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State-Society Relations and the Discourses and Activities of the 1989 Beijing Student Movement[1]

Dingxin Zhao
University of Chicago

Many writings emphasize the importance of Chinese culture to the 1989 Beijing Student Movement. Comparing the 1989 movement to the May 4th movement of 1919 and to the December 9th movement of 1935–36, this study finds the rhetoric and activity patterns of the 1989 movement to be actually more traditional than those of its forerunners. This is quite a paradox, considering the scale of social change in China during the 20th century. This article argues that the 1989 movement's traditionalist outlook can be explained by three structural conditions, all involving state-society relations. In comparison with the states of the earlier movements, the state during the 1980s had a higher capacity for repression. To avoid immediate repression, students tended to hide their real demands and goals behind safer and culturally congenial forms of action. Second, China in the 1980s had comparatively weaker independent civil organizations. Hence, the movement was poorly organized, and competing activities frequently occurred in the same time and location. What determined the efficacy of these activities then were less the actors' intentions than the perception of those who were observing the movement. This study argues that people's acceptance of particular movement activities is shaped by their perception of state legitimation. During the 1980s, most Chinese saw that the state's legitimacy lay in its moral performance, close to what was in traditional China. Therefore, people were more receptive to culturally and morally charged movement activities. This furthered the domination of traditionalism during the 1989 movement.

Because of its scale, duration, tragic ending, and impact on current Chinese politics, the 1989 Beijing Student Movement (BSM) attracts a great deal of scholarly attention. To date, scholars have tried to explain the

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causes of the movement and its development by tracing such factors as the rise of civil society (Burns 1989; Huan 1989; Strand 1990; Sullivan 1990), the lack of civil society (Zhou 1993), the political opportunities provided by factionalism among top leaders (Cheng 1990; Dittmer 1990; Kristof 1990; Nathan 1990; Tsao 1991), the influence of international media (He and Zhu 1994), the importance of ecology-based mobilization (Zhao 1998), and the decline of student control systems in Chinese universities during the 1980s (Rosen 1991; Zhao 1997).

The preponderance of writings on the topic, however, emphasizes the importance of Chinese culture (and the accompanying emotional elements) to the 1989 movement (Wasserstrom and Perry 1992). During the movement, students often set picket lines to prevent other elements of the Beijing population from joining their demonstrations. This type of activity is interpreted as reflecting a sense of elitism, a sentiment deeply rooted in Chinese intellectual culture. It is also considered to be an important factor contributing to the failure of the movement (Chan and Unger 1990; MaCartney 1990; Perry and Fuller 1991). Students tended to march together by school, class, and often major. Calhoun (1994) argues that this manifested Chinese cultural values of solidarity, loyalty, and friendship. It is a fact that conflicts between students and the government had continuously escalated until the military crackdown. According to Pye (1990), this was because Chinese cultural sanctions on self-interested behavior led students (and the government) to attack the other party with lofty, symbolic, and moralistic rhetoric and activities. Since battles of morality and shame often have a positive feedback nature, such interactions portended a bloody ending. All in all, for many cultural scholars, the 1989 movement was a "street theatre" with Chinese culture supplying the "scripts" (Esherick and Wasserstrom 1990; Wasserstrom 1991).[2]

Obviously, this type of analysis has weaknesses (Mann 1993, chap. 6; McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly 1997; Tarrow 1998). Logically, to attribute cultural manifestations to culture courts tautology. Empirically, such analysis tends to overemphasize cultural stability and to assume that the relationship between culture and behavior is deterministic. It usually fails to explain questions such as Why do waves of movements emerge in some periods and not in others, and why are some more adept at manipulating cultural symbols than others? Indeed, most of these works tell stories in which culture only functions as a "metanarrative" (Tarrow 1998, pp. 17–18).

[2] This research tradition is influenced by discourse analysis (Jabri 1996; Steinberg 1994; Terdiman 1986), that of poststructuralists (e.g., Derrida 1978, 1981; Foucault 1980, 1994) as well as interpretative anthropologists (Geertz 1973, 1983). Many new generation French Revolution scholars also follow this tradition (Baker 1990; Furet 1981; Hunt 1984; Sewell 1985).

The cultural perspective often fails to explain a reasonable amount of variation of the 1989 BSM. Let me provide two examples. In the beginning of the 1989 BSM, most students acted very cautiously. However, by early June, many were risking their lives to resist the military repression. Calhoun (1991, 1994) argues that the students became braver because they became increasingly committed to a culturally embedded identity during their movement participation. Yet, as a matter of fact, by the end of May, most Beijing students were very tired and went home; the Tiananmen Square occupation was sustained by students who were continuously arriving in Beijing from other provinces after mid-May. Since identity cannot be borrowed from someone else, we cannot attribute students' bravery during the military repression to an internal identity transformation. Following the logic that battles of morality and shame would only escalate confrontations, Pye (1990) predicted that, after the repression, the government would take severe revenge on students and reformers and that China's reform would be stopped. Yet, Chinese politics in the 1990s was not governed by a desire for revenge, as Pye predicted, and China's economic reform continues.

Although cultural analysis is mechanical, many of its observations are not without foundation. People can be mobilized by cultural symbols and norms as well as by material interests. Social movements and revolutions all have important discursive dimensions (Hunt 1984; Jabri 1996; Sewell 1985; Steinberg 1994). Empirically, it is undeniable that the languages and activities that students used during the 1989 BSM were deeply rooted in Chinese culture and had a significant impact on the movement. The challenge is how to analyze this impact in a causal manner. Since comparison is the essential method of falsification in the empirical sciences, I compared the movement rhetoric and activities of the 1989 BSM with those of the May 4th movement of 1919 and the December 9th movement of 1935–36—the other two large student movements in Chinese history. My initial hypothesis was that if the patterns of a social movement are determined by culture, the 1989 BSM should appear less traditional than the earlier movements, since Chinese culture has become significantly more modern during the 20th century.

To my surprise, I found that the rhetoric and activity patterns of the 1989 BSM were actually truer to traditional Chinese culture than those of the two earlier student movements. For instance, during the 1989 BSM, Beijing students tried to exclude Beijing workers from participating in the movement, an action that, as has been suggested (Chan and Unger 1990; MaCartney 1990; Perry and Fuller 1991), was motivated by a traditional sense of elite status. In contrast, during the May 4th movement, students praised workers as sacred (*laogong shensheng*), tried to earn their own living through labor (*bangong bandu*), and mobilized workers and

merchants to form a broad coalition. During the December 9th movement, students launched a rural crusade to the south to mobilize China's peasantry into an anti-Japanese coalition.[3] These findings posed a puzzle that pushed me to consider other differences behind the three student movements.

I found that the 1989 BSM was developed under different "state-society relations" than had existed during the two earlier student movements. Unlike the eras of the earlier movements, the 1980s found China with a unitary state, weak independent organizations, and state legitimacy based on moral and economic performance. My major argument is that because this unitary state had allowed state authoritarianism to penetrate deeply into society, students in the 1980s had a stronger fear of repression than students during the earlier movements. Some culturally interpretable patterns of movement activities, such as the picket lines, were strategies intended to avoid immediate repression. Moreover, because of the weakness of associational life, many activities during the 1989 BSM were initiated by individuals or a small group of students without preplanning, with multiple activities often occurring simultaneously in a given time and space. These activities might be rooted in Chinese culture, in a communist style of mobilization, or in Western influences; people also acted from any number of motives. The simultaneous occurrence of several activities in the same location made the psychology of sympathetic bystanders an important factor in shaping the patterns of the movement. One of the central arguments of this article is that people's views on the proper behavior of movement activists and the government were shaped by their understanding of state legitimation. During the late 1980s, the notions of most urban Chinese of what legitimates a state had changed from communist ideology to moral performance, a notion more in accordance with the ideas found in an earlier, more traditional China. Those who watched the movement were thus more receptive to culturally and morally charged rhetoric and activities and became very emotional when the state reacted harshly to morally charged acts. This further intensified the traditionalism expressed during the 1989 BSM.

THE STATE-SOCIETY RELATION AND ITS ESSENTIAL DIMENSIONS

The phrases "state and society" and "state-society relations" existed only marginally in sociology before the 1970s (e.g., Bendix 1968; Blelloch 1969; Morley 1949, chap. 5). Back then, the dominant theories and research agendas in sociology were largely society centered (Skocpol 1985); "state-society relations" was more a casual phrase than a theoretical framework.

[3] See Israel (1966, pp. 134–38) for more details about the event.

The situation changed between the late 1970s and the 1980s. One of the pioneering works was Skocpol's (1979) classic study on the role of the state in great social revolutions. Skocpol (1979, p. 27) treats the state "as an autonomous structure—a structure with a logic and interests of its own not necessarily equivalent to, or fused with, the interests of the dominant class in society or the full set of member groups in the polity." Since then, state-centered research has blossomed not only in the study of social revolutions (Foran 1997; Goodwin 1989; Goodwin and Skocpol 1989; McDaniel 1988, 1991; Wickham-Crowley 1992) but also in studies of other types of contentious politics, such as working-class movements (Katznelson and Zolberg 1986; Lipset 1983; Mann 1993, chaps. 15–18; Marks 1989) and contemporary social movements (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1996; Kriesi et al. 1995), and in economic development (Amsden 1989; Evans 1995; Gold 1986; Haggard 1990; Wade 1990).

As this research has developed, more and more societal factors have been brought back into the state-centered analysis. In the area of economic development, instead of arguing for a "strong state," Zhao and Hall (1994) and Evans (1995) try to capture the importance of state-society linkages in economic development with concepts such as "bounded autonomy" or "embedded autonomy." In the study of social revolutions, scholars including Goldstone (1991) and McDaniel (1991) emphasize not only the structure and nature of the state, but also factors such as population density, economic structure, and ideational factors. By far the largest amount of recent research focusing on state-society relations concerns democratic transition and consolidation (Casper and Taylor 1996; Chehabi and Stepan 1995; Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1988; Linz and Stepan 1996; Schmitter 1993; Stepan 1978, 1989; Weil 1996). Although their approaches vary, most studies of this type treat democratization as an interactive process between the state and society, examining factors such as the nature of the state, the nature and strength of civil society, and socioeconomic structure. By the mid-1990s, scholars generally accepted that the state and society transform each other through a process with outcomes that do not always reflect the aims or will of either (Migdal 1994, p. 23). Obviously, the state-society relation perspective is intended to achieve a more balanced understanding of some political processes by apprehending not only the structure and nature of the state, but also the interactions between the state and society.

China has the longest uninterrupted state tradition in world history. Since the communists took power, Chinese government has initiated numerous social programs aimed at changing the state, society, and their relations. Each of these programs had a profound impact on the population. The Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and, to a great extent, the current reform are only the best-known examples. In fact, for those who know China, it is very hard not to think of Chinese politics in

terms of the state and of state-society relations. I imagine that it is for this reason that many China scholars have adopted approaches that either directly use or imply the idea of state-society relations.

In analyzing the 1989 BSM, Tsou (1991) uses the concept of state-society relations. Zhou's (1993) "large number" and "unorganized interests" concepts also contain the idea of state-society relations. In other research areas, Shue (1988) discusses the nature and limits of the state capacity of the communist government, and Wong (1997) theorizes on the general patterns of state-society relations in both historical and contemporary China, through a comparison with the European experience. Beyond these, Tang and Parish's (2000) recent study on social changes during Deng's era, Shirk's (1993) interpretation of the drives of China's economic reform, Liu's (1996) study on China's mass politics, Zhou's (1996) work on the role of Chinese farmers during the early economic reform, and Yang's (1996) research on the impact of the great famine on the later state policies, to mention just a few works published in the 1990s, have all consciously or unconsciously adopted a state-society relation perspective.

However, of this plethora of studies, few focus on the impact of state-society relations on the discursive and symbolic dimensions of political processes. Moreover, the concept of state-society relations is capacious. Most studies, with the noticeable exception of Linz and his associates' work on democratic transition and consolidation, have used it as a general concept under which quite a few meanings are attached but not clearly specified. Although a complete operationalization of the concept into several variables is neither possible nor necessary, we should at least turn this general concept into a powerful research perspective by specifying basic dimensions that should be attended to in most research. To this end, I suggest three impure but nonreducible dimensions of state-society relations: the nature of the state, the nature of society, and the links between the state and society. Later on, I will define and discuss the basic range of variation of each of these three dimensions, with regard to the three student movements I am comparing.

After a short methodological note and a section that introduces the three student movements, the rest of this article proceeds as follows. First, I delineate the patterns of movement rhetoric and activities during the 1989 BSM (the variations of dependent factors). Second, I define the three dimensions of state-society relations that I use to explain the important variations elaborated in the previous section (the independent factors). Third, I describe the different state-society relations behind the May 4th, the December 9th, and the 1989 movements along the three identified dimensions (the variations of independent factors). Finally, I analyze how different state-society relations shaped movement rhetoric and activities during the 1989 BSM (the causal relations between the dependent and independent

factors). For those not familiar with the comparative-historical approach, I have indicated the logic of each section parenthetically by quantitative analogies. These remain just analogies, however, because the structural dimensions that I have adopted are impure constructions rather than fully operationalized variables and the discourses and activities that my analyses focus on are not dependent variables but impure ramifications of the state-society interactions. Due to the nature of the work, a full elaboration of the causal logic of this article is not given until the last section.

A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This article compares movement activities in the May 4th movement of 1919, the December 9th movement of 1935–36, and the 1989 BSM. These are all large-scale student movements that took place in urban China. Thus, some undesirable variations are "controlled." The main factors remaining uncontrolled include the international environment, learning, and knowledge accumulation processes from previous collective action experiences; the goals of each movement; and relationships between the state, students, and the general public.

A major part of the data on the May 4th and the December 9th movements was obtained from published monographs, witness accounts, and memoirs. I did independent research in Beijing and Shanghai's libraries and archives in 1997. The data for the 1989 BSM came mainly from my own interviews. A total of 70 people were interviewed between 1992 and 1993, 40 in Beijing and 30 in Montreal, Canada. Of the 70 informants, 48 were university students during the movement, 16 were political control cadres or teachers in Beijing universities, and 6 were young researchers from various cultural and academic institutions. I have given the details of the interview methodology elsewhere (see Zhao 1996, 1997, 1998).

To limit the length of this article, I adopt an unbalanced comparison. My major focus is on the 1989 BSM. The two earlier student movements are used mainly as contrast cases to the 1989 BSM. Discussions on the two earlier movements will be kept at a reasonably minimum level. For more on the earlier movements, see Chow (1967) and Israel (1966).

THE THREE STUDENT MOVEMENTS

The May 4th movement of 1919, the December 9th movement of 1935–36, and the 1989 movement are the three largest student movements in 20th-century China. They all started in Beijing and spread across the nation. Here I only briefly introduce these events.[4] The May 4th movement

[4] For interested readers, Chow (1967), Yeh (1996), Israel (1966), Calhoun (1994), and Lin (1992) offer case studies.

was the first major student movement in modern China. Since 1917, China's new intellectuals and students initiated a vast modernization drive that aimed to strengthen the country through science and democracy. This modernization drive to a great extent paved the ways to the rise of the movement. The movement, however, was named after the May 4th incident in 1919: on that day, over 3,000 Beijing students marched in the streets in an anti-Japanese demonstration protesting the Shandong Resolution of the Versailles peace conference. Joined by merchants, workers, and other urban residents, anti-Japanese protests soon spread to many other Chinese cities. Eventually, the government of Northern China had to dismiss three pro-Japanese officers and to refuse to sign the Versailles peace treaty. The impact of the May 4th movement was profound. Politically, it contributed to the rise of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the reorganization of the Nationalist Party (Guomindang). Culturally, it facilitated the rise and dominance of vernacular literature and mass education and the decline of Confucianism and traditional ethics.

While the May 4th movement was at once a prodemocratic and a nationalistic movement, the December 9th movement was mainly a nationalistic reaction to Japanese aggression. By 1935, Japan had occupied the whole Dongbei (Manchuria) region and a large part of the Hebei provinces. Beijing was virtually encircled by Japanese troops. On December 9, 1935, thousands of Beijing students marched to urge the government to resist the Japanese invasion. The movement spread to most of urban China in 1936. The impact of this movement was also monumental. It helped the CCP rebuild their urban base, which had been destroyed by the Guomindang. It also split the governing elites and induced the Xi'an Incident.[5] A series of chain reactions during and after the movement led to the establishment of a united front between Guomindang and the CCP to resist the Japanese invasion, an event that paved the road for the communist victory in China (Johnson 1962).

The 1989 BSM was prodemocratic, yet it was also a direct reaction to emerging social problems such as high inflation, rampant official corruption, and the decreasing economic status of intellectuals. Beijing students started the movement on April 15, 1989, upon Hu Yaobang's sudden death.[6] The movement achieved some success by early May. However, unlike the two earlier student movements, the 1989 BSM was not able to

[5] On December 12, 1936, general Zhang Xueliang detained Chiang Kai-shek, the generalissimo, to try to force him to stop the war with the communists and lead the whole of China to resist the Japanese invasion. This is known as the Xi'an Incident.

[6] Hu Yaobang was the general secretary of the CCP between 1981 and 1987. Forced to resign his position in part because of his liberal attitude toward student unrest in 1986, Hu became a respected figure among students and intellectuals.

sustain its success. While the government was pushed to make limited concessions, a few students started a hunger strike at Tiananmen Square on May 13 to demand more radical changes. The action drew hundreds of thousands of sympathizers once the condition of the hunger strikers deteriorated. The hunger strike was a big success in mass mobilization. However, it interrupted the Sino-Soviet summit and antagonized most of China's top state leaders. Thus, the government announced martial law. Yet, martial law could not be carried out immediately. On the night of May 19, in a popular belief that the soldiers were going to harm the students in Tiananmen Square, Beijing residents went out by the hundreds of thousands and stopped the army. The troops had to withdraw, and the student occupation of Tiananmen Square was preserved. Then, on June 3, the army entered Beijing once again. They met with violent resistance. Yet with much more resolute orders from the government, the troops pushed their way through the square, leaving behind several hundred dead and thousands more wounded. The movement was suppressed, but people did not forget. Much of Chinese politics since then has centered on the ghost of the movement and its aftermath. The impact of this movement on China's politics has yet to be fully realized.

PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES DURING THE 1989 BSM

This study investigates the impact of state-society relations on the patterns of social movement activities. However, I do not claim that social movement activities are completely shaped by state-society relations. In comparison with the May 4th movement of 1919 and December 9th movement of 1935–36, the 1989 BSM has three distinctive features. The movement was much more pro-Western in appearance. It bore a strong imprint of the Cultural Revolution and styles of communist mass mobilization. Finally, culturally embedded rhetoric and movement activities figured much more centrally in the 1989 BSM than in the two earlier student movements. Only the last pattern was closely related to state-society relations in China during the 1980s. Before examining it, however, I will briefly introduce each of the three features.

Pro-Western Characteristics of the Movement

During the 1989 BSM, students frequently flashed V-signs to indicate victory, built a Statue of Liberty turned "Goddess of Democracy" in Tiananmen Square, held countless press conferences to attract Western attention, provided Western and Hong Kong journalists with easy access to their headquarters, and routinely listened to foreign broadcast for news and

feedback.[7] The list of pro-Western attributes can be expanded. The movement's pro-Western nature was also reflected in its language. English banners such as For the People, By the People, Absolute Power, Absolute Corruption,[8] Glasnost, and People Power appeared everywhere.[9] This pro-Western sentiment was new to China. Although the two earlier movements were anti-Japanese, students also expressed grievances with other foreigners. For example, during the May 4th movement, when Shanghai students demonstrated around Waitan Park in the British concession, several students smashed a board in front of the park which read No Chinese and Dogs (Xu 1987, p. 76). During the May 4th movement, the Guomindang elite had to make efforts to keep the movement from becoming explicitly anti-Western (Liu 1990).

Both the May 4th and the December 9th movements took place between the world wars. During that period, colonialism still dominated international geopolitics. Weak nations such as China were constantly bullied by big powers acting on their conflicting geopolitical interests. Given this situation, nationalism became a major feature of the movements. The May 4th students advocated Westernization mainly because they believed that democracy could save China from foreign aggression. By the time of the 1989 BSM, however, colonialism was seen as part of the distant past; intellectuals and students were no longer concerned about saving China. Instead they felt great pain as a consequence of the strong state that their predecessors had dreamed of and fought for. They also witnessed the decline of the Soviet Union and a new wave of worldwide democratization. State socialism was no longer treated as a viable model; capitalism and democracy had again become the engine of the world system. The pro-Western nature of the movement revealed fundamental changes in the international environment and the mood of Chinese intellectuals and students.

Imprint of the Communist Mass Mobilization

Communist education imprinted on the students a set of habits and iconic images. For example, during the 1989 BSM, students sang "The Interna-

[7] According to MaCartney (1990, pp. 9–10), "Access to inner sanctums [at Tiananmen Square] was granted only to the Western and Hong Kong press." Moreover, student leader Wang Dan visited Hong Kong reporters almost daily "to feel out their attitude to the students, to find out whether the outside world was interested in the movement."

[8] See the photos in Xuese de Liming (1989, pp. 48, 68).

[9] During the May 4th and the December 9th movements, students seldom used Western languages to express their demands. Even when students wrote their banners in English, they only intended to explain to the Westerners that their movements were not radical and anti-Western. See, e.g., Wasserstrom (1991, photos between pp. 124–25).

tionale" whenever they felt that their action was heroic and tragic. Although "The Internationale" is part of a legitimate set of symbols under the regime, students sang the song frequently because the song is rebellious in spirit and singing it was a standard way to express the type of emotions that students had learned through revolutionary dramas and films. However, some movement tactics popularized during the Cultural Revolution had an even greater impact on the 1989 BSM.

The hunger strike was arguably the single most important form of protest during the 1989 BSM. The strike led to the success of the movement, both in terms of the scale of mobilization it achieved and the worldwide attention it generated. It also sowed the seeds for martial law and the final military crackdown. Significantly, the tactic was not used during the May 4th and the December 9th movements but was popularized only during the Cultural Revolution. The impact of the Cultural Revolution on the 1989 BSM can be seen from Zheng Yi's account of his involvement in the movement (Zheng 1993, pp. 62–68). In his book, Zheng describes organizing a large-scale hunger strike during the Cultural Revolution. He also depicts how he passed on his experiences in that regard to activists at Beijing University, suggesting that they stage a hunger strike as early as April 22. Zheng Yi's fascinating story certainly had its impact on young listeners such as Wang Dan, Chai Ling, and Zhang Boli, all of whom were key figures in the hunger strike.

Between May 16 and 26 in 1989, around 172,000 students from various provinces went to Beijing by train (Wu 1989, p. 474). Students also went by other means of transportation. Thus, in late May, Tiananmen Square was filled by energetic newcomers who were reluctant to leave. These students went to Beijing not just to support the movement, but to take advantage of the opportunity to get a free trip to visit Beijing. This phenomenon, which had a tremendous impact on the development of the movement, is called *chuanlian*. To travel a long distance as part of the petition process started during the earlier student movements (Wasserstrom 1991, p. 88), yet it is the Cultural Revolution that gave chuanlian a new meaning—chuanlian as massive free tourism. By 1989, most old Red Guards regarded the Cultural Revolution as a personal as well as a collective tragedy. Nevertheless, most of them had good memories of chuanlian (Jin 1996). In the interviews, all the students whom I asked about chuanlian knew the story very well. Past novelties became this movement's routine.

The Traditionalism of the 1989 Movement

What is most stunning and hard to explain is that the language and activity of the 1989 BSM were actually more traditional and moralistic than

those of the May 4th movement of 1919 and the December 9th movement of 1935–36. This is not to suggest that China's traditional culture had no impact on the two earlier movements or that there are no similarities among the three movements. For example, in premodern China, kneeling in a public place was a major way by which the Chinese proclaimed their discontent and appealed to the public for support. Indeed, we see that during the May 4th movement students knelt in front of workers and merchants to try to mobilize them. Nevertheless, kneeling had never been as significant a movement tactic as it was during Hu Yaobang's funeral on April 22, 1989. Never before did kneeling bring out the emotions of hundreds of thousand of students and trigger a Beijing-wide class boycott. The same was true of staging protests during funerals. During the May 4th movement, the funeral protests at Tianjin and Shanghai were only minor activities (Chow 1967, pp. 129, 143). During the December 9th movement, Beijing students did hold a memorial service and demonstrated for Guo Qing, a high school student who had died in prison. However, when the government repressed this activity, no further radical actions followed (Han 1986, pp. 103–8; Israel 1966, p. 145). The 1989 BSM, by contrast, started after Hu Yaobang's sudden death and for its first week centered on mourning activities.

Students of the 1980s also brought back some of the rhetoric that their predecessors during the May 4th era had vehemently attacked and which had gradually disappeared from China's political discourse. Traditional Chinese virtues such as loyalty, filial piety, and images of extended family were under severe attack during the May 4th movement (Chow 1967, pp. 58–59); yet during the 1989 BSM, students and Beijing residents frequently used language drawing on these elements to mobilize emotions. One frequently encountered slogans that centered on extended family relations, such as: "Mama, we are not wrong!" "Mama: I am hungry, but I won't eat!" "Grandpa Zhao, uncle Li, come to save our big brothers and sisters!" and "Your big brothers have been very anxious!" In addition, one also encountered language that emphasized very traditional Chinese values: "To fast to death is only a small deed!"[10] and "Loyalty and filial piety cannot be obtained at the same time."

Traditional language was not just an individual initiative. For example, the Hunger Strike Declaration, arguably one of the most important student declarations of the 1989 BSM, was also filled with traditional rhetoric and with elitist sentiment such as "When a person is about to pass away,

[10] This is a slightly modified version of half of a traditional Chinese couplet, the other half of which goes: "Keeping up one's chastity is the most important matter." The couplet was used to teach women in traditional China to maintain chastity in widowhood.

he speaks kindly and wisely; when a bird is about to die, it cries sadly" and "Please forgive us. Your children cannot be loyal [to the country] and show filial piety at the same time." In comparison, few declarations during the May 4th and the December 9th movements bore traits of this sort; such language (and the values embedded in it) was in fact a target of attack in some student manifestos during the May 4th movement.

No wonder China scholars have been so committed to explaining the 1989 BSM by different facets of traditional Chinese culture. Yet while it is not difficult to find a strong empirical support for this connection, such explanations do not provide any clue as to why the 1989 BSM was more traditional and culturally driven than the May 4th movement of 1919 and the December 9th movement of 1935–36.[11]

It is quite tempting to explain this difference in terms of the core issues of each of the three movements. This works partially for the May 4th movement. There is no doubt that the iconoclastic nature of the movement delegitimatized the use of traditional rhetoric and tactics in the movement. However, this explanation does not work for the December 9th movement, because it was almost purely nationalistic. There is little reason to explain why a nationalistic movement in the 1930s was less traditional than a prodemocratic movement in the 1980s.

One might also argue that activity patterns of the 1989 BSM point to the resilience of culture. Yet, it is illogical to assume that youths of the 1980s were more exposed to traditional culture than the May 4th and the December 9th youths. In the 20th century, China has arguably undergone the most dramatic social change in its long history. A considerable portion of the May 4th youths were brought up in large extended families. In comparison, modern students were mostly brought up in urban nuclear families and were subject to much more liberal child-rearing practices. During the May 4th era, female students had to fight to wear modern hairstyles and to attend the same schools as males. In contrast, students in the 1980s could date rather freely. Moreover, many of the May 4th and the December 9th students were educated with a blend of traditional and modern curricula. In comparison, the students in the 1980s were educated with more Westernized curricula. Finally, modern students lived in the age of media technology. They were much more exposed, albeit superfi-

[11] One may simply view the traditionalism during the 1989 BSM as a nostalgic cultural revival. While people are nostalgic, this is not enough to explain the revival of a major cultural tradition. Major cultural revival must be accompanied by certain structural changes that either make that culture more relevant or facilitate the development of certain cultural institutions that fight for that culture. In a way, this article can be seen as an analysis of the structural conditions that revived some of the traditional cultural elements in China during the 1980s.

cially, to the Western lifestyle and mentality than earlier students. Therefore, we need other explanations.

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

I have shown that the 1989 BSM's rhetoric and activities were more traditional than those of the two earlier student movements. Before explaining this finding, I need to specify three structural dimensions of state-society relations that will be used to elaborate the comparison. These dimensions are the nature of the state, the nature of society, and the links or patterns of interaction between the state and society.

Scholars have proposed different ideal-types of states. For example, recently Finer (1997) has classified major regime types based on four institutional sources: palace, forum, church, and nobility. Their combinations yield six hybrid types. Mann (1988, 1993) identifies four types of regimes, differentiated by the level of a state's despotic power and infrastructural capacity to penetrate society. While modern democratic regimes are characterized by strong infrastructural but weak despotic power, modern totalitarian regimes have strong infrastructural and despotic power.

In their study of the democratic transition, Linz and Stepan (1996) identify five ideal-types of modern states: democratic, authoritarian, totalitarian, post-totalitarian, and sultanic. Different regime types have different paths and tasks in making the transition to democracy. Most relevant to this article are the authoritarian regime and the post-totalitarian regime. By authoritarian regime, Linz and Stepan refer to a political system that has no elaborated guiding ideology, but has a certain social and economic pluralism and a limited political pluralism, mainly a result of the state's weak capacity to penetrate society. A post-totalitarian regime is a decayed form of the totalitarian regime. In contrast to the authoritarian regime, this type of regime emphasizes rational decision making but is still officially committed to an elaborate ideology. It has a certain level of economic and social pluralism but a very limited political pluralism, due to the state's still-overwhelming presence. As it will be discussed in the next section, China was governed by authoritarian regimes during the May 4th and December 9th era, and by a post-totalitarian regime during the late 1980s. Because of its post-totalitarian nature, the Chinese state during the 1980s was more capable of carrying out repression than the state had been during the earlier student movements. The level of state unity—mainly elite unity—and the state's infrastructural capacity to penetrate society are thus the initial criteria of my comparison.

The second dimension of state-society relations is the structure or nature of society. Recent publications on the role of civil society in democratic transitions have greatly enhanced our understanding of this dimen-

sion (e.g., Ehrenberg 1999; Hall 1995; Keane 1988). The density and strength of intermediate organizations are crucial to the nature of society because intermediate organizations have many social movement–related functions. First, intermediate associations check state power. Without them, state power will be truly despotic, and people's attention will be state centered (Tocqueville 1955). Second, intermediate organizations nurture bonds and contractual relations among social groups and create and sustain a shared identity and tradition. Poorly organized individuals tend to have little mutual understanding and little capacity to pursue their interests in a coordinated manner (Kornhauser 1959). While poorly organized movements tend to be driven by activities with strong emotional elements, stronger organizations make the rationalization of movement strategy possible. Finally, strong intermediate organizations facilitate sectional and segmental mobilization and prevent unitary national-level uprising. Organizations do play a crucial role in most microlevel participant recruiting processes, as resource mobilization theorists have argued (McCarthy and Zald 1973; McAdam 1982; Tilly 1978). However, different organizations tend to have distinctive interests and tend to nurture crosscutting identities of their members. Thus, when the society is taken as a whole, the existence of strong intermediate organizations actually prevents unitary national-level mobilization. In the next section, I will show that, due to the state's post-totalitarian nature, Chinese society during the 1980s had a very poor level of intermediate organizations compared to the eras of the May 4th and December 9th movements.

The third dimension of the comparison is where the state and society are linked. The importance of economic and political linkages has been conventional wisdom. The analysis in this article relies heavily on the ideational links between the state and society: on people's perception of state legitimacy. State legitimacy has been defined in many ways (Habermas 1975; Finer 1997; Johnson 1982; Linz and Stepan 1996; Offe 1973; Wolfe 1977). There is also a significant difference between people's perception of state legitimacy and the bases of state legitimation that state authorities use to justify their rule. Since I mainly deal with the population at large, not with state elites, this article focuses on people's perception of state legitimacy

Weber believes that tradition, charisma, and rationality are the three bases of human compliance (Bendix 1960, pp. 290–97; Weber 1978, p. 28). Weber's classification is illuminating, but when it is used to analyze people's perception of state power, it raises a problem. Not only in modern times, but even in the past, people's perception of state legitimation involved a mix of emotions and rationality regardless of the ways in which a state tried to legitimize itself. For example, in historical China, the emperor was legitimized as "the son of the heaven," yet dynasties were fre-

quently challenged and overthrown when heaven's son failed to provide basic services. The same is true when people support a charismatic modern state leader. They do so both out of affection and hoping for a reward. I therefore slightly modify Weber's classification system. In this article, sources of state legitimation are not classified in terms of basic types of human compliance, but in terms of how state power is justified: by a commonly accepted procedure, by the service that the state has provided, or by a future promise. Correspondingly, I define three types of state legitimation: legal-electoral, ideological, and performance legitimacy, respectively.

A state is likely to enjoy legal-electoral legitimacy when it takes laws as binding principles for all social groups, including state elites themselves, and when top leaders are popularly elected on a regular basis. Ideological legitimacy means that a state power is based on a grand vision that rests on future promises to which a government is committed.[12] Performance legitimacy means that a state's right to rule rests on its continuing economic development, its observance of certain moral and ritual practice, or its maintenance of national defense. Finally, when citizens tie their hopes to the ability and personality of one or a few state leaders, the state enjoys charismatic legitimacy. Charismatic legitimacy can be supplementary to any kind of state legitimacy, but it tends to be an extreme form of ideological legitimacy.[13] These are all ideal-types. In reality, a state seldom bases its survival on a single source of legitimacy. However, in a particular country and at a particular time, one source of state legitimacy tends to dominate.[14]

Many classic studies suggest that people interpret an event by following preexisting "schemata of interpretation" in their minds. They tend to be upset when an action violates their expectations and to become excited when an action resonates with what preexisted in their minds (Collins 1981; Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1967). In this article, I take people's preexisting perceptions of state legitimation as such "schemata of interpreta-

[12] People may find similarities between legal-electoral and ideological legitimacy since legal-electoral legitimacy has democracy at its ideological base. However, they are different in two aspects. Democracy only promises a procedure to select leaders, not a utopian future. More important, my definition of legal-electoral legitimacy emphasizes the procedural, not ideological, aspect. Although democracy is the base of legal-electoral legitimacy, over time it is the commonly accepted procedure of leadership selection, rather than the value system behind it, that legitimizes a state.

[13] Defined this way, people's perception of state legitimacy can be assessed by their views on a state's ideological claim, their satisfaction with a state's major performance, and their impression of the top state leaders.

[14] During Mao's era, the dominant source of state legitimation was ideology. However, the state also based its survival on Mao's charisma, as well as on some public goods that the state delivered to the previously lower classes in society.

tion" in society. In this sense, sources of state legitimation may determine to what kinds of rhetoric and activities the people will be more receptive, and therefore what kinds will dominate a social movement. In the next section, I will show that while nationalism was a major source of state legitimation during the May 4th and December 9th eras, the Chinese during the 1980s saw that the state's legitimacy lay primarily in moral and economic performance rooted in China's traditional state-society relations. This mode of legitimation also contributed to the traditionalism during the 1989 BSM.

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN THE THREE STUDENT MOVEMENTS AND ALONG THE THREE IDENTIFIED DIMENSIONS

In the last section, I defined the three major dimensions of state-society relations. Now, I will draw upon these dimensions in giving a brief historical account of the different state-society relations operating during the May 4th movement of 1919, the December 9th movement of 1935–36, and the 1989 BSM. I begin with the May 4th movement.

The May 4th movement started eight years after the 1911 Republican Revolution. When it began, China consisted of two rival states, with the north controlled by warlords and the south by a coalition of warlords and the Guomindang. The May 4th movement was aimed against the pro-Japanese force in the northern government. China at that time had two major political parties, the Guomindang and the Jinbudang (the Progressive Party). While they were otherwise in political competition, both parties urged the northern government not to sign the Versailles peace treaty. The Progressive Party was generally conservative and often a supporter of the warlord government in the northern parliament. During the May 4th movement, however, some members of the party, especially Liang Qichao, supported the students. Before the movement, the Guomindang had split into a southern revolutionary and a northern parliamentarian faction, neither of which really initiated the movement. But individual Guomindang members, such as Cai Yuanpei, Wu Zhihui, Zhang Ji, Ye Chucang, Dai Jitao, and Shao Lizi were behind the movement from the very beginning. Moreover, more Guomindang members from both the northern parliamentary and southern revolutionary factions came to support the movement after it started. In fact, when the center of the movement shifted to Shanghai, the Guomindang practically led the movement (Liu 1990). But support for the movement was not limited to political parties. Some powerful warlords associated with the northern government, such as Wu Peifu and Zhang Jingrao, also publicly expressed their sympathy for students. Thus, the students were actually backed by a polit-

ically powerful and organizationally resourceful political coalition. Still, if the northern government during the May 4th era was no less authoritarian and repressive than the post-totalitarian communist government of the 1980s, its state elites were certainly more fragmented.

The northern government's weakness was reflected in the limited degree to which its authoritarianism penetrated Chinese society. Between 1912 and 1914, that government had published a series of laws to restrict people's rights to free speech, assembly, association, and the press. However, such laws could not extend to provinces and cities controlled by southern revolutionaries, or to foreign concessions, where publication and association were not regulated by Chinese law. Even within its own sphere of political influences, the northern government had proved unable to eliminate organizations not in its control. Therefore, commercial organizations, worker unions, and other nongovernmental organizations were in place long before the May 4th movement. Some of these organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce of China in Beijing and Shanghai, the Citizens' Diplomatic Association, and the Chinese Industry Association, played important roles during the May 4th movement. After Yuan Shikai's failure to restore a monarchy and his subsequent death in 1916, the Beijing government's capacity for control deteriorated even further. Newspapers, magazines, and student organizations controlled by the new intellectuals mushroomed in Beijing. At Beijing University, for example, over 20 new associations were formed before the rise of the May 4th movement. The Association of Personal Ethics (*Jindehui*), with a membership of over 500 people (over 25% of the university population), had organized virtually all the new intellectuals in the university. Organizations such as the New Tide Society, the Citizens' Magazine Society, and the Mass Media Research Society provided the leadership for the movement (Zhang et al. 1979).

Immediately before the rise of the December 9th movement, by contrast, China seemed more tightly controlled by a repressive government. For by 1935, the Guomindang had unified most parts of China and pushed the CCP to abandon its southern bases and retreat to the Shanbei area. In the meantime, the Guomindang also tried to eliminate the CCP in the cities. Hundreds of thousands of communists and their supporters were captured and killed, and most underground communist organizations in the cities were destroyed. This "white terror" also extended to Chinese society at large. After 1927, procommunist worker unions, student societies, and left-wing organizations were banned, and other social organizations were placed under governmental control.[15] In Beijing, for example,

[15] For example, whereas before 1927 Shanghai had been a heartland of left-wing working-class politics, in the years between 1927 and 1937 left-wing worker's movements

the universities, with the exception of Yanjing and Qinghua,[16] were politically very quiet before 1935.

However, although the Guomindang regime was very repressive, a highly divided governing elite on the top, and the existence of a professional Leninist communist party at the bottom, strongly affected the government's capacity to penetrate the society. When China was unified in the late 1920s, most warlords were not militarily eliminated, but politically co-opted. Thus many warlords still controlled their own bases and troops. Some of them, such as Feng Yuxiang and Zhang Xueliang, had great sympathy for the December 9th movement because of their nationalistic feelings and because of the fact that their northern power bases were being undermined by the Japanese.[17] Furthermore, the Guomindang had a revolutionary tradition rooted in its history and in its ideological underpinnings. Chiang Kai-shek was able to repress the communists but could do very little to highly influential left-wing party members. During the December 9th movement, left-wing and liberal Guomindang leaders, led by Song Qingling and He Xiangning, the widows of Sun Yat-sen and Liao Zhongkai, also vehemently supported the students' actions. Therefore the governing elites' attitudes toward the movement were highly divided.[18]

Meanwhile, although the communists were driven to Shanbei, the Guomindang was unable to defeat them completely. Even before they arrived in Shanbei, the communists advocated a united front with the Guomindang against the Japanese invasion. At the time, most government troops stationed near Shanbei were part of Zhang Xueliang's army, which had retreated from Dongbei since 1931. Thus, the communists' proposal strongly resonated among Dongbei Army officers who were homesick and deeply humiliated by their peaceful retreat from their home province. For

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were so repressed that worker unions in Shanghai became controlled by local gangsters (Perry 1993, chap. 5).

[16] Yanjing was an American private university, and Qinghua was established and funded by war reparations that China paid to the United States. In both universities, the Guomindang's influence was relatively weak and free associations were more tolerated.

[17] This was especially true of Zhang Xueliang, who had come under a lot of public pressure since he followed Chiang Kai-shek's orders and withdrew his troops from Dongbei in 1931 without offering any resistance to the Japanese invasion.

[18] Here is an example of how students benefited from the elite's divisions. On February 23, 1936, 44 Dongbei University students were arrested in Beijing. Student leader Song Li went to Zhang Xueliang for help. Zhang wrote a letter to the chief of the military police in Beijing and requested that he release the students. He also asked Song Li to act as his secretary and to deliver the letter. When Song was in Beijing, he was recognized by local authorities as one of the students on the arrest list, yet nobody dared to arrest him. Instead, Song was treated well, and all of the 44 arrested students were released as Zhang requested (Song 1982). This kind of politics would have been unimaginable during the 1989 BSM.

a period, a truce existed between local Guomindang troops and the Red Army.

In Beijing, by the end of 1934, the CCP had been completely destroyed as an organization. However, in early 1935, the CCP started to reestablish its underground organs through a peripheral organization called the Chinese Association of Military Defense. The members of the association used Yanjing and Qinghua Universities as bases to expand their influence. By the time the December 9th movement broke out, the CCP had reestablished its Beijing branch and controlled radical student networks (Chen 1982; Yao 1987). Most of these students turned out to be crucial leaders in the movement and later revolutionary veterans. Thus, even though the CCP headquarters at Shanbei was not aware of it, the CCP local in Beijing played a role in facilitating the December 9th movement.[19] Moreover, soon after the movement began, the CCP strengthened its presence in the movement. The CCP gradually gained control over the movement in several major cities, particularly Beijing and Tianjin. Thus the December 9th movement was increasingly supervised by the CCP.

One point that I need to bring out is that the principal base of state legitimation during both the May 4th and December 9th periods was nationalism. Since the Opium War in 1840, foreign aggression had become an increasingly urgent problem for China. In the wake of foreign aggression, nationalist consciousness rose first among intellectuals and then among other urban populations. China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 was a crucial catalyst for radicalism. Having a strong state capable of defending China became a dream of the Chinese (Meisner 1967; Pusey 1983; Yu 1993). It was in this general atmosphere that Liang Qichao, one of the foremost reformers during the late imperial and early republican era, proclaimed that: "even if a government system deprives the people of much or all of their freedom, it is a good system so long as it is founded on a spirit of meeting the requirement of national defense" (see Nathan 1986, p. 62). It was in the same atmosphere that China's political elites staged reforms and rebellions that eventually overthrew the Manchu government and established the Republic. Finally, this same radical atmosphere still prevailed when Chinese intellectuals and students staged the May 4th and December 9th movements.

[19] Edgar Snow (1966) insists that the December 9th movement was largely spontaneous and that the early leaders of the movement were "mostly Christian or Christian-trained youths . . . not a Communist among them." Snow seems to have underestimated the communists' role in initiating the movement. In fact, many leaders of the movement had joined the CCP before the movement began. Some of them, such as Yu Qiwei (Huang Jing), Yao Keguang (Yao Yilin), Wang Rumei (Huang Hua), and Song Li, were also among the frequent guests of Snow's family. See Liao, Zhang, and Liu (1993) for the political careers of these December 9th movement leaders.

As a post-totalitarian regime, the Chinese government during the 1980s still claimed its legitimacy in ideological terms—in terms of the Four Cardinal Principles written in the preamble of the Chinese Constitution.[20] However, after the reforms of 1978, China's urban population knew more and more of the outside world. In comparison with the development of the West, and especially of the newly rising East Asian neighbors, urban Chinese found that their government had delivered to them far less than had been promised. Coupled with bitter memories of the disastrous Cultural Revolution and with the new international wave of democratization, the younger generation of intellectuals and students became increasingly critical of the regime's ideological stance (Zhao 1997). This does not mean that most people during the 1980s perceived the state as illegitimate, however. What happened in China was a shifting of public perception of the basis of state legitimation from leftist ideology back to performance—mainly moral and economic performance.[21] Particularly relevant to this article was the moral dimension of state legitimation, which owes its legacy largely to the Confucian principle of "governing by goodness" (e.g., Creel 1953; Yang 1991). According to this principle, rulers must fulfill certain materialistic and ritualistic obligations to show their responsibility to and love of their subjects, who in exchange offer conformity and loyalty. After the ideological legitimation of the state declined, moral and ritual performance became a popular criterion by which the people would judge their government. Thus, during the 1980s, many novels became bestsellers in China not because of their quality, but because their topic was on upright officials (*qingguan*).[22] Similarly, popular sayings such as "If an official is not able to stand up for his people, he should go home to sell sweet potatoes" (*Dangguan buwei minzuozhu, buyo huijia maihongshu*) became cur-

[20] These are adherence to socialism, adherence to the leadership of the party, adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, and adherence to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

[21] During my interviews, I asked informants the question: "What was your view on the Four Cardinal Principles before the 1989 student movement?" Among the 60 people who responded to the question, 21 (35%) were strictly against them, whereas only 9 (15%) accepted them. The rest (50%) accepted them with reservations. For those who had conditionally accepted the Four Cardinal Principles, most of them said so only because they thought that the state was still effective in certain functions, especially in leading economic development. This finding is also confirmed by other similar studies during the 1980s (Zhao 1995). Therefore, during the 1989 BSM, at least among intellectuals and students, the Chinese state enjoyed a certain degree of performance legitimacy, but not ideological legitimacy.

[22] Ke Yunlu's *Xinxing* (A new star) was perhaps the most famous such novel. It shows how a young county mayor had acted as a traditional upright official for the benefit of the local people. When the novel was turned into a TV mini-series, each Saturday evening when the mini-series was broadcast, the major streets in Shanghai looked empty (Lull 1991, chap. 6).

rent.[23] The same reasoning also made official corruption an extremely sensitive issue in China and a major point of contention during the 1989 BSM.

Nevertheless, although a crisis of ideological legitimacy could be widely felt in urban China during the 1980s, no rival political organizations or parties existed then, as had been the case during the earlier student movements. Moreover, in the late-1980s most of the top-level government offices were still controlled by CCP veterans who had joined the party long before the communists took power. These veterans were aware of China's economic backwardness, among other problems. However, they also believed that the problems did not result from communism or authoritarianism, but rather from inexperience. They realized that reform was an absolute necessity, but they never intended to give up what millions of their comrades had died for.[24] They were confident because they had an armed force still controlled by veteran senior officers. Thus, the legitimation crisis actually had no catastrophic impact on the higher echelons of the leadership. Western analysts have highlighted the factional nature of Chinese government during the 1989 BSM. But the crucial fact is that no top state leaders really supported students during the movement. Their differences focused more on strategies to stem the movement (Zhao 1999). This contrasts sharply with what happened during the May 4th and the December 9th movements, when powerful governing elites openly supported students.

China in the 1980s was much freer than it was during Mao's era. This created an opening for the rise of the 1989 BSM. However, this openness should not be exaggerated. In the early years when the communists took over power, they wiped out the independent social organizations and replaced them with party-controlled worker, woman, youth, and vocational organizations. New forms of nonofficial organizations emerged during the 1980s as China's reform deepened (White 1993). However, the new associations were still at a very rudimentary stage of development and not comparable to the organizations of the republican era. Most of these new organizations also had a semiofficial status and were never intended to mobilize against the state (Wang, Zhe, and Sun 1993). Thus, during the 1989 BSM, all the movement organizations emerged with no prior history,

[23] This sentence was from a drama about an upright official in traditional China who risked his career to serve his subjects. The drama became very popular as soon as it came out, and the quoted sentence became a catchphrase for the Chinese urban population during the mid-1980s.

[24] For example, in a speech at the CCP Central Advisory Commission Standing Committee, Chen Yun (1990) said that "Everyone knows that the Chinese revolution went through decades of hard struggle and saw the sacrifice of more than twenty million people, and only then was the People's Republic of China founded. The victory has not come easily." Chen Yun's speech was highly representative of most top CCP leaders' attitudes during the 1989 BSM.

and student mobilization was facilitated more by the ecology of the campuses and of Tiananmen Square than by the strength of organizations (Zhao 1998).

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS AND PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES DURING THE 1989 MOVEMENT

In the last section, I argued that China during both the May 4th movement of 1919 and the December 9th movement of 1935–36 had a fragmented state, divided elites, strong opposition parties or intermediate associations, and a state legitimation primarily based on the state's capacity for national defense, while the post-totalitarian communist state during the 1980s had a relatively unitary governing elite that held much tighter control over society, despite the fact that a large proportion of the urban population judged it by its moral and economic performance, not by its ideology. Now, I will analyze how these differences shaped rhetoric and activities of the 1989 BSM.

Because China in the 1980s had a less fragmented state and weaker intermediate associations than had existed during the May 4th and the December 9th movements, the students during the 1989 BSM were unable to organize freely and raise demands directly. In this setting, the students sought to avoid head-on repression by twisting or hiding their real demands and goals behind legitimate forms of collective action. Many activities during the 1989 BSM can be straightforwardly explained as strategies that aimed to create a "safe space" to lower the possibility of repression (Evans and Boyte 1992; Gurr 1986; Lichbach 1995; Opp and Roehl 1990).

Let us recall the picket line example I gave earlier. In the past, the communist government had treated student activism relatively leniently but had severely sanctioned worker activism or any attempt to build an alliance between students and workers. Moreover, when a student demonstration was not picketed, the urban youths, some of them hooligans, had tended to mingle with demonstrators, making the demonstration less orderly and threatening to turn it into a riot. To avoid allowing the government to justify repression with such side effects, the students over time developed the picket line strategy to ensure that a demonstration went on in an orderly fashion.[25]

The same logic also explains why funeral protests, which were only

[25] For example, riots broke out in both Changsha and Xi'an during and after student demonstrations on April 22. Massive looting occurred in both cities. Around 20 houses and 10 vehicles were burned during the Xi'an riot. In the April 26th *People's Daily* editorial, the government claimed that student demonstrations had facilitated these riots. Student leader Cheng Zhen (1990, p. 175) also has given exactly the same account of why they tried to keep other sections of the Beijing population from joining the demonstrations during the early stage of the movement.

marginally used during the May 4th and the December 9th movements, became so important for the 1989 BSM. Before the December 9th demonstration, student activists explicitly rejected Helen Snow's (a foreigner) suggestion that students start their demonstration with a mock funeral by carrying a "corpse of North China" through the streets of Beijing (Isreal 1966, pp. 115–16). Why was a tactic that was rejected by traditional students heavily used by modern students? In fact, a few student activists in Beijing had begun preparing for the 1989 movement long before Hu Yaobang's sudden death. They would have started this movement anyway, regardless of Hu's physical condition. Yet Hu's sudden death provided an excellent opportunity. At the time of his death, Hu Yaobang was still a politburo member of the CCP, and therefore a top statesman. Since to mourn a government leader in China is a legitimate action, one that the government itself would also conduct, to start collective action by centering on Hu Yaobang's funeral shielded the intention of movement activists and made immediate repression impossible.

The students' fear of repression also manifested itself in other activities. On April 26, the government published a *People's Daily* editorial that labeled the movement as antirevolutionary turmoil instigated by a small number of black hands. When students demonstrated on April 27 in defiance of the editorial, however, the slogans that students chanted the most were "Long live the communist party!" and "Support socialism!" (Wu 1989, p. 62). They also chanted slogans centered on issues of official corruption and high inflation. The slogans were not radical, even from the perspective of communist leaders. This led many observers to conclude that the students were loyal to the system and that their movement was in many ways similar to the remonstration of China's traditional intellectuals before an emperor. I do not deny that China's traditional political culture assigns particular social roles to intellectuals and that modern Chinese students were influenced by these scripts. However, the rhetoric that students used during the April 27th demonstration makes for a somewhat misleading example. As early as April 18, student activists had unveiled seven demands at Tiananmen Square, at the center of which were calls for the freedom of speech, the press, and association. These demands guided the movement from that point onward. That the slogans students used during the April 27th demonstration were strikingly different from the earlier ones is best explained by considerations of strategy. By demonstrating on the street after the *People's Daily* editorial, the students challenged the regime's authority. However, by restricting their rhetoric to conformist slogans and to a few major social problems of common concern, the movement activists were able to mobilize more students from within and public sympathy from without, while denying the government an excuse for repression.

Thus far I have explained how the state's repressive and unitary nature pushed social movement actors during the 1989 BSM to use conformist strategies to expand the potential for mobilization and lessen the possibility of an immediate repression. However, strategy cannot be the only explanation. During the movement, many students bit their fingers to write slogans in blood; one of my informants reported that he had hit and smashed his own face in anger; a student leader recalled that he saw a woman with tears, snivel, and hair all over her face kneeling outside the student headquarters at Tiananmen Square crying, chanting, and begging the students not to leave Tiananmen Square during late May.[26] In fact, emotional displays constituted a major part of movement activities. If I were a social psychologist, I would certainly attribute the domination of cultural activities during the 1989 BSM to the emotional nature of the movement. The logic is straightforward: when people act emotionally, they tend to act out what they are most familiar with, to act according to those behavioral codes that have already been imprinted in their minds and to which they have become habituated (Kitayama and Markus 1994; Triandis 1989).

However, such an explanation could not constitute the whole story either. We know that a huge number of people participated in the 1989 BSM in an increasingly unorganized fashion (Chen 1996). Also, most movement activities were carried out in a few places, such as Tiananmen Square, the Triangle at Beijing University, or the Third Student Dining Hall at the People's University (Zhao 1998). During the movement, people frequently visited these places after work, after dinner, or anytime as they wanted. Most of them simply acted as sympathetic bystanders. When so moved, a few of them would stage actions of their own. The relatively unorganized and place-centered nature of these activities made the relationship between movement actors and bystanders very much like that between "street theater actors" at a fair and the people who visit that fair. Someone who had visited Tiananmen Square during the movement was likely to encounter several independent protesting activities, either simultaneously or sequentially, and a huge crowd of sympathetic bystanders mingling inside and looking for something interesting. Those who acted on the stage might follow traditional, modern, or foreign scripts of social movements. They might also act out of impulse, calculation, or a combination of both. For the most part, their forms of actions and motivations did not matter at this level because most of these activities came and went without having a

[26] In my interview with this student leader, he insisted that during the martial law period Tiananmen Square was like a mental hospital. He usually had a clear mind while outside the square. However, each time he returned to the square and saw many people acting this way he became emotional and confused.

substantial impact on the movement. Yet some activities, like the three students kneeling and the hunger strike, touched the hearts of hundreds of thousands of sympathetic observers and shaped the movement dynamics. I found that it was at this level that movement activities during the 1989 BSM appeared to be more traditional than those during the May 4th or the December 9th movements. Obviously, what mattered here was the psychology of those who were watching the protesting activities.

In their study of the "Zoot-Suit" riot, Turner and Surace (1956) found that a symbol would not evoke uniform group action and unrestricted hostile behavior unless its presence aroused uniformly and exclusively unfavorable feelings toward an object under attack. If we consider movement rhetoric and activities as symbols, and the sources of state legitimation as such an object, the logic they uncovered is certainly applicable to my case. I argue that people's acceptance of particular movement rhetoric or activities is shaped by their perception of state legitimation. During the 1980s, moral performance was a major source of state legitimation. Therefore, people were more receptive to morally (culturally) charged activities and got angry when the government reacted improperly to these activities. For example, on April 22, three students knelt on the steps of the Great Hall of the People, but Li Peng failed to come out to receive their petition. This immediately triggered a citywide class boycott. In fact, according to several of my informants, many other activities took place around the same time, but none of them was able to capture the hearts of students and shape the future of the movement. An informant recalled what happened when Li Peng did not come out to receive the three kneeling students:

> I never trusted the communist party. I did not believe that they would really do anything good. I knew that nothing would be accomplished even if Li Peng came out to meet us, yet I still wished that Li Peng would come out to say a few words. But, he did not come out. We felt extremely sad and many of us burst out crying. . . . At one point, I even punched my own face several times, and blood gushed out of my face. Then I was pulled out by several friends. . . . On my way out, I saw that students were crying everywhere. I also saw that a journalist was crying like a baby and chanting: "This is a bastard government. This is a shit government. This is a useless government." I also heard some students shout: "Down with Li Peng!"

This informant was a very radical student leader, and yet he wished that Li Peng would come out and meet them. As Pye (1990, p. 168) has pointed out, coming out and receiving a petition in such a circumstance was a ritual that even the old magistrate had to fulfill. Contrary to most students' expectations, Li Peng did not come out. On that day, what my informant and the journalist acted and cried out was actually a general sentiment—a sentiment of total disappointment in the government. They

had this sentiment not because the government was not democratic (even though some of them were fighting for democratization), but because a leader of the government failed to perform a proper ritual, a ritual upon which the state was now basing its legitimacy. It was out of this sentiment that most Beijing students participated in a general class boycott the following day.

During the April 27th student demonstration, as an informant recalled, Beijing citizens on the sidewalks responded enthusiastically when students shouted slogans against official corruption and high inflation. However, slogans such as "Free Press," "Free Association," and "Democracy" were poorly received. Consequently, my informant saw a gradual drift of the slogans shouted during the demonstration away from the issue of freedom and democracy toward those of official corruption and inflation. The reason for the differentiated response from the people on the sidewalks was clear. By the late 1980s, the major sources of state legitimacy were moral and economic performance; that is, most students and Beijing residents did not really care about how the government was formed, but rather about whether the government was moral and whether it could bring order and economic prosperity. Slogans that were centered on official corruption and inflation attracted a wide audience because they resonated with most people's expectations of the government.

Many other examples can be given of how people responded differently to various movement activities. During the hunger strike mobilization between May 11 and 13, radical students tried to mobilize students to join the strike by using different claims. In the University of Political Science and Law, the major reason was "the government has not yet rehabilitated our movement, but Dongchang starts to spread rumor again."[27] This was not successful. By noon of May 13, only seven or eight students had volunteered for the hunger strike. Beijing Normal University's major claim was "in order to advance the democratization in China, we voluntarily participate in a hunger strike." This was not convincing either. Very few students signed up. At the more radical Beijing University, activists had made different speeches to try to mobilize students. However, by the evening of May 12, only about 40 students had signed up to be hunger strikers. At this point, student activist Chai Ling made an emotional speech to tell her reason for a hunger strike. In her speech, she did not capitalize on the democratic aspect of the movement. Rather, she emphasized that "my hunger strike is for the purpose of seeing just what the true face of the government is, to see whether it intends to suppress the movement or to ignore it, to see whether the people have a conscience or not, to see if

[27] He Dongchang was the minister of education in China. The slogan was a response to his rather harsh comments about the movement made several days earlier.

China still has a conscience or not, if it has hope or not."[28] Student leader Shen Tong was among the majority who were initially against the idea of a hunger strike. He recalled his impression after Chai's speech (Shen 1990, p. 237):

> Chai Ling's speech was so personal and direct, yet it touched me as no other speech had. I had been trying all day to come to terms with the idea of the hunger strike, and no one had said anything that satisfied me. Chai Ling made me understand why students would want to make such a sacrifice. We were asking the government for dialogue and recognition. Were these two things worth dying for? I didn't think so. But Chai Ling's speech made me and many others realize that the hunger strike was about much more than those two demands.

After Chai's speech, the number of students signed up for the hunger strike at Beijing University immediately went from around 40 to nearly 300. Rhetoric centered on the democratic goals of the movement was not effective, but a call for the students to use their own lives to test the government's morality received a very enthusiastic response.

The above analysis explains why the 1989 BSM focused on moral issues even though the goal of the movement was democracy. Since moral performance was the basis of state legitimacy, activities that morally discredited the government posed a more fundamental challenge to the state, and thus were able to mobilize more people. Therefore, during the hunger strike, almost all the people in Beijing, even those working in state institutions, eventually supported students. Most Beijing residents also joined the mass resistance of the army after martial law was imposed. Most of them, especially those from peripheral government institutions, did not stand up to fight for a democratic China, instead they protested a central government that kept silent while students were dying of hunger and a government that tried to use troops to repress students. In short, many people participated in the movement because they were angry; they were angry because the government's actions violated the people's common notion of how a good government should act.

Now I want to return to the issue of why traditional languages and activities were less manifest during the two earlier student movements. The difference seems to be attributable to two factors. First, early this century, foreign aggression was the most urgent problem in China, and how to stop it was the focus of Chinese political elites. As stated before, the principal foundation of state legitimacy then lay in the state's capacity to resist foreign aggression rather than in its moral conduct and its ability to regulate economy. In other words, while the nationalist goals of both

[28] This excerpt is from both Shen (1990, p. 237) and Han and Hua (1990, p. 198).

the May 4th and December 9th movements had actually challenged the regime's legitimacy, simple moral issues were at those moments less able to move people if they were not directly related to nationalism.

Second, the level of organizations in society was different in the earlier periods. All three student movements were initiated without particular organizations behind them. Emotional displays were also widespread during the May 4th movement of 1919 and the December 9th movement of 1935–36. However, in the two earlier movements, organized forces moved in to explore the situation, whereas during the 1989 BSM no such political forces existed. The strategic activities of political organizations also freed the two earlier student movements from emotion-ridden rhetoric and activities. Let me discuss a case during the December 9th movement to illustrate the point.

The December 9th movement started as a direct response to the Japanese aggression. Yet, the CCP supported and gradually took control over the movement as it developed. The CCP leadership saw the movement as an opportunity to gain back their political influence in cities and as an occasion to establish a united front with the Guomindang government against Japanese aggression. Obviously, the CCP was not interested in radical actions at that point.

Here, the turning point was occasioned by Guo Qing's death. Guo Qing, a high school student, was beaten and later died in a jail. The students in Beijing became very angry and organized a memorial service at Beijing University in protest. Local authorities banned the meeting and deployed a huge number of police outside the university. The students were very emotional. When a student rushed onto the stage and suggested carrying a coffin and demonstrating outside the university, most students followed. However, the demonstrators met head-on with repression. Only six to seven hundred students eventually managed to demonstrate outside the campus, where about a hundred were wounded and 53 were arrested, including several major student leaders. The action was immediately criticized by Liu Shaoqi as ultra-leftist.[29] Liu then reorganized the CCP Beijing Committee and dismissed those whose ideas were not congenial to the policy of the CCP Central Committee. He wrote a letter to students and requested them not to continue to act so radically. He also demanded that they resume classes and respect their teachers and parents.[30] Moreover, Liu asked students to differentiate between the Nanjing government

[29] Liu was then in charge of the CCP Northern China Bureau. He was the president of P. R. China before the Cultural Revolution, and died during the Cultural Revolution after being purged from the party.

[30] The article was reprinted in 1987 with a title: "Close-Doorism and Adventurism" (Liu 1987).

and that of the local military leader Song Zheyuan. He promptly raised the slogans: "Support the Chief of the Committee Song to lead the anti-Japanese resistance!" and "Support the 29th Armed Forces to fight against the Japanese!" He also contacted hundreds of Guomindang elites to gain their sympathy. Liu's efforts were successful. From then on, Beijing students no longer acted radically. Local military leader Song Zheyuan relented and released the arrested students. The movement changed its course after the CCP Central Committee gained control.

This example shows that Chinese students were indeed very likely to follow culturally embedded forms of collective action, such as the funeral ritual, during the movement. Yet, it also suggests that the impact of culture was not as deterministic as some cultural theorists have claimed. The students during the December 9th movement initiated a funeral demonstration in anger, but once it was suppressed, no more radical actions followed. On the contrary, the funeral demonstration was labeled as ultraleftist, and the movement took a different course. The movement was able to drastically change its orientation because the student organizations were controlled either by CCP members or by left-wing students closely associated with the communists.

DISCUSSION

The 1989 BSM was dominated by many traditional languages and activities. This phenomenon has been explained as a result of characteristics of traditional Chinese culture. But to explain cultural manifestations as culture is tautological. Moreover, the interpretation cannot explain why traditional Chinese culture was less manifest during the May 4th movement of 1919 and the December 9th movement of 1935–36. I argue that its domination in the 1989 BSM was realized at the microlevel through two not always separable processes: a strategic and an emotional process. Both of these processes, however, can be further explained by three structural factors centered on state-society relations. In comparison with the two earlier movements, China in the 1980s had a relatively unitary governing elite with much tighter control over society, a weaker level of independent civil organizations, and a mode of legitimation based on moral and economic performance. Students had to conceal their real demands and goals behind culturally congenial forms of collective action in order to avoid an immediate state repression. Moreover, because of the weakness of independent social organizations, the 1989 BSM was composed of many small groups of poorly organized activists and a large number of (generally unorganized) sympathetic audiences. As a result, competing activities frequently occurred in the same time and location, and the perceptions of people watching movement activities became key determinants of what

types of activities dominated. I argue that people's perceptions of state legitimation shape their view on the proper political behaviors of movement activists and the government. During the 1980s, the source of state legitimacy in China had changed from ideology to moral performance, reviving it to what it had been in traditional China. Therefore those who were watching movement activities during the 1989 BSM were more receptive to morally charged activities and became angry when the government reacted insensitively to these types of activities. This further facilitated the domination of traditional Chinese culture during the 1989 BSM.

In this article, I have identified three macrostructural factors. I have also analyzed how these structural elements shaped the strategic choices as well as the emotions of movement participants. I have thus linked social structures with human agents that have the capacity for rational calculation as well as emotions. "Micro-macro links" have been a fundamental issue in sociology (Alexander et al. 1987). Currently, a dominant trend in sociology is to link structures to rational human individuals. The political opportunity structure theory, or David Snow's type of "strategic framing" analysis in social movement studies,[31] and the new institutionalism in organizational studies (Adams 1996; Brinton and Nee 1998; Czada, Heritier, Keman 1996; DiMaggio 1988; Granovetter 1985) attest to the potency of this tradition. If I had followed this tradition, I could have simply argued that students during the 1989 BSM adopted ostensibly traditional cultural forms mainly because the regime's unity and repressiveness made such strategies safer. In the following, I will explain why I do not follow this line of reasoning.

Empirically, most observers may agree that the 1989 BSM was very poorly organized (e.g., Shen 1990; Tsou 1991; Zhou 1993). In certain events, there were so many independent activities that I feel very uneasy about assuming that some actions were a result of pure strategic calculation without even being able to identify the exact actors. Moreover, although the cultural explanation of the 1989 BSM is tautological, the observation that culture and emotions figured very importantly during the 1989 BSM is actually right and should not be neglected.

It may be argued that contemporary scholars who follow various "bounded-rationality" approaches also recognize the role of cultural and emotional factors in social actions (Boudon 1987). In social movement

[31] For the political opportunity structure theory, see, e.g., Costain (1992), Gamson and Meyer (1996), McAdam (1996), Jenkins and Perrow (1977), Kitschelt (1986), Kriesi (1996), Kriesi et al. (1995), McAdam (1982), Porta (1996), Rucht (1990, 1996), Tarrow (1996, 1998), and Tilly (1978). For recent criticisms of this theory, see Jasper and Goodwin (1999). For the strategic framing theory, see Evans (1997), Johnston (1995), Ryan (1991), Snow et al. (1986), Snow and Benford (1988, 1992), and Williams and Williams (1995). Zou and Benford (1995) also apply frame analysis to the 1989 BSM.

studies, for example, Gamson and his associates have from very early on emphasized the role of the "injustice frame" and of cultural resonance in social movements (Gamson 1992; Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982). Snow and his colleagues also argue that frames promoted by activists must correspond to the values and experiences of larger groups to attract wider support. Tarrow (1998, pp. 111–12), in his second edition of *Power in Movement,* adds a section that discusses the role of emotions in social movements. However, their understanding of culture and emotions is different from cultural theorists. When rational choice scholars talk about injustice, moral commitment, ritual, loyalty, and behaviors with a strong emotional dimension in a particular culture, they view them functioning as "solidarity incentives" (Oberschall 1998), or as a "tool kit" (Laitin 1988; Swidler 1986; Tarrow 1994, p. 122; Zald 1996) that assists people's rational calculation. On the other hand, for scholars who study culture and emotions, it is an indisputable fact that cultural and emotional forces also operate at a subconscious level as habits and instincts (Barbalet 1998; Collins 1990; Goodwin 1997; Gordon 1990; Griffiths 1997; Jasper 1998; Kemper 1990; Scheff 1990).

My choice to link social structure with real humans with emotions as well as rationality reflects my quite different understanding of the problems of micro-macro links. I will restrict the discussion to a most relevant issue. Assuming the readers accept that rational creativity and emotions are essential to human behaviors and that individuals are not always able to rationally manage their emotions, then we can immediately identify three ways to link microlevel social actions to macrosocial structures. The first links macrostructures to a rational human model. In social movement studies, proponents of political opportunity structure theories adopt this strategy. The second connects structures to emotional humans. The recently emerging culture and emotion-centered studies on social movements and other contentious politics follow this strategy (Jasper 1997, 1998; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Lindholm 1990; Scheff 1994). The last way links macrosocial structures with real humans who have emotions as well as the capacity for rational calculation. It is this type of link that I have adopted.

Each of the three research strategies has its own values. When we link macrostructures with rational (or emotional) humans, we are actually interested in a more formal question, that of the amount of variations that a particular theory can explain when one assumes humans to be rational (or emotional). When we connect macrostructures with real humans with emotions and rationality, we are interested in explaining empirical reality in a truthful manner. While the former is an analytical model, the latter is an empirical model. Let me provide a closely related example from other disciplines. Physics is almost completely dominated by analytical ap-

proaches, because in physics analytical models such as Newton's law and Maxwell equations can describe the reality so well that no other approaches are necessary. In population biology, however, the situation becomes more complicated. For example, the Malthus equation captures the exponential nature of population growth. Yet few populations can grow exponentially due to population-specific constraints (such as food, density dependent diseases, inter- and intrapopulation competition, predators, climate, etc.). Therefore, population biologists have developed two modeling strategies. While analytical models (most start with the Malthus model) aim to capture formal essences of population dynamics, empirical models (usually the extension of life table methods) incorporate as many empirical complexities as possible to describe population dynamics in the closest possible manner. The purpose of this article is not to develop a formal theory, but to understand empirically why the 1989 BSM adopted a particular pattern of rhetoric and symbolic activities. Therefore, I link empirically determined social structures with real humans who have both rationality and emotions. This type of linkage, however, is not my invention. Indeed, as Stinchcombe (1975, p. 27) has commented, the secret to the success of George Herbert Mead and Max Weber lies in "the fact that they make both people and structures real."

I argue that an empirically motivated structural analysis on social movements should not be linked to a rational human model, but to real humans. This does not mean that empirically motivated studies are not able to deal with the issue of rationality and emotions in social movements. This article shows that structural factors such as the nature of a state, the level and strength of intermediate organizations in society, and the sources of state legitimation all have motivational and microlevel behavioral consequences. The 1989 BSM was more driven by activities with strong emotional elements rooted in Chinese culture than the two earlier student movements under republican China because it developed under a post-totalitarian state with higher state unity and the capacity to penetrate society—a society with a very poor level of intermediate organizations and a state legitimation based on moral and economic performance. By pinning down these structural conditions, I explained why the 1989 BSM was more driven by culture and emotions than the two earlier student movements. Seen in this light, even the rise and domination of rational human models–based sociological theories in the West may reflect a set of structural transformations. That is, when the market dominates the economy, national politics center on regular elections, and well-defined legal codes penetrate almost every sphere of human life, the most important dimensions of human activities fit into accounting books. Consequently, rationality dominates social life, and Western sociological theories also increasingly rely on rationalist assumptions about humans. Yet,

what the traditionalism during the 1989 BSM teaches us is that cultural and emotional claims might gain new purchase, at least in the political sphere, under certain structural transformations in society.

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