain problems of validity and representativeness.[23]

It is not known how many refusals there were. All that is reported is that of 5,000 interview forms administered, just over 3,000 were returned in a completed and usable form. On the whole, the entire country seems to have been well represented in the sample.[24] If there are any gaps, they are regional (the southwest is the most seriously underrepresented of the seven regions, with only 14 of the total of 3,204 respondents)[25] and socio-economic (the poorer people and locations in China are underrepresented. Just over 3 per cent of the respondents come from "poor and remote border areas," while nearly 30 per cent come from "large cities").[26] Perhaps the single most serious problem in using data drawn from this study is the lack of information about the details of the survey's administration. There might well have been serious problems of acquiescence and response set bias. These are always potential problems, but they might have been particularly acute in China, among people accustomed to quiet obedience who are often fearful of speaking their political minds after the years of "cultural revolution" and other political dangers.[27]

Although we lack access to the original data, the 114 tables contained in Min Qi's book based upon the study[28] contain a great deal of

22   Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little Brown, 1965).
23   Min, *Zhongguo Zhengzhi Wenhua*, 240-45.
24   Nathan and Shi point out that Min Qi's data "severely undersampled women, older citizens, rural residents, and other key sectors of the population" (see their "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China," 97). This is exaggerated. The proportion of women sampled is 38 per cent, while the proportion of those sampled in villages, small towns and more remote areas is an equally acceptable 47 per cent.
25   Min, *Zhongguo Zhengzhi Wenhua*, 246, 50, Tables 1-1 and 2-1.
26   Ibid., 248, 252, Tables 1-8, 2-8.
27   Moreover, in China there is a rich archaic tradition of politeness in interpersonal relations, and intricate folkways designed to make and save the "face" of the other. Walder points out the tendency of Chinese people to attempt to be obliging and to attempt to comply with the perceived feelings of the other. He argues that this is almost "second nature." See Andrew G. Walder, "Communist Social Structure and Workers' Politics in China," in Victor C. Falkenheim, ed., *Citizens and Groups in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1987), 74, 83. Lucian Pye (*The Mandarin and the Cadre*, 31) makes much the same point. If these observations are even partially applicable to the manner in which the Chinese responded to the questionnaire, then they raise serious concerns about interpretation. At the very least we should be cautious.
28   Min, *Zhongguo Zhengzhi Wenhua*.

useful information. The tabulated data do not always permit the disag-
gregation necessary to perform further statistical analyses, and at times
our inability to do this is frustrating. (For instance, we are unable to
break down orientations to the political authorities by age cohort.) But
even in their tabulated form, the data permit a satisfactory test of our
main hypotheses and, provided the results are treated with caution, they
are most illuminating.

Analysis of the Data and Discussion

Political Community

As anticipated, support for the political community is high among the
majority of the respondents. Table 1 shows that support is almost uni-
versal for the diffuse third item on the fate of the country. There are few
(5.8%) respondents who would disagree with the proposition that the
fate of the country is "everyone's responsibility."[29]

TABLE 1

ORIENTATION TOWARD POLITICAL COMMUNITY

	Political community		
	% support	% oppose	(n)
1. "If the country disappoints you, you have cause not to love it."	75.0	25.0	(1,712)
2. "If the country disappoints you, you have reason to rebel against it."	85.7	14.3	(1,705)
3. "The fate of the country is everyone's responsibility."	94.2	5.8	(1,731)
$\bar{X}$	85.0	15.0	
s	9.7	9.7	

It is also noteworthy that while a substantial minority (25%) of re-
spondents would withdraw their "love" of country if it "disappointed"
them, only just over 14 per cent would be prepared to "rebel" against it
under these circumstances. The act of passively withholding support is
both less severe and less risky than actively working against one's own
country. However, the extent to which the reluctance to rebel is based

29   This is consistent with the study conducted by Godwin C. Chu and Yanan Ju.
     Their sample of 2,000 respondents was drawn from metropolitan Shanghai and
     surrounding area. See their *The Great Wall in Ruins* (Albany: State University of
     New York Press, 1993), 24-29, 224-25.

upon fear, and the extent to which it is based upon patriotic love, is diffi-
cult to judge.

Regime

Orientation toward both the regime and the authorities is treated in
terms of five identifiable subgroups. Each subgroup sets out the orienta-
tions of the respondents toward a particular focus of political interest.
This organization is for convenience of analysis only, and we have no
expectations about quantitative variation across these subgroups. In-
deed, within both major groups (regime and authorities) subgroup
means and standard deviations are very close to each other and the bulk
of the variation occurs between variables within each subgroup.

Table 2 presents the average percentages of support or opposition
toward the regime among each of the three subgroups.[30] Two major and
noteworthy trends are revealed in this table: first, the average level of
support for the regime is, as anticipated, lower than that toward the po-
litical community; second, as the standard deviations reveal, there is
comparatively greater variation among these items, created by some in-
teresting and important "outliers."

TABLE 2

ORIENTATION TOWARD REGIME—A COMPARISON

OF SUBGROUP MEANS

| | Mean % | | | (n) of |
	Support	Opposition	s	items
Ideology and government				
institutions	64.5	35.5	23.3	(11)
Political system	58.9	41.1	20.2	(18)
Civil rights	64.6	35.4	18.1	(15)

Ideology and Government Institutions

Support for the principal institutions and ideological values is higher
among the diffuse items, than among the specific ones. "Satisfaction
with the work of government on behalf of the people," with "the major-
ity of government policies" and "we should trust and obey the govern-
ment (because it is always working for our good)" all refer to the benef-
icence of government in general. In this respect, the identification of the

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30   Full details on the wording of the items as well as the full tables of results by indi-
vidual item are available on request from the authors.

government with broad purposes seems to elicit widespread diffuse support. Each of these three items reveals support levels of at least 80 per cent.

Support is still strong, although somewhat lower, for the more focused items: "Do you have faith that the National People's Congress would implement democracy," "attitude (trust) toward government" and "if you encounter problems you cannot solve, would you seek help from the government?" When asked directly about their attitude toward government, or when invited to respond to broad hypothetical situations about the intentions of the National People's Congress to promote democracy or the receptiveness of government to their problems, support for the regime goes down to between two thirds and three quarters. There is widespread pride (76.8%) on living in a socialist country and yet, when invited to respond to specific questions about government interference, the respondents clearly do not like it. Although 60 per cent of the respondents feel that the government should interfere to prevent people causing harm to others, "even if there is no complaint," it is noteworthy that almost 40 per cent reject even this "night-watchman" version of the minimal state. If over three quarters of the respondents are proud to be living in a socialist country, and yet less than one third feel that the government should interfere in private life, then what is the nature of the socialism which the respondents have in mind? It is possible that "socialist" is more of a patriotic symbol than an ideology of any consistent kind. If this interpretation has any validity, it supports the proposition that Chinese people are more positively disposed toward the political community than the regime.

Political System

The second line of Table 2 shows the average of 18 items which tap into support respecting the overall political system. As with the responses toward the government and ideology, there is much variation. The least support for the political system comes in the category of basic reform. Despite the evidently high degree of diffuse support for the government, the prompts "Do you think China needs reforms of the political system at present?" and "Does China need democracy at present?" reveal an equally broad call for political reform and democracy. In both items, about 80 per cent of respondents argue that the Chinese system needs to change. If the political system is said to need fundamental change and there is also manifest support for government institutions, then it is clearly something else which the respondents have in mind when they speak of reform. Almost by definition, this includes reform of particular incumbent authorities and policies. The evaluation of "the political situation in the past ten years" displays the almost uniform sense among the respondents that matters have been moving in the right direction since

the death of Mao. Ninety per cent of them are expressing at least mini-
mal satisfaction with the direction of reform from 1977 to 1987.

Fifteen items in this subgroup assess the orientation of respondents
toward distinct objects within the political system. They seem to be least
satisfied with the decision-making and personnel structure of the party
and the bureaucracy. There is only an average 47 per cent support rate
for such things as the judiciary, the administrative structure, the cadre
personnel system, the decision-making structure and party style. Com-
mensurate with their expression of support for reforms over the previ-
ous 10 years, however, the respondents express relative satisfaction
with their personal (85% supportive) and press (73% supportive) free-
dom as well as with their freedom of thought and speech (72% suppor-
tive). In line with their support for the institutional structures of the
state, they express relative satisfaction with the National People's Con-
gress (77% satisfied) as well as with the relationship between party and
state (80% satisfied).

Civil Rights

One of the key features of the Deng Reforms in the late 1970s and early
1980s was the pragmatic extension of certain civil rights. There were
new-found, if still limited, freedoms of association, assembly, expres-
sion and thought. How far did the respondents feel that the regime had
opened up? On the whole, they were quite supportive. Just under two
thirds, on average, supported the regime on civil rights. Line three of
Table 2 displays the average of the items.

On the Communist regime's traditionally strong elements of col-
lectivist "positive" freedoms ("freedom to"), the respondents gave the
existing regime high marks. This is shown in their high (80%) evalua-
tion of social, economic, labour, employment and educational rights. In
the minimalist "negative" demand of "sovereignty" over one's own
religion, personal freedom, dignity, residence and communication,
there is a clear acknowledgment that the regime has satisfied the re-
quirement of non-interference (the average positive evaluation of the re-
gime is 82%). And yet there is also a clear expression of dissatisfaction
when it comes to the regime's treatment of those more assertive acts of
political life: criticism of the government, freedom of association and
freedom of assembly and demonstration, for the average positive evalu-
ation of the regime on these items is only 36 per cent. As if anticipating
the events at Tiananmen Square some two years later, 73 per cent of re-
spondents state that freedom of assembly and demonstration is a poorly
protected civil right.

Authorities

Table 3 records the reactions of the respondents to the political authorities. Two general findings are noteworthy. First, as anticipated, support for the authorities is lower than support for the regime or the political community. Second, however, support is not entirely lacking. In fact, there is a majority of support for the authorities on seven of the 15 items summarized in the table.

TABLE 3

ORIENTATION TOWARD AUTHORITIES—A COMPARISON
OF SUBGROUP MEANS

| | Mean % | | | (n) of items |
	Support	Opposition	s	
Communist Party	47.6	52.4	21.1	(5)
Bureaucrats and cadres/officials	49.4	50.6	13.4	(10)

Communist Party

Attitudes toward the Communist Party are relatively straightforward. While the "principles and policies" and the goals of the party seem to be acceptable to many (62% average approval rating), the actions and behaviour of Communist Party officials are clearly regarded as unsatisfactory. Both the popular impression of the party and the "model function" of party members are found wanting. In fact, over 80 per cent of the respondents claim that the Communist Party's members are "not good" models.

Bureaucrats and Cadres/Officials

Among the most consistent and balanced items are those assessing the respondents' attitudes toward officialdom and bureaucracy. Most of the items find the respondents evenly split on such matters as the degree to which cadres are self-interested, self-serving, corrupt and inefficient. There is a general dissatisfaction (71% disapproval) with the "work styles of officials" as well as a clearly manifest fear of "making too many proposals" in front of officials because they may not "like democracy" (70% agree that one should not make too many proposals). At the same time, relatively few (25.7%) would agree with the contention that "few officials are kind-hearted." Overall, there seems to be an ambivalence of feeling about the cadres and the bureaucrats, which would seem to require further exploration.

Comparing Orientations toward the Political
Community, Regime and Authorities

The data in Table 4 set out the overall empirical pattern anticipated in Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, stated earlier. Support for the political community is higher than for the regime, and support for the regime is higher than for the authorities. Moreover, the standard deviations of each of the three levels indicate greater variation among the "regime" items than among either the political community or the authority items. This pattern is explicable if the respondents, as we anticipate, possess an ambivalence toward the system and structure of government.

TABLE 4

ORIENTATION TOWARD THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY,
REGIME AND AUTHORITIES — A COMPARISON
OF OVERALL MEANS

	Mean %		s	(n) of items
	Support	Opposition		
Community	85.0	15.0	9.7	(3)
Regime	62.2	37.8	20.0	(44)
Authorities	48.8	51.2	15.6	(15)

Age and Political Orientation

Since data for age cohort breakdowns of the "authority" items were not available, our analysis of age differences and our assessments of Hypotheses 4 and 5 must be limited.

Table 5 supports one element in Hypothesis 4. As anticipated, support for the political community does not vary in any consistent manner with age cohort. There are too few respondents in the oldest cohort to make any definitive statements about this age category (the "n" of cases varies from 9 to 16). Although not too much should be made of the finding, the penultimate cohort, those aged 56 to 65, seem to be consistently somewhat lower in support for the political community. This is the generation who reached their age of political adulthood just before the Communist victory, in the tumult of the civil war. They are the only respondents who seemed prepared, even slightly, to question their own commitment.

Line two of Table 5 offers clear support for Hypothesis 4. The mean averages of the 12 items indicate a monotonic increase in support for the regime with age cohort, if the unrepresentative "oldest" age cohort is removed. The differences are substantial enough (9.1% from

youngest to the penultimate oldest cohort) to be interesting, if not over-
whelmingly conclusive. Key age differences occur in those items which
assess trust in the government, and which concern the balance between
private and public life. The younger do not trust their government and
want it to interfere less in their private lives. The average difference here
is 18.1 per cent between the youngest and the penultimate oldest age co-
hort. Responses to the questions concerning the need for China to "re-
form the political system" and for "democracy" are very mixed and, on
the surface, appear inexplicable. Surely, if our hypotheses are plausible,
the young should be far less supportive of the regime's progress toward
"reform" and "democracy," and they should be more vociferous in
their calls for change. And yet, they do not seem to be.

TABLE 5

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AVERAGE PERCENTAGE
SUPPORT DATA FOR POLITICAL COMMUNITY
AND REGIME BY AGE COHORT

	25 and under	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66 and over	(n) of items
Political community	85.6	84.3	84.2	86.3	81.3	89.0	(3)
Regime	55.4	56.0	58.5	62.0	64.5	64.0	(12)
Difference	30.2	28.3	25.7	24.3	16.7	25.0	

An explanation for this apparent contradiction is perhaps to be
found in the political context at the time of the interviews. If there was a
perception that, despite the entrenched obstacles to progress, the post-
Mao regime had begun the process of reform, then to state that China
needs "reform of the political system at present" or "China needs
democracy at present" could imply dissatisfaction with the reformism
of the Deng innovations, which the young perhaps were more inclined
to report. This might well be the reason why 74 per cent of China's
youngest cohort said they felt no need for reform in 1987, while a full 86
per cent of their 56 to 65-year-old fellow citizens were calling for re-
form. However, it would not explain why only 84 per cent of the young-
est cohort had a positive evaluation of the political situation during the
previous 10 years, while 97 per cent of the penultimate oldest age cohort
did so.

If Hypothesis 5 is supportable, we could expect to see a gradually
diminishing percentage difference in Table 5 as the cohorts get older.
This pattern is indeed found in the table. If the small—and maver-
ick—oldest age cohort is removed, the diminution in the gap between
support for the regime and the political community, shown as "Differ-

ence" in line three, is monotonic and substantial. Among the youngest cohort, it is over 30 per cent. For the pre-Communist cohort of 56 to 65-year-olds, it diminishes to a relatively inconsequential 17 per cent. Here, in a nutshell, is evidence of an emerging civil society in China. Those who are disinclined to distinguish between political community and regime will soon be replaced by younger, progressively more discriminating and critical citizens.

Conclusion

The data gathered by Min Qi and his associates tend to support our hypotheses. There is widespread support for the political community, moderate and highly variable support for the regime, and, with some exceptions, lower support for the persons who occupy governmental and political roles. Although the manifest goals of the Communist Party still receive some support, the Chinese do not believe that the party itself has lived up to their expectations. The model role of the vanguard party is seriously questioned, and there is general discontent with its officials. Moreover, there is clear empirical evidence of a generational change as younger cohorts adopt an increasingly "civil" profile.

One of the major demands of the 1989 protest movement was an end to the rampant corruption and inefficiency of public officials. In any democratic society, the authorities are temporary incumbents in office, and there are institutionalized and regularized procedures for selecting and removing public officials. The Chinese have been consistently blocked from the exercise of this kind of political influence. Despite some acknowledged methodological flaws, the evidence derived from Min Qi's study indicates that the Chinese are dissatisfied with many of their officials and wish to see reforms in the conduct and structure of their government. It remains to be seen whether the contradiction between the traditionalist leadership and the critical citizenship of the masses, notably China's youth, can be resolved gradually and peacefully, or whether the events of Tiananmen Square were a precursor of greater conflict in the future.