Administrative Absorption of Society: A Further Probe into the State-Society Relationship in Chinese Mainland

*Kang Xiaoguang** and *Han Heng**

I. Framing the Question

Tremendous changes have taken place in the general state of Chinese mainland because of the country's reforms and opening up for almost 30 years. With the market driving a wedge between state and society, the integral whole which the two used to form has been destroyed and a completely new model of relationship between state and society has begun to emerge. However, are the two really separated from each other? How should the new state-society relationship be understood? What is the basic feature of the process in which the old is being replaced by the new? Is the society becoming autonomous, or the government reestablishing its control over society? Or have both happened? In any case, what impact will these changes bring to bear upon the further economic and political evolution of Chinese mainland? These questions entered, after the 1990s, into the core area of research in social sciences in China.

For research on the state-society relationship in Chinese mainland since its reform and opening up, the mainstream approach has been the application of theoretical frameworks from the West – chiefly, that of civil society and that of corporatism – to the analysis of Chinese problems.[1] And while much difference is found between the two, they do agree on one point, namely, both are based on the separation of society from the state. Behind this concern for the separation of society from the state lies a complex about the democratization of politics.

Owing to their Western or Eastern European origins, whether these theoretical patterns of civil society, corporatism, and resistance against the state by the civil society can be applied to Chinese mainland has

long been doubted by a number of scholars. At the same time, new analytical concepts based on China's own experiences have been put forward by domestic scholars, such as the "theory of intermediate social stratum" suggested by Wang Ying *et al.*,[2] while researchers abroad have also recognized the "dire chaos" in research on the state-society relationship in Chinese mainland, aptly described by Richard Baum and Alexei Shevchenko as "a wild profusion of new labels" and being "redolent of the parable of the blind man and the elephant."[3] Thus theoretical innovations are badly needed for China's research on the state-society relationship today.

II. Theoretical Framework and Research Program

Setting out from the way the government administers social organizations, the authors have looked into the state-society relationship in Chinese mainland today. Their findings show that administration is not carried out following one single pattern, and so cannot be uniformly labeled with any such fashionable term as civil society, corporatism, centralism, etc. Actually, the government adopts different administrative approaches for different kinds of social organizations. Yet while the approaches seem to be multiple, the dominating principle behind them has been consistent, that is, the government adopts different approaches for administering different social organizations in the light of their potential to challenge the government and of the kinds of public goods they supply, always with an eye to maximizing its own interests. To refer to

this type of state-society relationship, the authors suggest the term "categorized control."[4]

However, investigating the state-society relationship only from the angle of "control" tends to be one-sided even when dealing with a "government-led society." Actually, in handling the state-society relationship, the government adopts not only a "passive" "control strategy," but also a more "positive" "replacement strategy" and "the principle of priority for the powerful," which is in tune with the class alliance. Ambrose Yeo-Chi King's analysis of the Hong Kong political structure of the 1970s points out that the secret there lay in "elite absorption," by means of which the elite's demand for political democratization was eliminated.[5] Then the concept of "administrative absorption of politics" was employed by Kang Xiaoguang to analyze the political changes occurring in Chinese mainland since its reforms.[6] Actually, the analytical paradigm expressed in "administrative absorption of politics" can also be effective in describing and explaining changes in the social sphere.

When the system that suppressed the inherent human need for "association" was broken down by marketization reforms and opening to the outside world, the wise choice was to meet this social demand by means that fit in with one's own interests. This "wise choice" was none other than "functional replacement." In the social sphere in Chinese mainland today, the strategy of "functional replacement" includes in the main the following measures: continuance, meaning continuing to make use of old organizations; development, meaning developing new organizational forms adapted to the totally

new environment, incorporating, meaning accepting into the government administrative system those social organizations that have sprung up spontaneously; and laissez-faire, meaning giving free rein to organizations that don't really count either way. Through these measures the government has succeeded in the functional replacement of "autonomous" or "harmful" social organizations by "controllable" or "harmless" ones and so, while blocking the emergence and development of any "autonomous" social organization, it has managed to meet to a certain degree the objective needs born of economic and social development.

Whether it be "limitation" or "functional replacement," all are subject to the policy of "priority for the powerful", or "putting the interests of the powerful first." With the new ruling alliance between the government and powerful newly emerging elite group (entrepreneurs and intellectuals) that sprang up from the mid-1990s, the former allies (workers and peasants) were dispatched to the bottom of the new society.[7] The strategy of "putting the interests of the powerful first" meant, chiefly, that entrepreneurs and intellectuals enjoyed more rights than workers and peasants in setting up their own associations. This was so because, on the one hand, these two groups had more in common with the government in terms of interests and, on the other, this arrangement was better able to protect the alliance between the three.

Be it "limitation," "functional replacement," or "putting the interests of the powerful first," all follow in fact a common logic of governmental pursuit of interest maximi-

zation. For an authoritarist government, every social organization is bound to have a "dual nature" in that every one of them is both a challenger and an auxiliary force. As a result a government that pursues interest maximization will necessarily adopt different policies of absorption towards social organizations of various kinds in the light of both their varying power to challenge and the social goods they offer.

We use the expression "administrative absorption of society," with its core connotations of "limitation," "functional replacement" and "putting the interests of the powerful first," to refer to the state-society relationship in contemporary Chinese mainland. Here, "administration" means both the government and the state, as well as their actions; "society" does not refer to society in a general sense, but to "civil society," "public sphere," and the kind of society designated by "corporatism." "Absorption" means that through a series of efforts the government makes it impossible for such social structures as civil society, corporatism, or resistance against the government organized by civil society to take place. The major ways in which "administrative absorption of society" include "limitation," "functional replacement" and "putting the interests of the powerful first."

Since we have already undertaken systematic analysis of the strategy of "limitation" in another article (Kang Xiaoguang and Han Heng, "Categorized Control: A Study of the State-Society Relationship in Contemporary Chinese Mainland"), we now focus on the strategies of "functional replacement" and "putting the interests of the powerful first."

Table 1 Survey Sample

Category	Sub-category	Name	Note
Functional organizations	Trade union	SG general trade union	Trade union in state-owned enterprise
		Trade union in iron works plant of SG	Trade union in state-owned enterprise
		Trade union in SK CO.	Trade union in a joint venture
		Trade union in SD CO.	Trade union in a foreign-invested enterprise
	Trade association	YY commercial association	
		ZB trade association	
		WS investors' association	
Community organizations	Urban residents' committee	SY community residents' committee	Communal residents' committee
		XX community residents' committee	Ordinary residents' committee
Religious organizations	Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement	YC Christian church	Urban church
		BD Christian church	Rural church
NGOs	Government-run NGO	FP foundation	
	Grass-roots NGOs	XY education research institute	Local organization
		FZ Bulletin	Overseas organization
Informal organizations	Interest organizations	RD calligraphy and painting research association	Organization within a work unit
		SY waist-drum team	Organization within a work unit
		QN hobby organizations	Park-based organizations

One methodological feature common in research done so far on the state-society relationship is to take the government attitude and way of acting towards social organizations as the starting point of the dissection. This paper will follow suit and examine the relationship between the government and social organizations as the starting point for a study of the state-society relationship. The empirical material used here came from our field survey of social organizations,[8] which looked into their structural characteristics, spheres of activity, and social roles, as well as the way government control over them is

exercised. Altogether there were 17 sample organizations, falling into 7 categories (see Table 1).

Below, we shall make use of the empirical material mentioned above to look into the actual application and operation first of the strategy of "functional replacement," covering "continuance," "development," "incorporation," and "laissez-faire," then of the strategy of "putting the interests of the powerful first." Finally, we examine the actual effects of "administrative absorption of society," so as to ascertain whether this pattern genuinely exists in society or is but so much theoretical guesswork.

III. An Empirical Examination of the Functional Replacement Strategy

Continuance

Existing social organizations were not discarded in the process of reform. Rather, they were allowed to continue with their social roles while developing new ones adapted to the new environment. Through keeping and reforming these existing social organizations the government realized, on the one hand, its control of society and, on the other, satisfied a part of social demand, and thus suppressed the spontaneous springing up of corresponding autonomous organizations.

Take trade unions as an example: the government's control of their establishment, personnel appointment, funding, major decisions, daily activities, etc. through legislation and the strict application of the law has never been relaxed. Like the trade unions that have always existed in state-owned enterprises, those that were newly established in non-public ownership enterprises were all

set up from the top down under state compulsion. Of the four trade unions we looked into, two were organized by the government at the time the PRC was established, and the other two were set up at government request after reform and opening up started. The chief leadership of all of them was appointed by the CPC committee or government administrative department of the same administrative level. The responsible persons in the general trade union at various levels were, in most cases, concurrently *Party and government officials.*[9] The government also guarantees funding for the unions through its Trade Union Law; its intervention even permeates their daily activities. It should be mentioned that the government is gradually expanding the trade unions' scope of activities, extending them into new social spheres.[10] With "continuance" of the "government-monopoly trade unions" supplemented with "limitation" of "autonomous trade unions," the government can at least be sure that it is impossible for any worker to try to join any independent trade union free from government control. Barely satisfactory though such "active supply" is, we may take it as a minimum level of "functional replacement."

Development

The government tries also to set up new types of organizations to "satisfy" the large numbers of totally new social demands brought forth by the reform, as is evidenced by the various kinds of trade associations, typical cases of "development." Marketization reforms demanded changes in macroeconomic management modes; that is, a shift from the existing "management by divisions"

to "management by industry" which called for the establishment of trade associations to take over from the government its economic management functions. The government did respond to this demand inherent in the market economy; however, it did not transfer its power to those trade associations that had sprung up spontaneously, but to those that it had set up itself. The three associations covered by our survey were all government creations. It is thus clear that the government has attained its aim of "functional replacement" through the creation of a whole series of industry associations, which, being always under official control, will never become new challengers.

Incorporation

The government carried out a typical "incorporation" strategy with regard to informal hobby associations in the community. In our interviews with the residents' committee of XX community we were told by the committee member responsible for recreational and sports activities about a document called "The Way to Strengthen Control of Civil Society Organizations in the Community," issued by the sub-district office. It instructed residents' committees to produce and report to the sub-district office statistics on the basic features of all the hobby associations in the community and, at the same time, give them a certain degree of support. A similar phenomenon can be observed in work unit communal compounds, such as the SY research institute. Support for various hobby associations in work units and communities substantially reduced people's need for similar organizations that had sprung up in the streets and in parks;

thus this strategy of "incorporation" is, in essence, a strategy of "functional replacement."

Departments in the central government have started to strengthen their efforts in constructing popular organizations in the community.[11] Introducing civil society organizations into the community was one of the seven important community-building tasks mentioned by the Ministry of Civil Affairs' Director of the Department of Grassroots Governments and Community Construction in his speech at the symposium "Community Construction and the Harmonious Society."[12]

Laissez-faire

Not all social organizations that sprang up spontaneously were incorporated by the government. For some of them, for example, those informal hobby organizations scattered in the streets and parks, there was never any such intention, nor capacity. Related government departments neither limited nor supported them, so that they were left free to follow their own course. But of course these hobby organizations were fundamentally informal in nature, quite distant from the "public sphere" and rather closer to the "private sphere." Laissez-faire is, in a sense, an expression of absorption. Giving free rein to those informal hobby organizations met the demands of some social groups for association, interaction and entertainment, effectively released social pressures and led to the melting away of larger-scale "social resistance."[13]

Attention must be called to another kind of laissez-faire that took place because of inability on the part of the government and

found remarkable expression in the existence of so-called "grass-roots NGOs" that registered as enterprises. Existing institutions having made it almost impossible for grass-roots NGOs to be registered as such at the civil administration departments, some of them simply registered as enterprises in order to be allowed to go about their business. The two grass-roots NGOs we included in our survey had done this. It is interesting to note that these NGOs were only subject to supervision by the industrial-commercial administration departments as "enterprises," and were basically let alone by the government as "social organizations." Such laissez-faire should be regarded as the outcome of a dysfunctional control mechanism rather than a deliberate choice of the government.

IV. An Empirical Survey of the Strategy of "Putting the Interests of the Powerful First"

Here we shall use the trade union (organization of workers) and the trade association (organization of entrepreneurs) as examples to illustrate the actual performance of the strategy of "putting the interests of the powerful first."

The chairman of a street trade union talked, during our Beijing interviews, of trade unions in non-public-owned enterprises. Yes, they had been set up, but that was merely nominal since their activities were irregular and some of them did nothing at all. By contrast, in foreign invested enterprises and joint ventures that had done well economically, the performance of trade unions was somewhat better, but only in that "they had more entertainment and sports activities."

Such activities, added the interviewee, "had always been there anyway before the trade unions were set up." Further investigation revealed that basically these activities were organized by the trade unions with a view to strengthening employees' cohesion and sense of belonging to the firm, and bringing into full play their enthusiasm for production. One could say that these activities mainly served the interests of the enterprise. Overall, whether or not the trade union existed did not have much impact on the workers.

One of the major tasks of a trade union has always been to uphold workers' rights in cases of labor disputes. Yet all the responsible persons in the trade unions whom we interviewed stressed, almost without exception, that their unions support of workers' rights had to be "two-edged," meaning that they supported the lawful interests of the enterprises in addition to those of the workers in accordance with laws and regulations made by the state, related stipulations made by the firm, and contracts signed by the firm with its employees. The firm's institutions and regulations, however, never involved worker participation, while the contracts signed with the workers were also drafted in advance by the enterprise with absolutely no consultation with the workers.

In sharp contrast with the trade unions, trade associations in China do a lot to safeguard the interests of their members. As can be seen from the activities sponsored by the Shenzhen WS association of investors in 2002,[14] government officials often take part in trade association activities. Their interaction with entrepreneurs is frequent and cordial, constituting an important resource for the enterprise. These chambers of com-

merce have in fact become a kind of platform for exchanges between enterprises and the government.

The gaping difference in the degree of autonomy between trade unions and trade associations is the direct cause of the gaping difference between the protection they afford for the interests of their respective members. The difference in their degree of autonomy finds expression, in the first place, in the way leadership is set up in these organizations. While the chairman of the trade union was concurrently the vice secretary of the CPC committee at the same administrative level and its deputy chair was also appointed by the Party-government department of the enterprise concerned, the chief responsible persons of the trade associations were nominated through consultations between the association and related departments and then decided by vote of its board of directors. In the second place, the trade union staffing levels and their benefits were decided by the Party-government department at the enterprise or by its owner, with the enterprise paying their wages and supplying their office facilities. While the staff levels and wages and benefits of some trade associations were also controlled by the related units, other trade associations – those in the coastal provinces – fared better. They decided their own personnel matters, benefits and wages, and their administrative and other activities were paid for by membership fees and income from the services they provided. Furthermore, while the main routine activities of the grass-roots trade unions in state-owned enterprises consisted of fulfilling the tasks assigned them by superior levels of the union and they lived constantly under the

latter's supervision and evaluation, and the main routine activities of the trade unions in joint ventures and private enterprises were organizing entertainment and sports events under the leadership of the enterprise that had created them, the daily activities of the trade associations were decided upon and conducted by their secretariats autonomously, even if the decisions had to be reported to the authorities afterwards and the associations had to accept their inspection. The routine activities of the trade associations were also subject to the supervision of the association's general board of directors. However, when compared with the trade unions, they did have a good deal of autonomy, being allowed to make their own decisions, raise their own funds and conduct their own business. Owing to the difference in the way the trade unions and the trade associations were controlled, the relationship between the two organizations and their respective members was also different. The associations are frequently to be seen shuttling busily among government departments, working for the interests of their members and seeking solutions for their practical problems. The performance of the trade unions is quite another story.

To sum up, different "absorption" strategies were adopted by the government for trade unions and trade associations. In terms of "limitation," the strategy adopted for trade unions was "strict control" and that for independent trade unions was "prohibition" or "banishment," while that for trade associations was "encouragement in the main supplemented with control." In terms of "functional replacement," the strategy used towards the trade unions was "continuance,"

while that for the trade associations was "development." The fact the government adopted different strategies of absorption towards the two was due to the different tendencies found in their challenges to the government. And, of course, the strategy of "putting the interests of the powerful first" was preferred with a view to consolidating the existing ruling alliance.

V.   The Effects of Administrative Absorption of Society

The institutional arrangement of "administrative absorption of society" did indeed reflect the government's subjective wishes. However, this is not the only determinant of its effectiveness; it also has to be judged on actual results. Should the strategy be adopted without gaining the expected results, it would merely remain indicative of the government's wishful thinking instead of becoming a real feature of the social status quo. To find out whether this strategy worked or not, we shall have to look further into its actual results.

Table 2 Actual effects of "administrative absorption of society"

Type of organization	Public goods provided	Responding to whom; responsible to whom	Influence on society in general	Degree to which activity overlaps with government wishes
Trade unions	Activities of trade unions in state-owned enterprises are restricted by Trade Union Law. Those in joint ventures, foreign-funded and private enterprises focus mainly on entertainment and sports events and labor competitions. Lots of "sham trade unions" in non-public enterprises.	Subjectively trade unions in state owned enterprises respond to and are responsible to their superiors, but do objectively meet some workers' demands. Non-public enterprise unions are mainly responsible to capital. Their activities center on production and are intended to boost production morale.	Trade unions in state-owned enterprises have survey & research tasks that affect the drafting of laws on trade unions. Their activities help stabilize the ranks of workers, and mitigate poverty. Activities of trade unions in non-public enterprises increase coherence among employees and boost labor morale.	In state-owned enterprises, trade unions serve to stabilize workers, in nonpublic enterprises, to drive production. Their activities are undertaken at the request and with the encouragement of government.
Urban communities	Public security, dispute resolution, community services and social welfare, community medical services and family planning, community culture, education, popular science and sports, community	Activities are undertaken mainly in response to government orders, but objectively meet resident demands; residents' committee is responsible to superior sub-district office,	Help grass-roots stability.	Residents' committees are a grass-roots urban organization for carrying out government administration; activities undertaken at government

To be continued

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	environment and property management, joint community building and coordinated development, etc.	as well as to the residents.		request, highly identified with it.
Churches	In the main religious gatherings of believers are meant to strengthen ties and mutual help; undertake charity work to the extent that they have the capacity to do so.	Gatherings are mainly in response to believers' demands and are responsible to them; charity work done mainly in response to social demands.	Meet objective needs of some groups for belief and social interaction, have certain social interaction and assistance functions.	While not encouraged by the government, their religious activities are tole rated when under control.
Trade associations and chambers of commerce	Offer consultation, training, interaction among members and between government and enterprises, overseas survey trips, exhibitions, protection for members' lawful interests; help enforce laws and regulations.	Respond mainly to members' demands and are responsible to them; usually actively cooperate with government on tasks delegated to them.	Often take part in hearings and informal discussions held on law- and policy-making and revision.	All activities undertaken at the request and with the encouragement of government.
Official NGOs	Public benefit activities, especially those having to do with poverty relief.	Respond to call from government and needs of society.	Contribute to mitigating poverty and inequality.	All activities undertaken at the request and with the encouragement of government.
Grass-roots NGOs	Social services such as early education, preschool training and home tutoring for autistic children; give information on NGOs.	Respond mainly to needs of society; responsible to those they serve.	Play a certain role as an initiator.	Services rovided with tacit consent of government.
Informal organizations	Organize hobby activities and interaction among members.	Respond mainly to needs of members, responsible to participating members.	Meet needs of some members of society for entertainment and social interaction.	Functions promoted by government.

We shall start by looking at the activities of these social organizations, find out what specific public goods they provided, whose demands their activities responded to, to whom they were responsible for these activities, and what effect the activities had on society. It is hoped that the investigation will help to show how much the activities of these social organizations accorded with the wishes of the government, so that it will become possible for us to judge whether the absorption strategy of the government has attained its goal.

In Table 2 we sum up information gained

through field investigations on the public goods provided by the various social organizations, to whom they responded and were responsible, their effect on society in general, and the degree to which their activities overlapped with the government's wishes.

As can be seen from Table 2, while the degree to which they accorded with government wishes differed among activities sponsored by various social organizations, all these activities had one thing in common: none of them ever contradicted the government openly. All the interviewees had a strong "sense of the bottom line" and knew clearly what they could not do, and how serious the consequences of overstepping that line would be. Therefore they exercised strict self-discipline. The main role of these social organizations was to help, not to cause trouble, and what was more, all their development had been under government control. Instead of being a threat, their existence helped solve certain social problems and thus strengthened government authority. It can be said that "administrative absorption of society" is an institution that has operated effectively in the real world.

VI. Discussion

The institution of "administrative absorption of society," with its clear-cut aim, rigorous logic and effective operation, is not the conscious design of any person, nor, quite probably, that of the government; possibly the government has not even realized its existence. Rather, the institution is the embodiment of the "wisdom of the system" and the expression of its "collective unconscious-

ness" – a product of sedimentation, layer after layer of decisions made by officials and government departments scattered all over the country, engaged in their daily routines and handling crises. It is the uniformity of the officials' fundamental interests and of the system's inherent logic that has bestowed on this institution its "clear-cut goals," "rigorous logic" and "effective operation."

What "administrative absorption of society" stresses is not the separation of state from society, and even less opposition between the two, but rather their integration, in which the state enters into society by means of a "social approach." However, while the state that has entered society is no longer the "pure state," the "social approach" has been stamped with the seal of the "state," and the state's intervention in and influence on social organizations are found everywhere. The situation obviously differs from the civil society, corporatism, public sphere, and other social structures that came from the West. Social change since reform and opening up has not been a simple process of the broadening of autonomy, nor one of restructuring the government's control, but one of reestablishing administrative control during the process of growing social autonomy; to a certain degree, a win-win process for both the state and society.

* Kang Xiaoguang is Professor of College of Agriculture and Rural Development, Renmin University of China.

* Han Heng is Lecturer and PhD, College of Public Administration, Zhengzhou University.

Notes

1. Cf. Gu Xin, "Do Civil Society and the Social Sphere Exist in Contemporary China – Comments on Relevant Discussions by Scholars from the West," *Dangdai Zhongguo yanjiu*, 1994, no. 4; Gordon White, "Prospects for Civil Society in China: A Case Study of Xiaoshan City," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, January 1993, no. 29; He Baogang, *The Democratic Implications of Civil Society in China*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997; B. Michael Frolic, "State-Led Civil Society," in Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic (eds.), *Civil Society in China*, New York: M. E. Sharp, 1997; Anita Chan, "Revolution or Corporation? Workers and Trade Unions in Post-Mao China," *Australian Journal of China Affairs*, 1993, no. 29; Jonathan Unger and Anita Chan, "China, Corporatism, and the East Asian Model," *Australian Journal of China Affairs*, 1995, no. 33; Jonathan Unger, "Bridges: Private Business, the Chinese Government and the Rise of New Associations," *China Quarterly*, September 1996, no. 147; Tony Saich, *Governance and Politics of China*, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 207-210; Jean C. Oi, "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China," *World Politics*, 45 (Oct.), 1992.

2. Wang Ying *et al.*, *The Intermediate Social Stratum – the Reform and Corporate Organizations in China*, China Development Press, 1993; Wang Ying, "The Intermediate Social Stratum in China: Social Development and Organizational System Restructuring," *Chinese Social Science Quarterly*, February 1994.

3. Richard Baum and Alexei Shevchenko, "The 'State of the State'" in Merle Goldman & Roderick MacFarquhar (eds.), *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 333-334 and 346.

4. Kang Xiaoguang and Han Heng: "Categorized Control – A Study of the State-Society Relationship in Contemporary Chinese Mainland," *Shehui xue yanjiu*, 2005, no. 6, pp. 73-89.

5. Ambrose Yeo-chi King, "Administrative Absorption of Politics: Political Model of Hong Kong," in *Chinese Politics and Culture*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1997.

6. Kang Xiaoguang, "A Study of Political Stability in Chinese Mainland in the 1990s," *The 21st Century*, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, August 2002.

7. Cf. Kang Xiaoguang, "An Analysis of Political Stability in Chinese Mainland over the Next 3-5 Years," *Zhanlue yu guanli*, 2002, no. 3; Kang Xiaoguang, "A Study of Political Stability in Chinese Mainland in the 1990s."

8. The field investigation was fully sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

9. Up to 2002, 28 of the 36 trade union chairmanship posts at the provincial level were occupied concurrently by the Party or government deputy leading cadres at the same level. Of the general trade unions of 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, 24 chairmanship posts were occupied concurrently by deputy leading cadres at the provincial level. The chairmanship positions in many trade unions at the municipal or regional level were also held concurrently by deputy leading cadres of the Party or government organization at same level. Cf. *Collected Documents and Materials of the 14th National Congress of China's Trade Unions*, Hualing Publishing House, 2003, p. 156.

10. In 1999, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions held a conference in Ningbo on the setting up of trade union organizations in newly established enterprises, calling for "setting up trade unions wherever there are employees" and thus launched the movement to set up trade unions in all newly established enterprises

throughout the country.

11. Cf. "Note on Launching Research Work on Community Construction," announcement made on the website of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, http://www.mca.gov.cn/callboard/index.asp?page=6&sortcode=public#.

12. Cf. speech by Zhan Chengfu, Director of the Department of Grass-roots Governments and Community Construction, Ministry of Civil Affairs, at the symposium "Community Construction and the Harmonious Society," http://www.mca.gov.cn/artical/content/WSQ-LDJH/20051214141700.html.

13. "Laissez-faire" here is of course relative, and does not mean that the government exerts no control over these organizations. In fact, every organization and every person lives under the control of the government's security department, a "bottom line" control meaning that no organization or individual would dare to challenge government authority. This bottom line control has come under the notice of some scholars, cf. Jude Howell, "New Direction in Civil Society: Organizations around Marginalized Interests" in Jude Howell, Rowman and Littlefield (eds.), *Governance in China*, 2004, p. 159.

14. Cf. *Shenzhen waizi*, 2002, nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4; and 2003, no. 1.

— *Translated by* Feng Shize
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