AN ATTEMPT TO BECOME MASTERS: THE ORAL HISTORY OF JIANGNAN SHIPYARD WORKERS IN THE 1950s

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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(Signed)

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Abstract

China had witnessed sea changes since the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949. In the urban industrial sector, the state organized workplaces into the socialist factory regime, especially in terms of the work unit system throughout the Mao era. Under public ownership, working-age urban residents would be employed in corresponding work units, enjoying permanent job tenure and comprehensive welfare provisions from the enterprise. This means that both the production and reproduction spheres of industrial enterprises underwent drastic transformation in the 1950s China. Socialism is about constructing alternative production relations as well as social relations in the new society. Examining the factory regime in Communist China could be an interesting angle to rethink Chinese socialism in the Mao era.

This thesis reinterprets the factory regime and the formation of the socialist working class in Communist China. The story is told through a case study of Jiangnan Shipyard, which, as one of the premier heavy industrial enterprises in modern China, was at the epicenter of socialist industrialization in the 1950s. I argue that although the Jiangnan Shipyard factory regime in the 1950s' largely adopted the Soviet industrialization model, laborers' narratives demonstrated that the work unit system and Communist ideological emphasis on manual labor provided the workers with great autonomy in the labor process. Meanwhile, workers' reminiscences depicted the Party's grassroots mobilization mechanism at the shop-floor level, challenging the conventional binary conceptual framework that juxtaposes the state versus the working class in the context of socialism. The process of workers' subjectivity formation in Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s also challenged the communist neo-traditionalism and socialist working class moral economy paradigms in explaining the socialist factory regime. The case study reflected that the socialist work unit system and political mobilization at the shop-floor level realized a potential of empowerment as it transformed workers from exploited

manual laborers to the masters of the state, glorifying the dignity of labor in socialist industrialization.

However, my examination also illustrated that despite Jiangnan Shipyard workers in the 1950s enjoying full membership and considerable autonomy in the factory, real workplace democracy including self-managed labor processes and elections at the shop-floor level was absent. Lacking workplace democracy eventually led to the workers' factionalized rebellion during the Cultural Revolution as well as the dismantling of the socialist work unit system and working class in the post-Mao era. The story of Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s opens up our imagination of the socialist factory regime and allows us to rethink the way of building workers' self-managed production and reproduction structures in order to achieve full development of human capacities in the Mao era.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

China has witnessed several sea changes from 1949 since the Communist Party took power. The Party took over the urban industrial sector and restored production while carrying out land reform as well as a collective campaign in the countryside. In the urban industrial sector, the Party campaigned on the slogan "Three years of recovery and ten years of development." After three years' restoration, this new revolutionary state had revived its industrial production to the highest level since before the war. On the basis of the urban industrial restoration, Communist China initiated industrialization and developed a socialist economy (Meisner, 1999). Socialism is not only about building material basis but also about constructing alternative production relations and social relations in such a new society (Guevara, 1967; Han, 2013; Engst, 2014). Production itself is not merely an economic process but also a political and social process: on one hand, the labor process brings out particular social relations and an experience of those relations; on the other hand, there are specific political and ideological apparatuses of production which regulate production relations (Burawoy, 1985). So examining the factory regime in Communist China can be an interesting angle to rethink the Chinese Revolution and Chinese socialism during the Mao era.

Located in Shanghai, the Jiangnan Shipyard has been a crucial shipyard specializing in making and repairing ships since the late Qing Dynasty. It was a bureaucratic bourgeoisie enterprise from the very beginning, but the Communist Party turned this venerable shipyard into a socialist state-run enterprise in 1949. By the end of 1949, approximately 4,000 Jiangnan Shipyard workers had returned to work for the sake of production restoration. After three years' restoration, the Jiangnan Shipyard became one of the "156 key projects" in heavy industry of the First Five Year Plan. Along with the restoration and socialist development, the Party had launched several political reforms and campaigns in the shipyard since 1950: democratic reform in 1950, organization reform in 1953, *Zhengfeng* and *Shuangfan* from 1957 to 1959, General Line of

Socialism Construction in 1958, and the Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1960.[1] As a "key" ordnance factory which went through the military takeover and other political campaigns, the Jiangnan Shipyard can serve as a perfect example of socialist production relations reform during the 1950s in Communist China.

This thesis aims to examine the factory regime of the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s and how workers adopted, modified, and even resisted against this system. I focus on the relations between shop-floor workers, technical management and Party cadres, the enterprise organization, labor management, incentive mechanisms and political organization within the Jiangnan Shipyard. This project proposed to illustrate how the socialist state, industrial organization and labor process shaped the workers' subjectivities, as well as how workers interacted with the state and enterprise. This project adopted the empirical approach of oral history to study the distinct mode of production in a state-owned enterprise (SOE) in the 1950s and the socialist working class formation in the context of the Chinese Revolution.

Literature Review

My literature review will be divided into three parts. I will first review the literature on the Chinese Revolution and socialist industry restoration and construction in order to situate the making of the Chinese socialist working class in the specific historical and global context. Then I will examine existing studies on the socialist industrial organization of Chinese state-owned enterprises, which also engage in major theoretical debates on communist factory regime and labor process. Finally, I will turn to the discussion on how workers became political subjects and the formation of the working class, offering a foundation for my exploration on Chinese socialist workers' subjectivities in the proposed study.

[1] Source: Annals of Jiangnan Shipyard, 1999.

The Chinese Revolution and the remaking of the Chinese working class

If we define the twentieth century as a century of revolution, then the Chinese Revolution must take up a center position in this historical process. Led by a revolutionary party (the Chinese Communist Party), the Chinese Revolution had radically reshaped Chinese politics, economy, and society. Far from being an accidental by-product of modern Chinese history, the Chinese Revolution bore both the continuity with its predecessor and its own creative invention and experiment since the 1920s (Esherick, 1995). On one hand, the regime of the People's Republic of China was built on the basis of former Guomindang systems. On the other hand, the Chinese Revolution was also an adoption, modification, and innovation of classic Marxist-Leninist theory, the Soviet model, and its own revolutionary experience (Frazier, 2002).

Mainstream Western scholars who study the Chinese Revolution agree that the revolution was actually not a liberation for all citizens but another kind of domination which was called "the proletariat dictatorship." Led by the vanguard Party, the dictatorship had overturned the old elite power structure and empowered new social actors as well as constituencies such as peasants and workers. However, these scholars usually regard this process as a strategy of political discipline and emotion mobilization, emphasizing the bureaucratically administered economy, the party organization that extended to society and economy, and the "revolutionary virtues" such as determination, sacrifice, and commitment (for example, see Walder 2015 and Perry 2002). In sum, these scholars remind us of the necessity to examine the Chinese Revolution under the historical and global context and take into account its external and internal complexity in the process of the construction of socialism after 1949. The history of Communist China is not a teleology of revolution. These sources can serve as a threshold for us to understand the transformation after the CCP took power.

Being independent of the world economic system, Communist China accepted aid from the Soviet Union and developed its economy in spite of the foreign embargos in the

1950s. The Party soon continued its revolutionary practice in rural and urban areas. In the countryside, the Party carried out land reform and collective campaigns, which radically transformed the traditional Chinese villages into collective farms and people's communes. In the cities, the CCP first erased some negative dimensions of the former society, such as holding political campaigns to eliminate opposition and suppressing traditional gangs, secret societies, and vice. Then the CCP established the new order by reorganizing labor in new trade unions, reeducating the intellectuals, reforming the higher education system, expropriating private assets, and registering households as well as organizing their neighborhoods (Walder, 2015: 61-81). Such an urban revolution brought about profound social impacts, which formed the social and demographic background for the socialist industrial transformation and construction. The Party made advances in health care, life expectancy, literacy, infant mortality, and other indicators of quality of life. This revolutionary state had also shown its strong implementation of power into communities, workplaces, and families, particularly its unprecedented mobilization capacity from the grassroots (Walder, 1989).

According to Maurice Meisner (1999: 75-89), the Chinese urban industrial base was definitely weak when the CCP took control of the cities. Industrial productivity was relatively low and the limited industrial enterprises were highly concentrated in major coastal cities much less the economic deterioration resulting from wars, corruption, and inflation. Hence, the CCP held the slogan "Three years of recovery and ten years of development" in urban industrial sector restoration and construction. Along with the restoration of production, the Party gradually reformed production relations inside different kinds of enterprises. Initially, the Party permitted a large degree of managerial authority in both state-run enterprises and old capitalist ones that did not call for workers' demand for direct control by producers. Those state-owned bureaucratic bourgeoisie enterprises were confiscated by the Party, and private enterprises were merged and turned into public-private joint ventures. Small handicraft workshops were reorganized as different scales of cooperatives. This was the process of "socialist

alternation" which lasted from 1949 to 1956.

In addition, the Party launched several political campaigns such as "Three-Antis" and "Five-Antis" in bureaucratic administrations and private enterprises during this interim period in order to sweep out deterioration factors inside these institutions. The Sanfan Campaign hit hardest on corruption and waste in private enterprises and bureaucracy in bureaucratic administrations. The former Guomindang and new Communist cadres' bureaucratic behaviors and spirits became the main goals of mass supervision in the Sanfan Campaign. The Wufan Campaign targeted bribery, tax evasion, fraud, theft of government property and stealing of state economic secrets conducts within private enterprises. The Party seriously punished those corrupt practices in the urban economy and illegal economic activities, which mainly fell on the bourgeoisie. The heavy taxation and fines depleted the bourgeoisie. Their private enterprises gradually became joint state-private enterprises as well.

After three years' restoration, this new socialist state began to build socialist industry as the threshold of the transition to socialism. Implementing direct and centralized socialist state authority to control the enterprises, the state nationalized key means of production to develop socialist economy as well as realizing rapid economic growth. As a typical representation of the industrial development of Communist China in the 1950s, the First Five Year Plan (FFYP) from 1953 to 1957 had three telling characteristics. First, industrial production was processed under socialist public ownership and a highly centralized planning system. Second, the industrial development model, which consisted of "one-man management" inside the enterprise and a dominant proportion of state investment in heavy industry, was largely adopted from the Soviet Union (Li Fuchun, 1955). Domestic industrial production doubled, and the annual growth rate was 18% in 1957 (Meisner, 1999: 106). But such a system resulted in some problems of bureaucratization and shortage economy, which created a hierarchy between political elites, technological elites, and workers, differentiation

among the "working class," and the distinction between town and countryside. So we can see the third telling characteristic of socialist industrial development: launching large political mass mobilization to unleash inspiration from the masses to solve the problem caused by the Soviet model (Walder, 2015: 98).

In modern Chinese history, Chinese workers were usually understood as a distinct class whose subjectivities were embedded in the network of native origins, kinship relations, ethnicity, gender, and particular profession or skill proficiency (Ren & Pun, 2006; Perry, 1993). But the development of socialist economy built up a new system of industrial relations. In 1952, there were approximately 6,000,000 workers (including construction workers) in China. After the FFYP, this number soared to 10,000,000 in 1957 (Howe, 1971). This process was also "remaking" the Chinese working class under direct state and institutional power (Walder, 1984). Walder concluded that, under socialist ownership and the strict house registration system, industrial workers in the Mao era were largely recruited from the urban unemployed population and new migrant labor in the city. Since workers were directly recruited, trained, hired, managed, and paid by the state without previous negotiation or mutual agreement, they were dispossessed of key resources so that they had to institutionally depend on the enterprise. The company union, which was not independent, was just an official institution offering social welfare and benefits, buffering against workers' contradictions and avoiding their organized resistance against the state. So according to Walder, the Chinese workers actually played a passive role in the formation of the institution. This institution also created new inequalities, including hierarchy within industrial enterprises and the gap between city and countryside. The whole hierarchy of Chinese workers was like a pyramid; from the bottom to top were rural workers in the commune industry, rural temporary workers, urban temporary workers, urban workers in collective enterprises, and permanent workers in state enterprises. Chinese workers were highly dependent on the enterprise, lacking social mobility within enterprises and strictly banned from creating independent political organizations. Therefore, Walder defined Communist China as a

bureaucratically administered status society and the remaking of Chinese working class from 1949 to 1981 was a process of creating "a new dualism." This process brought some profound social consequences including "a pattern of community organization characterized by limited mobility, broad dependence on workplaces for the distribution of goods and services, and extensive networks of personal loyalty, obligation, and mutual assistance" (Walder, 1989: 410).

The literature about the Chinese Revolution and the remaking of the Chinese working class can serve as a specific political, economic, social, and historical background for us to examine the socialist industrial relations. This proposed research aims to offer a new perspective to understand the factory regime and how the political economy structure shaped the workers' subjectivities as well as their adaptations or resistance to the industrial system of Communist China.

The socialist industrial organization of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOE)

The work unit (Danwei) system as Communist Chinese factory regime

The great political economy transformation, like the Chinese Revolution, could have a great impact on relevant factory regimes. The determinants of factory regimes included three crucial aspects: the labor process, mode of reproduction of labor power, and enterprise relation to state and market (Burawoy, 1985: 17). Here I will first review the political economy setting and the mode of labor power reproduction in socialist China, offering three possible paradigms to explain the work unit system. Then I will clarify how my proposed study can shed light on workers' subjectivities on the basis of this literature.

During the Mao era, Communist China built up and developed the socialist economy. In the urban area, the family labor and capitalist sectors were almost eliminated, while the market exchange was also under strict control of the state. Nearly the entire urban

population became members of work units (*Danwei*), which was one of the most significant characteristics of Communist Chinese economic organization. Work units included not only the state-owned and collective enterprises but also government offices and social institutions like hospitals and schools. Members of work units enjoyed permanent employment and were paid wages. The urban work units could not fire their employees freely and had to be responsible for their employees' consumption (Whyte & Parish 1984). The work unit system, like the Chinese Revolution, was a product of a specific historical and social context. Some works have already shed light on the significance of the Soviet influence and the danwei's possible origins in the Communist free supply system in the heritage of labor protest, the management practice of a major bank, and the evolution of labor management institutions (for example, see Perkins, 1991; Henderson & Cohen, 1984; Perry, 1997; Lu, 1993; Lü, 1997; Yeh, 1997; Frazier, 2002).

Being intensely curious about such a Red China, some Western scholars (mainly from the US) devoted themselves to the study of Communist Chinese rural and urban areas since the 1970s. Due to limitations on access, most went to Hong Kong and conducted interviews with émigrés from the mainland. These Hong Kong studies documented and interpreted the Maoist model of development with two evident characteristics. The first was a remarkable lack of residential and job mobility, along with rationing household registration and food, housing, and material goods. The second was the extent to which patterns of work and residence were combined. The funds from institutional budgets and enterprise earnings subsidized the delivery of a broad range of services and goods to employees that formed the collective consumption of a community (Henderson & Cohen, 1984; Whyte & Parish, 1984; Walder, 1986). In contrast to the contemporary Western urbanism, which embodied extensive job and geographic mobility, short job tenure, and extreme social insecurity, Communist Chinese cities were relatively self-contained, closed units in which there was extensive protection against economic insecurity, a fusion of political and economic powers, authority via personal loyalties,

and a prevalent subculture of personal alliances and mutual help (Walder, 1989: 420).

One of the loci classici of these Hong Kong studies was Andrew Walder's (1986) *Communist neo-traditionalism: Work and authority in Chinese industry*. In this paradigmatic work, Walder put forward the concept "communist neo-traditionalism" as a rational ideal type of Communist society to summarize the society and authority relations of Communist China as well as other Communist countries. According to his observation, Communist Chinese enterprises involved industrial authority on institutional features. On one hand, the enterprises resulted in workers' organized dependence. The enterprise was not only an economic institution but also a political and social unit. Workers were politically dependent on management, socially and economically dependent on the enterprise, and personally dependent on supervisors. On the other hand, this authority structure created an institutional culture, which included patron-client relations, institutional clientelism and principled particularism in the allocation of material rewards, and career opportunities on the basis of networks of instrumental personal ties. Walder interpreted this institutional culture as an exchange between workers' loyalties and cadres' resource distribution, and this exchange brought about differentiation inside the working class.

Walder's work was extremely influential, but critics were also fierce. The critics of "communist neo-traditionalism" mainly concentrate on following three dimensions: the relationship between communist neo-traditionalism and pre-modern or revolutionary history; the range for utilizing this concept despite permanent workers in state-owned enterprises; and the real power relations and interactions among different actors at the basic level of Chinese society (Li & Wang & Miao, 2009). Among these critics, Brantly Womack (1991) insightfully argued that "work unit socialism" may be a better framework that "communist neo-traditionalism" to analyze industrial organization in Communist China. Based on the tension between the irresistible power of the state and the immovable permanence of work unit membership, Womack recognized that in the

ecology of a permanent community, what the leadership could do was conditioned by its need for continued cooperation from a fixed circle of subordinates. In other words, this critic caught sight of those subordinate workers' agency, which initiated the moral economy approach to explaining Communist Chinese industry authority relations.

This approach, borrowed from E. P. Thompson (1971) and James Scott's (1976) concept of moral economy, emphasized "a particular set of social relations, a particular equilibrium between paternalist authority and the crowd" (Thompson, 1971: 129). The food riots of the English poor in the 18th century and the subsistence rebellion of Southeastern peasants both demonstrated this concept. When the equilibrium was disturbed, the masses (peasants, crowd, and workers) reacted to restore the conditions corresponding to the social norms supported by the consensus of the community. Thus, both sides of the power relation would have a tendency toward stability. Similarly, in his work on the contradictions of Soviet Real Socialism, Michael Lebowitz focused on the social contract between the Soviet working class and the Party-state under the vanguard relations of production. The ideological claim of the existence of a workers' state and the real support for the aspirations of workers provided through the social contract were important sources for the moral economy of the working class (Lebowitz, 2012).

Some scholars put forward a similar explanation for the Chinese SOE workers' resistance in the post-Mao era. In her study on workers' protests in the northeastern rustbelt, Lee (2007a) found that the state regulated these workers with social contract. In the Chinese socialist setting, workers viewed themselves as having a relationship with the state, a relationship which operates according to the norm of reciprocity: the state was expected to have committed itself to ensuring that the workers have a decent living by providing job security and welfare packages, while workers, in return, advocated the party ruling by giving their political support and loyalty to the state. But these rustbelt workers were extremely disappointed with their life in the post-Mao era,

which brought despair about downward social mobility and the feelings of exclusion and betrayal by the state and Party. Rustbelt workers' grievances were ignited by layoffs, absences, and shrink of collective consumption provided by urban work units. This approach demonstrated the dynamic equilibrium between the working class and the Party-state. In this explanation of socialist working-class moral economy, the worker was no longer a passive adaptor of the whole industrial authority but a relatively active actor with bargaining power in the equilibrium. However, this approach overemphasized the workers' material rationality and neglected their ideological surrender or struggles. Socialism was a mixed and ambivalent historical experience for most northeastern rustbelt workers, which included psychological and economic security, relative egalitarianism, social justice, and collective purpose (Lee, 2007b: 162). After studying the moral economy of Soviet working class, Lebowitz (2012: 131) concluded that under the Real Socialism Vanguard Relation, "Any attempts by workers to organize independently of the official channels appointed by the vanguard to represent them were repressed. Without space for autonomous organization or, indeed, effective communication among themselves, workers in the Soviet Union were disarmed in the ideological struggle."

In sum, neither "Communist neo-traditionalism" nor the socialist working class moral economy fully explains the socialist production relations in the Mao era. Both largely neglect the dimension of workers' subjectivities. The first paradigm, lacking exploration of workers' experiences and understanding of such a totally different system in comparison with capitalism, regards workers as passive and docile subjects under the socialist system. The second paradigm assumes the workers to be mere rational economic subjects, busy figuring out how to gain the greatest material benefit in the enterprise. These two paradigms fall into the snare of essentialism, which regards the power relations within socialism as similar to those under capitalism, without considering the transformation of production relations and workers' subjectivities. In order to better understand this process, we have to consider workers' actions in relation

to the transformation and how they understood this transformation. Therefore, by studying the case of Jiangnan Shipyard with oral history approach, this proposed study would like to examine how workers' subjectivities, particularly the ideological and political dimensions, were constructed, adopted, surrendered, and struggled against the Communist Chinese political economy and the socialist industrial organization in the Mao era.

Before we turn to the specific labor process inside the Communist Chinese state-owned enterprises, Joel Andreas' (2008, 2012) explanation of the Communist Chinese work unit system can serve as a threshold to develop our understanding of workers' subjectivities from a Marxist perspective. Marx assessed class position under the condition of a given system of production relations: who controlled the means of production, how labor was organized, and how the product of labor was distributed among different groups. According to Andreas, the socialist work unit system that prevailed in China from the 1950s to the 1980s possessed a key characteristic that the labor was tied to the means of production. Since enterprises were responsible for both production and consumption, workers were permanent members of a work unit, and membership entailed significant rights along with duties, so there were no "free" labor markets for workers from a Marxist perspective. Although cadres and managers played a quite paternalistic role in enterprise management and workers' democracy was very limited, one can't deny there were mutual obligations and consultations between enterprise leaders and workers. This socialist work unit system also gave rise to class hierarchy inside the society including inequality among work units and inequality within work units. Hence, we can't ignore the dynamics between workers and cadres in the socialist industrial organizations or the actual differentiation of such a socialist country. Specifically, to take Andreas' explanation a step further, we should examine how workers experienced, participated, adapted, modified, and resisted the state and Party at the very basic level of enterprise production and consumption. Workers' subjectivities embodied not only the identification with Party and state but also their

self-consciousness and dignity as members of the socialist working class.

The socialist labor process: From bureaucratic despotism to building new socialist men

In this part, I will first briefly review the Marxist tradition of labor process theory, which demonstrated a thread from capitalist class antagonism to workers' multiple subjectivities in modern capitalist production relations. Then I will examine studies on socialist labor process, particularly those about China. My proposed study intends to examine what the labor process was in socialist China during the 1950s to understand what the "socialist new man" was, how it was generated, and the relation between socialism and modernization.

Marx's (1976) critique of capitalism revealed the foundation of the capitalist labor process. In *Capital Vol. 1*, he defined the capitalist labor process as "a hidden abode of production" (Marx, 1976: 279), which served as a process for the bourgeoisie to control workers' labor in order to seize surplus value. Hence, the critical issues in the labor process were control and resistance. On one hand, the bourgeoisie would utilize various modes of hegemony to control and suppress workers for the sake of maximizing profits. On the other hand, this was also a process for creating a mass against capital, but not yet for itself. Through the struggle, this mass becomes united and constitutes itself as a class for itself, which would perform as the gravedigger of capitalism. This was insightful, but Marx didn't elaborate the methodology of bourgeois control and class struggle. Almost a century later, Harry Braverman (1974) elaborated the issue of bourgeois control on the basis of his own working experience as a coppersmith. He pointed out that under the condition of monopoly capitalism, the bourgeoisie would utilize so-called "scientific management" to intensify the labor division, which spawned the separation of conception and execution and workers totally lost control of the labor process. Such a process was also understood as deskilling: the bourgeoisie initiated the separation between mental and manual labor, which made workers equal to disposable labor power.

However, Braverman didn't solve the problem of workers' subjectivities. In other words, we can't grasp workers' experience and consciousness according to Braverman's analysis. Michael Burawoy had cast the same doubt on Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital.* Burawoy was once a machine operator in a factory, but he found that workers did not undergo high pressure from managers and the boss directly. Instead, everyone was keen to compete in the "game of making out" (Burawoy, 1979). Such a "game" generated workers' hard work as well as their consent to the whole labor process. Capitalists themselves took part in the "game" while manufacturing consensus among workers by internal labor market and internal state. In sum, the labor process manufactured workers' consent and workers actively participated in their own exploitation. Later on, Burawoy (1985) put forward a broader theoretical framework of factory regime to analyze the labor process. Production was not only an economic process but also a political and ideological process. Hence, production relations can bring out particular social relations and experiences of those relations, while there are also external political and ideological apparatuses of production that regulate production relations. The determinants of factory regimes included labor process, enterprise relation to state and market, and mode of reproduction of labor power. Taken together, the theoretical framework of the factory regime, which will be my major theoretical lens to study the Chinese socialist factory regime and labor process in a heavy industry enterprise during the 1950s, examined both the objective type of labor and the subjective experience of that labor.

When it comes to the socialist labor process, we can't neglect Burawoy and Lukacs' (1992) study on the Hungarian factory regime. Based on an ethnographic study of Banki Factory and the Lenin Steel Works, Burawoy defined the factory regime of former socialist countries (like Hungary) as bureaucratic despotic. He called it "bureaucratic" because, in these countries, the state intervened in production and reproduction of factories with no exception. As for "despotic," Burawoy interpreted the Hungarian factory regime as having provided workers with stable employment and limited

resources under the control of management. Such an exchange generated workers' obedience to the Party and state. Guided by the central planning, the production limits of socialist enterprise lay in the supply shortage. Hence bargaining with the national planning administration became the most important aspect of enterprise development, instead of competition between enterprises. But it doesn't mean that workers were puppets of the management. On the contrary, the management relation inside the Hungarian enterprise was not a mere dichotomy between managers and workers but a multi-layered management system, which included strategic management (the enterprise leader), middle management (enterprise managers), and operative management. Actually, the operative management organized their production directly without intervention from strategic and middle management. Burawoy viewed this system as offering workers more space for their self-organization as well as permanent employment.

In the transition from socialist planned economy to capitalist market economy, Hungarian civil society was also booming, along with the working class organizations' prosperity. So Burawoy and Lukacs foresaw the possibility of the working class achieving a radiant future instead of the nostalgia for a radiant socialist past. However, Burawoy and Lukacs' work treated the opposition between the Party-state and working class as an inherent characteristic of socialism. This proposed study aims to rethink such an assumption by asking the following questions: Was the socialist state inherently opposed to the working class? What role did agents of the state in a specific factory (particularly those at the basic level) play in their interaction with workers? How did workers act towards and understand the process of socialist economy development? What's the difference between socialist and capitalist labor unrest? These questions are not only about making clear the Jiangnan Shipyard production relations in the Mao era but also about gaining an essential understanding of socialism.

Burawoy and Lukacs' findings shed light on the importance of workers' independent

self-organization and subjectivity formation under socialist production relations. In the Chinese setting, Mao Zedong (1977) had emphasized the importance of the transformation of production relations in a socialist society. Such a transformation should not stop with the transformation of property relations and those distribution relations most immediately linked to private property. By launching direct political and production campaigns, the cooperative handling of technical, leadership, and shop-floor workers on production problems, the blurring of distinctions between mental and manual labor, suppressing wage differentials, and extending cooperative and nonmaterial incentives, the CCP and socialist China have hoped gradually to erode the basis of political and economic domination of one social group over another (Walder, 1979).

Some empirical studies on Chinese socialist industrial organization and labor process will be a threshold for this proposed study. From an institutional perspective, Morris Bian analyzed the history of Chongqing Iron and Steel Corporation and discovered the internal structure of this state-owned enterprise possessed "bureaucratic governance structure, distinctive management and incentive mechanisms (officials and managers of the Chongqing Iron and Steel Corporation often use ideological and psychological incentive mechanisms such as "emulation campaigns" to motivate employees to increase productivity), and the provision of social services and welfare" (Bian, 2009: 4). Mark Frazier (2002) pored over the archival data on four enterprises in two cities (two textile mills and two shipyards in Shanghai and Guangzhou), demonstrating that the main features of the Chinese Communist industrial workplace included concentration of authority in shop-floor supervisors, provision of comprehensive workplace welfare, compressed seniority wage schemes, subordination of management to local party committees, and Party penetration into and mobilization of the workforce. Workers, managers, and party and state agents, with different, at times countervailing, concerns and constraints, actively engaged each other in struggle and collaboration to institute new workplace features and replace old ones. Li Huaiyin and his collaborators

(2015) interviewed 97 retired workers in various state-owned enterprises, and concluded that during the Mao era, "the behavior of the workers in everyday production was influenced not only by political pressure, regulations and institutions, peer supervision, and other restraining means, but, more importantly, by the collective consciousness of the special status of the staff in state-run enterprises, the sense of identification with the unit, and the mechanism of promotion through spiritual stimulation."

The above studies have offered a large number of details about Mao-era SOE workplaces, particularly from archival data and institutional perspectives, which put great emphasis on the external apparatuses regulating production relations. However, they failed to present the ideological and political aspects of workers' labor in terms of workers' experience and the social relations inside the factory, which leads to the distortion and misunderstanding of socialism itself. Charles Bettelheim's (1974) study on the industrial organization of Beijing General Knitwear Factory during the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution offered me a good approach to examining the formation of workers' subjectivities in the socialist labor process. My study will not only concentrate on how the macro level of state and market apparatuses regulate production relations but also the micro level of workers' working experience, participation, resistance, and adaptation to social relations in the workplace. In the end, my proposed study aims to dialogue with some Western scholars (like Andrew Walder, 1979) who doubt whether the industrial organization of socialist China can eliminate the mental-manual and worker-cadre differentiation and whether socialism was compatible with technical innovation and modernization.

Workers as political subjects: The formation of the Chinese working class in the 1950s

Workers were not merely economic subjects only in charge of production activity but also political subjects in the factory regime. In this part, I will first review two classic working class formation theories from Western labor history, which serve as the basic

analytical framework for working class formation. Then I will turn to a discussion of Chinese socialist working class formation, particularly borrowing the theoretical lens of state and institution. Finally, by reviewing some important works on Chinese workers' political participation and resistance in the Mao era, I would like to put forward my own explanation of these historic moments as well as my understanding of Chinese socialist workers' subjectivities construction.

Fundamentally, most labor study scholars would agree that there are two traditional theoretical approaches to the study on working class formation in Western labor history. The first theoretical approach is a political economy one. Initiated by the analysis of production relations in capitalist society, Marx (1976) first conceptualized class antagonism in terms of the ownership of the means of production and the wage labor system served for the bourgeoisie, which generated the dichotomously opposed classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1963), Marx put forward the concepts of class-in-itself and class-for-itself, which became the basic concepts for later working class formation studies. The former concept refers to the objective economic position. The expansion of capitalist production relations resulted in a large number of proletarians, whose class position was determined by the capitalist production system. The latter concept refers to the subjective dimension, including the formation of proletariat class-consciousness. But the class-consciousness was not a by-product of objective class structure. Instead, only when members of the class recognized their own class position and realized the class relation in the whole society could they be identified as a class-for-itself. However, Marx proposed this theoretical framework only through abstract logical deduction without abundant direct empirical evidence.

Although many Western countries had gone through the process of proletarianization, how workers reacted to this process and how they recognized their own actions varied in different countries. And this is the reason why Katznelson and Zolberg's (1986) study

matters. By conducting comparative historical analysis on working class formation in England, France, Germany, and the United States in the 19th century, Katznelson and his colleagues synthesized a theoretical framework to understand the gradual process of working class formation. This four-layered framework expanded from the macro level to the micro level. The first layer was the development structure of the capitalist economy, which equaled Marx's objective class analysis. The second layer concentrated on the workers' social life and organization, which included not only the workplace and labor market situation but also their community lives. When it comes to the micro level, we would like to study how workers' collective emotions were formed and how they finally conducted collective actions to change the existing unjust social structure. According to Katznelson and Zolberg, such studies should carefully analyze how economy, society, and state mutually intertwined and collectively shaped the process of working class formation. In sum, the political economy analytical approach demonstrated the significance of the grand political, economic, and social structure in the formation of the working class. However, this approach is often criticized as essentialism. The cultural-symbolic approach arose and enriched the political-economy analytical framework.

In 1963, E. P. Thompson published *The Making of the English Working Class*, which was the cornerstone of the cultural-symbolic study on working class formation. Based on stunningly abundant historical materials, Thompson took 18th-century folklore traditions, workers' production and reproduction in the Industrial Revolution, and workers' resistance into account, which provided a holistic configuration of the English working class formation in the late 19th century. Thompson was inclined to regard class as a "historical phenomenon" instead of a specific "structure" or "category," while class is an actual relationship as well as a historical process rather than an objective thing:

> By class I understand an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and

> in consciousness. I emphasise that it is an historical phenomenon. I do not see class as a "structure," nor even as a "category," but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships…. And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs…. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms. If the experience appears as determined, class-consciousness does not. (Thompson, 1963: 9–11)

According to Thompson, there's no distinction between class-in-itself and class-for-itself, because class-consciousness is the only criterion for determining class formation. Hence, Thompson was strongly opposed to the inclination to the "economic determinism" and essentialism of the political economy approach. He adopted historical analysis and constructionism to understand the process of English working class formation, emphasizing the significance of culture and institutions.

These two traditional approaches offer us a basic theoretical framework to examine how workers become self-conscious subjects and the particular trajectory of working class formation. We should bear in mind that both the political economy structure and the cultural-symbolic interaction matter in forming a particular working class. However, allowing for the specific background of the Chinese Revolution and Chinese socialist industrial construction, we shall take a step further on the basis of traditional working class formation theory. In Maoist China, the process of "proletarianization" was quite different from those discussed in the studies mentioned above because the process was directly initiated by political forces rather than market forces. Although the success of the Chinese Revolution was largely due to the power of Chinese peasants, who were not a "pure" proletariat in its true sense, the new socialist state still relied greatly on the

industrial working class, which numbered only about two million before 1949. However, after the liberation, it was the industrial proletariat, not the rural masses, who were proclaimed as the avant-garde of the Chinese proletariat and the "masters of the state." In other words, the Chinese working class in the Maoist period was formed by a command state economy within very short period compared to their Western counterparts in the 19th century, whose formation was dictated by the market economy and took at least half a century. The role of the almighty Party-state was to intervene in production, reproduction, and consumption, and hence when the planned economy was "accomplished," the process of "proletarianization" was also complete in Maoist China (Pun & Chan, 2004). Therefore, examining the process of Chinese socialist working class formation should take the Party-state's role into account. From the state perspective, we ought to examine how the state influenced workers' consciousness, organization, and actions, as well as how workers interpreted the state, expressed their requests and impacted the state along with transforming themselves (Chen, 2009). By adopting such a state-centered approach, my proposed study aims to enrich the literature on working class formation under the condition of socialist industrial organization.

True, the workers in Maoist China were by no means merely economic subjects who only conducted production activities and passively accepted the Party-state power. Instead, history reveals that they were political subjects who actively participated in management and even resisted against the Party-state. But the participative management institutions didn't necessarily mean that workers participated fully. By examining their participation and its impacts in different formal participation institutions, scholars delivered various interpretations of workers' participation in the Maoist period. The first interpretation regards workers' participative management as a by-product of the Party-state control and authority, with limited impact on the macro level of state policies. Andrew Walder (1981) reviewed the boundaries of worker participation in socialist China and the limits of worker control since 1956, placing them in the broader context of organizations exhibiting "collectivist-democratic" and

"bureaucratic-authoritarian" features (for example, see Brugger, 1976; Andor, 1977). According to Walder's review, participative management was a double-edged sword. On one hand, such a system reinforced the permeation of Party organization through the shop floor. On the other hand, workers had little control over the management and operation of the factory (though they had a certain degree of influence at the immediate work group level), much less at the national regulation level. In such a framework, Walder concluded that workers' participative management was a zero-sum game for workers and managers. Comparing the forms of worker participation such as worker congresses in the 1950s, cooperative technical innovation teams (which were most propagated during 1958–1960 and 1966–1968) and work group self-management, Walder created a typology of the scope of worker control, divided into four categories:

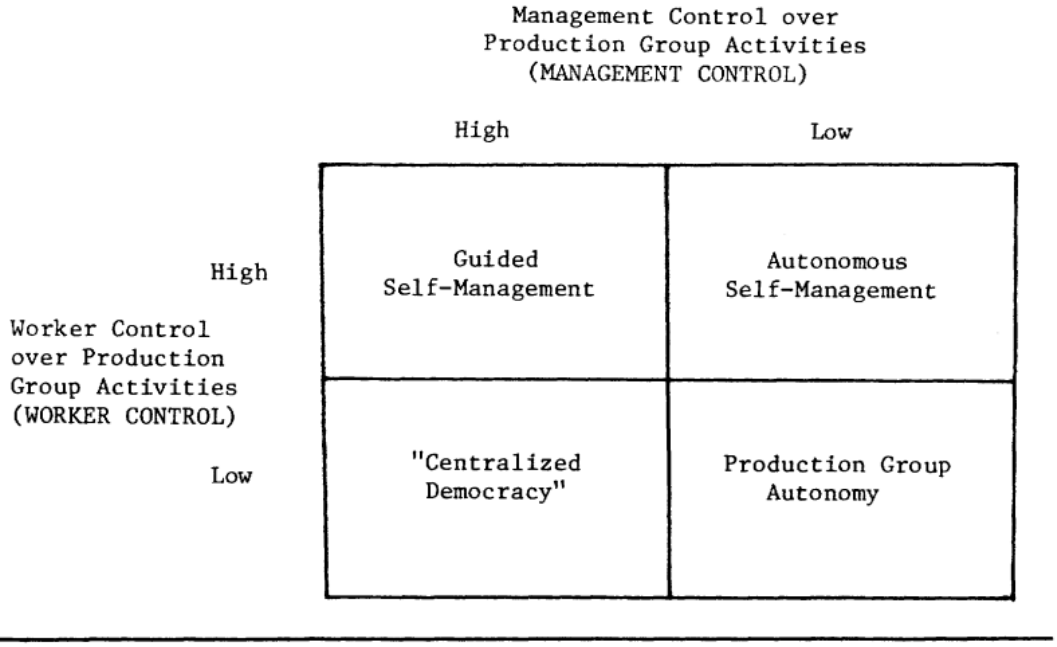


Figure 1: A Typology of Shop-Floor Participative Forms

Based on the model presented in this figure, Walder found out that during the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, the group autonomy of worker control reached its peak. However, the power of management revived after these campaigns. In sum, the authority of Party organization and workers' limited control on the immediate shop floor made up workers' participative management in Maoist China.

The second interpretation of worker participative management lies in the impact workers had on management, though it's quite limited. From 1948 to 1951, the CCP implemented "democratic management" (*minzhu guanli*) in urban industry. It was hoped that such reforms would not only help to build up working-class support for the revolutionary party but would also improve production by relying on the initiative and creativity of the "worker masses." Although short-lived and largely unsuccessful, experiments with democratic management in state-run factories in the early years of the People's Republic effectively overcame alienation and the separation of decision-making and implementation at the factory level to a certain extent (Cliver, 2009). After the democratic reform, the CCP organized workers in both private and state-owned enterprises to conduct "mass supervision" of capitalists and managers by launching political campaigns.

In 1956, the "socialist transformation" had finished, along with the nationalization of most industry. Supervising Party cadres became the main target of mass supervision after 1956. Initially, the supervision was conducted through the Hundred Flowers Movement and Zhengfeng Movement, while the trade unions and worker representative congress served as the main political institutions for mass supervision. During the Great Leap Forward and Anti-rightist Campaign, the trade unions were denounced due to the accusation of "being independent from the Party." Whereas the system was only democratic in a very limited sense, workers still had considerable influence, an essential foundation for which was permanent job tenure (Andreas, 2011a).

The third interpretation focuses on how worker participative management can be the foundation of working class-consciousness formation, which is the approach I adopt in my study. By studying the emergent SOE worker rebellions against privatization in Zhengzhou at the beginning of the 21st century, Stephen Philion (2009) found out that workers' democracy in SOEs in the Maoist period became the repertoire of old workers'

struggles in contemporary China. Being both an ideological discourse and an effective act, the workplace democracy of "Each period's respective discourse was informed by the Party's reaction to workers' collective forms of activity, set up minimally realized potentials for workers to experience certain amounts of workplace democracy, and in turn gave rise to workers' collective forms of action when dissatisfied with the fruits of the CCP's workplace democracy policies" (Philion, 2009: 17). Therefore, ideology is not merely ideas imposed on the masses to reproduce the power of the ruling class. It can be believed (sometimes in ways unexpected and confused), especially in periods of transition from one set of social relations of coercion to new ones, which may transform into realistic actions. In other words, the workers' democracy in socialist China may be the threshold for Chinese SOE workers to develop the class-consciousness and their subjectivities. My proposed study aims to collect data on old Jiangnan Shipyard workers' participative management experience and tries to figure out how such a political process shaped their consciousness and how they became self-conscious political subjects.

Claiming to be a socialist state led by the proletariat, Maoist China had witnessed labor protests during the 1950s in several industrial cities, which finally cumulated in a wave of strikes in 1957, especially in Shanghai. How could a socialist state, whose legitimacy is rooted in the working class, ignite workers' dissatisfaction and resistance? Elizabeth Perry's (1994) study on Shanghai's strike wave in 1957 attributes labor unrest at that time to both domestic and international factors. The domestic factors were both political and economic. Politically, Mao's Hundred Flowers movement encouraged and emboldened workers to be outspoken and act directly. Economically, the Shanghai economy was going through a socialist transformation, and this caused a decrease in real income for workers in joint ownership enterprises. The major foreign influence came from the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, which inspired Chinese workers to speak out and take to the streets. The disparities of welfare benefits between different workers (joint venture & SOE; temporary employment & permanent employment) was the

major grievance. However, Perry overemphasized the division within the working class and held the assumption that these workers were rational economic subjects, which makes it hard to explain why workers directly resisted the central government instead of the related institutions within their enterprises.

Chen Feng (2014) put forward an explanation of this post-revolutionary labor unrest, borrowing the theoretical framework from James Scott's "moral economy." Deriving evidence from Neican (Internal Reference), he demonstrates that labor unrest in the 1950s was rooted in inherent tensions in the state's efforts to reconstruct state-labor relations. With the state's increasing control over industry and the emerging paternalistic institutions, workers came to see the state, as it presented itself, as the patron of their interests, and they expected its economic protection. Consequently, the discrepancy between the state's socialist promises and some of the policies and the practices of its agencies often disappointed and disillusioned workers and became a major source of grievances, triggering protests. In other words, the industrial system inherently bore the characteristics of a "moral economy" in which the state traded economic benefits for the workers' recognition of its legitimacy and the workers derived their conception of justice and equity from the extent to which their interests were maintained by the state. Such relations began to shape the workers' perception (or image) of the state as the patron that had a moral responsibility to ensure their interests. Chen draws the detailed figure below to demonstrate the connections and conflicts between the state's practices, the outcomes among workers, and the state's image:

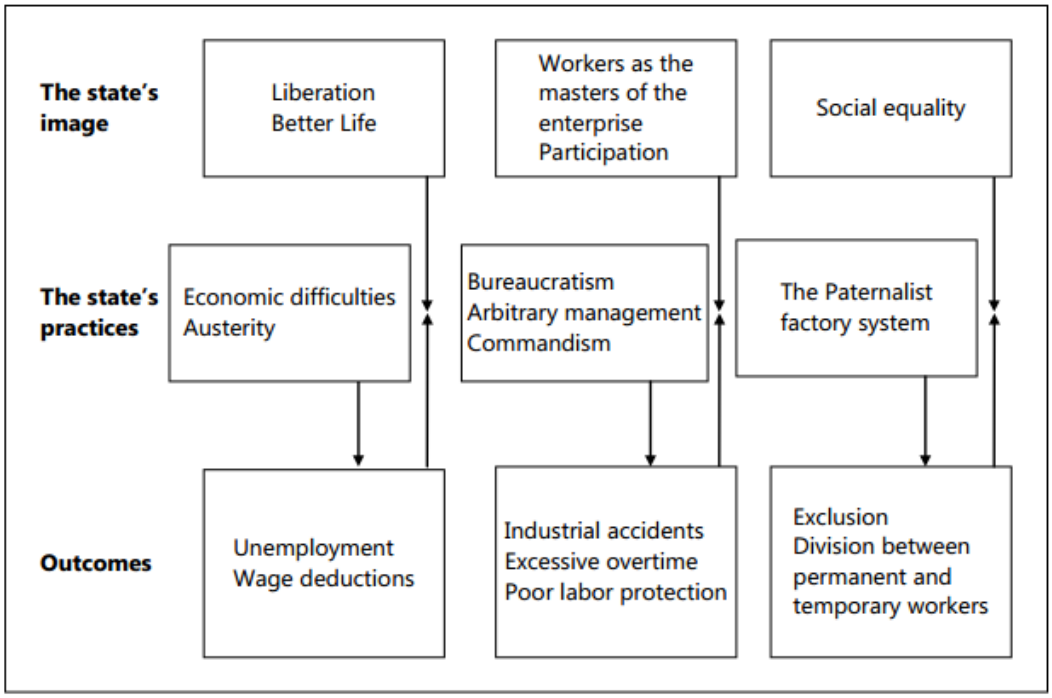


Figure 1. State-labor conflict in the 1950s: Image versus practice.

According to Chen, as the state's self-presented and self-promoted image, which was necessary for its political legitimacy, was in conflict with its policy practices, the state itself ended up being a major source of the perceived injustices and hence became the target of workers' discontent. However, what interests me the most is Chen's findings on protesting workers' intention, as well as their ability, to organize. But Chen attributed the framing and actions to the state not yet having gained full and systematic control of Chinese industry, particularly joint-ownership industry, in the early years of the PRC, so some social spaces were still left for workers to organize themselves. My proposed study aims to dig out the possibility of political self-consciousness formation among those SOE workers in Maoist China. How did they experience and recognize such disparities? How did they understand and practice the ideological claims of "workers as the masters of New China"? In what ways were they involved in political participation and labor unrest? And what's the difference (both the form and the content) between socialist labor unrest and that under capitalist production relations? And why? These questions would lead us to re-examine the Chinese socialist production relations and help us reflect on the true meaning of socialism.

Fortunately, Jackie Sheehan's (2002) work clearly demonstrates that Chinese workers were by no means docile subjects passively adapting to the Party-state. Instead, they were positively involved in political movements from 1949 to the mid-1990s. In the Mao era, these movements started off as state-initiated political campaigns, beginning with the period of New Democracy, the Three-Antis campaign, the Hundred Flowers campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the Gang of Four period, and the 1976 Tiananmen incident. Sheehan documented Chinese workers on the stage as active historical agents, while this stage had previously been seen as occupied solely by intellectuals and students. Sheehan argues that protests often originated from economic grievances, ranging from excessive overtime, extra shifts, poor working conditions, wage disparities, and the neglect of welfare to bureaucratic indifference. The cumulated daily grievances on the shop floor set the micro backdrop for the large-scale strike waves in 1957, which developed into political confrontations with the Party-state. Her finding is stimulating, but the secondary documentary materials limited her first-hand exploration of workers' specific experience and affections, which led her study to deal with abstract "Chinese workers" rather than concrete historical subjects. Also, her overemphasis on workers' involvement in political movements led to indifference to the daily participation in workplace and community. Therefore, my proposed study will adopt an oral history approach to collect old SOE workers' first-hand memories during the 1950s and try to fill the knowledge gap left in the literature.

To sum up, this proposed study will collect Jiangnan Shipyard workers' personal memories in order to examine how workers framed their subjectivities in socialist China and the role that the state played in the making of the Chinese working class. I'd like to go beyond the abstract concept of "class" and reconstruct the process with workers' vivid personal histories and figure out the trajectory of how workers became political subjects in the Maoist era. Previous studies have shown that gender and cohort distinctions existed among workers (Rofel, 1999), so I shall also concentrate on the

homogeneity as well as the fragmentation within the working class.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis aims to study not only how the grand political economy structure shaped the organization of work and the type of labor the workers carried out, but also workers' adaptations and struggles generated by such specific experience or interpretation of that labor. Hence, I will utilize Michael Burawoy's (1985) theoretical framework of factory regimes to analyze the labor process, mode of labor power reproduction, and enterprise relation to state and market. After examining the process of production, we shall explore how workers' political and ideological identities came into being in such an objective process, which paved the way for the formation of class-consciousness. I will borrow the analytical framework from Chen Feng's (2009) discussion on working class formation under the state and institution perspective for my case study on the Jiangnan Shipyard workers' oral history.

According to Burawoy, production is not a purely economic process, but it explicitly includes politics and ideology. First, the organization of work has political and ideological effects: as workers transform raw materials into products, they also reproduce particular social relations as well as an experience of those relations. Second, there are distinctive political and ideological apparatuses of production that regulate production relations including the labor process. Concretely speaking, I will focus on how external political economy apparatuses regulated the internal enterprise management, particularly under the specific historical background of Chinese socialist industry restoration from 1949 to 1952, the First Five Year Plan for socialist economy development from 1953 to 1957, and the mass campaigns including *Zhengfeng*, *Shuangfan*, the Great Leap Forward, etc. Only by placing workers' personal memories in the social, political, and economic setting can we better understand how workers' personal experience was shaped by the process of production. Then I will examine the subjective and micro dimension of workers' experience, consciousness, and adaptation

to or resistance against the factory regime, which will be related to the issue of working class formation.

However, compared to the Western working class, the state played a more outstanding role in the formation of the Chinese socialist working class. The working class was the product of post-revolutionary industrialization, which was directly operated by the Party-state and embodied in the tradition of state-owned-enterprise workers as the main body. The more significant characteristic lay in the social and economic patterns of such a working class, which were largely determined and shaped by the institutional arrangements and state policies. Hence, I'd like to refer to Chen Feng's (2009) review of the Western literature on the role that state and institutions played in working class formation, which will offer us a novel perspective to study the socialist workers' class-consciousness formation and renew our understanding of Chinese socialist factory regimes.

We have to be cautious about the nature of the state when utilizing such a perspective. Was the state inherently opposed to the working class under socialist production relations? What role did agents of the state in a specific factory (particularly those at the basic level) play in their interaction with workers? On what occasions and to what extent did the agents of the state represent/coordinate with/compromise with/oppose the working class? How did workers act toward and understand the process of socialist economy development? How did such a process reflect workers' adaptation to and tension with the state? Did workers really become the "masters of the state"? If so/not, why/why not, and how? What's the difference between socialist and capitalist labor unrest? These questions are not only about making clear about the nature of state, but also about gaining an essential understanding of socialism.

Chen synthesizes three main theoretical perspectives in the literature: the state structure and regime patterns, which represented the extent of state power concentration and

repression; the framework of citizen rights, including the implementation of universal suffrage and workers' political participation within the state regime; and the institutional design of the state, like the federal/unitary system and the position of judicial organs. If we define working class formation with the criteria of consciousness, organization, and action, then these three layers can be influenced by the state and are demonstrated in different trajectories and strategies of collective action. Meanwhile, different institutional settings would engender various reactions to specific labor movements, shaping the appeal (social-political reform or economism), the appeal target (government or employer), and the way to express appeals (radical or tender, political or economic). Such a dynamic process can serve as the foundation of united class-consciousness and identification.

Chen's review pays special attention to the regime type, including general patterns of the system (such as constitution type, political power structure, laws of citizenship, the relationship between central and local government, and the complaint system, etc.) along with the relevant labor institution arrangements (such as the relationship between the state and trade unions, the labor rights and law framework, the procedures dealing with collective disputes, and the state discourse of class, etc.). Far from being purely docile and passive subjects under the grand structure, workers generated their own interpretations of the state. How did they interpret the state? How did they express the appeals? How did they influence the state as well as transforming themselves in this process? I will focus on how the political regime of socialist China shaped Jiangnan Shipyard workers' working and living experience and how workers interpreted the Party-state. If they had certain complaints about the enterprise and the state, how did they express these opinions? In what way did they have an impact on the Party-state (particularly at the shop-floor level), and how did they recognize themselves in different periods (from pre-Liberation to the end of the 1950s)? Did they gain class-consciousness under such circumstances? Setting out from these questions, I intend to explore a heavy industry SOE and workers' personal histories in order to re-examine

the construction of Chinese socialist industry and the first-hand experience of shop-floor workers in the Mao era.

In sum, with the help of factory regime theory and the state and institution perspective of working class formation theory, I will study the grand social, political, and economic background of new socialist China from 1949 to 1960. I will then turn to the labor management, incentive mechanism, and welfare provision at the enterprise level to learn about the concrete production process in this key heavy industry SOE. Finally, I will collect workers' own narratives for the sake of reconstructing the socialist industrial construction history in the 1950s from the angle of common people (rather than elites) as well as their adaptation and modification of and struggles against this production system and the Party-state organization, which may pave the way for the formation of the Chinese socialist working class in the Maoist period.

Research Questions

Drawing theoretical insights from factory regime theory and the state/institution-centered approach of working class formation, I'd like to pore over the factory regime of the Jiangnan Shipyard during the 1950s. I will also concentrate on workers' emotions, experience, and reactions to the political economy setting and the enterprise institutions of socialist China. All aspects of this study will help us to understand the formation of a new Chinese working class in the socialist period, whether workers had become real masters of the Chinese socialist revolution or were simply puppets manipulated by party leaders or factory cadres. How did the Chinese workers make sense of revolution and socialism? In the process of socialist construction, how did the workers understand their status versus the power of their managers and cadres in the workplace? Was there any real form of workplace democracy in the state-owned enterprise? These are the major concerns of this study that help us critically review the issues of party, organization, class, and labor. To be specific, I will address the following questions on enterprise management, incentive mechanism, community organization, welfare provision, and

workers' participation and experience within the enterprise:

a) How were the workers recruited into the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s?
b) What was the division of labor and management system within the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s?
c) How did the line cadres, workshop cadres, and factory leaders arise and what was the process of selection?
d) What was the decision-making process on wages, welfare, housing, and other benefits in the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s?
e) What was workers' perception of socialist practices and workplace democracy in the work unit system of the Jiangnan Shipyard from 1950 to 1960?

Methodology

Oral history as methodology: Memories, politics, and labor subjects

This proposed research will adopt the oral history approach as the methodology to collect the life stories of Jiangnan Shipyard workers and record their collective memories in the Maoist period. As one of the only means of retrieving the historical experience of non-elite people whose lives are largely neglected in historical documents, oral history can play a crucial role in the writing of subaltern people's history. To compose the history of socialist China and the Jiangnan Shipyard in the Mao era, we should give priority to those actors who made and experienced the history. According to Paul Thompson (2000: 23), the significance of the oral history approach lies in its sympathy with subalterns' vivid feelings and experiences, which is a revolutionary approach against the repressive structure: "Oral history is a history built around people. In short, it makes for fuller human beings. Equally, oral history offers a challenge to the accepted myths of history, to the authoritarian judgement inherent in its tradition. It provides a means for a radical transformation of the social meaning of history." By telling their life stories with the help of particular interviewers, interviewees will find that stories provide them with continuity to their experience. A clear channel for

learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by individual narrators about their lives and their experienced reality. That is to say, narratives provide us with access to an interviewee's identity and personality (Atkinson, 1998).

However, like any other social statistics or primary field data, oral sources are by no means a hundred percent "reliable" information. Instead, we shall treat them as subject and spoken testimony.

> They all represent, either from individual standpoints or aggregated, the social perception of facts; and are all in addition subject to social pressures from the context in which they are obtained. With these forms of evidence, what we receive is social meaning, and it is this which must be evaluated.…The constructing and telling of both collective and individual memory of the past is an active social process, which demands both skill and art, learning from others, and imaginative power. In it stories are used above all to characterize communities and individuals, and to convey their attitudes. (Thompson, 2000: 124)

Instead of treating a recorded life history as a straightforward representation of experience, scholars began to problematize power relationships between the historian and interviewee, to see the narration of life history as performance, and to recognize the importance of speech patterns. The role of memory has also come into question. Oral history cannot be treated as a source of some narrative truth, but rather as one of many possible versions of an individual's past. It also means that the stories told in an oral history are not simply the source of explanation, but rather require explanation. Elizabeth Tonkin's (1995) West African fieldwork experience demonstrated how the content and form of memory is strongly influenced by the social context in which it is produced, including particularly the type of performance or genre and the expectations of the audience.

In sum, oral history data is a social construction that reveals the interviewee's interpretation of their experiences in a certain social context. Any particular rendition of a life history is a product of the personal present. It is well recognized that chronicles of the past are invariably a product of the present so that different "presents" inspire different versions of the past (Honig, 1997). We should ask the following questions: Why was the story told that way? How were those elements sequenced? Why were some elements evaluated differently from others? How does the past shape perceptions of the present? How does the present shape perceptions of the past? How do both past and present shape perceptions of the future (Reissman, 1993)?

Hence, when it comes to the analysis of oral history data, we should bear in mind that interviews can be evaluated in three ways. The first is to understand the interview as a text, including listening to what it says, picking up its overall meanings, repeating comments and images. The second is to understand the interview as types of content, which means we should disentangle different types of content in the interview along with distinguishing the "objective" part with the "subjective" content. Finally, we shall understand the interview as evidence, which can serve as a source material in terms of reliability (Thompson, 2000: 272).

Some scholars have applied the oral history approach to their study on workers' collective memories. By so doing, they envisaged the possibility of uncovering workers' self-consciousness and subjectivity formation. "Collective memory…is the memory that takes its shape in the recounting of a shared time, recalled through a set of shared conventions and further refined in interaction with others…it is the memory of a life within a collective organization that structured daily work, politics, and social interactions (Hershatter, 2007: 73). For workers, both memories and narratives can make sense in their lives and let them act in certain ways along with defining who they are. Therefore, memory is related to class formation and mobilization, whereas fragmentation and diversity within collective memories indicate the lack of disposition

(Somers, 1997; Steinmetz, 1992). When analyzing the collective memories, we should also be aware of the relation between collective memories and hegemony or domination: What do workers consent to, and where does their resentment come from?

In order to comprehend what socialism meant to northeastern rustbelt SOE workers in China, Lee Ching Kwan (2007b) conducted about 80 in-depth interviews in Liaoning. Lee concluded that workers' memories bore two significant patterns: the first was their rhetorical, cognitive, and moral references to vocabularies provided by the state in the process of revolution, like "working-class leadership," "workers as masters of the enterprise," and "serve the people," etc. In other words, the hegemonic discourse became workers' discourse instead of them being outside the ideological propaganda. The second pattern was the fragmentation along cohort lines, which lay between those who entered the factory in the 1960s or earlier and those who became workers in the 1970s. Socialism was a mixed and ambivalent historical experience for most northeastern rustbelt workers that included psychological and economic security, relative egalitarianism, social justice, and collective purpose. In recalling their experiences in the Mao era, workers were extremely unsatisfied with their circumstances in the post-Mao era, which directly ignited their collective actions against market reform.

By adopting the oral history approach, this proposed research can retain the first-hand memories of a Chinese socialist workplace in the 1950s. Workers' narratives can be understood as texts that demonstrate the working and living experience of an SOE in the Mao era. We can analyze what the social and political context is in their narratives, as well as understanding how their present situation and contemporary social structure shape their narratives. Workers' subjectivities will be revealed in their storytelling, which will shed light on the examination of working class formation in socialist China. However, my data collection will not be limited to shop-floor workers, but will also include technical management staff and Party cadres. The ratio will depend on my

fieldwork, in which I estimate that the cadres and management staff will comprise 15% respectively while the shop-floor workers occupy the remaining 70%.)

Case Selection

I chose to examine China because it is an alternative case in the context of socialism. In the 1950s, China largely adopted the Soviet model of industrialization but what makes China stand out is the revision of Soviet experience after the First Five Year Plan. As the following chapters will show, the Chinese Communists initially imitated Soviet principles like public ownership, highly centralized planning and technocratic governance, but those Maoists later turned to a more laborer-participative mode at industrial workplaces since the late 1950s. If we want to know what makes China stand out in the socialist industrialization history, scrutinizing a specific case would be a perfect introduction to realize the peculiar experiment.

This thesis is based on a case study of a single state-owned heavy industrial enterprise, Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai. Located in Shanghai, the Jiangnan Shipyard has been a crucial shipyard highly specialized in ship making and repairing since the late Qing Dynasty. It was a bureaucratic bourgeoisie enterprise from the very beginning, but the Communist Party turned this venerable shipyard into a socialist state-run enterprise in 1949. Until the end of 1949, approximately 4,000 Jiangnan Shipyard workers had returned to work for the sake of production restoration. After three years' restoration, Jiangnan Shipyard became one of the "156 key projects" in heavy industry of The First Five Year Plan. Along with the restoration and the socialist development, the Party also had launched several political reforms and campaigns in the shipyard since 1950: democratic reform in 1950, organization reform in 1953, *Zhengfeng* and *Shuangfan* from 1957 to 1959, General Line of Socialism Construction in 1958, and the Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1960. As a "key" ordnance factory which went through the military take over and other political campaigns, Jiangnan Shipyard can serve as a

perfect example of socialist production relation reform during the 1950s in Communist China. This centuries-old enterprise is a good example of the production relation transformation in the 20th century, particularly comparing before and after the Liberation. As a "key" heavy industry SOE of FFYP, the Jiangnan Shipyard is a typical example of socialist factory regimes in the 1950s. Such a crucial enterprise possesses abundant documents in both the enterprise and the Shanghai Municipal Archives, which provided me with enough literature for reference. Last but not least, according to my pilot study in October 2014, the feasibility of this research can be secured because the Jiangnan Shipyard workers' compounds still existed, which offered me easy access to the old workers.

I chose to study a factory, especially at the shopfloor level, because I wanted to be able to examine the socialist Chinese industrialization experiences, and I selected Jiangnan Shipyard because it was a crucial example. Due to its historical foundation and the importance of ordnance and heavy industry in the 1950s' Chinese industrialization, the shipyard served as a model for other enterprises to follow. Conducting a detailed case study allowed me to analyze, from a ground-level perspective, what the socialist labor process was, how the Party/state actually functioned and how workers reacted throughout this process. By closely examining the factory regime in a particular factory, I was able to depict a much richer and concrete story than if I had simply presented the official policies and nationwide statistical data or conflicts.

In this thesis, I'm attempting to deploy the extended case method which could "extract the general from the unique" (Burawoy, 1998). Allowing for its apex position in the 1950s' socialist Chinese industrialization and the difficulty of deskilling in shipbuilding sector, as a socialist state-owned enterprise, Jiangnan Shipyard is both as universal and as unique. In the following chapters, I will point out in what ways Jiangnan Shipyard was peculiar and unique. Nevertheless, the factory regime was emblematic of wider sociality in the Mao era, and we can learn much more about the sociality by examining

how they played out in Jiangnan Shipyard, which was always at the epicenter. Being a Leninist state, Communist China implemented version of the Soviet industrialization model so much in common throughout the 1950s, which is worthwhile to utilize certain common theoretical framework from previous scholarship on Communist industrial relations. The contradictions, conflicts and policies described in the following pages can highly resemble the early history of Soviet Union and other countries in which Communist parties came to power. Carefully analyzing the Jiangnan Shipyard case with its peculiarities, can help us further compare to other cases and draw more general conclusions on socialist way of modernization.

Data Collection

I was fortunate that Jiangnan Shipyard workers' compound, where I conducted my fieldwork, was a relatively open space. The compound pavilion was often crowded with retired Jiangnan Shipyard employees who were willing to share their experiences and perspectives with me. Most of my interviewees had spent decades at the shipyard, first as junior technical workers, and then as senior technical staff or cadres, and they had experienced firsthand much of the post-Liberation history. As I came to see the shipyard at the center of the key experiments of the socialist state modernization plan in the 1950s, I realized the value of closely examining the factory regime at the shopfloor level , especially in terms of the policy implementation and the social relation transformation since 1949. I have tried in this account of China's premier shipyard to capture crucial elements of Chinese Revolution in industrial sector, which depicted the radical nature of socialism throughout the Mao era.

The factory archive office and Shanghai municipal libraries were also filled with materials that provided a rich documentary Altogether I spent a month at the Jiangnan Shipyard workers' compound between 2014 and 2015, gathering data from both retrospective and contemporary sources. The most important retrospective sources were

my interviews with 21 people, including technical workers, technical staff and Party/state cadres (a list of interviewees is included in Appendix 1). I sought individuals who came from various social origins and held different political perspectives. Retrospective published resources included memoirs, biographical sketches of workers and cadres, workers' publication like poems and articles, and official and semiofficial school histories. I also consulted scholarly books and articles about the factory's history in the 1950s. Contemporary sources included articles about the shipyard and certain retired employees that appeared in national and domestic newspapers and journals, as well as factory annals produced by the factory. Documents were obtained from libraries in China and Hong Kong, the Jiangnan Shipyard archives, used-book markets and the personal collections of interviewees and others.

All accounts, whether retrospective or contemporary, oral or written, reflect the biases of the producers and the times. Contemporary and retrospective sources have complementary strengths and weaknesses. Since public expression in China has been and continues to be influenced by the prevailing ideology and political considerations of the period. On one hand, these materials recorded the political discourse of certain period and interpreted events from a period perspective. On the other hand, data produced retrospectively, such as interviews, memoirs, and histories are subjected to new sets of constraints and incentives. Individuals' recollections after several decades of drastic social change have to be treated with caution, since these narratives may undergo conscious or unconscious metamorphosis as subsequent events as well as political and ideological changes make their imprint. Therefore, I highly concentrate on how the narrative was produced before reconstructing certain historical events. One advantage of focusing on a single factory is that it was possible to get many different perspectives on the same historical fact.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis reinterprets the factory regime and the formation of the Chinese socialist

working class in Communist China. It comprises three thematic chapters. The story is told through a case study of the Jiangnan Shipyard, which, as one of the premier heavy industrial enterprises in modern China, was at the epicenter of socialist industrialization in the 1950s. In the first chapter, I argue that although the factory regime in the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s largely adopted the Soviet industrialization model, laborers' narratives demonstrated that the work unit system and Communist ideological emphasis on manual labor enabled the workers to have great autonomy in the labor process. Meanwhile, workers' reminiscences depict the Party's grassroots mobilization mechanism at the shop-floor level, challenging the conventional binary conceptual framework, which juxtaposes the state versus the working class in the context of socialism.

The second chapter turns its attention to workers' subjectivity formation. The process of workers' subjectivity formation in the 1950s' Jiangnan Shipyard also challenged the communist neo-traditionalism and socialist working-class moral economy paradigms in explaining the socialist factory regime. The case study reflects that the socialist work unit system and political mobilization at the shop-floor level realized a potential of empowerment as it transformed workers from exploited manual laborers to the masters of the state, glorifying the dignity of labor in socialist industrialization. However, my examination also illustrated that despite Jiangnan Shipyard workers in the 1950s enjoying full membership and considerable autonomy in the factory, real workplace democracy including self-managed labor process and elections at the shop-floor level was absent. Lacking workplace democracy eventually led to the workers' factionalized rebellion during the Cultural Revolution as well as the dismantling of the socialist work unit system and the working class in the post-Mao era.

The concluding chapter discusses the Chinese socialist way of industrialization and its relation with workplace democracy. Although the deficiency of workplace democracy at the shop-floor level eventually led to workers' factionalized rebellions during the

Cultural Revolution and the dismantling of the socialist work unit system and the socialist working class in the post-Mao era. In sum, I conclude that the story of the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s opens up our imagination of the socialist factory regime and allows us to rethink the way of building workers' self-managed production and reproduction structures in order to achieve full development of human capacities in the Mao era.

Chapter 2 The Making of a Chinese Socialist State-Owned Enterprise

The year 1949 witnessed sea changes in modern China: the Nationalist government, which equipped itself with powerful weapons and American aid, was totally overthrown by "countrified Communists." However, although the Chinese Communist Party had accumulated rich mass mobilization and governance experience in their rural base, the take-over and governance of the urban industrial sector was quite a challenging task. In theory, socialism is not only about building material basis, but also about constructing alternative production relations and social relations in such a new society (Guevara, 1967). Therefore, there's no reason to assume that production relations in Communist China would remain the same as in the pre-Liberation period. Even within the context of international Communism, the Chinese socialist experience of industrial construction and economic development in the 1950s was not a pure duplication of the Soviet Union model, which deserves further research under comparative perspective.

Production is an economic process and a political and social process. The labor process not only brings out particular social relations and an experience of those relations, but also embodies specific political and ideological apparatuses of production which regulate production relations (Burawoy, 1985). The classic analytical framework of the factory regime, which was proposed by Michael Burawoy, consists of the labor process, mode of reproduction of labor power, and enterprise relation to state and market (Burawoy, 1985: 17). In the late 1980s, Michael Burawoy and his collaborator Janos Lukacs examined two socialist Hungarian factories under this framework. They concluded the socialist Hungarian factory regime, which largely adopted the Soviet model, was "bureaucratic despotism," due to the rupture between the "paint socialism" ideology and the reality of shortage economy (Burawoy & Lukacs, 1992).

But how about the situation in Chinese socialist state-owned-enterprise during the

1950s? What do we have to be concerned with when we apply this framework to the Chinese socialist context? This chapter argues that at the shop-floor level of a key heavy industrial state-owned-enterprise, we can see how the local understandings of feudalism, liberation, and the content of national campaigns combined to make the presence of the state, which questioned the assumption that workers and the Party/state were in definite antagonism in the Chinese socialist context. Being one of the outstanding representatives of the "pre-Liberation Chinese capitalism majority" (Mao, 1999) and the key projects of socialist industrial construction in the 1950s, Jiangnan Shipyard is an appropriate case for examining the micro-mechanism of "state effect" (Hershatter, 2002) implementation and how shop-floor relationships, practices, and understandings are incorporated into workers' narratives and memories, which offer reflections on factory regime theory.

Socialist Industrialization in the 1950s

The Chinese urban industrial basis was extremely weak when the CCP took control of the cities in 1949. Industrial productivity was relatively low, and the limited amount of industrial enterprises were highly concentrated in major coastal cities, in addition to the economic deterioration resulting from wars, corruption, and inflation. Hence, the CCP accepted aid from the Soviet Union and held the slogan "Three years of recovery and ten years of development" in urban industrial sector restoration and construction (Meisner, 1999: 75-89). Former state-owned bureaucratic bourgeoisie enterprises, including Jiangnan Shipyard, were confiscated by the Party. In order to transform production relations, the Party launched "Democratic Reform" to pave the way to realize socialist industrialization. The "Democratic Reform" was to establish the Party, administration, trade union, and Youth League system within state-owned enterprises (Annals of Jiangnan Shipyard, 1999: 84).

After three years' restoration, this new socialist state nationalized key means of production for the sake of developing the socialist economy as well as realizing rapid

economic growth. The First Five Year Plan (FFYP) from 1953 to 1957 was the CCP'S socialist economy development blueprint. According to the FFYP, industrial production occurred under socialist public ownership and a highly centralized planning system, which was largely adopted from the Soviet Union. Within the state-owned enterprises like Jiangnan Shipyard, the Soviet model of labor management (like "one-man management" and piece-rate wage system) prevailed fin the workshop. The state investment in heavy industry occupied a dominant proportion, more than 80% (Li Fuchun, 1955). The FFYP realized significant achievements: domestic industrial product was doubled and the annual growth rate was 18% in 1957. In particular, the main industrial sector, such as the heavy and armament industry, had seen enormous growth (Meisner, 1999:106). In 1952, there were only about 6 million industrial workers (including construction workers) in total all over China but in 1957, this number had soared to 10 million (Howe, 1971).

But such a system resulted in some problems of bureaucratization and shortage economy, which created the hierarchy between political elites, technological elites and workers, differentiation among the "working class," and the distinction between town and countryside. Maoists launched large political mass mobilization (for example, the "Rectification" and "Anti Waste, Anti Conservative" Campaigns) to unleash inspiration from the masses to solve the problem caused by the Soviet model after the FFYP (Walder, 2015: 98). Inspired by the Maoist continuous revolution theory, the Party withdrew the Second Five Year Plan and initiated the Great Leap Forward Movement in 1958, which entailed the decentralization and rectification of the urban industrial sector. It was far from a satisfactory experiment, but the CCP did attempt to explore the Chinese socialist way of industrial development from 1958 to 1960.

The Jiangnan Shipyard

Located in Shanghai, one of the most industrialized cities in modern China, Jiangnan Shipyard dates back to the late Qing dynasty. Established in June 1865, the shipyard

originally belonged to the Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau, a modern ordnance factory born in the Westernization Movement. In 1905, the dock was formally separated from the manufacturing bureau in order to develop a "commercial operation" model like other foreign commercial docks in Shanghai (Annals, 1999: 63). Since then, the shipyard had always been a state-owned-enterprise and specialized in shipbuilding and repair in the service of the navy. As a key state-owned industrial enterprise, Jiangnan Shipyard reflected not only the cutting-edge technical progress of the Chinese ship manufacturing and mending industry but also the production relations and the nature of the state at that time. In other words, the Jiangnan Shipyard was crucial due to its technical and political capital.

After the victory in the anti-Japanese war, the Nationalist Navy officials resumed their control over Jiangnan Shipyard, operating with 456 managing staff and around 10,000 production workers (Frazier, 2002). Nominated by the Nationalist Party, Ma Deji became the new director who reformed the enterprise management in late 1945. On one hand, he professionalized and militarized non-production staff from the shipyard's personnel offices. For production workers, he converted the entire workforce from contract to full-time labor. However, with the deterioration in the economy and the Nationalist Party's failure in the civil war, Jiangnan Shipyard also encountered mounting pressures to reduce the size of the workforce, which led to the layoff crisis in the spring of 1947. Ma Deji also attempted to restructure wages at the shipyard so that pay was attached to jobs rather than to individuals. Yet in practice, wage adjustments could be given out in a highly arbitrary fashion, based on a worker's personal relations with the workshop director or shift leader.

During the civil war, Jiangnan Shipyard workers were living in extremely harsh conditions. Thanks to the serious inflation, workers' actual income drastically decreased from 1947 to 1949. Take ordinary technical workers as an example (who accounted for the greatest proportion of frontline workers): their basic monthly wage

was approximately 47 Yuan, which could still support a small family (including 3 to 5 members) in 1946. But in April 1949, the same amount of money could buy no more than 3 *dou* (around 22.5 kg) of rice. In order to get a chance to work, workers even had to secretly send presents or money to bribe the foremen or line supervisor. Beyond the workplace, most workers were living in huts because the enterprise didn't offer enough dormitories for them (Annals, 1999: 80).

The Technostructure and Management of Jiangnan Shipbuilding in the 1950s

Shipbuilding is a complex and demanding process with an elaborate division of labor. It consists of seven basic steps (Annals, 1999: 245-250):

(1) Lofting. In order to guarantee the least error and get to know the concrete size as well as the position of every necessary machine part, they would conduct shape, structure, and element lofting on the basis of a blueprint at a particular ratio. In the 1950s, all lofting labor was carried out manually.

(2) Assembly. Workers would assemble the baseplate, shell, and deck on the building berth. In the 1950s, the assembly process included the manual assembly welding of both interior components and hull.

(3) Welding. This step accounted for 30 to 50 percent of the complete hull manufacture process as well as prime costs. It also reflected the level of shipbuilding craft.

(4) Pipeline lofting and assembly. In the 1950s, this process was carried out by coppersmiths, who would conduct lofting after all interior devices were installed. Then the coppersmiths would turn these pipelines to production workers and manufacture corresponding pipelines.

(5) Outfitting. The ship would be launched and berthed in the pier, waiting for workers to install interior (motor and electronic) devices. This step accounted for almost half of the workload of shipbuilding.

(6) Painting. In the 1950s, workers would de-rust the ship by hand chipping and scraping before they used pneumatic sand blasting to paint the ship.
(7) Cable laying. From the 1950s to the mid-1960s, the ship usually utilized a DC system. Workers would work on cable cutting, release, and installation manually.

According to most workers' reminiscences, shipbuilding or ship repairing was quite a hardship (*ku*), thanks to most steps taking place outdoors while the dock was exposed directly to the sun and rain. Many workers recalled the manual labor of shipbuilding then as "authentic hard work" (*hen zhengzong de*). Even in the indoor workshop, workers still had to go through high temperature and humidity in summer and cold in winter. Most workers I've interviewed told me that owing to the hardness of shipbuilding and repairing, Jiangnan Shipyard was inclined to recruit male rather than female workers. Whether I believe in this explanation or not, I have to admit that women did account for a very small proportion of the employees and most of my interviewees were male, which sets the limitation of my study.

Such a technostructure also embodied the bargaining power of proficient technical workers. Take welding, one of the most crucial steps in shipbuilding, for example. Welding wasn't widely used in Jiangnan Shipyard until 1953 when the state invited experts from the Soviet Union to professionally train Jiangnan Shipyard workers. Most interviewees told me they tended to agree that only those who were more "technically smart" (*jishu haode*) could be competent as welders, and welders were surely more "technically smart" than workers from other posts (like painting). Allowing for the pressure to industrialize and the context of the US embargo as well as Cold War geopolitics (Yan, 2003), state-owned ordnance enterprises in the heavy industrial sector like Jiangnan Shipyard played an important role in Chinese socialist economic development in the Mao era. Therefore, technical workers from Jiangnan Shipyard possessed greater bargaining power in terms of the technical dimension (compared to light industrial enterprises) and the ideological dimension (compared to collective

enterprises) in the urban industrial sector.

The Governance Structure and Organizational Management of the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s

The Nationalist government resumed control of Jiangnan Shipyard in late summer of 1945. The factory underwent professionalization and militarization of the shipyard's personnel offices while the director Ma Deji determined to abolish the labor contract system and expand workers' welfare provisions (Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard Labor Movement History Group, 1995). However, while the Nationalist army was continually retreating in the civil war and inflation ratcheted up as time went by, Jiangnan Shipyard also met mounting pressures to reduce the size of its workforce, which led to layoff announcements in the spring of 1947. In order to handle these layoffs, management instructed production department engineers and shift leaders to rate each worker according to his or her skill, age, and "attitude and performance." Those who scored lowest would be cut. Ma Deji and shipyard officials permitted several dozen foremen to carry out the functions of staff members in a procedure called "labor replaces staff" or "artisans replace staff" (*gongdaizhi, yidaizhi*), a move that clearly enhanced the power of foremen relative to professional staff (SASS Economics Institute, 1983). As the CCP moved south in the first half of 1949, local underground party members within factories received orders to organize factory protection teams to safeguard facilities and equipment. Under Nationalist government orders to dismantle the shipyard's productive equipment and destroy whatever machinery could not be transported to Taiwan, Ma Deji instead aligned himself with shipyard workers who had organized teams to protect the shipyard and its capital equipment (Frazier, 2002: 117).

On May 25, 1949, the advance detachment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Shanghai. Military representatives from the navy department of Shanghai Military Takeover Committee took over this former state-owned bureaucratic bourgeois

enterprise. The PLA cooperated with former local underground Party members within factories to dispose of explosives left by the Nationalist government and safeguard the factory and the neighborhoods nearby. The Shanghai Military Takeover Committee declared that all employees in Jiangnan Shipyard would enjoy "Three-retain" (*sanyuan*) like in the pre-liberation era: retaining their former position (*yuan zhi*), retaining their former salary (*yuan xin*), and retaining the former system (*yuan zhidu*). Military representatives also sent assistants into every office within the enterprise to help the factory resume production and order as soon as possible. In September, Jiangnan was passed to the management of the logistics headquarters, which was directly led by the navy department. Jiangnan Shipyard didn't terminate its military takeover status until March 1950, when the logistics headquarters demanded that all takeover cadres work in corresponding departments as formal Jiangnan Shipyard employees (Annals, 1999: 82-83). Through a makeshift provision system used by CCP military units, shipyard management provided employees with minimal grain and cloth subsidies along with their wages.

The new revolutionary state also built up a complete governance system of Party, administration, trade union, and Youth League (*dang zheng gong tuan*) in the Jiangnan Shipyard along with the resumption of production. The Party branch from the takeover committee was combined with the former underground Party organization within Jiangnan Shipyard before liberation. Most administration staff were military representatives. An Employee Representative Council was established within the shipyard with the help of the Shanghai Municipal Trade Union. The same went for the Jiangnan Shipyard Youth League, which was supervised by Shanghai Municipal Youth League. The Democratic Reform Campaign (*minzhu gaige*) took place in April 1950, which meant the socialist state-owned Jiangnan Shipyard would reform its production relations, including establishing the Employee Representative Congress (*zhigong daibiao dahui*), abolishing unreasonable rules (like the search system), implementing labor protection regulations, and reforming the wage system (implemented the eight-

level wage system). In December 1952, Jiangnan Shipyard was formally managed by the Shipping Industry Bureau from the First Machinery Industrial Ministry of the central government (Annals, 1999: 84-85). The shipyard also launched several political campaigns at the beginning of the 1950s, such as expelling "reactionaries" and other politically unsavory elements among the workforce and staff at the shipyard and the Three Antis (*sanfan*) campaign, which exposed and punished incidents of corruption, bureaucratism, and waste among state and CCP cadres in state-owned factories and government offices (Frazier, 2002:130).

Communist China launched the First Five Year Plan from 1953 to 1957. The state began to adopt a central planning system during the FFYP, different to the former supply system (*gongji zhi*). In January 1953, Jiangnan Shipyard established the four-level production system, which was factory-workshop-work section-group from the top to bottom. The shipyard, being a prominent heavy industrial state-owned enterprise, adopted a complete Soviet Union industrial management system, such as imposing construction demand from the top to bottom, issuing "work slips" (*pai gongdan*) to manage production, and managing labor quotas, etc. The factory management would formulate a monthly production plan for the workshop, then the workshop management would issue a monthly or biweekly production plan for the work section, and the work section would directly arrange the group biweekly production plan. Throughout the whole FFYP, Jiangnan Shipyard had developed complete shipbuilding, ship repairing, and machine-making assembly lines, which made it one of the most influential shipyards in socialist China. In spite of the production development and erection of infrastructure, Jiangnan Shipyard also reformed the production relations and labor management at that time. By June 1956, it had formally established the director responsibility system under the leadership of the Party committee (*dangwei lingdaoxia de changzhang fuzezhi*), which put great emphasis on the balance between "political work" (*zhengzhi gongzuo*) and "technical work" (*jishu gongzuo*). In terms of welfare provision, the enterprise deployed a permanent employment and work unit system,

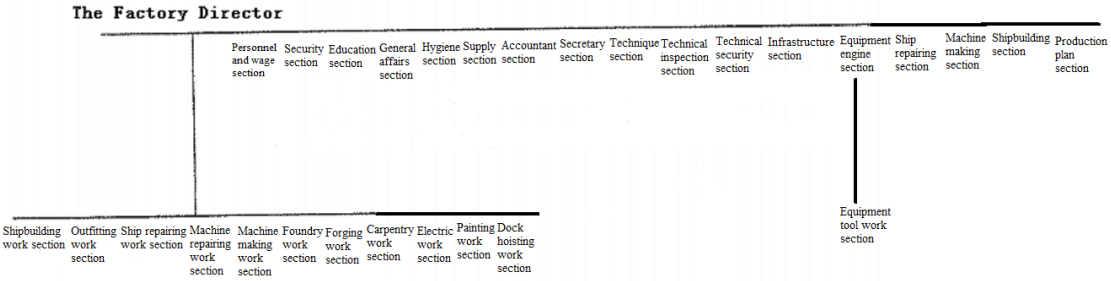
including constructing workers' compounds, clinics and hospitals, canteens, nurseries, kindergarten, primary schools and middle schools, etc. Basically, all employees in Jiangnan Shipyard were permanently employed, and all employees along with their relatives could enjoy these welfare benefits free or with very limited fees (Annals, 1999: 86-89).

From November 1957, the Party committee in Jiangnan Shipyard launched the Rectification Campaign (*zhengfeng yundong*) in order to encourage "the masses" (like ordinary shop-floor workers) to criticize the existing problems in the shipyard through Big Debates (*damingdafang*) and Big Character Posters (*dazibao*). Afterward, the Party and administration of the shipyard further mobilized the masses and launched the "Double-Antis" (*shuangfan*) Campaign (anti-waste and anti-conservative). According to the official documents, the masses were soon mobilized after the command from the Party committee and workers mainly concentrated on cadres' style of work and production management (Annals, 1999: 90). The Maoists had seen some problems resulting from the FFYP, like serious bureaucratization and a larger income and status disparity between workers and cadres, proficient and novitiate workers, heavy and light industrial sectors, and urban and rural areas (Meisner, 1999). In the Jiangnan Shipyard, these two campaigns were radical adjustments to the Soviet-style industrial development model, say, the FFYP.

As for the Great Leap Forward in Jiangnan Shipyard from 1958 to 1960, the official annals adopted the popular narrative of how this campaign turned into a feverish, "exaggerated" and "communist" utopia plan and how it destroyed the production (like the "great steel making with indigenous method" and unreasonable production plan as well as machine innovation). However, some technical workers I've interviewed recalled the Great Leap Forward as a "good" campaign because it did evoke workers' enthusiasm, although the campaign proposed some unreasonable blueprints and people were too optimistic about achieving the goal.

At the end of the 1950s, Jiangnan Shipyard adjusted the enterprise organization. The whole shipyard was made up of 17 sections (*ke*) at the management level and 12 work sections (*chejian*) at the production level. The following chart clearly illustrates the enterprise organization structure in the 1950s.

The Organization Structure of Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s



Source: Annals, 1999: 91

The Socialist Labor Process in the Jiangnan Shipyard During the 1950s

Shanghai, being one of the most urbanized regions in China, concentrated a large proportion of industrial investments, ranging from foreign capital to bureaucratic capital and national private capital. That's why Shanghai became one of the cradles of the modern Chinese industrial working class. Most workers in Shanghai were from suburban Shanghai or more remote areas, like the countryside in Jiangsu or Zhejiang Province. They usually moved to Shanghai at a very young age, either with their parents or some other close relatives, trying to earn a living in this metropolis. Most of them experienced the Civil War period (1953–1957), and some even underwent the Japanese occupations (before 1945) when they were still young kids. Their experiences varied from factory to factory that they worked in, but they shared numerous expressions of similar "bitterness" (*ku*) or hardships. Being humiliated by Japanese invaders was *ku*. Sheltering in relatives' doorway to wait for a job opportunity and witnessing how

gangsters controlled the business within the neighborhood was *ku*. The bosses abandoned the factory and fled to Hong Kong, leaving workers nothing, which was also a source of *ku*. Working 12 to 14 hours a day in a humid and dirty work section, as well as tolerating hyperinflation was particularly *ku* for them.

Master Wu came from rural areas of southern Jiangsu and began to work in a small wireless factory in Shanghai before 1949. As he recalled,

> Shanghai was really a big city. There used to be a huge number of poor people living here. They lived a really bitter life. I was very young when Japs occupied Shanghai, and I witnessed how bad those bastards were! Once an old master cycled on the boulevard and didn't cross over the tunnel as the Japs stipulated. The Japs not only slapped him hard across the face but also confiscated his bicycle and punished him to stand in the hot sun for two hours! We ordinary people absolutely hated these brutal bastards…
>
> Shanghai was also messy before Liberation. Gangsters were everywhere. Poor people were also everywhere. I saw poor coolies residing in boats on the Suzhou River. They earned a meager living by carrying extremely heavy goods for cargo boats. But those gangsters, particularly heads like Du Yuesheng and Huang Jinrong, they simply lived parasitic lives. They shared strong connections with the Nationalist government and lived on feneration business. They didn't need to labor at all.… Gangsters fought with each other (hei chi hei) quite often, while poor people suffered a lot…
>
> I used to work in a wireless factory located at Suzhou. The factory moved to Shanghai later, so I worked in Shanghai as well. As the Peoples' Liberation Army was approaching, the boss was scared to death so he fled away. The factory was therefore dismissed, so I set up a wireless stall at Zhifu Road for a living. But such business could not last long, so I worked as an intern in a private wireless enterprise, located at Taicang Building, Zhejiang Road. My

monthly wage was 4 Yuan then. In May 1949, Shanghai was liberated. This boss also fled away, so I became unemployed again.

The Communist Shanghai Municipal Government established Shanghai Unemployed Aid Committee (Shanghaishi shiye jiuji weiyuanhui), welcoming all unemployed workers in Shanghai to register and wait for the distribution of job opportunities under the planning of the Party. I registered and therefore had the chance to take the recruiting exam of Jiangnan Shipyard. I passed the exam so I later turned into a formal employee of this shipyard.

Even workers in Jiangnan Shipyard went through panic and hardships. Master Guo came from Fujian Province and joined the shipyard in 1947, when the enterprise was still under the Nationalist Navy's control:

The National Party was arranging Jiangnan Shipyard employees to disassemble the equipment and bury explosives, preparing for fleeing to Taiwan and leaving the deteriorated industrial basis to the Communist Party. Everyone in the shipyard got into extreme panic, because the factory was also undergoing harsh staff reduction, much less the inflation then…

My father had migrated to Taiwan several years ago. So it wouldn't be a big problem for me if I were really eager to leave Mainland China. But I decided to stay. On one hand, I heard from my father that the Nationalist Party did really a bad job even in Taiwan, which was very messy there. On the other hand, what the Communist Party impressed me the most about was its promise of "everybody can have food to eat, everybody can have work to do (renren you fanchi, renren you gongzuo)." This was the most touching thing for me! I just got married then and my family was badly in need of money and food. You can imagine how much we longed for a stable life…

In contrast to the illusion created by today's mass media, the reminiscence of the pre-

liberation era from these old workers presented the precariousness of the so-called "golden Republican era." Although the upper class, such as bureaucrats, local gangster heads, compradors, and capitalists were living a luxurious life, ordinary people like peasants, coolies, and manual laborers suffered a lot in such a turbulent era, under the repression of "Three Mountains" (*sanzuo dashan*)—imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism, and feudalism.

After the takeover, the Jiangnan Shipyard resumed production while recruiting a large number of technical workers from suburban Shanghai and elsewhere (mostly rural areas around Shanghai) in China. The exodus of these migrant workers to industrial cities like Shanghai could be understood as a push by the state's modernization plans, which required intense rural input for industrialization, in the context of the US embargo and Cold War geopolitics. Of the 21 employees I interviewed who had worked in Jiangnan Shipyard during the Mao era, 13 were recruited in the 1950s and most were male. All employees in Jiangnan Shipyard, whether or not they were recruited after 1949, enjoyed permanent employment as a member of a state-owned enterprise and complete labor welfare provided by the enterprise. Compared to their bitter living and working experiences before getting into Jiangnan Shipyard, they gained a strong feeling of "turning upside down" (*fanshen*), which embodied a strong loyalty to the enterprise, Party, and the state.

Master Cai was from rural Taixing of Jiangsu Province. He came to Shanghai when he was 16 and took the Jiangnan Shipyard recruitment exam in 1954. He still remembered the moment when he finally became an employee of the shipyard:

> That was my first time to be in Shanghai. I went to Shanghai by myself and followed the instruction to the destination given by my brother, who was working in Jiangnan Shipyard then. I took the exam soon after my arrival. Unexpectedly, I passed the exam. I still remember those moments when I

checked in: my brother gave me 5 Fen to take bus to shipyard; I had a physical examination in a foreign doctor's clinic on Huaihai Road; I was happy that I could work in the state-owned factory instead of tolerating the bitterness of agricultural hardships…

The factory first provided us with a complete set of technical training: on one hand, we had some theory classes in the morning, learning some basic knowledge about ship making, like how to read and make blueprints, how to weld, so on and so forth; on the other hand, we took some practice classes in the afternoon, like practicing welding in the work section. The training lasted for six months, after which we became formal welder of the factory. All graduates turned into level-three (san ji) welders at that time.

Working in Jiangnan Shipyard was much better than staying in the countryside. Now I could live in the dorm on Quxi Road offered by the enterprise. The enterprise also provided us with various welfare facilities, like clinic, canteens, elementary school, middle school, nursery, etc. All employees could use these facilities free of charge, or with very limited costs.

My monthly wage was 57.5 Yuan then. I spent 15 to 20 Yuan every month on eating in the canteen and buying some clothes—that's completely enough! Then I sent the rest of the salary to my rural family, when my mother was still alive then. I worked in the work section as a welder eight hours a day. We had three shifts, and we switched shifts every two weeks. The first shift was from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., which included an hour of noon break at 12 p.m. The second shift was from 4 p.m. to 12 p.m., while the third shift was from 12 p.m. to 7 a.m. in tomorrow morning. We did not only get technical training before working but also received labor protection instruction as well as some instruments, like uniforms and labor shoes, at the same time. I worked as a welder for five years, before I was assigned to the Party publicity section by our factory leader.

Our wages would rise as our seniority increased. I was still young then,

> so I worked indoors while senior colleagues worked outdoors. We were extremely enthusiastic in our work! It was snowing heavily then, but we still kept working willingly. Because we really cherished our work then, and we loved our factory as our home…

Regarding the political dimension of the labor process, one can't ignore the master-apprentice system (*shitu zhi*) and how Party, administration, trade union, and youth league, the representations of the state at the micro level, actually interacted with workers. Even if they had completed the training program and become formal employees in the work section, new workers were usually distributed with particular veteran workers, who would help these unskilled newcomers to fit into the production process as quickly as possible. These veteran workers therefore became the "masters" (*shifu*) of the neophytes, say, apprentices (*tudi*). In contrast to the situation before 1949, the master-apprentice system in the 1950s was more equal: though relying on the master's supervision, an apprentice's life was more independent because all knowledge and skills were public other than possessed by particular persons. Being members of a state-owned enterprise, masters and apprentices were in a relatively equal relationship, sometimes sharing very strong emotional connections with each other. Masters and apprentices' relationship also extended beyond the production sphere, which is revealed in the reproduction sphere, like caring about apprentices' lives after work (Fu & Qu, 2015). Master Cai still remembered how his master cared about him when he first arrived at the welding post, how anxious he was when he witnessed his master injured accidentally in the night shift, and how he took his *shifu* to the hospital immediately. Another interviewee, Master Ma, a female printing worker, told me that: "Whoever entered the factory as a worker, he or she had to follow a *shifu* to learn how to labor in the actual practice step by step, even if you are a university graduate. The so-called *shifu* would be a lifelong relationship with very strong emotion!"

On the other hand, the state representation at the shop-floor level also reflected the

nature of the labor process in Jiangnan Shipyard during the 1950s. Directly established by the state, the Party, administration, trade union, and Youth League had covered every level of the enterprise organization. Referring to the interaction between ordinary workers and local level state cadres, many interesting stories were told by my interviewees. According to their reminiscences, cadres from these state organs were quite hearty. We can take Master Wu's recall of the trade union cadres' work as an example:

> The trade union at that time was really working for workers' interests. Why do I say it's "real"? You see, the enterprise couldn't fire anyone randomly in the Mao era. One may make some mistakes on particular occasions, but it doesn't necessarily mean that he or she is really a bad person.
>
> I had a young colleague who was in a relationship with a young lady from another factory. They were going to marry each other very soon. But the young man was short of money. So he stole lead barrels and covered them with the swimming suit before taking them away from the factory. As the frequency increased, the doorkeeper of the factory noticed and kept an eye on him. Not surprisingly, the doorkeeper finally found out that this guy was actually stealing factory property. Then the security section staff came, inquiring how many barrels he had sold and how much he had earned. The factory calculated that he had stolen barrels about 30 times. Though you couldn't fire an employee at that time, the factory still arranged a trade union cadre to "do this young man's tough work" (zuo ta de sixiang gongzuo). The cadre seriously criticized his mistakes, warning that it's definitely prohibited to steal factory property on any occasion. But at the same time, the enterprise didn't accuse this man nor fire him. Instead, the trade union cadre seriously examined my colleague's dilemma, and proposed a solution for him: he could borrow money from the trade union, but he had to work overtime on Sunday to compensate this loan. Once he completely compensated the borrowed amount, he could stop the overtime shift.

That sounded quite reasonable for both sides, and the problem was also solved.

Some former technical workers, like Master Wan, remembered that the trade union cadres also mobilized them to participate in part-time learning after work. In order to achieve the greatest mobilization effects, these cadres visited workers' homes one by one and clarified the necessity and benefits of such courses, which were provided by the enterprise. In spite of distributing certain welfare benefits, the trade union, say, the state at the shop-floor level was definitely "politics by demand" (*zhengzhi guashuai*), which played a fairly crucial role in shaping workers' relations with the state.

The permanent employment, complete welfare provision, and worker-oriented politics at the shop-floor level together lay the foundation of workers' power in the Jiangnan Shipyard, in both technical and political dimensions. Being the fulcrum of the shipyard, old workers possessed relative autonomy in the labor process and their continued identity with manual labor throughout their lives. One of the masterpieces produced by Jiangnan Shipyard in the late 1950s was the famous "Million-ton" hydraulic press, which was built by these ordinary workers independently. Building such a huge machine at that time was an extremely difficult task. The factory annals (1999: 592–593) recorded one of the things that happened in the production process:

> The more intractable problem was, there's no bridge crane in the factory! There was only an 8-ton crawler crane and some small lifting jack parking in the factory. Could we successfully transport all those heavy components into the workshop?
>
> Wei Maoli, the group leader of the jack-up group, whose nickname was "old Shandong," came to workshop. The 300-ton crossbeam touched off a heated discussion among all lifting workers. Some proposed to erect two portal frames inside the workshop and use a windlass and gun tackle to hang it. Some proposed to dig a hole with 12 meters at length, 8 meters at width and 6 meters at depth, which could help the crossbeam to turn in and out though this hole.

Proposals came one by one, then they were rejected one by one as well. Throughout the discussion, only Wei Maoli kept silent, and quietly heard about everybody's suggestions.

"I came up with a solution," Wei finally opened his mouth. "Let's make two frames, and wield two axles respectively on both sides of the crossbeam. Then we move this crossbeam with only a few wire ropes. But in order to successfully hang it to the ideal height, we still need these three things: the first is 40 to 50 lifting jacks, the second is a large amount of baulk and the third is to increase several dozens of lifting workers."

The director from the heavy machinery factory satisfied Wei's first two requirements: "We have enough lifting jacks. We don't have so many lifting workers, but we can mobilize the masses to help you. However, we don't have enough baulk." The problem was reported to the Shanghai municipal leaders, and the government informed Shanghai Wood Warehouse and finally the third problem was solved.

Such a battle was known as "ants moved the mountain" (mayi ban dashan). Those who operated those lifting jacks were not only lifting workers from the Jiangnan Shipyard but also leaders and workers from the Shanghai Heavy Machinery Factory. The hard work lasted for three days and nights, and the crossbeam was finally lifted to 6 meters, say, the ideal height. When they removed all the baulk under the crossbeam and pulled the wire rope, the crossbeam smoothly turned around as expected.

From this story, we can see how technical workers, particularly those with proficient skills, were really behaving and being treated as the conscious masters of the actual labor process: workers were actively participating in the discussion about what to produce and how to labor. The cadres, technical management in the shipyard and municipal officials also adopted the proposal raised by an ordinary technical worker, while trying their best to fulfill his requirements. Many old workers told me that even

the factory director was extremely courteous to them at that time, not to mention the top skilled workers in the shipyard, whose wages were even higher than the factory director. Allowing for the very limited wage disparity between workers and cadres in the factory then (Andreas, 2011b), workers were in a relatively equal relationship with cadres from the upper level within the enterprise.

The technical dimension of workers' strong bargaining power fostered their political dignity of being an ordinary worker. Master Wan, one of the most skilled workers in the shipyard, said to me, "If you don't possess good technique, you won't be able to gain any prestige among we ordinary workers. For example, if we had to select one of our colleagues to be the production group leader, surely we would consider his technical proficiency first, then his political quality. If he could solve those technical problems we couldn't solve, definitely he was superior to us in the technical sense. It would be unimaginable if a group leader couldn't solve technical problems!" Some workers recalled that cadres sometimes even earned less than a skilled worker at the same level, and workers were not that scared of cadres in the 1950s. The pressure from the workers continued to shape the worker-cadre relationship in the Mao era, which was relatively equal then.

The valorization of manual labor was also standing out in social life in the Mao era. As mentioned above, workers were proud of the technical training provided for newcomers because of its concentration on actual practice, which was called "the combination of work and study" (*gongxue jiehe*). It was possible for workers to cope with technical problems in the labor process and share their successful experiences within and outside the enterprise, and some might be rewarded with a particular bonus. The old labor model, Master Zhao, was appraised as the fifth-level worker in the 1950s when he was still in his early 20s. Since he was one of the most skilled welders in the factory, he was invited to give welding lectures at Shanghai Jiaotong University in the late 1970s. The enterprise leader once considered promoting him as the workshop leader. But Master

Zhao rejected this: “I prefer to work downside (*zai xia mian*). I felt energetic only when I did technical work in the workshop. This was what I am really fond of. Stuff like workshop leader was not tempting to me at all. In the Mao era, one can’t earn any money without labor. But today we can see how corrupted those cadres were, let alone doing manual labor by themselves at the front line.”

In short, to have a historical understanding of the conditions of labor for the old Jiangnan Shipyard workers requires that we examine the terrain and fabric of sociality in the 1950s, in which manual labor had a moral-political value and the vision of modernity was rooted in ordinary workers’ labor. Their relative autonomy in the labor process was enabled in a society where the dignity of manual labor was woven into the state’s socialist industrialization plan, in contrast to the capitalist labor process observed by Harry Braverman (1974), which brought about the separation of worker and labor process as well as separation between conception and execution. The capitalist labor process was under capitalists’ and managers’ control, while knowledge and technology were degraded as the private property of capital. This finally leads to the workers’ deskilling. However, in socialist China, the factory regime at the time tied labor to the means of production (Andreas, 2012). Such a sociality brought about relatively great autonomy for these workers, both in technical and political terms, which clearly reflected the nondominance of commodification and objectification of labor throughout the 1950s in Jiangnan Shipyard.

Rethinking the Nature of “the State” in Socialist China

Examining the lives of old workers in socialist China, one cannot escape the concern with the state, for industrial relations were drastically transformed by the state and its specific modernization plan (Chen, 2009). However, scholars are quite used to regarding the Party/state as a fixed entity objectified by the “masses.” This is particularly common among studies on Chinese socialist factory regime and labor, which assume a high degree of unified intervention from the expansive and almighty

Party/state into the industrial relation. Yet since all socialism is local, it would be interesting to rethink how the central state was understood, interpreted, implemented, and emphasized in widely varied environments (Hershatter, 2002). In the case of Jiangnan Shipyard throughout the 1950s, rearrangements of labor and recalibrations of time were mandated in state policies, but they were worked out through workers' interpretations and practices and embodied local understandings. Instead of merely emphasizing how abstract communist ideology or ethical principles structured the production relations in a Chinese socialist state-owned enterprise, we ought to observe what the concrete mechanism of "ideology" was and how it worked at the micro level, which could reveal how workers' subjectivity was transformed in this historical process. Particularly now, sixty years later, these changes have been incorporated into local narratives and memories.

One such local narrative is that of Guo Youdong, who worked as the trade union vice president of Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s. Born into a rural family of Fujian Province in 1924, Guo was left by his parents, who migrated to Taiwan to earn a living. Due to the Japanese invasion and extreme poverty at that time, Guo was forced to leave his hometown and went to an uncle's home for shelter, which was located in southwestern Fujian. As a semi-illiterate rural boy, Guo went to Shanghai to find a job and finally became a formal worker at the Jiangnan Shipyard five years later, under the introduction of an old skilled worker. However, the shipyard was in a turbulent era before 1949. On one hand, the Nationalist government was arranging employees to disassemble equipment and bury explosives in order to degrade the shipyard's production capacity. On the other hand, the shipyard was undergoing a large employee downsizing. Guo was also in an extreme panic since he didn't know whether he would lose his job as well, let alone the hardships resulting from hyperinflation. There was underground Party organization within the shipyard, but Guo didn't know such an existence until the evacuation in 1949. However, one of Guo's colleagues was an underground Party member, and he consistently told Guo that the Communist Party could secure

everybody's employment, which was fairly attractive to Guo. Also, these underground Party colleagues mobilized workers to protect the factory and persuaded them to stay in Shanghai rather than flee to Taiwan.

The Communists took over Jiangnan Shipyard on May 25, 1949. The events that led to Guo's recognition as a trade union cadre began in 1953, when he was 29 and was elected by the workers in the workshop. Being a helpful dispatcher, Guo gained a good reputation among his colleagues, thanks to his hard work. The Party connector first arranged for him to do some basic publicity work like painting blackboard displays and organizing worker parades in the factory. Guo didn't know that the Party scheduled such arrangements deliberately until he was told by a formal Party cadre that the Party was training him to be a new cadre. Then this formal cadre encouraged him to "recall bitterness memory" (*yiku sitian*) and helped him to figure out the root of bitterness, which brought out the concept of "three mountains" (*sanzuo dashan*), class struggles and the socialist industrialization of modern China. Guo was extremely touched by this explanation and the call for the proletariat to become masters of the nation. As a trade union cadre, Guo brought his enthusiasm and these theories to the front line to mobilize and organize workers to participate in production and political gatherings (like the employee representative congress and parades) throughout the 1950s. These activities not only strengthened the connection between the masses and the Party, which legitimized the Communist Party's governance in the factory, but also transformed workers' recognition of labor, rooted in their brand new identity as the masters of Jiangnan Shipyard as well as the state. As Guo recalled, "Workers were highly conscious then. They worked for day and night without any concern with overtime salary or going home!"

As the full-time vice president of the trade union, Guo was in charge of the distribution of compound housing, the collection of production suggestions, and the mobilization of workers' adult education after work throughout the 1950s. All these activities were

organized and conducted by the trade union publicly. For instance, the workers' compound, Jiangnan New Village, was completed in 1953. The trade union cadres, like Guo, welcomed all workers to apply for the housing and pored over their application information one by one before publicizing it to the whole enterprise. Based on the information released to the public, all workers involved in this process could participate in the discussion on how to distribute the housing, which was also organized by the trade union. Basically, those who lived in the worst conditions or with bigger family could get relative priority in the distribution process, which was agreed by most of the applicants. Guo, on behalf of the trade union, also welcomed employees to propose "reasonable suggestions" (*helihua jianyi*) to the enterprise management, ranging from production sphere to reproduction sphere. After the collection process, Guo and his trade union colleagues sorted out these suggestions and delivered them to various sections in the enterprise for further implementation. The trade union was also responsible for supervising this implementation process. Guo introduced many of the workers interviewed in my fieldwork, and most of them spoke highly of him thanks to his contribution to the Jiangnan Shipyard workers' benefits for last sixty years. Some of them used to take the adult education courses, which were mobilized and organized by Guo in the 1950s and had a great influence in shaping these old workers' conceptions on the meaning of labor and their relations with newborn socialist China.

Guo's experience, particularly his transformation from an ordinary worker who knew nothing about communism or the Communist Party to a self-conscious trade union cadre who devoted the rest of his life to serving Jiangnan Shipyard workers, would be incomprehensible without the activities of the Party/state. In his story, we can see that "the state" was no longer an abstract or external entity objectified by "the masses." Guo Youdong remained an employee of Jiangnan Shipyard all his adult life while becoming a local embodiment of Party/state authority, say, the trade union cadre in the enterprise as well. Instead of assuming that there is a precise boundary between state and society, or regarding the state as a "free-standing agent issuing orders" (Mitchell, 1991: 93), we

should seek out how "the network of institutional arrangement and political practice that forms the material substance of the state is diffuse and ambiguously defined as its edges" (Mitchell, 1999: 76).

Scholars who write about the socialist factory regime are not accustomed to thinking in this way. After all, someone either belonged to the Party or not, and the Party had substantially traceable relations with the state organs. It seems that once the Party-state speaks, it signs its name. We usually regard the Party/state as an abstract or even antagonistic entity versus the masses, say, the working class. Early accounts of the socialist factory regime and the formation of the Chinese socialist working class emphasized how the state/Party, as external forces, manufactured the docile masses and transformed them into the inferior belongings of the state/Party. Arguing whether there is more continuity or discontinuity in the factory regime before and after Liberation cannot escape discussion of workers' subjectivity transformation throughout this process. In classical accounts of socialist industrial relations, the state/Party seems to be totally objectified by the socialist workers, while the workers appear mainly as objects of state attention or else living under the shadow of communist brainwashing. Only by moving beyond the understanding of the socialist state/Party in particular contexts can we rethink the nature of the socialist factory regime as well as the formation of the socialist working class.

We must go beyond the dichotomous stereotype of the Party/state, on the one hand, and the workers, with the rearrangement of production relations, on the other, and think about what the actual mechanism was and how the workers' subjectivity was shaped through this concrete mechanism. In other words, what sorts of practice, what sorts of local mobilization and understanding, created a state effect in a socialist state-owned enterprise throughout the 1950s? When the Party deliberately "trained" Guo to be an eligible trade union cadre by mobilizing him to get "bitterness education" and organize workers to participate in political meetings or parades, Guo himself, along with

thousands of ordinary workers, was living in brand new forms of sociality and public expressions. These "local practices" surely helped to shape workers' new contours. Not only knowing how bitter he was before the Liberation but also understanding why he was no longer a repressed subject in the new society, clearly revealed that local understandings of repression and liberation and the content of political campaigns together make the presence of the Party/state.

Conclusion: "Paint Socialism" or Not?

The Jiangnan Shipyard underwent a substantial transformation in 1949, especially in terms of its production relations. While workers in both the pre-Liberation era and the post-1949 era conducted similar manual labor in the form of wage labor, essential differences exist in the relations and processes of labor in these two eras, which reflect the political epistemic differences between them. In this chapter, I argue that the permanent employment and complete welfare benefit provision for state-owned enterprise employees, like workers in the Jiangnan Shipyard, were the sources of workers' technical and political bargaining power. Workers could possess relatively great autonomy in their labor process, like actively participating in discussions on how to labor and what to produce as well as being in a relatively equal relationship with enterprise cadres. One critical enabling structural and ideological condition for such labor process autonomy was the valuation of manual labor in the 1950s and the egalitarian, laborer-oriented communist ideology that cherished manual labor embedded in the urban sociality and the state's specific modernization plan. This valorization of manual labor, as a representation of the politicized and radicalized Mao-era ethos, was performed in the labor process and expressed by the labor process itself.

Workers' subjectivity was also transformed within this labor process, as is revealed in their interactions with local Party/state practitioners at the shop-floor level. In this sense, we should rethink the nature of the state before we refer to the typology of the socialist

labor process. According to Burawoy and Lukacs's examination of the factory regime in former Hungarian heavy industrial factories, the telling characteristic of the socialist factory regime was bureaucratic despotism, which embodied intense intervention from the state and an incentive mechanism generated by the "paint socialism" illusion and shortage economy. In other words, such classical factory regime and labor process theory regards the socialist state as an external and antagonistic object to the working class, which draws the conclusion that the Party/state only serves as a hegemonic apparatus which suppresses workers' agency under the name of socialism. Without examining the actual mechanism of local practices from the Party/state and its local effects, we could easily come to such a stereotypical state-masses dichotomy.

Instead of falling into the trap of telling a story of continuity, which focuses on whether there was more or less autonomy for workers in the labor process before and after Liberation, I'd like to link the autonomy to the wider configuration of sociality and political ethos in the Mao era which underpins workers' position as "masters" of the enterprise and the state, revealed in the formation of socialist working class subjects. It is in this sense can we realize the radical nature of socialism.

Chapter 3 Reinterpreting the Formation of the Chinese Socialist Working Class in the 1950s

After the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949, it reorganized all urban workplaces, ranging from Party and administration organs to public institutions like hospitals and schools as well as factories and enterprises in the work unit model (*danwei*). All urban residents were employed in particular work units and enjoyed permanent employment and complete welfare benefits offered by the *danwei* (Andreas, 2012). Such an employment system continually restructured employees' subjectivity throughout the 1950s in the newborn socialist China. Also, in the discursive context of post-Liberation development in China, statements like "the working class is the master of the state" (*gongren jieji dangjiazuozhu*) registered workers, particularly urban state-owned enterprise industrial workers, with a superior position in this revolutionary state. What appeared in such statements was a desire for a new and modern socialist laborers' land constituted by the "socialist new man," say, the conscious socialist working class. Both the work unit system and the formation of the socialist working class enabled China's specific modernization and accumulation plan in the Mao era.

Yet one cannot simply discuss the work unit system and the formation of the socialist working class without referring to the political economy and sociality in post-Liberation China. The establishment of socialist China initiated an unprecedented industrialization plan throughout the 1950s, including three years' restoration from 1949 to 1952, the First Five Year Plan from 1953 to 1957, which largely adopted the Soviet Union model, and then the 1957 Party Rectification campaign and Great Leap Forward. Based on socialist public ownership and a highly centralized planning system, industrial production in socialist China then embodied both Real Socialism patterns identical to the Soviet model and the adjustment by the Chinese Communist Party, especially Maoists. In this chapter, I analyze the following questions: How did the political economy in 1950s' China generate the conditions for a new experiment in

socialist industrialization and capital accumulation? How did the socialist urban industrial workplace, such as Jiangnan Shipyard, invoke ordinary employees as conscious "new" manual laborers before and after Liberation? By raising these questions, this chapter links the political economy of Mao-era China in the 1950s and processes of laborers' subjectivity formation. My specific critique targets the classical paradigms of Chinese socialist work unit system. I'd like to explore an alternative way to understand the urban industrial workplace and the formation of the new labor subject in the 1950s.

In what follows, I first examine the work unit system from when first came into being in the 1930s to the socialist period in the 1950s, offering a longitudinal background to observe the nature of this system, especially its transformation into a socialist one after Liberation. Then I review previous explanations of the Chinese socialist industrial work unit system. I argue that our understanding of the socialist factory regime should go beyond the Communist neo-traditionalism and working-class moral economy framework, which distorted the actual ideological mechanism at the shop-floor level while overlooking the subjectivity formation of the conscious socialist laborer in a socialist state. The work unit system didn't necessarily bring about employees' consent on manual labor, enterprise development and the state's specific industrialization plan, nor could the abstract Communist ideology fully explain workers' subjectivity transformation from a working class in itself to a socialist worker for itself. Therefore, I will demonstrate such a process of subjectivity formation and argue that this process can only be understood in the context of a labor-valued ideology in post-Liberation China's restructured political economy. I further argue that embedded in the Mao-era culture of modernity was an epistemic glorification of manual labor and worker's originality that clarified the nature of socialist China in both material and symbolic practices.

However, the data drawn from my fieldwork illustrates that although workers—

especially workers from urban heavy industrial factories like Jiangnan Shipyard—did attain superior status both in material and political terms, they were still far from becoming authentic masters of the enterprise as well as the state. Although Jiangnan Shipyard also developed a complete complex of institutions, policies, and practices connected with the key legitimating slogan of workplace management called "democratic management," we can judge from their experiences that workers were denied democratic participation in both the production and reproduction spheres, which meant they were only masters in a very limited sense. I'd like to further elaborate the factory regime in Jiangnan Shipyard, borrowing Joel Andreas' (2011a) framework of "participatory paternalism." In sum, the socialist experiments conducted in the Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s were still far from establishing the working class political economy.

The Work Unit System (*danwei zhi*) in China

The newborn revolutionary state launched Maoist modernity projects soon after the Party took power in the autumn of 1949. The Maoist development strategy, a socialist one, aimed to improve national self-sufficiency through narrowing the disparities between urban and rural areas, industrial and agricultural sectors, and mental and manual labor (Yan, 2006). In Maoist policy, ordinary laborers like workers and peasants occupied an ideological high ground as the privileged locus of production and industrialization. Such a development strategy generated the socialist work unit system, which prevailed for nearly half a century in China.

The Chinese Communist Party reorganized all urban workplaces, ranging from government organs to public institutions like schools and hospitals, to factories and other enterprises, in accordance with the work unit system model soon after it took power. Basically, all work units were public property managed by the state and the Party. Theoretically, all working-age urban residents were employed by corresponding work units, and work units offered permanent employment as well as complete welfare

benefits to all their members. Individuals were assigned to work units after their graduation from school and remained with them until they retired. Transfers between work units were difficult, requiring consent not only from employees but also from both units. There was no labor market, and an enterprise couldn't fire employees unless agreed by the Employee Representative Congress, the worker's democratic management institution within the enterprise. Some scholars even found that if an employee was put into jail for committing a crime, he or she could still return to the same work unit after the release (Whyte & Parish, 1984; Andreas, 2012: 106). Generally speaking, the work unit system in the Mao era included attributes like public ownership, self-sufficiency, urban or nonagricultural purview, communal facility provision, personnel power concentration, and mobilization of the working population (Lü & Perry, 1997).

However, the work unit system was not the Chinese Communist Party's patented invention. Various scholars have offered historical observations of this system since the 1930s. Xiaobo Lü (1997) traces its predecessor to the Yan'an period, which worked under the free supply system (*gongji zhi*) and the slogan of "work hard and self-reliance" (*jianku fendou, zili gengsheng*) due to the suppression from the Nationalist government as well as the severe material conditions in northern Shaanxi region. In order to develop the Communist base area during the revolutionary war, both administrative and military units were encouraged to engage in production and allowed to retain a certain proportion of the revenues as work units' collective assets and covered members' livelihood. This revolutionary praxis created a realm called "agency production" (*jiguan shengchan*) or "minor public economy" (*xiaogong jingji*), which Lü regards it as the "institutional foundation for units to pursue their own tangible interests, legitimately or illicitly."

On the Nationalist-governed side, we can find out the forerunner of the work unit system as well. Wen-hsin Yeh (1997) did a case study of Shanghai's Bank of China

which reflected the development of an urban, non-Communist *danwei* in the 1930s. Yeh discovered that the work routines in the bank were supplemented by lots of social and leisure activities including reading clubs, group dinners, study societies, and sports. There was also a moral philosophy that emphasized paternal authority and fostering employees' virtues and good behaviors. According to Yeh, this Republican banking community was concerned more with creating a new corporate culture rather than the basic livelihood provision, which "eased the transition into a sort of personalized Chinese Communism that combined collective leadership with institutionalized familialism."

A third historical interpretation of the Chinese work unit system comes from various China labor movement history researchers. Elizabeth Perry (1997) attributed the emergence of the work unit system after 1949 to the early labor movement led by Party labor activists like Li Lisan and Chen Yun since the 1920s. Mark Frazier (2002) examined how officials, workers, and managers created institutions of labor management, such as the work unit system, to cope with the transformation of China's industrial sector. He argued that the evolution of the Chinese industrial workplace should be located at "the backdrop of broad processes: industrialization, state building, labor mobilization, and within the firm, the process of bureaucratization, or the imposition of rules and procedures regarding hiring, work, and pay." These processes were initiated prior to 1949, and they accelerated drastically during the 1950s.

These historical studies offer us a longitudinal understanding of Chinese work unit system transformation. However, they only figure out the material benefit dimension as the inherent characteristic of the work unit system, or the equilibrium corporate culture within the enterprise, without examining the concrete mobilization strategy and employees' subjectivity formation. Since the work unit embodies not only economic functions like distributing welfare benefits to its members but also political functions like mobilizing working population participation and social functions like its

encapsulation as a community and social cell, the concrete mechanism of the mobilization and members' participation and interaction need to be explored and interpreted. Before turning to my explanation of the work unit system in Mao-era China, first we have to review some classic paradigms on interpreting the Chinese socialist factory regime, which I'd like to engage in the theoretical debate.

Classic Explanations of the Chinese Socialist Work Unit System

Being intensely curious about such a Red China, some Western scholars (mainly from the US) have devoted themselves to the study of Communist Chinese rural and urban areas since the 1970s. Due to limitations on access, most went to Hong Kong and conducted interviews with those emigres from mainland then. These Hong Kong researches documented and interpreted the Maoist model of development with two evident characteristics. The first one was a remarkable lack of residential and job mobility, along with rationing household registration and food, housing and material goods. The second one was the extent to which patterns of work and residence were combined. The funds from institutional budgets and enterprise earnings subsidized the delivery of a broad range of services and goods to employees which formed the collective consumption of a community (Henderson & Cohen, 1984; Whyte & Parish, 1984; Walder, 1986). Contrast to the contemporary Western urbanism which embodied extensive job and geographic mobility, short job tenure, and extreme social insecurity, the Communist Chinese cities were relatively self-contained, closed units in which there was extensive protection against economic insecurity, a fusion of political and economic powers, authority via personal loyalties, and a prevalent subculture of personal alliances and mutual help (Walder, 1989: 420).

One of the locus classicus of these Hong Kong researches was Andrew Walder's (1986) *Communist neo-traditionalism: Work and authority in Chinese industry*. In this

paradigmatic work, Walder put forward the type concept "Communist neo-traditionalism" as a rational ideal type of Communist society in order to summarize the society and authority relations of Communist China as well as other Communist countries. According to his observation, Communist Chinese enterprises brought out industrial authority on institutional features. On one hand, the enterprises resulted in workers' organized dependence. The enterprise was not only an economic institution but also a political and social unit. So workers were politically dependent on management, socially and economically dependent on enterprise and personally dependent on supervisors. On the other hand, this authority structure created an institutional culture, which included patron-client relations, institutional clientalism and principled particularism in allocation of material rewards and career opportunities on the basis of networks of instrumental personal ties. So Walder interpreted this institutional culture as an exchange between workers' loyalties with cadres' resource distribution, while this exchange brought about the differentiation inside the working class.

Walder's work was extremely influential while critics were also fierce. The critics to "communist neo-traditionalism" mainly concentrate on following three dimensions: the first one was the relationship between communist neo-traditionalism and pre-modern or revolutionary history; the second one lied in the range for utilizing this concept despite permanent workers in state-owned enterprises; the third one cast doubt on the real power relations and interactions among different actors in the basic level of Chinese society (Li & Wang & Miao, 2009). Among these critics, Brantly Womack (1991) insightfully argued that compared to the concept of "communist neo-traditionalism," "work unit socialism" may be a better framework to analyze the industrial organization in Communist China. Based on the tension between the irresistible power of the state and the immovable permanence of work unit membership, Womack recognized that in the ecology of a permanent community, what the leadership can do was conditioned by its need for continued cooperation from a fixed circle of subordinates. In other words,

this critic caught sight of those subordinate workers' agency, which initiated the moral economy approach to explain the Communist Chinese industry authority relations.

Borrowed from E.P. Thompson (1971) and James Scott's (1976) concept of moral economy, this approach emphasized on "a particular set of social relations, a particular equilibrium between paternalist authority and the crowd." (Thompson, 1971: 129) The food riots of English poor in 18th century and the subsistence rebellion of Southeastern peasants both demonstrated this concept. When the equilibrium was disturbed, the masses (peasants, crowd, and workers) react to restore the conditions corresponding to the social norms supported by the consensus of the community. Thus, both sides of the power relation would have a tendency toward stability. Similarly, in his work on the contradictions of Soviet Real Socialism, Michael Lebowitz focused on the social contract between Soviet working class and the Party-state under the vanguard relations of production. The ideological claim of the existence of a workers' state and the real support for the aspirations of workers provided through the social contract were important sources for the moral economy of the working class (Lebowitz, 2012). Some scholars also put forward similar explanation on the Chinese SOE workers' resistance in post-Mao era. According to her study on workers' protests in Northeastern rustbelt, Lee (2007a) found out that the state regulated these workers with social contract. In the Chinese socialist setting, workers viewed themselves as having a relationship with the state, a relationship which operates according to the norm of reciprocity: the state was expected to have committed itself to ensuring that the workers have a decent living by providing job security and welfare package, while workers, in return, advocated the party ruling by giving their political support and loyalty to the state. But these rustbelt workers were extremely disappointed with their life in post-Mao era, which brought out their despair about downward social mobility and the feelings of being exclusion and betrayal by the state and Party. Rustbelt workers' grievances were ignited by the laid-off, absence and shrink of collective consumption provided by urban work units. This approach demonstrated the dynamic equilibrium between working class and the Party-

state. In this explanation of socialist working class moral economy, worker was no longer a passive adaptor of the whole industrial authority, but a relatively active actor with bargaining power in the equilibrium. However, this approach overemphasized the workers' material rationality and neglected workers' ideological surrender or struggles. In sum, socialism was a mixed and ambivalent historical experience for most Northeastern rustbelt workers, which included psychological and economic security, relative egalitarianism, social justice and collective purpose (Lee, 2007b: 162). After studying the moral economy of Soviet working class, Lebowitz (2012:131) concluded that under the Real Socialism Vanguard Relation, "…Any attempts by workers to organize independently of the official channels appointed by the vanguard to represent them were repressed. Without space for autonomous organization or, indeed, effective communication among themselves, workers in the Soviet Union were disarmed in the ideological struggle."

In sum, neither the "Communist neo-traditionalism" nor the socialist working class moral economy fully explained the socialist production relations in the Mao era. Both of them largely neglected the dimension of workers' subjectivities. The former one regards workers as passive and docile subjects under the socialist system, lacking the exploration of workers' own experience and understanding towards such totally different system in comparison with capitalism. The latter paradigm assumes the workers as mere economic rational subjects, who were busy with figuring out how to gain their own greatest material benefits in the enterprise. These two paradigms fall into the snare of essentialism, which regards the power relations within socialism amount to those under capitalism, without considering the production relation transformation and workers' own subjectivities. In order to better understand this process, we have to consider workers' own actions towards such a transformation and how they understood this transformation.

Joel Andreas' (2008, 2012) explanation for the Communist Chinese work unit system

can serve as a threshold to develop our understanding on workers' subjectivities from Marxist perspective. Marx assessed the class position under the condition of a given system of production relations: who controlled the means of production, how labor was organized, and how the product of labor was distributed among different groups. According to Andreas, the socialist work unit system that prevailed in China from 1950s to 1980s possessed a key characteristic that the labor was tied to the means of production. Since enterprises were responsible for both production and consumption, workers were permanent members of a work unit and membership entailed significant rights along with duties, so there were no "free" labor markets for workers from Marxist angle. Although cadres and managers played a quite paternalistic role in enterprise management, meanwhile workers' democracy was in a very limited sense, one still can't deny there were mutual obligations and consultation between enterprise leaders and workers. This socialist work unit system also gave rise to class hierarchy inside the society including inequality among work units and inequality within work units. Hence, we can't ignore the dynamics between workers and cadres in the socialist industrial organizations as well as the actual differentiation of such a socialist country. Specifically speaking, workers' subjectivities did not only embody the identification with Party and state, but also their self-consciousness and dignity as a member of the socialist working class.

Becoming Masters: The Process of Workers' Subjectivity Formation in the Jiangnan Shipyard

> Every time when the shipyard launched a ship, workers would hit the ship fore with the champagne bottle. Then the bottle clanged and the champagne spurted. Ropes would also be cut by a special axe. Colored balloons would be cast off, with the pigeon flying into sky and paper snowflakes swirling in the air. The East Is Red (dong fang hong) would be broadcasted as the background music. The ship was decorated with a lot of celebration banners and slowly

> flowed into water.…You can never imagine what such scene really meant to we Jiangnan Shipyard workers! What an excitement!
>
> ——Guo Youdong, former trade union vice president of Jiangnan Shipyard (Interviewee's memoir, 2010)

Master Guo, who used to be the vice president of the Jiangnan Shipyard trade union has lived in Jiangnan Compound, the affiliated workers' community of residence, since the 1950s. Every day Guo and his former colleagues, ranging from ordinary workers to senior technical staff and Party or administration cadres, sat together in the garden pavilion of Jiangnan Compound for casual chats. These retired employees were in a relatively good relationship and some old technical staff even held a reunion banquet every month in restaurants. Most of them, including Guo, showed strong nostalgia for the Mao era, particularly the period before the Cultural Revolution. They recalled the 1950s as a golden age because people were "silly" (*sha*) and "pure" (*danchun*), and there was almost no theft, fraud, or shirkers. Workers were extremely devoted to their work, and they clearly realized that their labor was tightly attached to the development of the newborn socialist state, according to Guo. The discourse of modernity in the 1950s produced labor, especially manual labor, both materially and ideologically, as high ground, which generated these old workers' nostalgia as well as their grievances in the market era due to the contrast they see nowadays. Today, they complain about the great income disparity between cadres and workers; the bureaucratic style of work and serious corruption among factory leadership; and the denial of shop-floor workers' labor and position.

However, what is critical here is not simply how bad today's life is for these old workers and how much better life was in the 1950s but how the ideological and material rise of the worker and the valuation of the manual labor in 1950s' modernity reshaped the subjectivity of these ordinary workers. In this section, I analyze the experiences of two former employees at the Jiangnan Shipyard. The first is Master Wu from rural Jiangsu

Province, who was a junior electrician before being recruited into Jiangnan Shipyard in the early 1950s. The second is Master Guo from Fujian Province, who experienced the Liberation as a veteran dispatcher at the shipyard. The narrative of Master Wu is drawn from my interview data, whereas the story of the other is collected from the narrator's memoir. I choose these two cases for three reasons: First, their narratives are quite typical and represented the impression I got from most interviewees; second, their narratives demonstrate the socialist state's mobilization and organization tactics regarding the working population, which is the most significant process of subjectivity formation in post-revolution China; third, these two retired employees are very reflective of what "socialist new man" really meant in the context of 1950s China.

Master Wu's narrative: Reinterpreting *ku* in 1949

> Shanghai was also messy before Liberation. Gangsters were everywhere. Poor people were also everywhere. I saw poor coolies residing in boats on Suzhou River. They earned a meager living by carrying extremely heavy goods for cargo boats. There were good people and bad people in Shanghai. So things were quite complicated before Liberation.
>
> After Liberation, things were getting better. The Chinese Communist Party had its own solution. It on one hand established a trade union within the factory, on the other hand organized all unemployed workers to gather at the East Asia Hotel, where the Shanghai Municipal Trade Union was located. The Party cadres were holding lectures there, introducing the Chinese Revolution. I was also one of the audience, since I was unemployed. The Party cadre asked us: "Why are you poor people so POOR?" The audience replied: "Because we were born just to suffer!" (a la ming ku!) The cadre denied this answer and told us it's not because we were born to be a slave just to suffer. Instead, it's the feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, and imperialism, saying, the "three mountains" repressed you and you couldn't escape at all. They clarified it little by little and finally persuaded all of us. You guys can't simply attribute poverty

> to our birth, and this is what Revolution is for. We listened to lectures and read some books on Chinese Revolution and social development history. This was how we learned about Liberation.
>
> ——Author interview, October 2014

The narrative from Master Wu clearly illustrates how the ideological mechanism of Revolution actually worked among these ordinary manual laborers. Most old workers in Jiangnan Shipyard were from rural China, had already suffered a lot, and realized they were suffering before the Chinese Revolution came. Some witnessed the brutality of Japanese invaders; some underwent extreme starvation in their hometown, which led to their exodus to Shanghai; once they arrived in Shanghai, all that waited for them might be 12-hour heavy load manual labor in a private workshop with extremely harsh working conditions and a meager salary. However, living in hardship didn't necessarily bring about the for-itself class-consciousness and resistance actions. As we can see from Master Wu's reminiscence, poor people tended to attribute their poverty and suffering to their unfortunate family origins, which meant they were born to be slaves without alternatives.

Overlooking the repressive structure while blaming themselves for their suffering was prevailed in the pre-Liberation ideology, which corresponded to the need to maintain the ruling apparatuses at that time. From a functionalistic perspective, such repressive structure perfectly suits an equilibrium framework. Official textbooks are the representation of ideology apparatuses, which reflected the nature of the state. Sun Xiaozhong (2012) analyzed the Chinese textbook used by urban primary school students in Republican China and found out that the textbook limited its scope to the urban bourgeoisie lifestyle, which largely neglected rural youth's daily production and living needs. Furthermore, the textbook also promoted Confucian hierarchical and "self-reflection" ethics, which required people to be self-reliant without complaining to the external society, let alone exploring the unequal structure. In contrast, the eliminate

illiteracy education textbooks used by Communists in rural areas attached education to daily agricultural production and basic living needs in the countryside. Peasants not only learned relevant characters and knowledge through the education, but also refreshed their conceptions of labor, community, and socialism, which finally led to the formation of the socialist "new man."

Therefore, instead of arguing about what kind of equilibrium a society has, concentrating on the power contrast and conflicts within this system can help us better understand what Revolution meant for ordinary laborers like Master Wu in 1949. Tens and thousands of Party cadres, organizations, and lectures, like Master Wu's experience in the East Asia Hotel, renewed workers' and peasants' conception of their own fortune as well as the understanding of the Chinese Revolution and socialism. Revolution meant to dig out the repressive structure and mobilize the masses based on the exposure of how such a repressive structure resulted in their common suffering; that is to say, the "class emotions" (*jieji qinggan*). Meanwhile, the formation of new subjectivity, or liberation, embodied not only the destruction of the repressive structure but also the imagination and praxis of building an equal society.

Being the slave, the subaltern, the figure of the poor, young unemployed migrant worker like Master Wu in 1949 had been a particularly important site for party mobilization through their liberation—a process of their transformation from the subaltern in the repressive society with "three mountains" into a conscious new subject for the Party-state. The new revolutionary state valued the dignity of labor and superior position of ordinary laborers. Recalling the words of Master Wu, the site for realizing a modern subjectivity for poor migrant workers in the 1950s was decidedly based in their urban workplaces. Contrary to the equilibrium ideology emphasizing accepting one's destiny and individual struggles, which prevailed in pre-Liberation China, the development strategy of the Mao era redefined the material and ideological position of laborers and valued their contribution to the socialist modernization plan.

Master Guo's reminiscence: Manufacturing *Dongfeng*

The manufacturing of the Dongfeng cargo ship lasted for a year. The factory specially established a work team to accomplish this task, as well as building the Party organization within this team. I was appointed to be the Party cadre who was responsible for employees' "thought work" (sixiang gongzuo) of this team. We concentrated on three key links: First, we informed all employees of the situation, the task and the meaning of finishing such a complex project. Some comrades were suspicious whether we could hand in the ship on time since the project was adjusted from time to time in the initial period and the corresponding facilities were also lacking then. Hence, we emphasized the political, economic and historical meaning of building this ship, while clarifying the advantages we had, in order to enhance everybody's confidence by affirming that this was a glorious task of "self-dependence and make efforts" as well as winning honor for the country.

Secondly, we repeatedly informed every employee with the latest task, the crux and the progress throughout that manufacture process. The fuel boiler system of Dongfeng was to be ignited in June according the original plan. However, the blueprint was still undergoing adjustment in March while elements were incomplete as well. No one knew exactly when the ignition could be initiated. Confronting such a situation, the work team leadership required whole team to hand in technical details, hand in concrete tasks. The technical staff were required to guarantee the production preparation. The production groups were required to finish the task. That's why some technical staff brought data to the workshop and informed all workers with the technique and quality expectations. The workers would pore over these blueprints and actively offered technical staff some suggestions based on their own production experiences. This mutual communication largely shortened the production process and successfully ignited the fuel boiler systems.

Thirdly, we implemented the "political thought work" (sixiang zhengzhi

gongzuo) into key programs, production groups, and figures. For example, the team was conducting the cork-paving program in the cold storage warehouse. That was summer, which meant the working condition was harsh while both our time and labor was extremely limited then. In order to accomplish this key program on time, the leaders and cadres went to the carpenter group and helped them to find out solutions. The leadership also adjusted the personnel schedule as well as carry out the labor competition among them. Eventually we did accelerate the pace and accomplish the task.

Despite "thought work," we also deployed labor competitions from time to time. The work team organized various competitions among different work groups, sections and positions. This process radiated workers' enthusiasm. In September, the main machine was successfully put into use, which meant we did accomplish our aim of "struggling for three quarters and guaranteeing the motor by October" (fenzhan san jidu, shiyue bao dongche).

——Interviewee's memoir, 2010

From the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, the Jiangnan Shipyard undertook three famous projects in Chinese socialist industrial history, which were usually summarized as "three-*wan*s" (*san wan*): building the first self-designed 12,000-ton hydraulic press in China, repairing the Soviet Union's 10,000-ton-level luxurious passenger liner *Il'ich*, and manufacturing the first self-design and self-provision 10,000-ton cargo ship *Dongfeng* (Annals, 1999: 145–146). As a socialist industrial project, *Dongfeng* couldn't come out without the aid of 291 brother factories all around China, offering everything from the diesel engine to premium steels (Guo, 2010).

The narrative above was from Master Guo, who was a trade union cadre in the Jiangnan Shipyard at the time. Though the *Dongfeng* ship was manufactured in the mid-1960s, its design and preparation could be traced back to the 1950s. The labor management and the mobilization strategy at the shop-floor level presented in Guo's memoir were

also typical in the Mao era, particularly before the Cultural Revolution. Party cadres like Guo in Jiangnan Shipyard were responsible for the "politics thought work," which was the most common way for them to mobilize all laborers. The neo-traditionalist paradigm tends to regard such mobilization as the product of patron-client relations, institutional clientelism, and principled particularism. However, according to Guo's narrative, it would be impossible to mobilize workers unless they fully realized the organic connection between the state and themselves. As the local representatives of the state at the shop-floor level, Party cadres like Guo formed these connections through repeatedly informing workers of the latest progress of the whole project, through requiring technical staff to discuss production details with frontline workers, through encouraging workers to contribute by working with them in the workshop, and through emphasizing the importance of ordinary workers' manual labor in these glorious production tasks. All these conducts redefined cadre and state in the context of socialist China, which transformed the worker's subjectivity in this process. That's why the socialist labor competition was not alienated while effectively generating workers' production enthusiasm. In the context of Mao-era development, the very condition enabling such workers' identity as the masters of the enterprise, the backbone of the state, was that they realized their contribution to the state development strategy as well as the dignity of manual labor. The conditions that have enabled and were constitutive of workers' search for self-consciousness as the masters of the state also reinforced their ability to become subjects of modernity and development. This is what the working class moral economy paradigm has been overlooking: that the equilibrium between the state and the working class can't explain the worker's subjectivity transformation in the context of the Chinese Revolution.

In summary, I treat narratives of old workers in Jiangnan Shipyard as enabling us to understand the process of subjectivity transformation in the 1950s. By examining two former skilled workers' experiences, my analysis illustrates what the Revolution meant to them at the shop-floor level and how it transformed the ordinary laborer's

subjectivity through the Party mobilization and daily labor process. As we can see, modernity can be plural in terms of the dynamics of historicity, whether it is in the service of laborers or capitalist accumulation. However, instead of treating the socialist factory regime from a functionalistic perspective, I'd like to emphasize the epistemological nature embedded in the 1950s' modernity project of socialist China and disclose the process of workers' subjectivity transformation. By highlighting their conception of Liberation and Development, my analysis contributes to rethinking the micro-operation of Communist ideology at the shop-floor level and how ordinary workers understood the socialist state and modernization plan.

The Jiangnan Shipyard Worker's Achilles' Heel: The Participatory Paternalism of the Chinese Work Unit System

There have been heated debates about whether the Chinese socialist factory regime was democratic or not, which concentrate on the analysis of institutional apparatuses of democratic participation within the Chinese work unit system (see Walder, 1981; Sheehan, 2002). However, relatively little attention has been paid to the problem of democracy within the workplace. In this section, I investigate the internal governance of Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s, both in production and distribution, including labor management, the selection of leadership, and the distribution of material benefits. My field data demonstrates that although the work unit model featured employees' permanent job tenure, workers could enjoy workplace democracy only in a very limited sense, which corresponds to Joel Andreas' (2011a) characterization of it as "participatory paternalism." I argue that this dispossessed workers' of real power to become a self-organized class-for-itself, which finally led to the dismantling of the Chinese socialist working class in the market era.

Labor Management

There were various production units in our factory. The factory leadership

would allocate the work sheets (pai gong dan)—the distribution of production tasks—into every workshop on the basis of project process. Once the sheets were distributed, we would learn about our tasks and start to work. You were in charge of this and I was in charge of that, so on and so forth. The production plan, which was the basis of these work sheets, was designed by the technical management. They may be senior technical staff or qualified university graduates. But anyway, we ordinary workers trusted them because they were familiar with the shop-floor production under most circumstances.

For example, the State Council required the Department of Ship Manufacture to provide ten 10,000-ton ships this year. Then the Department would impose this requirement to state-owned shipyards all over the country, including Jiangnan Shipyard. Then our factory got our own annual mission and passed it to the blueprint section for the preparation on design. Once the blueprint was ready, it would be the plan and allocation section's duty to figure out the whole workload and divide them into each work section. Everything was planned and arranged.

After the allocation of concrete production tasks, all levels within the factory would hold the production deployment congress once a month, from factory to work section and production group. The tasks, from lathing to welding, would be allocated level by level and finally we ordinary workers would do our work accordingly, based on group leader's command.

——Author interview, October 2014

As one of the most venerable shipyards in China, Jiangnan Shipyard was the backbone of ship manufacturing throughout the Mao era. The shipyard adopted Soviet Union management practices to govern the enterprise, especially during the FFYP, which embodied the Stalinist emphasis on the decisive effects from technical managers and Party cadres (Meisner, 1999). This narrative, given by a skilled welder, vividly pictures how the bureaucratic management system governed the production procedure.

Although workers possessed relatively strong bargaining power due to permanent job tenure and technical proficiency, they didn't have the power to decide what to produce and how to produce, that is to say, decide the labor process, independently. In other words, the enterprise was not managed by these laborers, despite its public ownership. The shipyard was one of the gears in the whole Chinese socialist industrial system in service of the capital accumulation and state modernization plan. Workers could impose considerable influence on technical managers' blueprints and Party cadres' relations with them. However, there was no institutional channel or space for self-organizing to direct the production process on their own. Workers were dispossessed of the right to participate in workplace democracy at that time, and most of them even didn't notice.

Selecting Leaders

> The candidate of work group leader was nominated from the upper level leadership. We ordinary workers would know the nomination soon and then we would have an internal meeting in the work group which was organized by the work section. There was "mass evaluation" (qunzhong pingyi) from us in order to appraise the candidate, but usually this was more like a perfunctory formality because basically the candidate was qualified enough both in technical and political dimension. So usually we trusted this candidate as well. Even if the candidate was a university graduate, he or she still had to go through an old master's supervision, improving the practical skills hammer by hammer. Otherwise he or she couldn't get respect (weixin) from us.
>
> Practically, we wouldn't be unsatisfied with the leadership. The same went to the candidate nominated by them. Surely it's unrealistic to win 100% support from all workers. But if this candidate won a relatively large proportion of support, like 55%, it meant that he or she was the right one. If the proportion was only 15%, it meant the opposite.
>
> ——Author interview, October 2014

> Group leaders…usually they performed better in the workshop. They must be senior workers and prove to possess a certain ability to lead. We didn't have elections and leaders were usually appointed by upper-level leadership. Party organization was not an idiot! The one who caught their eye must be someone with very strong technical and organization ability. So this guy also got certain respect among workers. Otherwise, how could he or she be a leader and lead everyone?
>
> ——Author interview, October 2014

Throughout the work unit era, higher authorities usually made the final decision about the appointment of enterprise leaders. Top factory directors were appointed by upper Party authorities and the government agency directly in charge of the enterprise, typically a municipality, province, or central ministry. The workshop and small group leaders were appointed by higher levels of the factory administration (Andreas, 2011a). Although there were formal and informal mechanisms for consulting employees about leadership appointments that brought about certain influence, the impression I got from my interviewees' narratives was that the democratic participation or evaluation was more like a perfunctory formality. When I asked two interviewees above about their leader selections, neither of them was quite aware of the election or evaluation procedures. Instead, they concentrated on the authority and "brightness" of higher leadership along with the "support from below." This paternalistic governance model functioned well because workers enjoyed permanent job tenure and were free from the threat of termination issued by the leadership. Labor relations were based on developing personal relations, maintaining mutual respect, and employing consultation and negotiation between leaders and workers. However, these informal influences could not be guaranteed through a sustainable channel and workers themselves were also indifferent to it, which finally led to the dismantling of the socialist working class in the market reform era.

Distribution of Material Benefits and Wages

The staff and workers representative congress (SWRC, zhigong daibiao dahui) was held every two years, and its plenary session was held two to three times annually based on specific situations. The representatives of SWRC were elected by every small group in every workshop from the bottom to the top. I used to be a representative, while I was also a trade union group leader in my production group. The central committee of SWRC included the trade union president, two trade union vice-presidents, eight committee members, and five to seven ordinary workshop workers.

The SWRC usually discussed workers' welfare benefits and incentive mechanisms. Basically the SWRC only served as a formality. For example, the system of rewards and penalties was internally discussed by the factory level committee of the congress, which was attended by work section level trade union presidents and only had rights to vote other than propose. Once the system was passed within this level of congress, the following procedures at the basic level were more like perfunctory formalities. The factory level leadership would make these crucial decisions first and the following congress was like a formality.

——Author interview, October 2014

There's another type of person, who had relatively "low consciousness" (sixiang juewu bugao). It should be noted that the wage system, which was approved by the congress, was reasonable. However, if you didn't raise his wage, he would bear grudges. Also, there were certain cadres who had a snobbish dislike for some other leaders.…The fractions in the Cultural Revolution originated from these conflicts: some of them were mobilized by the "rebellion" (zaofan) calling from Chairman Mao, while other honest people were unsatisfied with them. So Jiangnan Shipyard was in an extreme mess during the Cultural Revolution. This was Chairman Mao's fault.

——Author interview, October 2014

During the Mao era, basic wage rates were set by government regulations. There were eight wage grades for workers and thirty-two grades for cadres. The system was quite fixed and highly transparent within the enterprise so that everyone knew what everyone else was paid. Wage differences were also relatively compressed while ideological ethics strictly limited the use of material bonuses. At the factory level, all wage and material benefit systems should be approved by the SWRC, at least theoretically. Practically, this was also one of the issues that representatives in SWRC treated most seriously (Andreas, 2011a). However, according to my field data, the approval of the factory wage and bonus plan was again perfunctory in the Jiangnan Shipyard SWRC practices in the 1950s. Most interviewees told me that they did have an SWRC to consult and discuss these problems, but the congress was only responsible for approving the plans instead of welcoming every representative, from factory level to shop-floor level, to propose and debate.

To a certain extent, such limited and perfunctory participation of workers in the distribution of wages and material benefits accumulated workers' resentment. Although the Mao era represented egalitarianism and the valuing of labor, the work unit system then generated class hierarchy with its own peculiar characteristics, including inequality both among and within work units. The urban population was relatively better off than the rural population. The work unit differentiated the laborers by the means of production they were tied to and determined an individual's class position (Andreas, 2012). Meanwhile, there was a distinct hierarchy within work units, which was regulated by the state. On one hand, there was a status and wage distinction between cadres and workers. On the other hand, there were conflicts within elites (between technical managers and cadres) and within different worker groups (between state-owned enterprise permanent workers and collective enterprise temporary workers) (Wang Shaoguang, 2009). These distinctions, which accumulated disadvantaged

employees' grievances, set the scene for the wildcat resistance throughout the 1950s and the fractured rebellion during the Cultural Revolution.

The dispossession of workers' political participation in the form of the lack of workplace democracy also became the root of socialist working-class dismantling in the reform-and-opening-up era. As one of the workers recalled, "In the 1980s, Jiangnan Shipyard went through the shareholding system reform (*gufenzhi gaige*) as well. All we ordinary workers could do was to accept that without any consultation. So a large number of workers were laid off. Who would like to be laid off? Surely this something extremely bad for these laid-off workers. Even for those who got the buy-out offer (*maiduan gongling*) were also pitiful-see, the money at that time is no longer worthwhile nowadays!" Jiangnan Shipyard workers did enjoy greater "right to speak" (*fayan quan*) and imposed certain influences on the enterprise decision-making and production process. However, workers, particularly those who worked at the shop-floor frontline, didn't fully enjoy workplace democracy, including independently deciding what to produce, how to produce, and how to distribute their labor products. They possessed neither the independent collective bargaining system nor strong self-organization. The Chinese work unit mode featured permanent job tenure with the most telling characteristic as "participatory paternalism," which finally led to the dismantling of the Chinese socialist working class and the work unit system itself in the post-Mao era.

Conclusion: How Many Roads Must Workers Walk Before They Become "Socialist New Men"?

This chapter challenges two classic theoretical explanations of the Chinese socialist factory regime, the Chinese socialist work unit system. On the one hand, the Communist neo-traditionalist framework is a functionalistic explanation, which treats the system as an authoritarian complex that only generates dependence of employees

and instrumental personal ties between cadres and workers. On the other hand, the working-class moral economy approach regards the socialist work unit system as a social contract between workers and the state, insisting that the equilibrium is based on the material benefits allocated by the state and the political recognition given by the workers. My data from Jiangnan Shipyard demonstrates that these two paradigms can't fully explain the process of workers' subjectivity formation in the 1950s. In the context of the Chinese Revolution, ordinary workers like my Jiangnan Shipyard interviewees were by no means docile objects who only relied on the enterprise for material benefits. On the contrary, they realized the structural source of their hardships before Liberation and the valuation of their labor in the socialist industrialization under mobilization and organization from the state, which transformed them from working-class-in-itself to dignified manual laborers who played crucial roles in the state modernization plan. It was the process of subjectivity transformation that marked the emergence of "socialist new men," which was a dynamic of empowerment rather than an exchange between two stakeholders.

However, this process was still far from reaching total completion in terms of Jiangnan Shipyard workers' workplace democracy participation in the 1950s. The work unit system that prevailed during the Mao era was characterized as a "participatory paternalism" due to its perfunctory operation of workers' institutional democratic participation. According to my interviewees' reminiscences on workplace democracy like labor management, leadership selection, and distribution of wages as well as material benefits, workers' participation was not optimistic at all. This reality, I argue, accumulated employees' dissatisfaction and grievances ever since the 1950s because of the lack of real rights to express and negotiate with the enterprise and the state. The Party-state and the enterprise possessed a stronger power of decision-making whereas workers were more or less dispossessed of the power to directly determine their production, distribution, exchange, and consumption. The fractured rebellion within the Jiangnan Shipyard during the Cultural Revolution could be seen as the result of a

particular social basis. The dispossession of labor's real power could also, to a certain extent, be responsible for the dismantling of the socialist working class and the work unit system in the post-Mao era.

There's no shortcut to solving this problem. In the late 1950s, Mao Zedong (1977) was already aware of these problems and proposed his own solutions in *A Critique of Soviet Economics.* He had foreseen that the dispossession of laborers' rights to manage the state, troops, enterprises, and ideological apparatuses would result in the dismantling of laborers' rights to work, rest, education, and some other basic labor rights, which were usually regarded as "typical characteristics" of socialism. According to Mao, the rights to manage the state apparatuses were the essential rights underpinning the nature of socialism. His Marxist-Leninist framework divided the production relations into three components: the means of production, people's relations in the production process, and the distribution system. Public ownership didn't necessarily bring about creative cooperation between workers and enterprise leadership. Instead, the lack of workplace democracy would eventually lead to the bureaucratization of enterprise management and gradually become the barrier to productive force development. Practically speaking, that's why Maoists were persistently mobilizing various political campaigns in order to "rectify" the production relations within workplaces. Just as Mao himself said, "We did a lot of work in this respect: We requested leaders to treat workers with the humble familiarity of an equal. We requested the factories to rectify every one or two years and conduct large-scale cooperation. In terms of enterprise management, we encouraged the combination of centralized leadership and mass mobilizations; the combination of working class masses, leadership cadres and technical staff. We requested cadres to participate in shop-floor labor whilst workers to participate in management, in order to revise those unreasonable systems, so on and so forth." The road to socialism was by no means an easy one, which is why we have witnessed the split between the Chinese and Soviet Communist Parties in the 1960s and the continuous revolution throughout the Mao era.

Instead of retaining either private capitalism or state capitalism, what we really long for may be the establishment of "working class political economy" (Lebowitz, 2003, 2012): refusing to keep a disadvantaged equilibrium with the Vanguard Party; building a worker-self-directed production and reproduction structure; eliminating exploitation and dignifying the value from workers' own labor. The terminal point of the struggle should lie in the full development of human capacities.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

The twentieth-century Communist endeavor to eliminate inequalities was the most ambitious and arduous social experiment in human history. The Communist movement may have surpassed other social experiments in recorded history in terms of its duration, geographic scope, the number of people involved, and the level of ideological sophistication. As the pillar of modernization, the industrial sector had always been the sharp focus of the newborn socialist state's development strategy, which unveiled the production relations as a crucial dimension. Communist China's industrial production relations also underwent an essential reformation from the 1950s, lasting for about three decades. Although it's hard for us to precisely date the end of this social experiment since the "reform and opening up" was implemented gradually, the events of the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s witnessed how the socialist state became a paradise for transnational incorporate investments and the emergence of large-scale private property in Communist countries like the Soviet Union and China. The Chinese Communist Party is still in power, but it has brought back private property, eliminating essential elements of the Communist project and initiating the drastic polarization of wealth and income. Honestly speaking, based on my observation of Jiangnan Shipyard workers' narratives in the 1950s, the enterprise could hardly be treated as a worker-self-directed socialist enterprise. Instead, although based on public ownership, the enterprise actually worked under a paternalistic governance structure. The country did struggle to overturn the repressive structure and eliminate class distinctions after the Liberation, but it's still far from fully establishing an egalitarian Communist society according to Marx's vision.

Nevertheless, I'm not denying the accomplishment that the Chinese Revolution achieved throughout the twentieth century. In Jiangnan Shipyard during the 1950s, we have seen how the socialist state aroused workers' emancipation consciousness, referring to the repressive social structure before 1949, and how the Communist

ideology and prevailing work unit system valued workers' superior status and the significance of their manual labor in the socialist modernization project. We can learn a lot from both the failures and the accomplishments. Today's China is already the "World Factory" embodying around 270 million migrant workers mainly working in the manufacture and construction industry—an unprecedented scale of industrial working class (National Statistics Bureau, 2016)—quite apart from the laid-off former state-owned enterprise workers. The Chinese Communist Party nowadays, which claims to be the vanguard of the Chinese working class and the Chinese people, has already deteriorated into an exploitative elite alliance that commits massive expropriation of ordinary workers and peasants. It's hard to imagine that these subalterns of subalterns and slaves of slaves can long tolerate a small minority of the population possessing the great bulk of wealth and exploiting them in the name of Development. However, even if future social-leveling experiments will definitely revive public ownership, we still have to look closely into the relations between different people within the production process and the distribution system in the Mao era. Otherwise, we would step twice into the same river.

In this thesis, I have focused on the making of the socialist factory regime in the Jiangnan Shipyard throughout the 1950s, reinterpreting the formation of the socialist working class and the process of laborers' subjectivity in that period. I have shown that this socialist country emancipated ordinary laborers by making them realize their repression before Liberation and their contribution to the socialist modernization project, illustrating how the factory regime reflected the nature of the state after 1949. In this concluding chapter, I will return to the questions posed at the beginning of the thesis: What did Revolution and socialism actually mean in the Jiangnan Shipyard shop-floor context in the 1950s? How do we understand the paternalistic socialist factory regime and the power of the Chinese socialist working class in the Mao era?

To lay the groundwork for answering these questions, I will first ponder the Communist

Chinese way of industrialization in the 1950s, compared to the Soviet Union experience, in order to figure out what were Communist industrialization projects in common and what may be peculiar to China. Following the macro comparison of these two former socialist giants, I will narrow my focus to Shanghai industrial workers' factionalized rebellion during the Cultural Revolution and Chinese socialist working-class destiny in the post-Mao era in order to unveil the conflicts embodied in the workplace and the material as well as the ideological legacies they inherited since the establishment of the socialist factory regime in 1949. Finally, I will discuss workplace democracy based on my present inquiry.

The Chinese Socialist Way of Industrialization in the 1950s

As the Soviet Union set up the industrialization model for socialist countries since the 1930s, the Chinese Communist Party and other Communist Parties around the world followed it to varying degrees. In order to better understand the Chinese socialist way of industrialization in the 1950s, understanding the Soviet socialist industrialization model will shed light on what happened in China.

After the New Economic Policy had briefly restored the shattered Soviet economy in the early 1920s, the new Soviet state initiated its industrialization plan in two Five Year Plans. While the First Five Year Plan (1928–32), which held the slogan "acquisition of technology," was basically a process of building relevant infrastructures like new railways, waterways, power stations, furnaces and factories, and the importation of technology, the Second Five Year Plan (1933–37), with the slogan "mastery of technology," concentrated on industrial production on the basis of making full use of the expensively acquired technological capacity and management by men of high technical expertise. Soviet industrialization was conducted through central planning by the Vanguard Party, investing enormously in heavy industry and the defense industry at the expense of agriculture. In terms of labor management at the factory level, the Soviet Communist Party deployed strict administration on time-keeping, technological

discipline, and a piece-rate wage system, along with norms set by technical experts (Wheatcroft, Davies, & Cooper, 1986; Andrle, 1985). In the 1930s, hundreds of thousands of newly minted Red experts trained by the post-Revolution Soviet education system graduated and entered the labor force. It's quite often seen that these Red experts controlled the concentrated authority at the factory level, which later gave rise to their domination of the Soviet leadership in the 1960s and 1970s. By the time the Soviet Union sent technical advisors to China to aid with industrialization in the early 1950s, the Soviet Union had become a technocratic socialist state administered by Red engineers (Andreas, 2009: 266).

The industrialization in 1950s' China, particularly the First Five Year Plan (1953–57), largely imitated the Soviet industrialization model. The Maoists from the Chinese Communist Party realized that the FFYP enabled the new socialist country to achieve rapid industrialization under the Western embargo and Cold War geopolitics. However, they also witnessed the problems caused by the Soviet model: the growing disparities between urban and rural areas, industrial sectors and agricultural sectors, and mental and manual labor, on one hand, the differentiation between elites and ordinary laborers as well as within the working class itself on the other hand. In sum, the FFYP brought about the tendency toward stronger bureaucracy (Meisner, 1999). Mao Zedong henceforth addressed that the Chinese socialist road to industrialize must balance the relations between heavy and light industry and coastal and inland industry at the macro level. At the shop-floor level, the relations between the state, production units, and producers also must be balanced (Mao, 1999). Methodologically speaking, Mao proposed his solutions in his critique of the Soviet economic development strategy, prioritizing "politics in command" instead of material incentives. In practice, the Party also required "two participations, one reform and three combinations" at the factory level, which embodied cadres participating in shop-floor labor, workers participating in enterprise management, the reform of unreasonable rules and regulations, and technical innovation relying on the combination of workers, cadres, and technical staff (Mao,

1999). Although Communist China failed to eliminate class distinctions, the Maoists observantly detected the negative effects resulting from the Soviet model and conducted various class-leveling experiments. The most telling experiments at the workshop level in the Mao era were the 1957 Party Rectification campaign and the early upheavals of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1968), encouraging freewheeling criticism of Communist cadres by shop-floor employees (Andreas, 2015).

The story of the 1950s' Jiangnan Shipyard unraveled the Party-state's political mobilization at the shop-floor level and how workers possessed strong technical bargaining power due to the sociality in Mao-era China. However, as a premier state-owned heavy industrial enterprise, Jiangnan Shipyard could not reflect the conditions of collective enterprise and temporary workers in the 1950s. Some scholars have illustrated that employees from non-state-owned enterprises and those without permanent job tenure launched wildcat strikes struggling for better material benefits and welfare provisions in Shanghai in the 1950s (see Perry, 1994; Chen, 2009), which means the situation in these factories could be fairly different from that in the Jiangnan Shipyard. Depicting factory regimes in various types of enterprises could offer us the whole picture of the Chinese socialist industrialization strategy, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

From Faction to Dismantling: The Dispossession of the Chinese Socialist Working Class

The case of Jiangnan Shipyard demonstrated the deficiency of workplace democracy in the 1950s' Chinese industrial enterprise, which gave rise to the Shanghai workers' factionalized rebellions during the Cultural Revolution and the further dismantling of the socialist working class in the post-Mao era. Under the context of inequality among and within different work units, the absence of workplace democracy at the shop-floor level could easily accumulate workers' grievances when they didn't possess appropriate

channels to express their interests. Much working-class militancy in the early upheavals during the Cultural Revolution was rooted in the political and economic hierarchy established in post-Liberation China. The dispossession of workplace democratic participation enabled the factory leadership to occupy a superior position in the enterprise, which finally led to the expropriation of workers and the dismantling of the socialist working class in neoliberal China.

Although Mao-era China was a relatively egalitarian society, inequalities still prevailed among and within work units. There was a distinct hierarchy of work units under the socialist work unit system. Basically, all of the urban population was better off than the rural population. Most of the state-owned enterprise working population was better off than those from the collective one, and permanent job tenure employees were better off than temporary ones. Within the work units, there was a distinct hierarchy as well. Members of the work unit were formally classified into two categories: cadres and workers. Each category occupied a scale of wage ranks set by the state. Cadres' average monthly base pay was generally higher than that of workers, although the disparity was relatively small compared to today. The quality of apartments and services differed by work unit and often by rank despite the petty differences (Andreas, 2012). There were also distinctions between veteran workers recruited before 1949 and the newcomers recruited in the late 1950s (Wang, 2009). Apart from the structural inequality of the socialist work unit system, workers also accumulated their grievances at the workshop level due to the leadership's bureaucratic attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, responding to Chairman Mao's call for rebellion in the early upheavals of the Cultural Revolution, workers could openly express their dissatisfaction with the cadres or work teams sent by higher Party authority, mainly by writing big-character-posters (*da zi bao*) in the factory. Generally speaking, workers were not criticizing the hierarchical socialist work unit system or the cadre strata. Instead, they tended to attack certain cadres that sometimes involved some personal enmities, although all these freewheeling criticisms were under the slogan of "rebellion" and Chairman Mao's instructions. Relying on

different a social basis with different appeals, Shanghai workers were divided into two factions as well: “The conservatives” (*baoshou pai*) mainly consisted of new elites with strong political capital from Party and administrative organizations and active workers at the factory. “The radicals” (*zaofan pai*) were made up of old elites with strong cultural capital occupying crucial technical management positions in workplaces and workers living at an inferior status within the work unit (Li, 2015). Allowing for the deficiency of workplace democracy at the shop-floor level, it is quite understandable that ordinary workers, especially those who were in a relatively inferior status within the hierarchical socialist work unit system, expressed their grievances and dissatisfaction in political campaigns in such a militant way.

The deficiency of workplace democracy disempowered the socialist working class, especially in terms of the dismantling of the socialist work unit system in the post-Mao era. China’s market shift in the early 1980s gradually undermined the work unit system by transforming the employment relations along capitalist lines: work unit members, particularly ordinary workers, who were expropriated by the state-regulated market reform and lost their membership rights then became simply contract labor or were even laid off. State-owned enterprises, freed from long-term responsibilities for their employees, can now treat labor as a disposable input, which allows them to concentrate on maximizing profit. Labor has become more mobile at the cost of economic security, labor relations have become more coercive, and wealth and income have become more polarized (Andreas, 2011b). Some interviewees recalled that Jiangnan Shipyard also laid off a large number of workers throughout the market reform. Due to the dispossession of workplace democracy at the shop-floor level, workers were also expropriated with the right to know the reform whereas they had to accept the fate of being abandoned by the state.

But Chinese workers also inherited the socialist legacies that became their resistance repertoire in the post-Mao era. After the privatization reform, former state-owned

enterprise workers in the northeastern China rustbelt resisted against the state because of unpaid wages, pensions, and insufficient collective consumption resulting from the work unit capitalist transformation. These old workers recognized themselves as socialist working class due to the nostalgia for the permanent job tenure, the relatively egalitarian Mao era, and the incentive mechanism emphasizing the worker's superior contribution to state development, embodying socialism. These old workers organized themselves to protest against the expropriation of workers on the basis of a material and ideological social contract with the state. Old socialist workers could not tolerate the betrayal by the Party-state and their inferior identities as victims of market economy reform. That's why they usually deployed concepts like "the masses" (*qunzhong*) and "working class" (*gongren jieji*) as the discursive repertoire when they expressed their indignations and grievances in collective actions (Lee, 2007). Although Chinese socialist workers enjoyed workplace democracy in a very limited sense, the worker's democracy discourse nevertheless became the former state-owned enterprise worker's resistance discourse and their actual appeal, in both ideological and practical dimensions (Philion, 2009). These studies reveal that the despite the deficiency of workplace democracy in the Mao era, one can still observe the material and discursive legacies of socialism even in post-Mao China, which reflect what Revolution and socialism actually meant for ordinary laborers at the shop-floor level.

Comprehending the Radical Nature of Socialist Labor Process

Even in capitalist enterprises, employers gradually realize the importance of workers' relative autonomy and dignity in terms of enhancing enterprise productivity. Some economists discovered that workers would become passive and uncooperative if the enterprise merely depriving them of discretion over the speed and the intensity of their work. Therefore, we've seen a number of capitalist managerial approaches, like the Human Relations School in the 1930s, emerged as they highlighted the necessity for

comprehending workers' complex motivations and encouraging good communication between employers and employees, which could help "bring the best out of workers". One of the most prominent examples of such approach was the "Toyota production system", implemented by the famous Japanese automobile tycoon Toyota. This system claims to give workers certain degree of control over the production line, like encouraging workers to offer suggestions for the production process improvement. This managerial experience has enabled Toyota to achieve unprecedented productivity, which becomes a model for many private enterprises to follow (Chang, 2010).

It's quite common for people to compare such managerial strategy in private enterprises with the labor process in the context of socialism, particularly in terms of workers' relative autonomy and dignity of labor. However, this comparison fails to observe that the capitalist labor process is in service of the private capital accumulation, whilst the basis of workers' relative autonomy lies in the mature model of capitalist welfare state since World War II. The welfare state provides workers with large scale of employment and certain degree of material benefits, creating an egalitarian illusion of capitalist society. Workers have become particularly disillusioned since the economic crisis, which crashes the welfare state model as the capitalist state turn to support private enterprises afterwards.

On the contrary, the case of Jiangnan Shipyard in the 1950s has already illustrated the radical nature of socialist labor process. The first dimension was the public ownership other than private one, which differed from the private-profit-oriented development mode in capitalist welfare state. Moreover, workers in Jiangnan Shipyard were transformed into nationalistic revolutionary subjects in the context of socialism. They realized the relation between their own manual labor and the state modernization plan. The permanent job tenure enabled them to possess relatively great autonomy in the production process, whereas laborers' in the Mao era occupied the ideological high ground due to the Communist ideology. Both the socialist political economic sociality

and the radical Mao era ethos glorified workers' position as maters of the state. This glorification went beyond material incentives, which distinguished from the working class moral economy in mature capitalist welfare state.

Socialism and Workplace Democracy

When we refer to socialism, concepts like public ownership and state-regulated planning would easily come to mind. According to Marx's (1967) class analysis framework, certain groups occupy different positions in a given system of production relations. Marx was concerned with who controlled the means of production, how labor was organized, and how the product of labor was distributed among different groups. If the appropriation of the product of the labor was not controlled by its direct producers, then the production relations would be in the exploitation of one class by another. Marx elaborated his blueprint of socialism based on his critique of capitalism, suggesting that the socialist economy would be operated by "associated workers" as laborers would become directors of enterprises. This means, according to Marx's theoretical framework, that in a socialist economy, workers should independently determine how to appropriate and distribute the products produced by themselves, which is differentiated from "primitive communism," and Marx proposed a post-capitalist horizon for the future. Most notably, theoretically speaking, the socialist economy should be managed and operated by workers, rather than by a separate and small group of persons. In other words, "the producers and appropriators of the surplus are then identical: the same group, collective, or community of persons," which is essentially different from capitalism in terms of being non-exploitative (Wolff, 2012).

However, if we trace back the history of socialism, things turned out to be slightly different. For example, the Soviet Union created a technocratic order under the "Vanguard production relations," embodying the bureaucratization of the agents of laborers—the Communist Party, which actually controlled the production and distribution power within productive enterprises (Lebowitz, 2012). Allowing for harsh

domestic and external opposition they faced after the October Revolution and the inexperience in state governance, the urgent mission of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union lay in reviving production and realizing rapid industrialization, which meant that establishing workplace democracy at the shop-floor level became less pressing to a certain extent. The shop-floor stories from Jiangnan Shipyard demonstrated that Communist China was in a similar situation after the Liberation. The hierarchical Chinese socialist work unit system and enterprise governance structure undemocratically generated social inequalities, although the Mao era was already a relatively egalitarian socialist society. Tracing back the Jiangnan Shipyard workshop in the 1950s, we can see that the mass of workers was largely excluded from directing their workplaces, although they did have a considerable impact on the decision-making of the enterprise leadership. That is to say, even in the 1950s, Jiangnan Shipyard was not—or at least not yet—an organization in which the producers and appropriators/distributors of the products were the same people. It's fairly tempting to conclude that the production relations of actually existing socialism could produce alienation and nurture resentment as well, although in a very limited sense, according to my case study.

The history of socialism has already shown that the deficiency of workplace democracy could not guarantee the "social contract," the socialist working class moral economy, in the long run. Both Russia and China have transformed production relations along state capitalist lines since the 1980s, embodying the privatization of public property and dismantling the socialist work unit system. Without the grounded economic democracy rooted at the shop-floor level, the "social contract" could not be guaranteed, the socialist working class would be dispossessed of their power, and establishing communism on the basis of workers' power would be totally in vain. The economic system would itself be democratized by positioning workers within each enterprise as they become the appropriators and distributors, the real masters of the enterprise, of what they have produced. Only by supporting and facilitating such a democratic polity can we imagine

building up “an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” (Marx & Engels, 2002), a real cure for the actually existing socialisms.

The case of Jiangnan has illustrated the possibility of empowering workers as a self-conscious socialist working class in the 1950s, which refreshes our interpretation of the Mao era and the socialist material and ideological legacies. However, just as slaves could become masters only by overthrowing the repressive structure beyond the inhumanity, inequality, and indignity of slavery, wage and salary earners must become their own directors in terms of organizing, receiving, and distributing the products they have produced by their own labor, which moves the society beyond the inhumanity, inequality, and indignity of capitalism in all its myriad forms.

Appendix 1 List of Interviewees

The following information about the individuals interviewed for this thesis is provided: Occupation and work duration at the shipyard, gender, family origin, relationship to the Communist Party. With one exception, all these are pseudonyms.

1. Guo Youdong. Jiangnan Shipyard Trade Union vice-president 1956-1983. Male. Peasant in Fujian. Party member.
2. Cai Shunkang. Jiangnan Shipyard Party branch publicity cadre 1959-1983. Male. Peasant in Jiangsu. Party member.
3. Wan Zhongcheng. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1952-1988. Male. Peasant in Fujian. Party member.
4. Du Shuyan. Jiangnan Shipyard technical staff 1960-1969. Female. White collar in Heilongjiang. Party member.
5. Zhao Lianglu. Jiangnan Shipyard technical staff 1953-1992. Male. Peasant in Jiangsu. Party member.
6. Hu Yidao. Jiangnan Shipyard engineer 1953-1992. Male. Capitalist in Shanghai. Party member.
7. Ding Deda. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1992. Male. Peasant in Jiangsu. Party member.
8. Chen Qiufa. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1992. Male. Peasant in Zhejiang. Party member.
9. Wang Fengzhuang. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1956-1984. Female. Peasant in suburban Shanghai. Party member.
10. Yang Xiuzhen. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1980. Female. Peasant in Jiangsu. Party member.
11. Qu Shipei. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1992. Male. Peasant in suburban Shanghai. Party member.
12. Lu Han. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1992. Male. Worker in Shanghai. Party member.
13. Chen Junde. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1951-1994. Male. Worker in Shanghai. Party member.
14. Yin Su. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1958-?. Female. Peasant in suburban Shanghai. Party member.
15. Gu Yuhua. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1955-1991. Male. Peasant in suburban Shanghai. Party member.
16. Sun Dehai. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1992. Male. Peasant in Tianjin. Party member.
17. Hu Feng. Jiangnan Shipyard security staff 1966-2001. Male. Worker in Shanghai. Party member.
18. Zha Shenxing. Jiangnan Shipyard trade union group leader 1953-1993. Male. Peasant in Anhui. Party member.

19. Zhang Guangde. Jiangnan Shipyard technical staff 1952-1986. Male. Peasant in Jiangsu. Party member.
20. Li Kui. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1953-1988. Male. Peasant in suburban Shanghai. Party member.
21. Wu Shigang. Jiangnan Shipyard technical worker 1951-1991. Male. Peasant in suburban Shanghai. Party member.

Appendix 2 Technical Term Glossary

造船	Ship building
造船工程	Naval architecture
造船工程师	Naval architect
船体放样	Lofting
下料	Cutting
装配	Assembly/Construction
焊接	Welding
管子加工制造	Pipe fitting
管系综合放样	Lofting of the piping systems
预舾装	Component building / prefabrication
舾装	Outfitting
单元组装	Component installation/machinery installation/assembling
prefabricated sections	
涂装	Painting
电缆敷设	Cable laying
12000 吨水压机	twelve-thousand-ton hydraulic jack
“东风”号万吨远洋轮	Ten-thousand-ton ocean-going ship *Dongfeng*
“伊里奇”万吨远洋客轮	Ten-thousand-ton passenger liner *Il'ich*
起重行车	Crane
履带式起重机	Tractor crane
千斤顶	Jack
楞木	Girder
横梁	Beam
龙门架	Overhead crane
卷扬机	Windlass
神仙葫芦	Pulley
翻身架	Cantilever scaffold

钢丝绳	Cable
人事工资科	Personnel and wage department
保卫科	Security department
教育科	Training department
总务科	Administrative department
卫生科	Health and safety department
供应科	Purchase department
会计科	Accounting department
秘书科	Secretary department
技术科	Department of technology
技术检查科	Technical inspection department
技术安全科	Technical safety department
基建科	Infrastructure department
设备动力科	Marine engineering department
修船科	Ship repairing department
造机科	Engine building department
造船科	Department of naval architecture
计划生产科	Production planning department
造船车间	Dockyard
舾装车间	Outfitting department
修船车间	Ship repairing plant
修机车间	Engine repair plant
造机车间	Engine building plant
铸工车间	Foundry
锻工车间	Forge
木工车间	Carpentry shop
电气车间	Electricity shop
油漆车间	Painting shop
坞闸起吊车间	Dockyard operations department

设备工具车间	Tool shop

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