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POLITICAL PRAGMATISM ON
THE CHINESE CAMPUS SINCE 1989

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Hong Kong
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Political Pragmatism on the Chinese Campus since 1989

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Introduction

Chinese college students were politically active in the 1980s. They were growing up in a period of rapid change. The result of a decade's reform and exposure to the outside world had major impacts on them. The gap between their expectations and reality was great. They tried to change the society which they viewed as unjust and to accelerate the pace of reform through student movements.

Various western studies have shown that Chinese youths were discontented with their social and political systems and were skeptical of the official ideology before the outbreak of the 1989 movement. In the 1989 movement, Chinese students saw themselves inheriting the Chinese intellectuals' tradition as spokesmen for the society. They cried out in and around Tiananmen Square to fight against the regime's corruption, bureaucratism, and social as well as political controls. They demanded, among other things, democracy, rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of organization and political reform. Nevertheless, the movement was suppressed and students were purged by the authority. The role of the students in the 1989 movement has exemplified an orientation of political idealism. The 1989 movement was a process of putting their idealism to test in reality. Setbacks in the movement induced them to move away from idealism.

For the seven years after the movement, the Chinese society has been going through a period of tranquility and stability. Students are inert and restrict their activities in

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the campus. They keep a distance from real politics. This is no doubt partly due to
the re-education campaigns and behavioral controls by the authority\(^2\). After 1989,
instead of politics, economics has become students' major concern. They generally
care about national economic development and relate their personal interests with that
development.

This study will investigate the political orientations of Chinese college students
after the 1989 incident and will argue that that incident has not changed what they
believed before; yet, what happened after the incident has changed their viewpoints on
how to achieve their beliefs. The change is from idealism to pragmatism. The nature
and process of the change will also be examined.

Pragmatism here means a down-to-earth approach to problems and affairs. The
meaning of ideas is to be sought in their practical result, and truth is preeminently to
be tested by the practical consequences of belief. Whether reality fits with the guiding
political principles is not the ultimate consideration. Rather, whether the principles
can solve existing problems is the main concern. Any principle is conditional. It may
be doubted and judged by rationality\(^3\). Under pragmatism, political truth and
authority are separated. Authority is denied if it is not effective or efficient in solving
practical problems. Inquiry is initiated in conditions of doubt\(^4\). Utility, efficiency and
feasibility are some major considerations of a pragmatic attitude. Skepticism,
experimentation and reform are the pragmatic keys to social progress\(^5\). Pragmatism is
sometimes indistinct from cynicism if one finds oneself to be too skeptical and
dissillusioned to get involved.

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\(^2\) Stanley Rosen, "The Effect of Post-4 June Re-education Campaigns on Chinese

\(^3\) William James, Pragmatism and Four Essays from the Meaning of Truth

1938).

\(^5\) H. S. Thayer, "Pragmatism," in Paul Edwards (ed.), The Encyclopedia of
A major portion of the data for this study comes from surveys conducted by Chinese academies or research institutes. Some of these surveys are sponsored by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Results of these surveys have been published in various Chinese academic and professional journals. Surveys in China sometimes are used for political or propaganda purpose, such as to evaluate the effects of the party’s youth policy and ideological education. Problems of validity and reliability thus exist in the Chinese surveys⁶. Nevertheless, a careful use of the raw data can still provide a general picture of how college students think of Chinese society and politics today.

This study avoids using data which is obviously for propaganda purposes and uses only those with at least some description of data-gathering process which enable one to judge the validity. In terms of reliability, statistics of the samples provided in this paper comes from several major cities. They do not claim to represent the actual distributions of the whole Chinese population but only indicate a trend or general picture in the student population with similar backgrounds. Observations from western academics and outside reports are also used in this study, in order to provide a different source of information as well as validation against the Chinese surveys.

**The Ideological Crisis of Chinese Youths**

The aim, content and methods of official moral and ideological education have remained the same since the establishment of the Communist regime and not much has been improved as a result of the reforms starting from the late 1970s. Marxism and Mao Zedong Thoughts are always the guidelines for school curriculum.

( In schools, Chinese youths learn how the CCP cadres work wholeheartedly for the people as well as abide by party rule and law. In society, they witness degenerate "party work style" such as bureaucratism, corruption, extravagance, lawlessness and power abuse. ) Likewise, they are taught socialist morals such as self-sacrifice and working for the collective good. At the same time, they witness selfishness and

profiteering. The discrepancy between school and reality makes youths feel discontented with the social and political systems. They are also puzzled over the "Four Cardinal Principles" (i.e., upholding the socialist road, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought). This gives rise to the "crisis of confidence" among Chinese youths towards communist ideology, system and authority.

A survey of Beijing college students in several universities before the 1989 movement found that 45% of students either doubted or rejected Marxism; 53% supported a multi-party system as well as a separation of powers among government institutions; 57% disapproved upholding the "Four Cardinal Principles" as well as the "Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Campaign"; and 79% saw no difference between socialism and capitalism. This showed that on the eve of the 1989 movement, college students (at least those in the Beijing area) were negative or skeptical about official ideology and inclined to accept some western alternatives.

In fact, Chinese youths did not have firm beliefs or rational pursuits in the 1989 movement. In the decade after Mao Zedong died, old beliefs were questioned and abandoned and new ones were sought. Exposure to the outside world introduced some western ideas into China. These western ideas were new and stimulating to the students. On the college campus, Sartre's existentialism, Nietzsche's superman concept, Freudian's psycho-analysis theory, Toffler's third wave approach,

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7 A separate survey carried out in Beijing in 1988 found that 32.7% students approved that "Marxism is only one of the many theories and should not be elevated (by the CCP) as the guiding principle." In May 1990, one year after the 1989 movement, the same statement was approved by 58.26% of students in Shanghai. Refer to Central Propaganda Department (CPD) (Issue Group, Education Commission, Central Propaganda Department, Chinese Communist Party) (eds.) "Guowai shehui wenhua sixiang dui woguo qingnian xuesheng de yingxiang he women de duice" ("Impact of foreign social and cultural ideas on our young students and our strategy"), Beijing: Gaoxiao lilun shijian (College and theory in practice) April 1992, pp. 54-64.

8 Zhang Yuan-long, "Xifang xueshu sichao yu dangdai daxuesheng xingtai" ("Western academic thought and contemporary college student thinking"), Shanghai: Sixiang lilun jiaoyu (Education in ideology and theory), February 1990, pp. 61-63.
Keynesian's economic theory and Maslow's psychology were some examples of hot topics for self-learning and peer discussion at different periods. Other western political theories such as the balance of power and social contract were also students' favorite subjects of inquiry.

There is a strong contrast between western ideas and official Chinese ideology. Influenced by western ideas, college students were upset with the socialist doctrine of collectivism and instead pursued freedom of mind, pluralistic thinking and self-fulfillment, or in short, individualism. Instead of being controlled and arranged by the state in most important decision-making, college students stood for "personal choice, individual planning and self-fulfillment".

According to a panel survey carried out in a university, in 1986, students who approved "individual planning" constituted 25.8%. A year later, the figure rose to 48.5%. Those who disapproved of "individual planning because it is individualism" constituted 4.1% in 1986. A year later, the figure dropped to only 2.4%. In the same survey, as shown in Table 1, there was an increasing trend among Chinese youths who approved "individual struggle". On the whole, we could conclude that on the eve of the 1989 movement, Chinese youths were moving away from collectivism and were becoming more self-centered in their conceptions.

The growing self-consciousness of Chinese youths during the past decade contributed to the occurrence of the 1989 movement. Students in the movement were mainly against the regime's monopoly of power and ideology as well as evils generated as a result of the monopoly. They fought to change the society into one in which they could have more freedom to pursue what they want.

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9 See Guo Xiao-cong, "Cong xifang sichao dui daxuesheng de yingxiang fansi gaoxiao sixiang zhengzhi gongzhuo" ("With the influence of western ideas towards college students, we should reflect on the ideological-political work in colleges"), Guangzhou: Gaojiao Tanshuo (Investigation on college education), January 1990, pp. 34-39; see also CPD, 1992, op. cit. footnote 7.
10 Zhang Yuan-long, op. cit. p. 61.
11 Ibid.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Will lead to individualism and should not be encouraged</th>
<th>Is the basic factor leading to success and should be strongly encouraged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Zhang Yuan-long, "Xifang xueshu sichao yu dangdai daxuesheng xingtai" ("Western Academic Thoughts and Contemporary College Student Thinkings"), Shanghai: Sixiang lilun jiaoyu (Education in ideology and theory), February 1990, p. 61.

Impact of the 1989 Movement on Chinese Youths: Frustration and Depression

The 1989 movement was a setback for both Chinese youths and the CCP. It was a setback for the youths because consequences of the movement were not what they had anticipated. It was a setback for the CCP because Chinese youths challenged the official ideology. It testified that the official ideological education has lost its validity.

However, the CCP authority did not learn from this lesson. Both the content and approach of the official ideological education has remained the same as before the 1989 movement. Some old political campaigns such as the "Emulation of Lei Feng Movement," "Patriotism Education Movement" and the study of Marxism activities were carried out again on a large scale. Some new campaigns were just "old wine in a new bottle". They included the "Anti-Peaceful Evolution Education" and the "Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Campaign." Students were forced to participate even though repelled by these activities.

Moreover, the government has revised a series of policies regarding college students, such as military training, job allocation after graduation, recruitment of graduate students and self-financed overseas study. These policies aimed at achieving a tougher control of the students. Students generally felt suspicious and resentful.
They regarded these measures as showing the government's mistrust of them as well as a punishment for their participations in the 1989 movement.

After the 1989 movement, the first political campaign publicized by the CCP was the "Emulation of Lei Feng Movement." Chinese youths were urged to learn from Lei Feng about self-sacrifice, altruism, firm class standpoint and being the CCP's "rust-free screw". Did the youths learn from the model of the 1960s? The answer was negative. A survey from Shanghai showed that 59% of respondents approved the statement: "Being selfish is natural and acceptable." 89% endorsed the more moderate attitude: "One should be both selfish and altruistic." In addition, 78% consent that "fate is controlled by oneself". Another study also confirmed that "control over one's life (is) more salient to the (Chinese) students than the realization of communism".

For quite some time after June 1989, Chinese college students still felt shocked, confused, upset and helpless. They have been inactive and apathetic to politics. Yet, whenever there was a chance, they would relieve their frustrations. In consecutive June Fourth anniversaries, students have smashed small bottles on campus as a form of protest.

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12 "Shanghai wanning qingnian sixiang zhuangkuang diaocha" (The Investigation of the Thinking of Ten Thousand Youths of Shanghai), Ming Pao (Daily News), Hong Kong, March 28, 1992, p. 7. The survey was conducted between September 1991 and March 1992 under the auspices of the Shanghai Communist Youth League. Ten thousand questionnaires were given out and the response rate was 76.5%. One problem of this survey is that the sample consists of both students in four Shanghai universities and young workers in twelve enterprises. Since we do not know whether there is an attitudinal difference between university students and young workers, we interpret the results here with care.


15 "Small bottle", in Chinese, is read as "xiao-ping," which is same as the first name of Deng Xiao-ping. Smashing a small bottle symbolizes an act of disrespect to Deng.
Since 1991, "classroom desk literature" has become widespread on the Beijing campuses. College students wrote their discontents on the classroom desks and sometimes, echoes or comments from classmates would also appear next to the originals. According to a study, about 30% of the total writings reflect students' disappointment, frustration and confusion, especially about their futures\textsuperscript{16}. One of such contents shows a strong wish to go abroad as an escape. The following stanza is an example:

\begin{verbatim}
Tianya wuchu rong woshen
Weiyou fuxi bi huaiyin

Nowhere could I hide
Only leaving for the west could evade the bad guys

Another 20% of the writings are attacks on social evils and criticism on different social phenomena. There are discontents on degenerate "party work style" and on the leftists returning to power. An example is as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
Xue hao shu-li-hua
Buru youge hao-baba
Buru dangge pipan-jia
Zhou pian tianxin dou bupa

Study well of mathematics, science and chemistry
Is incomparable to having a good father\textsuperscript{17}
Is incomparable to working as a political critic\textsuperscript{18}
Which enables one to achieve well anywhere
\end{verbatim}

Students are also dissatisfied with the low income of intellectuals as well as the disrespect for knowledge by society. About 15% of the "literature" writings belong to this category. The following is an example of students' making mockery of themselves:

\begin{verbatim}
Xueshi cheng kegui
Shuoshi jia geng gao
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{16} Ming Pao (Daily News), Hong Kong, November 4, 1991, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{17} Children of high-level CCP cadres enjoy privileges and good opportunities everywhere.
\textsuperscript{18} The leftists are perceived by the Chinese students as only good in empty words but do not have ability in policy making.
Ruo wei chaopiao gu
Liangzhe jie kepao

A bachelor degree is valuable
A master degree is even better
For the sake of money
Both could be given up

Other "literature" writings which constitute the other 35% include love themes, personal grievances and complaints with school curriculum, especially the ideological-political courses, etc..

The negative and perplexed emotions of the college students are also exemplified in other aspects. After the 1989 movement, many college students have been passive with their lives. They lived as if without any purpose. A popular self-portrait among the students was as follows¹⁹:

Da majiang
Yiye erye bushui
Tiaowu
Shanbu sibu quanhui
Hngjiu
Wuliang liuliang buzhui

Playing mahjong
Stay awake for one night two nights
Dancing
Good at three steps four steps
Drinking
Won't get drunk with five liang six liang²⁰

Moreover, college students have been in a low mood in their studies since 1989. A common study attitude was "to get only sixty marks (a passing grade) and an extra mark (was) a waste." According to a survey in a Shanghai university, 72% of the

²⁰ Liang is the Chinese liquid measure.
respondents approved the above study attitude and only 22.7% of students study off class\(^2^1\).

**Diversion to Economic Activities**

After the June Fourth Incident, China once again emphasized orthodox ideology and was immersed in a political atmosphere of "leftism". Mass media stressed the need to fight against "peaceful evolution" (heping yianbian). In 1991, there was an ideological debate on whether the reform and opening should be "surnamed socialism or capitalism". China's reform architect, Deng Xiaoping was concerned that the rising leftism would hamper his reform. He toured south China in early 1992 and used the tour as a platform to defend his economic reform program and opening up policies while on the other hand to attack the emerging leftist thoughts. Deng called for emancipation of the mind and an increase of the pace of reform and opening\(^2^2\).

Reform and opening since the 1980s have provided college students with three channels to success: through the "black (cap and gown) road" by studying postgraduate degrees, preferably abroad, through the "red road" by joining the Chinese Communist Party and working up to be a leading official, and through the "golden road" by becoming an entrepreneur and getting rich. For a period since the suppression of the 1989 movement, the government had set up different obstacles on the three channels. Ideological purity was stressed in the recruitment of graduate students and government officials. A lapse of five years after graduation with

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\(^{22}\) See Suisheng Zhao, "Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour: Elite Politics in Post-Tiananmen China," Asian Survey, 33(8), August 1993, pp. 739-56.
undergraduate degree was required if one wished to go abroad to have postgraduate study. Students were actually worried about the future of reform and opening. Deng's southern tour changed students' pessimism. They knew that another cycle of emphasizing economics and de-emphasizing politics had come. This in turn raised their economic consciousness. Having been denied political participation for three years, students needed other means to divert their energies and express their concerns. Deng's declaration had assured students of the future of reform and opening and excited them to participate with enthusiasm in economic activities. "Golden road" has become the most popular among college students since Deng's southern tour.

Students' interests focused around earning money inside and outside campuses. Classrooms teaching economics, finance, accounting, international trade, computer science, and English were filled with students. Books on economics and business were most popular for students after classes. Economic theories took place of political theories as the hot subject of discussions in the campus. Incoming freshmen also chose economics and business related majors as their first priority. The

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23 Yang Xiong, "Xinshi qi zhongguo qingnian shehui chanyu de shan da bianhua" ("The three big changes of the social participation among Chinese youths in the new era"), Shanghai: Dangdai qingnian yanjiu (Contemporary Youth Studies), No. 5/6, December 1994, pp. 23-25.


25 Qiu Shuiping, "Shichang jingji tizhi xia daxuesheng zhuangkuang de bianhua ji xuesheng gongzhuo de tiaoshi" ("Under the market economy system, the change of situation among college students and the adaptation of work on student affairs"), Redian Yan Jiu (Investigation on hot topics), no. 3, October 1993, pp. 7-9.

choosing of what to study was mainly with a career consideration. Among the graduating students, they had "three new wishes" upon graduation: wish to go abroad, wish to work in foreign enterprise (i.e., higher salary), and wish to work where they could earn most\textsuperscript{27}. Among different factors, high income was one of the two most important considerations in career hunting. This was especially true among students who majored in economics and business related fields. Table 2 indicated such a trend from a survey among college students.

Outside the classroom, even before graduation, students did part-time jobs or started their own small business to earn quick money. A survey in Peking University (Beida) showed that 75.4\% students in Beida already had or wanted to have part-time jobs; 54.5\% already had or wanted to have started their own businesses\textsuperscript{28}.

Frenzy in earning money reflects students' practical and utilitarian orientations. Pursuing economic profits is also a process which students can exercise their own free will, without much control from the authority. To the students, it is a way to realize achievement for oneself.

The widespread commercial culture in China has gradually changed the campus culture from idealism to pragmatism. With more and more students interested in commercial activities, the pragmatic and utilitarian elements embedded in the commercial culture have made college students' idealistic orientation of pursuing truth, concern for the fate of their fellow citizens, and rebellion against the establishment secondary in their pursuits. Students have become more secular and

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, pp. 116-117.
\textsuperscript{28} Beida Shehuixue she (The Sociological Association of the Peking University), "Miandui shichang jingji de beida ren" ("The Peking University people facing the market economy"), Shehuixue yu shehui diaocha (Sociology and Sociological Investigation), no. 5, October 1993, p. 61.
accommodative. This explains the less concern or apathetic attitude towards politics among college students since 1989\textsuperscript{29}.

Table 2 What is the major factor you would consider in choosing your career? (only one answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related to my study, then I can use my expertise and contribute more to the society</th>
<th>N = 6617</th>
<th>N = 352*</th>
<th>N = 222**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High social status</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have chance to go abroad</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light workload</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable job</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* a smaller sample from the Economics and Finance Faculty
** a smaller sample from the Business and Trade Faculty

Political Pragmatism

Pragmatism has been directly reflected in students' political behaviors. If political concern and involvement did not bring any reward and had even caused trouble, students saw that keeping distance from real politics would be the safest approach. In the last few years, same as in the 1980s, students were generally not interested in applying for membership or attending activities of the Chinese Communist Party

\textsuperscript{29} See Tan Jianguang, "Shangye wenhua yu qingnian wenhua de hudong fenxi" ("Analysis on the interaction between commercial culture and youth culture"), Qingnian yanjiu (Youth Studies), no. 3, March 1994, pp. 4-8.
(CCP) and the Communist Youth League (CYL). In one Beijing college, 90.7% of students had no intention to apply for CCP membership and 66.5% of students had no interests in any CCP or CYL organized activities.

Students also retreated from their previous political concerns, e.g., they showed no more interest in western political theories and ideologies. Before 1989, students had common concern over major national problems and common interest in political topics such as democracy, human rights and political reform. After 1989, if students still showed any concern and interest, the issues discussed were diversified and sometimes less important, such as issues of anti-corruption, unequal distribution, social morale and public security. There was a lack of significant political topic which would become the focus of debate among college students.

College students' apathetic and practical orientation has not just been reflected in their participation in real politics. It also reflected in their participation in student affairs in the campus. In a general survey in the Peking University (Beida), 56.3% of undergraduate students were willing to participate actively in their class-organized activities. Nevertheless, only 26.9% of them were willing to be organizers and actively helping out; 42.5% expressed no interest or not willing to help out. Moreover, among those who were willing to be organizers, 44.3% did the job with the consideration of pragmatic interests.

After the 1989 movement, under the tight control of the government, Chinese youths avoid involvement in politics. Nevertheless, behavioral alienation does not necessarily mean losing faith in their previous beliefs. As one way to find out whether Chinese youths still hold their pre-1989 political attitudes and whether they

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31 Wei Shusong, "Guanyu zai xiang shichang jingji guodu shiqi xuesheng sixiang zhengzhi zhuangkuang de diaocha baogao" ("Regarding the report of investigation on the political situation of students' thinking in the transition to market economy"), Beijing: Beijing jingji liaowang (Beijing Economic Outlook), April 1994, pp. 47.

32 Beida Shehuixue she, op. cit., p. 62.
try to achieve them differently today, we examine their present interpretations of the major themes of the 1989 movement.

Most of the Chinese college students believe in the right direction of the economic reform initiated by Deng Xiaoping and their beliefs have remained the same before and after 1989. Table 3 shows that the majority, 80.80% of youths from Shanghai area, look forward to having more reform in China and only an insignificant minority, 2.3% do not do so. 16.03% of respondents "do not care" to have more reform. These are probably those who are too skeptical and think that little could be achieved under the present regime. The general picture is that Chinese youths are still anxious to have reform carried out in China and most likely they would still like to have political reform carried out together with economic reform.

The spirit of the reform is to get into the right course through experimentation, as testified in Deng's own words, "crossing the river by touching stones" (mo zhe shitou guo he). Students today follow Deng's pragmatism. As shown in Table 4, 86% of the respondents do not accept any restriction on enterprise reform and 78% are concerned about different experimental programmes in the reform, among which some are highly controversial. They are concerned about the usefulness rather than the philosophic nature of these programmes. 87% among them are so bold to point out that whether the reform is socialism or capitalism in nature does not make any difference to them.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely necessary</td>
<td>80.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not care</td>
<td>16.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not necessary</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  Do you agree with the following statement: "More reform is necessary if China is going to have further development."

Source: "Shanghai wanming qingnian sixiang zhuangkuang diaocha" ("The Investigation of the Thinking of Ten Thousand Youths of Shanghai"), Ming Pao (Daily News), Hong Kong, March 28, 1992, p. 7.

Chinese students adopted a peaceful approach in the 1989 movement. They did not aim to replace the Communist regime. Instead, they asked the CCP authority to release some powers and to have more reforms. All these years, the CCP has only carried out economic reform but would not allow significant political change. Pushing for political reform was the intention of students in the 1989 movement. After the failure of the movement, students realized that if grassroots mobilization could not bring change, more economic development might be an alternative way to induce political reform.

From Table 4, it is interesting to note that as high as 81% of students acknowledge the importance of economic strength in pushing for political structural reform. From the above analysis, students today are obviously getting away from radicalism and are more pragmatic and utilitarian in their evaluation of the Chinese reform. They treat
reform more as a process involving constant trying and changing than as a goal with fixed ideals.

**Corruption and Democracy**

One of the major themes in the 1989 movement was to fight against cadres' corruption and power abuse. A survey conducted with third-year students in a well-known university in the early 1990, less than a year after the movement, showed that students still viewed corruption as a serious political problem. As illustrated in Table 5, among six problems, students thought that cadre's corruption has been the most urgent issue for the government to solve. Over half of the respondents agreed with the urgency of the problem. The other five social or cultural problems, though some should be of more immediate concern to the respondents, such as inflation and job allocation for college students, were cared about comparatively less. Having a clean political culture without CCP cadres' corruption has been one of the political goals Chinese students looked forward to before and after the 1989 movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad social trends</td>
<td>20.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degeneration of morality</td>
<td>13.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>3.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job allocation for college students</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fei Guang-fa, "Muqian da-xue-sheng zhengzhi xingtai tanxi" (Analysis of Present Political Thinking of College Students) Changchun: Qingnian xue yanjiu (Research and Youth Study), April 1990, p. 47.

34 Fei Guang-fa, "Muqian daxuesheng zhengzhi xingtai tanxi" ("Analysis of Present Political Thinking of College Students") Changchun: Qingnian xue yanjiu (Research and Youth Study), April 1990, p. 47.
The CCP also realized the urgency of eliminating the wide-spread corruption and has put in extra efforts in the anti-corruption campaigns in the last few years. Yet, no significant result has been achieved and the bad trend could not be curbed. Four years after the previous survey, most students did not think that the government had done enough to solve the problem and were pessimistic about having the problem solved. As shown in Table 6, more than half (i.e., 51.4%) of the respondents had no faith in government's action. Less than one fifth (i.e., 19%) of the interviewees were skeptical and rather let time decide. The other one fifth (i.e., 22.6%) were of conditional optimism.

In the Mao Zedong period, the CCP was proud of its honorable "party work style". The CCP cadres were characterized as working wholeheartedly and enthusiastically for the people as well as strictly following party rules. Since the reform, "party work style" has degenerated and eventually became one of the major protests in the 1989 movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>What do you think about the prospect of the recent anti-corruption struggle?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The anti-corruption activity is possibly temporary and could not solve the nature of the problem.</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to judge right now and it needs time to have more observation.</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the struggle continues in a serious way, it is hopeful to solve the corruption problem fundamentally.</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wei Shusong, "Guanyu zai xiang shichang jingji guodu shiqi xuesheng sixiang zengzheng zhuangkuang de diaocha baogao" ("Regarding the report of investigation on the political situation of students' thinkings in the transition to market economy"), Beijing: Beijing jingji liaowang (Beijing Economic Outlook), April 1994, pp. 47.
Students' perceptions of the CCP cadres have not changed after the movement. In Table 7, the first 4 items are positive evaluations of the cadres while the last 5 items are negative evaluations. Positive evaluations comprise of 40.64% while negative ones comprise of 59.36%. The majority of the students still do not have good impression of the cadres. Among the five negative evaluations, items 6, 7 and 9 refer to the negative work style of the cadres and they constitute 76.79% of the negative evaluations and 45.58% among the total responses. We can conclude that students are especially dissatisfied with the work style of the cadres.

The above conclusion is supported again when we examine another question in the same survey. From Table 8, we can see that 41.31% of the respondents think that cadres should abide by the law. Although the question does not directly address cadre's work style, the answer still reflects the serious lawlessness of the cadres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>What is your major impression of the cadres working in government organs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 2,601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Efficient and enthusiastic*  
2. Knowledgeable and with ability  
3. Industrious and hardworking  
4. Abide by law and rule  
5. Inadequate knowledge and ability 10.71%  
6. Bureaucratic and unconcerned 21.53%  
7. Irresponsible and sluggish 17.26%  
8. Backward thinking 3.07%  
9. Factionalism 6.79%

* Each of the percentage distribution from item 1 to 4 is not reported in the source. Only the aggregate sum of the 4 items are given.

Source: Same as Table 5, p. 48.
We could examine the other three answers in Table 8 from another perspective. The reality is that the CCP and its leaders are in total control of the government. Yet, it is interesting to note that, from the percentage distributions (42.79% vs. 10.97% vs. 2.96%), students obviously prefer the government be supervised by people rather than by the CCP or a dictator. Democracy was a major theme in the 1989 movement. It is still a major concern of the students today.

Another question in the same survey examines more directly students' expectations of the practice of democracy in China. As Table 9 reveals, altogether only 25.06% of the respondents are satisfied with today's practice of democracy while 71.40% of them are unhappy with the democratic progress, among which about one fifth of the respondents think that Chinese democracy needs a major improvement. From the above statistics, we can understand why so many students participated in the 1989 movement and fought for democracy in an unconventional way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8</th>
<th>What is the best method to elevate administrative efficiency?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 2,601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities of the cadres of state organs should be within legal boundary</td>
<td>41.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities of the cadres should be under supervision of the people because people are the master of the state and only if cadre's work is in accordance with people's wishes, administrative efficiency could be elevated</td>
<td>42.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chinese Communist Party is the leading party and the work of the government should be under the supervision of it</td>
<td>10.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The executive chief should have total control of power and should not be checked by other organs, then administrative efficiency could be elevated</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Same as Table 5, pp. 47-48.
Table 9  What is your opinion on the practice of democracy in China?  
\[N = 2,601\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>11.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>13.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need improvement</td>
<td>51.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need a lot of improvement</td>
<td>19.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Same as Table 5, p. 49.

Another survey in 1992 investigated similar topics as the above-mentioned 1990 survey. Thus, we can make a comparison between the two and examine whether youths have changed their attitudes over the time. In the Shanghai survey, as presented in Table 10, when students are asked to identify the most serious existing problem in China among seven given answers, three answers exceed over 10% and two of these are political problems, namely CCP's degenerate "work style" (35.16%) and bureaucratism (16.60%). It shows that over half of the respondents (51.76%) see the issue of CCP cadres' ethics and working attitude as the most serious existing problem.

This finding is further supported when we analyze other related questions. When respondents are asked whether "most cadres today are working hard for the people; few are working hard for their own futures", 22.61% agree while 57.77% disagree and 18.12% are so apathetic that they "do not care". These answers also show that most youths are dissatisfied with the ethics of the CCP cadres. It is not surprising that 88.16% of the respondents give the opinion that "it is extremely necessary" to "rectify the Party's work style and to improve the social trends." The findings here are consistent with the 1990 findings (refer to Table 5 and 7).

Several years after the 1989 movement, in students' perceptions, the CCP cadres' corruption and negative "work style" have not improved. This arouses frustration and political alienation among the students.
Table 10 In your opinion, what is the most serious existing problem in Chinese society?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degenerate &quot;work style&quot; of the CCP, the leading political party</td>
<td>35.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much population</td>
<td>24.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratism</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social morale and consensus</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor legal system</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarce resources</td>
<td>3.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 7,650

Source: "Shanghai wanming qingnian sixiang zhuangkuang diaocha" (The Investigation of the Thinking of Ten Thousand Youths of Shanghai), Ming Pao (Daily News) (Hong Kong), March 28, 1992, p. 7.

Conclusion

The 1989 movement has a great impact on the Chinese youths. The failure of the movement was a tremendous shock and upset to its participants; so it would take a long time for their emotions to be calm again. Also, before 1989, though it was not free, the political atmosphere still left a little space for students to air their discontent and grievances. After 1989, that little space was taken away. Strict control on the students only led them to be more skeptical of official ideology, apathetic to the CCP sponsored political activities and negative towards their own lives.

Surprisingly, the negative effects of the 1989 movement have not changed much of Chinese youths' political attitudes so far. Results of the Chinese surveys point out the fact that the political attitudes of Chinese youths have remained the same before and after the 1989 movement. Today, they are still for reform, democracy and legality and still against the CCP's "work style", corruption and collectivism. Also, the trend of
self-centeredness among Chinese youths has remained the same before and after the 1989 movement.

What has been changed in Chinese college students' political outlook is the approach to realizing ideals rather than the ideals themselves. The argument of this study is that the approach has changed from idealism to pragmatism. The growth of economic consciousness together with strict political control in China in the 1990s nourish the rise of pragmatic orientation.

It is traditional Chinese thinking that intellectuals should have ideals of moral integrity as well as ideals of serving and improving the society. Undoubtedly, college students see themselves as intellectuals and believe that they should also possess such ideals. Rosen correctly points out that Chinese college students believe in the necessity of having ideals but their ideals are not firm enough for them to strive without any consideration\(^\text{35}\). This is not a matter of have or have-not ideals but a matter of intensity of the ideals. Students were mobilized to fight for democracy and against corruption in the 1989 movement. Since their commitment to action is not strong enough, setbacks in the movement make them put aside the quest and return back to a more down-to-earth political outlook.