

PROTESTS IN CHINA: WHY AND WHICH CHINESE PEOPLE GO TO THE STREET?

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This research seeks to answer why and which Chinese people go to the street to protest. I argue that different sectors of Chinese society differ from each other regarding their tendencies to participate in protest. In addition to their grievances, the incentives to participate in protest and their capacities to overcome the collective action problem all needed to be taken into account. Using individual level data along with ordinary binary logistic regression and multilevel logistic regression models, I first compare the protest participation of workers and peasants and find that workers are more likely than peasants to participate in protests in the context of contemporary China. I further disaggregate the working class into four subtypes according to the ownership of the enterprises they work for. I find that workers of township and village enterprises are more likely than workers of state-owned enterprises to engage in protest activities, while there is no significant difference between the workers of domestic privately owned enterprises and the workers of foreign-owned enterprises regarding their protest participation. Finally, I find that migrant workers, which refers to peasants who move to urban areas in search of jobs, are less likely than urban registered workers to participate in protests.

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## CHAPTER 1

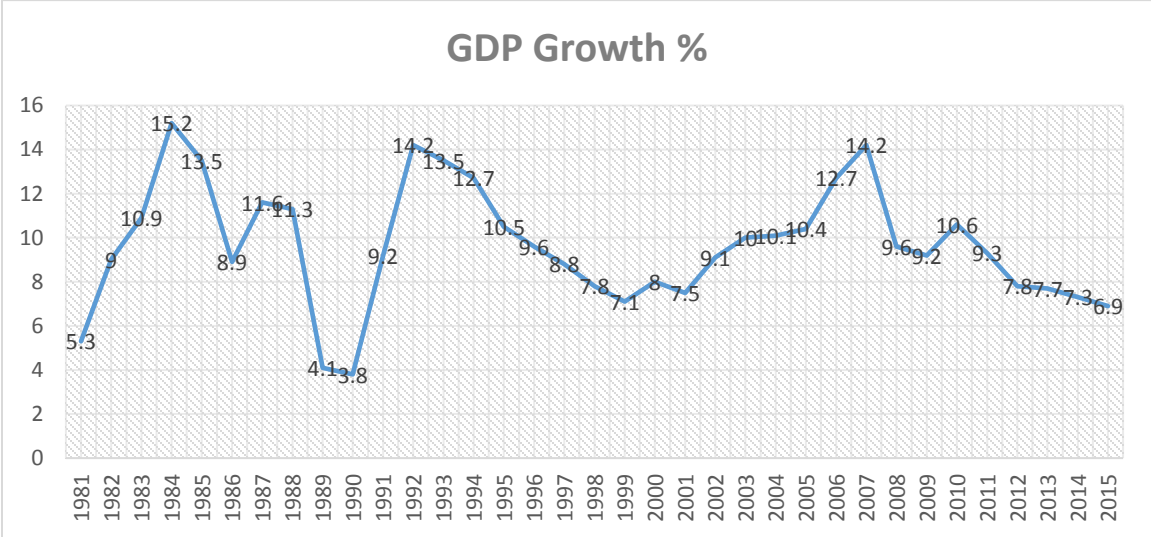
### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Question

After almost three decades under a centrally planned economy, the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) started its economic reforms to open the doors of its economy to the outside world in late 1970s. On the one hand, in rural areas, the Household Responsibility System (HRS) was launched in 1981 to replace the commune system of agricultural production that provided farmers little incentive to generate additional revenues, as that peasants were denied the right of the residuals they created. Differing from the land collectivization of the commune system, HRS makes peasants receive a piece of farmland from the state and they are in turn required to turn over a certain amount of their output to the state. Beyond that quota, peasants are allowed to sell the remaining output in free markets to earn money. Therefore, HRS gives peasants incentives to produce more because their rewards are linked with their performance: if peasants produce more, then their incomes will increase accordingly. Further, as long as the required quota is met, peasants are free to engage in other economic activities, such as to leave their native villages to work as a labor worker. On the other hand, Chinese authorities have initiated intensive reforms and privatization of state-owned enterprises (hereafter SOEs) step by step. Industrial economic reform not only involves the reform of SOEs, it also allows the entry of foreign investors and the emergence of domestic private firms to compete with SOEs in the market of China. As a result, there is no doubt that the speed and scale of China's economic development has impressed the world. For the last 35 years China's average annual GDP growth has been 9.6%, and it is now the second largest economy in the world (Zheng 2006). Economic

openness has brought wealth to China and enriched the Chinese people to the point that we would expect them to be more satisfied with their current lives compared to their standard of living before the economic reforms of the 1980s.

Figure 1.1. China’s Economic Growth, 1981-2011

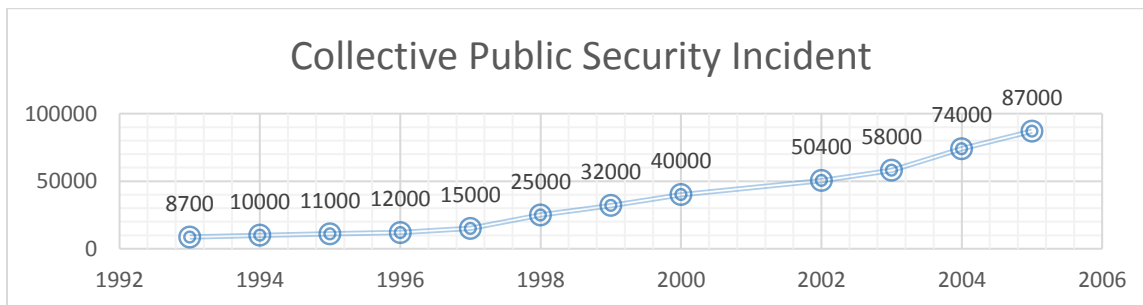


Source: Zheng (2006) and China Statistical Yearbooks, <http://www.tisqi.com/m/>, access on March 10, 2017.

The reforms and openness are limited to the economic dimension and do not extend to the political arena. China is still a one party regime which means the Chinese Communist Party is still sensitive to issues that relate to politics. Therefore, we would expect to not see many protests in today’s China. In reality, however, protests do occur in contemporary China. Moreover, statistics shows that the number of protest incidents in China is in fact increasing annually. Although there has not been a major national movement since 1989, local protests have proliferated. Figure 1.2 shows that the annual number of mass incidents in China has increased continually since from 1993 to 2005, as well as the annual number of strike since 2011 which is reported in Figure 1.3.

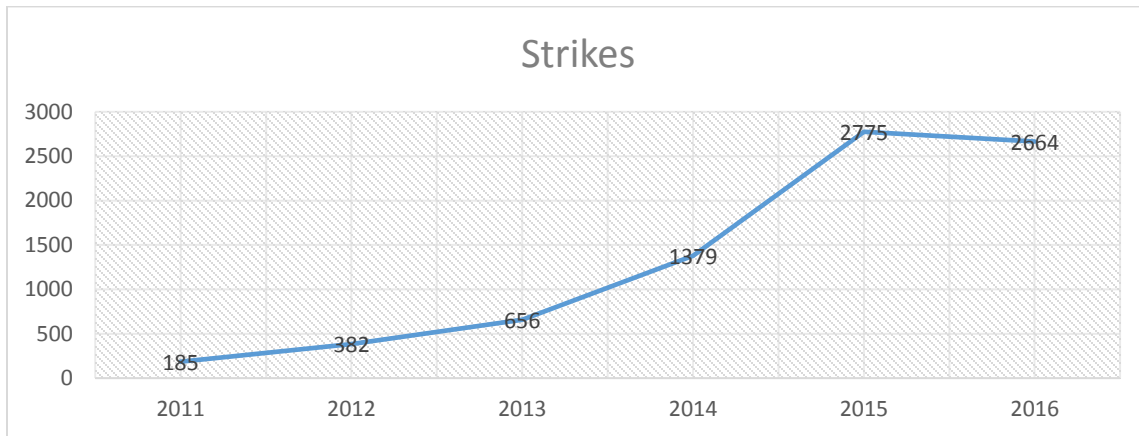
When it comes to the topic of protest in China, the world has noticed that there have been no major national protests since the Tiananmen Square movement of 1989. Chan et al. (2014) point out four major differences between the 1989 movement and post-1989 protests. First, post-1989 protesters do not seek democratization or reform of political systems; what drives them to protest are grievances that are generated from local issues, such as land seizures and forced layoffs. Second, the participants in these protests are not students but mainly peasants and workers. Third, the targets of those post-1989 protesters are mainly local authorities or local enterprises, not the central authorities. Fourth, the goal of post-1989 protesters is more tangible and material relief, such as economic compensation; those protests are limited to the local issues without any call for national reform, such as democratization. Therefore, factors that motivate these protests are different from what motivated the national political protest in 1989.

Figure 1.2. The Frequency of Collective Public Security Incidents, 1993-2005



Source: Chung et al. (2006)

Figure 1.3. The Frequency of Strikes, 2011-2016



Source: <http://maps.clb.org.hk/strikes/en>, access on March 10, 2017.

The standard of living and income per capita of the Chinese people has increased remarkably over the last thirty years. However, the nondemocratic Chinese communist government still monopolizes political power. It is sensitive to protest incidents, but the number of protests is still increasing. Although these protests are not national wide but local protests, the Chinese Communist Party is concerned about these because it could represent a challenge to its monopoly on political power. This phenomena brings certain questions: why has the number of local incidents steadily increased even though there has been no national pro-democracy protest since 1989? And why are the Chinese people more inclined to participate in these events even as their standard of living continues to increase? More specifically, if the standard of living of most Chinese in improving, which segments of Chinese society are more inclined to participate in these events? Therefore, in this dissertation project I offer a theoretical argument to explain why and which Chinese people are more likely to participate in protests.

## 1.2 What Do We Know about Protest

When it comes to the question of what kinds of people are more likely than others to go to take to the streets in protest, scholars have pointed out several demographic factors that are

associated with individuals' propensity to participate in protests. For examples, Wiltfang and McAdam (1991) argue that age has a significant impact on the propensity to participate in protest: the younger are more likely than the elderly to protest because they are more likely to be free from career and familial obligations. In other words, they have less to lose so the risk of protest participation will be lower for them. A factor that relates to age is marriage. Wiltfang and McAdam further explain that married people are less likely to engage in protests because they have to consider how their participation will affect their families and children. Therefore, the costs of participating in protests will be higher for a married person than for an unmarried person because the risks of arrest, imprisonment, injury, or death all will impose costs not just on them but on their families as well. In addition to age and marital status, McAdam (1992) points out that females are less likely than men to participate in high risk activities such as protests. As a result, gender makes a difference to protest participation: males are more likely than females to participate in protest activities.

Besides age and gender, Machado et al. (2011) argue that level of education matters to protest participation: well educated people are better informed and more critical, so they are more likely to participate in protests against unfavorable situations. Wong et al. (2007), however, argue that since people with a higher level of education should be better informed, they should also have more knowledge to find other ways to redress their unfavorable situations. Further, since they are more likely to have a better job and a higher income, they have more to lose than someone with less education, so they are less likely to have grievances. In other words, for people with higher levels of education, protest is not the only option for them to resolve their grievances given that the cost of protest participation could be high, especially in nondemocratic countries.

The effect of ethnicity on protest participation is also mentioned. Gurr (1993) argues that ethnic minorities are usually related to group disadvantages, such as economic differentials or poverty, which have an impact on their level of grievance. Scarritt and McMillan (1995) find that economic discrimination against ethnic minorities also relates to their political grievances. Tong and Lei (2010) also argue that ethnic identities make it easier to generate the sentiment of “us” and “them” between ethnic groups, so ethnic minorities should be more likely than members of the ethnic majority to participate in protests.

Beyond these findings, I propose that a more systematic analysis on this topic is needed to have a better understanding of who protests. That is, when we observe that younger individuals are more likely than the elderly to engage in protests, we should not assume that a potential younger protester and a potential elder protester would be protesting for the same reason. Neither should we see each individual has the same capacity and opportunity to take action. The Chinese authorities are still sensitive to mass incidents, so it is still risky and costly to engage in protest incidents. Therefore, a more systematic analysis on the source of grievance, the incentive for people to participate in protest, and the capacity for them to overcome the collective action problems is needed for the study of protest in China. Furthermore, structural factors that might encourage individuals to protest should also be included into analyses, given that there are variations across political subdivisions in the level of economic development and size of the population. On the one hand, local economic development could be a resource for protest leaders for organization and mobilization. A local area with a high level of economic development, or well-developed infrastructure such as better quality roads, convenient transportation, and prosperous business activities all could contribute to a high level of



interaction and communication between residents of the local area. Protest leaders could take advantage of these factors for mobilization. On the other hand, in a place with a larger population, the likelihood of someone with leadership ability and skills emerging to organize and mobilize others will be higher than a place with a smaller population. Further, a larger population means there will be more potential participants for protest. When the number of estimated protest participants increases, not only does the chance of success increase, but the risk for each individual potential protester to be arrested and punished for participation decreases. In other words, a large number of potential participants increases the expected benefits of participation while reducing the expected costs of participation.

In the following sections of this chapter I offer an overall review on the three major theories on individuals' protest participation. I analyze what these theories can do to improve our understanding of protest in contemporary China. Literature reviews on Chinese protests along with my theoretical expectations and testable hypotheses will be presented in the following three empirical chapters.

### 1.2.1 Deprived Actor Theory

Based on the observation of social unrest in the third world, Russett (1964) and Huntington (1968) argue that poverty and inequality function as the impetus to push people to go to the streets in protest. That is, people decide to engage in protests because of the marginal living conditions they suffer. Protesters choose protest as the strategy to redress their impoverished living conditions. The theoretical implication that derives from this argument is that in the world where conventional forms of political participation are either non-existent or are not working to solve their grievances, people will be more likely to choose protest as a strategy to seek redress

from the authorities for their grievances that come from poverty and inequality. In an equitable environment in which the basic living conditions are offered for people and conventional forms of political participation are either existent or are working well, then we should not see too much protests or social unrest.

The logic of deprived actor theory has been widely discussed along with many empirical studies that test the relationship between social unrest and social inequality and different forms of deprivation. Lichbach (1989) reviews studies on this topic and finds that empirical studies use different definitions and measurements for the concept of inequality. Further, Lichbach also points out that deprived actor theory ignores the reality that the level of inequality of a country is constant or changes at a very slow rate; given that, how inequality would account for why social unrest would take place at a given time. Some scholars argue that what matters for the occurrence of social unrest is not absolute deprivation, but the perception of relative deprivation.

### 1.2.2 Relative Deprivation Theory

Instead of focusing on the absolute levels of deprivation, relative deprivation theory brings the concept of comparison to explain the emergence of frustration, and how this feeling motivates people to engage in aggression, including the collective aggression of protest behavior (Runciman 1966). Relative deprivation theory argues that social unrest and revolt are likely to occur when individuals who have experienced some improvement in their standard of living are confronted with a short-term crisis that severely reduces their level of well-being (Davies 1962). Gurr (1970: 24) further explains that “relative deprivation is defined as actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities...value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value

capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping". If there were a discrepancy between "ought" and "is" in someone's mind, then the perception of relative deprivation would emerge. Therefore, scholars of political violence argue that relative deprivation functions as an impetus to engage in political violence, such as riots, terrorism, and civil wars, in many developing countries (Victoroff 2005).

According to relative deprivation theory, people realize the difference between their expectations and their reality, between their living conditions and those of others, and between their past life conditions and their current life conditions. When perceptions of discrepancy emerge, the feeling of relative deprivation is very likely to push people toward protests. Further, it is reasonable to expect that social unrest is most likely to occur during times of transition in a society since people are facing changes in their daily life conditions. More specifically, these social changes the perception of discrepancy, and the resulting feelings of deprivation, frustration and grievances push people to engage in protests.

Relative deprivation is also widely used in the study of protests in China. For examples, Chen (2003; 2008) and Hurst (2008) find that the participants and leaders of many factory-based resistance incidents were those who strongly believe in Maoist socialism. These protesters experienced the Mao era and were proud of being members of the working class because the working class was revered in the old days. Today, however, these workers are experiencing difficulty in adapting to the new economic openness in China's economy, especially the new management style that has followed the privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). For them, economic reform not only generates inequality in society, which was not the case in the Mao era, but also reduces the social status of the working class relative to other classes,

especially the status of SOE workers compared to other sectors of society. SOE workers have been called the aristocracy of China's working class. Now their income is being surpassed by workers in private and foreign-owned enterprises. These perceptions make workers, especially those laid-off because of economic reforms, hold a negative attitude toward economic reform. From their perspective, today's reforms betray Mao and the whole Chinese working class. This feeling of deprivation makes them engage in protests to express their grievances and frustrations.

Research on China's rural unrest finds that in many cases rural residents engage in protests because they have not received reasonable compensation after confiscation of their farm lands. In order to develop the local economy, local governments appropriate farm lands in rural areas for construction of infrastructure, such as roads and power stations, and for the construction of factories and other production enterprises. Ideally the affected peasants should be able to receive a reasonable compensation after confiscation of their lands. This expectation, however, is rarely met in reality. In many cases the affected peasants do not receive the compensation that they were entitled to, so they are worse off than they were before their land was confiscated. The discrepancy between what they are promised and what they received makes the affected peasants feel deprived and further motivates them to engage in protests (Cai 2003; Li 2006; Tong and Lei 2010).

There are at least two limitations when we employ relative deprivation theory to explain why people participate in protest. First, the key for the emergence of relative deprivation is comparison. More specifically, someone needs to compare his or her situation with that of others, or with his/her own situation at some earlier point in time, to generate the feeling of relative deprivation. In order to do so, reference groups are needed for comparison. However, the theory

of relative deprivation does not tell us why and how people choose a certain time or group as their reference. It turns out that “the determination of the reference group rests on a wholly unproven psychological intuition” (Wegener 1991: 6). Without a clear explanation of why an individual chooses certain groups or conditions and not others as his/her reference, anyone can make an un-falsifiable argument. Second, relative deprivation theory only explains the incentive to participate in protests; it does not address the collective action problem, a very important topic when we talk about protests. Without taking the collective action problem into consideration and overcome it, protest leaders will not be able to successfully organize and mobilize protests.

### 1.2.3 Rational Actor Theory

When it comes to the collective action problem, two concepts need to be explained: public goods and the situation of free rider incentives. Rational actor theory is based on the assumption that protest is intended to produce public goods. A public good is defined as “any good such that, if any person  $X_i$  in a group  $X_1, \dots, X_i, \dots, X_n$  consumes it, it cannot feasibly be withheld from the others in that group. In other words, those who do not purchase or pay for any of the public or collective good cannot be excluded or kept from sharing in the consumption of the good, as they can where non-collective goods are concerned” (Olson 1965: 14-15). Furthermore, “the achievement of any common goal or the satisfaction of any common interest means that a public or collective good has been provided for that group. The very fact that a goal or purpose is common to a group means that no one in the group is excluded from the benefit or satisfaction brought about by its achievement” (Olson 1965: 14-15). Therefore, public goods are non-excludable: once they are available to one person, they cannot be denied to anyone else.

Public goods are also non-rival: one person's consumption of the good does not diminish its availability to others.

Because of the characteristics of public goods, the best situation for a rational individual is that everyone else (but not I) devotes his/her efforts to the production of public goods, and I still enjoys the benefits of collective action without having to absorb any of the costs of their production. In other words, free riding costs nothing but the free rider can enjoy the public benefits with everyone else. Since participation is costly, especially in the case of protest, a free rider can avoid the cost of collective action while enjoying the benefits. Therefore, individuals will have an incentive to free ride. In the situation where everyone realizes that he/she could enjoy the fruit of cooperation without offering any effort, then no one will participate and no collective action occurs.

Relative deprivation theory itself does not provide a solution to the collective action problem to explain why collective actions still exist (Goldstone 1994; Lichbach 1994). Therefore, another group of scholars present ways to overcome the collective action problem.

#### 1.2.4 Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource mobilization theory argues that motives, such as frustration and grievance, are present everywhere at all times, but dissident collective action is rare. Every frustrated individual wants to change the world. The key point is whether or not these aggrieved people can be mobilized to join collective action.

Instead of looking at motives, resource mobilization theory focuses on how dissident leaders overcome the collective action problem to make protests happen (McCarthy and Zald

1973; McAdam 1982; Kitschelt 1991). Some scholars argue if the dissident leaders could make good use of mobilizing structures, repertoires of contention, framing processes, and political opportunities, then they will be able to effectively organize and mobilize people for participating protests (McAdam et al. 1996; 1997; 2001).

#### 1.2.4.1 Mobilization Structure

When it comes to the decision regarding whether or not to participate in a protest, rational actor models see it as an individual decision. However, resource mobilization theory observes that in reality, individuals are already embedded in existing social networks; most of time the decision regarding whether or not participate in protests is not made by atomized individuals (McAdam et al. 1996; Goldstone 1994). For individuals, “their lives are embedded in long-standing networks of social relations that exist in part for the purpose of coordinating the behavior of individuals in activities that produce shared benefits” (Mason 2009:78). Furthermore, “social bonds also enhance solidarity and offer leaders opportunities to apply subtle forms of pressure on followers.” In other words, “if you go, I will go, too” (O’Brien and Stern 2008: 17). Therefore, the choice about whether or not to participate in collective action is not made by isolated individuals but by people as members of pre-existing groups.

As members of a group, individuals interact with other members of the group frequently, create common memories, share emotions with each other, and build mutual trust. An individual can anticipate how other members of their groups will react to certain actions and can estimate the consequences for themselves if he or she does not stand with the rest of the members of the group. Therefore, individuals can be induced to participate in collective action as a member of a group if the group decides to join and the individual values membership in the group. Existing

social networks function as mobilizing structures to overcome the collective action problem; dissident leaders can overcome the collective action problems by mobilizing people through these existing structures.

According to these theoretical arguments, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who have personal ties with communities or organizations are more likely than isolated individuals to participate in protests. Individuals who have a dense network of personal ties with communities, organizations, and institutions are more likely to engage in protests than those with few personal ties. Based on resource mobilization theory, we expect an individual's occupational status to affect the likelihood of him/her participating in collective actions. All else being equal, those who work in a well-organized working environment should have a better capacity to mobilize for protests than those who work in a loosely-organized working environment. In the context of contemporary China, individuals who work in well-organized working environment, such as soldiers and the employees of SOEs, should have more capacity to mobilize for collective action than those who work in a loosely-organized working environment, such as peasants. Further, the lifetime employment guarantees and long history of SOEs should give their workers a higher level of organization for mobilizing collective action compared to the workers of private enterprises with a relatively shorter history and a higher labor turnover rate.

#### 1.2.4.2 Repertoires of Contention

It will be easier to induce a group of individuals to participate in collective action if this group has engaged in forms of collective action that have been successful in the past (McAdam et al. 1996). Because of this past successful experience, the members of this group will not only see the goal as achievable, but also know how to organize themselves for such action again.



Previous successful experience increases the incentive for the individuals of the group to participate in that form of collective action. Tarrow (1998: 21) argues that “workers know how to strike because generations of workers struck before them”. In the study of worker protests in China, Chen (2008) also points out that older Chinese workers know how to organize a protest because they did so in the Mao era. Also, students had experience with protest mobilization in 1976, 1978, 1986, so it was easier to mobilize students for the protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. From this perspective, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who are members of groups with successful protest experience in the past are more likely to engage in a protest in the future.

#### 1.2.4.3 Framing Process

Framing is the process by which dissident leaders persuade individuals to join collective action (Snow et al. 1986). An individual who faces a lot of inequalities and feels deprived might be hesitant to take any action because he/she is not sure if others also have similar grievances. Through framing dissident leaders persuade these people that they are not alone: others share their sense of deprivation. By framing, dissident leaders tell individuals what and where the injustice is, who they should blame for this deprivation (i.e., the target of the protest), who has the capacity to remedy the situation, and how that actor can redress their grievances. In this matter, dissident leaders can persuade individuals that their participation is very likely to make a difference in the outcome of a protest. Furthermore, and more importantly, if they participate in collective action, others will too (Hurst 2008; Klandermans 1984; Chen 2008; Tarrow 1998). In the context of contemporary China, workers can be mobilized by framing their grievances in

terms of the Maoist ideological exhortations that were used in the past by factory or party leaders to mobilize them to work harder to build new socialist order.

#### 1.2.4.4 Political Opportunities

Political contention involves not only the contentious group itself, but also the target of the protest, such as the government. A group of well-organized individuals with a clear target and appropriate mobilizing strategies might do nothing unless political conditions change in ways that lead them to conclude that there is a chance that collective action will succeed (Tilly 1978). Political opportunities refer to “external factors that facilitate or impede claims making” (O’Brien and Stern 2008:13). If there are events or changes that increase individuals’ estimate of the chance of success with protests, then protests are more likely to occur.

The increased chance comes from changes within the authority structure such that people perceive a reduction in the capacity of the political authorities to resist or repress protests. In this situation the power disparity between state and society is reduced, so that potential protesters conclude that protests have a better chance to succeed (McAdam et al. 1996). Resource mobilization theory predicts that collective action is more likely to occur when cues show that events happening within the political system are weakening the capacity of the state to resist their demands.

These four components discussed above not only emphasize the importance of organizing and mobilizing people to protest, but also point out what dissident leaders can do to overcome the collective action problem. Empirically, after taking demographic, political and structural factors into account, Schussman and Soule (2005) find that being asked to protest is the strongest

predictor of participating in protest. What that implies in reality is that a potential protester might have certain level of grievance, but the key factor that determines whether he/she will take action would be a successful mobilization.

In this section I have reviewed several major theories on protest participation. Deprived actor models focus on the relationship between poverty and social inequality and the occurrence of social unrest. They fail to account for the fact that the level of inequality of a country is usually relatively constant over the short term, so inequality cannot explain why social unrest takes place in a given time. Further, deprived actor models do not always receive support from empirical tests. Relative deprivation theory uses a psychological approach to focus on people's perception of the gap between their expectations and their achievements. This gap is depicted as the source of frustration, and frustration motivates people to participate in collective action. It argues that the perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities will facilitate people's protest participation. This theory is criticized because it over-predicts the occurrence of protest participation since it overlooks the importance of collective action problem. Resource mobilization theory emphasize the importance of existing networks and organizations and how they help dissident leaders to overcome the collective action problem to make protest happens. Decisions regarding whether or not participate in protests are not made by atomized individuals; individuals have to take their communities into account to make decisions. After a brief review of these major theories, I will now apply these competing theoretical frameworks to a review of patterns of protest in the contemporary China. In the following section I will talk briefly about what we know about the protests that are happening in contemporary China.

### 1.3 What Do We Know about Protest in Contemporary China

Most of studies on protests in China usually use qualitative approaches to describe and analyze these protest incidents. For examples, Chen (2003) and Zhao (1996) analyze how the economic reform of SOEs causes laid-off employees to protest. Fu and Balasubramanyam (2003) and Peng (2001) find that the annual wages of TVE workers are less than those of most other classes of Chinese workers (please see chapter 3 for more details), while TVE workers are mostly paid by piece rates; this method makes their salaries tied to their performances. By keeping wage rates low for TVE workers, TVEs will be able to reduce the production costs. In other words, cheap labor contributes to the success of township and village enterprises (TVEs) which means the workers in TVEs are exploited. O'Brien and Li (2005) and Li and O'Brien (2008) study the role of dissident leaders in rural protests regarding the difficulty of recruiting and organizing people for protest. Cai (2003) studies how affected peasants protest against the unfair compensation after their farm lands were confiscated. Others provide detailed accounts of individual events, such as the Chongqing nail-house incident, which involved Chinese protestors winning public sympathy for resisting eviction from their homes (Hess 2010). Some scholars employ quantitative approaches to analyze where protests occur (Chan et al. 2014). However, there is not much research on protest behavior at the individual level: why would an individual participate in these incidents? With the availability of survey data, we can now explore this question.

### 1.4 The Importance of This Study

China has a population of 1.3 billion people, and the annual number of protests is still increasing. Therefore, it is not difficult to propose an argument that China is getting more and more unstable, so the world should be prepared for the collapse of China in the near future. Is

this really the case? To understand why and which Chinese people participate in protest will give the world an idea about the potential future of China. On the one hand, if most of the protests are large in scale with one general demand such as democratization, the legitimacy of Chinese government will be questioned and threatened. Eventually, the Chinese Communist Party has to make a choice between meaningful political reforms or employing large scale repression. On the other hand, if most of the protests are limited in scale to local areas with different specific demands, then the large number of protest should not function as a serious threat to the stability of the regime as long as the Chinese authorities could continually answer and satisfy the demands of protesters. Moreover, as the protesters have to rely on the Communist government to be the arbitrator for justice and redress, the legitimacy of the Communist government is in fact increasing, which helps make the current government more stable.

This economic achievement has made the Chinese style of economic development become a model for many authoritarian countries, especially for developing and other authoritarian countries. More specifically, China has demonstrated to the world that it can open its economic door to the world while still monopolizing political power.

The question for those authoritarian leaders who want to open the door of their economies to the outside world is whether they could duplicate the experience of China to their countries. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, China has a large number of internal migrant workers. The marginal living and working conditions that migrant workers confront suggests that they should have many reasons to protest. My study suggests that the context of contemporary China gives migrant workers low capacity to overcome the collective action problem, so they are less likely than other sector of workers to engage in protests. If the scene changes from Chinese

society to other countries, then will the deprived migrant workers also choose to keep silent and suffer, too? By composing this study, I aim to offer more knowledge on China for political scientists, as well as for the leaders in the real world.

### 1.5 The Plan of This Study

In this study I mainly use survey data from Chinese General Social Survey in 2010 (CGSS 2010) for empirical tests. The CGSS project is the first continuous national social survey project in China. Although the survey questionnaire is not designed specifically to examine protest participation, this survey does ask questions about respondents' experience with protest participation. The variables, while not ideal, enable me to test propositions concerning which characteristic of an individual and the community in which he or she lives affect their propensity to participate in local protests.

Based on the information comes from CGSS2010, I compose three empirical chapters to investigate why and which Chinese people are more likely to participate in protests. The grievances of people, the incentive for participating in protest, and the capacity to overcome the collective action problem will be discussed along with the analyses of the cost and benefits of participating in protests. Chapter 2 offers a comparison between workers and peasants regarding their protest participations. Chapter 3 further disaggregates workers into several sub-types based on the ownership of their enterprises where they work. This distinction allows me to analyze which sectors of the urban labor force are more likely to engage in protests. Chapter 4 focuses on migrant workers and their protest participation compared to that of urban registered workers. A brief summary and discussion of the theory and finding is offered in the last chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### A COMPARISON BETWEEN PEASANTS AND WORKERS

#### 2.1 Introduction

China has been opening the doors of its economy for economic reform since late 1970s. After that, the speed and scale of China's economic development has impressed the world. Despite this rapid economic development, China has faced a series of major protests. Researchers have pointed out that the protests in contemporary China are very different from the previous protest movements. More specifically, unlike protests in 1976, 1978, 1986, and the famous Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, today's protesters are mainly peasants and workers, not students. Further, today's protesters protest for a more tangible and material goal, such as economic compensation, and these protests are limited to the local scales and issues without any call for democratization or reform of political systems (Chan et al. 2014; Chen 2003; Hurst 2008; Cai 2003; Tong and Lei 2010; Chen 2009).

Given that the People's Republic of China is officially a regime of peasants and workers, what is happening to workers, peasants, and the Chinese society? Why do workers and peasants protest against "their regime" when China's economy is growing so rapidly? Furthermore, are peasants and workers equally likely to participate in protests for the same reasons? If not, which of them are more likely than the other to engage in protests and why? What factors encourage or discourage them to go to the streets respectively for problem solving?

According to resource mobilization theory, individuals are usually embedded in existing organizations and structures, and dissident leaders can mobilize individuals via these existing organizations (McAdam et al. 1996). Individuals have occupations, and people spend many hours

each day at their jobs. The workplace can serve as a locus for mobilization, for overcoming collective action problems. However, the degree of organization varies across occupations. For example, compared to most industries, the mining industry is labor intensive and poses greater risks to workers' safety and health in the process of production. Therefore a well-organized structure is needed for production. By contrast, pasture husbandry does not require such a high level of cooperation among workers, and therefore the level of organization of individuals engaged in pasture husbandry should be lower than that of the mining industry.

Employees in highly organized occupations work together in a given place for certain time period every day. These individuals interact, communicate, and cooperate with their coworkers frequently. Therefore, they should develop a higher level of mutual trust and shared memories. These working conditions further make it easier for dissident entrepreneurs to frame issues as worthy of collective action because a group of people who work in the same place under similar conditions have similar experiences in their daily lives: they constitute a networked community. They also have shared interests that all of them are well aware of, in the sense that they know the ability of each of them to keep their job is to some extent dependent on all of them keeping their jobs. In case any injustice happens and is mentioned, the sense of shared grievance could easily spread among the community to influence all members. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the higher level of organization characterizing an individual's occupation, the easier it is to mobilize them for dissident collective action.

In addition to the existing argument that Chinese workers and peasants engage in protests to express their grievances that come from the loss of land rights or labor rights, in this chapter I mainly focus on the nature of their work, the source of their grievances, the level of



organization, and their capacities to protests. The overall theoretical argument is that an aggrieved worker and an aggrieved peasant are not equally likely to participate in protests because of their different capacities to overcome the collective action problem, and I expect that workers should be more likely than peasants to participate in protests. Using the 2010 Chinese General Social Survey to test my hypothesis, the results shows Chinese workers are statistically more likely than peasants to participate in protests; this finding is robust across all models.

This chapter is organized as follows. In the following section I describe peasants' and workers' grievances respectively in the contemporary Chinese context, and then I analyze their occupational traits and how those influence their capacities to overcome the collective action problem and mobilize for dissident collective action. In Section 3 and 4, I present my research design and the results of empirical tests. A brief summary and discussion is presented in the last Section.

## 2.2 Previous Literature

### 2.2.1 The Grievance of Peasants

During the Chinese Civil War and the first several year after the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, the land policy of Chinese Communist Party was to expropriate lands from the hands of landlords who owned large landholdings and then to distribute those lands to landless peasants. In the mid-1950s all previous distributed lands were forced to joint together and individual peasants were compelled to work collectively. Unlike the sudden forced collectivization of Stalin's USSR, in China the process from agricultural producers cooperatives to collectivization took place only very gradually. This new policy of land collectivization eventually "developed an institution called the People's Commune" in the Great Leap Forward (Chen and

Davis 1998: 124). Scholars have pointed out that the system of collective ownership and collective operation provided farmers little incentive to generate additional revenues (Oi 1999; Zweig 1983; Shue 1984). Under this policy, each localities “were required to turn over all or most of their revenues to the upper levels” (Oi 1999: 6). In other words, peasants were denied the right of the residuals they created. They worked together and submitted their harvests to the government; they did not own the product of their efforts. Therefore, “the communes destroyed farmers’ operational freedom and their enthusiasm for production” (Chen and Davis 1998: 124).

The Household Responsibility System (HRS) was launched nationwide in 1981 to replace the commune system of agricultural production. Differing from the commune system and its collectivization, the idea of HRS is decollectivization: the basic production and accounting unit changed from collective units to the individual household (Oi 1999). Under this new policy, peasants receive a piece of farmland from the state. In return for the use of land, peasants are required to turn over a certain amount of their output to the state. Beyond that quota, peasants are allowed to sell the remaining output in free markets to earn money. This system gives peasants incentives to produce more because their rewards are linked with their performance: if peasants produce more, then their incomes will increase accordingly.

Since peasants’ lives are getting better, one might wonder why peasants would engage in protests. The literature on peasant protests in China has pointed out that the grievances of today’s peasants mainly come from two sources (Cai 2003; Tong and Lei 2010; Li 2006; Chen 2009; O’Brien 2009; 1996). The first one is related to the deprivation of land use, while the second one is about local governmental issues such as unfavorable policies or corruption.

Along with the process of economic development, lands in rural areas are being confiscated by local governments for economic development purposes, such as building highways, power stations, or industrial parks. These development projects all require land, as well as the urbanization that has also generated the need of farmlands confiscation. In addition, as opposed to those already industrialized urban areas and coastal provinces where initial industrial boom took place, the industrial expansion into rural areas is part of China's strategy for bring more jobs to rural areas and to interior provinces. Land confiscation means affected peasants lost their farmland, which is an important source of their income and welfare (Yang et al. 2007). Therefore, for the affected peasants, they should be able to participate in the process of decision-making and receive a reasonable compensation after confiscation of their lands afterward. In reality, however, this expectation is rarely to meet. Many research have pointed out that protests in rural areas usually relate to the issue of under-compensation. For example, in a farmland confiscation case in Sichuan Province, 1993, the affected farmers were promised to jobs to replace their lost farm income. However, about 20,000 farmers were not allocated jobs because there were not enough positions to absorb all of them. "Consequently, they received a 200 yuan subsidy each month which was less than their income from farming" (Cai 2003). Tong and Lei (2010) also mention a case that also happened in Sichuan Province. In October 2004, in order to build a hydroelectric plant, the farmlands of peasants in Hanyuan County were expropriated. Compensation and land relocation were promised. However, many of these affected peasants did not receive sufficient compensation while the quality of their newly allocated lands was lower than that of their original farmland. These cases show that if peasants do not receive compensation for their loss of land rights, or the actual compensation they receive

is less than they are supposed or expect to receive, then that could function as a reason for them to protest.

The second source of grievance comes from the issues of local policies or corruption (O'Brien and Li 2005; Li and O'Brien 2008; Cai 2003). Related to the issue of land requisition discussed above, in rural China some greedy local officials benefit from selling farmlands. According to Land Law, rural land could not be used for non-agricultural purposes without the permission of different levels of governments, which involves a long and complicated process that is generally too difficult for the affected peasants to understand and participate in. Because of that, local cadres could sell the land to others while "pocketing the money, or even allotting land to some people as gifts" (Cai 2003: 667). In addition to the benefits from land sale, scholars like Bernstein (2004: 2) also points out that, in contrast to the East Coast, some inner provinces do not have a high level of economic growth and industrialization to generate the resources needed for infrastructure development. As a result, "in agriculture-dependent areas where there were few or no such resources, officials found themselves compelled to rely on informal extractions, fees, fines, apportionments, and informal taxes in order to fund public goods for neither the Center nor the provinces were providing adequate funding". Therefore, villagers' lives are affected by several legal or illegal fees, excessive extractions, and over-taxation that come from local authorities (Li and O'Brien 2008). Table 2.1 contains a list of formal and informal exactions for peasants.

Table 2.1. Peasant Burdens

Type of Charges	Items
State taxes	Agricultural tax and surcharge; special products tax; slaughter tax; farmland utilization tax; education surcharge.
Township and village levies	Villages collect three items- collective investments, welfare, cadre compensation; Townships collect five- schools, family planning, support for veterans, militia, and road construction and maintenance.
Collective contracting fee for land	
Monetary equivalent of corvee labour service	5-10 days of labour on flood prevention afforestation, roads or school construction; 5-10 days on “accumulation labour” on state water conservancy or afforestation projects.
Fees, assessments and fundraising	For road or school construction and other local improvement projects; newspaper subscriptions, purchase of insurance, marriage certificates, etc.
Fines	Collected by numerous government agencies for infractions such as birth control violation.
Hidden burdens	Compulsory grain sales to state at below market prices; scissors differential between industrial and agricultural prices.

Source: Bernstein and Lu (2000: 744)

Li (2006) further explains the situation in countryside in detail. In 1985 the central government granted villagers “the right to reject financial demands that were not authorized by township people’s congresses”. This right was reaffirmed in both a State Council ruling in 1991 and 1993 and Agriculture Law in 1993, so theoretically Chinese peasants could legally refuse to pay unlawful local fees imposed by local government. In practice, however, “neither the 1991 regulation nor the 1993 law says anything about the procedure through which villagers may reject illicit impositions” (Li 2006: 252). Further, according to the Agriculture Law in 1993, “the combined village and township tax was not to exceed 5 percent of the preceding year’s average net per capita incomes of the township inhabitants”, but in reality “it rose from 6.71 per cent of incomes to 7.94 per cent of incomes in 1991” (Bernstein and Lu 2000: 743). In other words, although the central authorities have made laws to regulate taxes and fees imposed by local governments, these laws might not be enforced properly in practice. Moreover, research also point out that local governments could employ certain methods for the purpose of fundraising.

For example, “administrative agencies charged fees for numerous services such as registration of births or issuing of licenses, which sometimes rose to bizarre heights” (Bernstein and Lu 2000: 743).

Among the burdens they face, peasants not only know they have the right to refuse to pay illegal fees, they are in fact also willing to pay some types of fees while refusing to pay others. For example, Bernstein and Lu (2000:745) report in their research that in 1983, villagers of Taoyuan County in Hunan Province agreed to pay agricultural tax to support military dependents and poverty-stricken household, while declined to pay for the training of Party members and the construction of a power station.

These excessive taxes and fees combined with brutal collection methods might also led to protest. In 1998, in Liangping county, Sichuan province, a farmer refused to pay land taxes so the local officials beat him. The farmer died two days later. It turned out that “several hundred villagers carried the body to the town government building. Police sought to remove the corpse. A clash ensued; one villager was killed and others were wounded” (Bernstein 2004: 6). In 1999, in Jiangxi province, a collision incident between a local government-owned luxury automobile and a two-wheeled cart triggered the anger of villagers regarding the continuous unapproved fees, unlawful taxes, and corruption. The angry villagers smashed the windows of government building, and fights broke out between the villagers and the local police (Li and O’Brien 2008). A fertilizer factory in Dachuan village, Gansu province had been discharging its waste water into a stream for many years. The villagers’ source of drinking water was contaminated, but for years the local county government failed to deal with this issue for two reasons. First, the factory was a provincial-level enterprises; the local county government had no jurisdiction over it. Second,

the county and township officials were unwilling to deal with this issue seriously because they did not want to offend higher level of officials. Consequently, Dachuan's villagers protested in 1996 (Jing 2000). A similar case happened in Yan'gen village, Guizhou province. The extraction of phosphorus ore caused a drop in water levels and an increase in water pollution, so farm lands could not be irrigated and drinking water was polluted. In 2007 the local government decided to expand the scale of the mineral extraction for the purpose of economic development. The government ignored the demands of villagers that previous pollution issues should be resolved before the expansion project could take place. In response, villagers blocked traffic to keep government officials from entering the village (Lai 2010). These cases show that these "rightful resistance" movements (O'Brien 1996) are mainly targeting local authorities regarding local policies and governance (O'Brien and Li 1996; Li and O'Brien 2008; O'Brien 2009).

The discussion above introduces the two main sources of peasants' grievances in contemporary China. One needs to keep in mind that the presence of grievances alone does not automatically mean that peasants will engage in protests. They still have to overcome collective action problems to mobilize people for action aimed at providing public goods. Therefore, a discussion about inclusive versus exclusive public goods is offered in the following section to analyze if the type of good affects the ability of peasants to overcome collective action problems.

### 2.2.2 The Incentive for Peasants to Protest

In his research, Chamberlin (1974) analyzes the relationship between group size and the provision of collective benefits. He argues that the properties of the achievement of collective action have influence on the decision regarding whether or not an individual will participate in collective actions. The two properties are (1974: 708):

*(1) Consumption of the good by one individual does not subtract from others' consumption of the good. This property is often referred to as non-rivalness of consumption.*

*(2) Individuals who do not share in paying for the good cannot be excluded from enjoying the benefits of the good. The benefits accrue automatically to all individuals. This is referred to as the nonexclusive property.*

Literature also points out that the size of protester also matters to individual protest participation (Chamberlin 1974). That is, when the size of group increases, then the size of the contribution required from individual participant will approach to zero while the probability of the good's provision will approach to one. Therefore, when an individual is facing the decision on whether or not to participate in a protest activity, if the achievement of collective action is non-rival and nonexclusive, then he/she should be more willing to participate. Because of his/her participation, the size of group increases so the probability of success (i.e., producing the public goods payoff) also increases; further, as the size of group increases, the probability of a given individual to be identified and punished by the authorities will decrease. In other words, when the size of the group increases, then the probability of success increases, while risk of being punished also decreases. Therefore, if the achievement of protest activity is an inclusive public good, individuals should have a higher level of incentive to participate in it.

In terms of the first source of grievance that whether or not a redress of farmland issues is an inclusive public good depends on several factors. On the one hand, if the farm land confiscation involves a large numbers of peasants in the same jurisdiction at the same time, then those affected peasants will have an incentive to act together to increase the size of the protest



because a successful protest will bring an inclusive public good to all participants: they can receive sufficient compensation, or even reverse the confiscation. Therefore, we should see a large scale peasant protest under those circumstances. On the other hand, if the confiscation involves only a few peasants, then this small number of affected peasants might find it difficult to act together, and there is no reason to expect a large scale protest to occur under those circumstances.

When it comes to the second source of grievance about local corruption and illegal policies, based on the examples mentioned above concerning local policies and taxation , it is reasonable to expect that if villagers could act together to put pressure on local authorities to abandon their illegal policies and practices, then all villagers would benefit. Therefore, the redress of those unfavorable situations should be an inclusive public good, which means villagers would have a higher incentive to take action collectively. Furthermore, a protest in a locale might also attract attention from higher level authorities. The attention from higher level of authorities would put pressure on the responsible local authorities and force them to correct their behavior (Cai 2008a; 2008b). From this perspective, individual peasants should have incentives to participate in protests.

The analysis above suggests that peasants might or might not be willing to take action together for problem solving. If the successful redress of such grievances, such as local corruption and illegal policies, is an inclusive public good, then they will have the incentive to engage in protests. Otherwise, protest will not be attractive to peasants.

### 2.2.3 The Collective Action Problem for Peasants

In order to make protest happens, the collective action problem needs to be solved. In this study I argue that three factors make the collective action problem difficult to overcome for peasants. The first factor relates to geographical isolation. That is, peasants work and live in rural areas, and their geographical isolation from each other makes it relatively hard to communicate and interact with each other. For thousands of years Chinese peasants farm small family plots and live in a relatively isolated rural environment. This characteristic means that peasants “tend to carry on their productive activities in relative isolation” (Paige 1975: 35). Therefore, traditionally Chinese peasants did not expect or demand labor from anyone other than their own family. These features of peasant life were reinforced by the shift from commune organization to the household responsibility. The abolished commune system was no longer the strong organizational force in peasant’s life that could have served as mobilizing structure. Although there is still cooperation among peasants in the same village, the scale and intensity are not great because cooperation only happens in the harvest season.

In addition to this self-reliance, farm lands have been an important income source for Chinese peasants (Yang et al. 2007). This gives Chinese peasants a strong tie to their lands. Consequently, Chinese peasants are conservative and risk-averse because political changes might result in the loss of their land (Paige 1975). Therefore, peasants should be more resistant to political change and less willing to involve themselves in politics. These factors make peasants difficult to organize (Popkin 1988). As a result, O’Brien (2009: 27) points out that in rural China, “most contention remains weakly organized, and cooperation across class is still rare”.

The second factor that makes protest difficult is that conditions in rural areas make it less likely that the sort of leadership needed to mobilize peasants will emerge and develop than is the case in urban industrial areas. Li and O'Brien (2008) and O'Brien (2009) find that although unlawful taxes and unapproved fees are a source of grievance in rural areas, few individuals dare to stand up and take on the leadership activities necessary to mobilize fellow villagers against these injustices. In other words, the lack of protest leadership makes collective action problem difficult to overcome for peasants.

Li and O'Brien (2008) further identify that two types of protest leaders in rural areas. The first type of protest leader emerged unexpectedly. That is, someone spontaneously stands up to local officials, and then villagers follow him/her to express their discontent. In these cases, without the spontaneous assertion of leadership, the aggrieved villagers won't automatically gel into a group and stage a protest. Those so called protest leaders in these cases did not intend to initiate protests from the beginning; most of them were just individual irate villagers who confronted local authorities over personal interests, and then were surprised to find that others with similar grievances supported their efforts. Since these incidents happen accidentally with an unprepared leadership, the likelihood and scale of these incidents are also limited.

The second type of protest leadership is someone with knowledge or access to official documents. These people have the ability to pinpoint exactly what policy or law has been violated by local authorities. In this situation, the knowledgeable individual stands up to express anger for his/her own interests. The targeted authority might buy him/her off by offering personal benefits, or they might threaten the protester's life (Fu 2016; Su and He 2010). Some of these protesters persist while others do not. For those who persist, they might become the leader of a group of

aggrieved peasants to organize and mobilize individuals for protests. After protest leadership emerges, the most crucial point for all leaders of rural protests is that the leader must “stay within the law or at least avoid breaching it” (O’Brien and Li 2005: 16) because leaders need to protect the protesters by not giving local officials legal grounds to suppress the protest with force. “More cautious organizers tend to avoid accepting recruits who have criminal records or other political stains, to avoid offering a pretext for repression and to dispel concerns that the contention will come to naught” (O’Brien and Li 2005: 6).

Even if dissident leaders do exist, the governmental regulations make it extremely difficult for peasants to organize legally. Li (2006) points out that if a group of peasants would like to create and register an organization, they will need to find a government department to be their professional supervisory unit. This regulation generates two difficulties for legalizing the organization. First, it creates an uncomfortable situation whereby peasants have to ask the target of their dissatisfaction to be their supervisor. Second, none of the government departments are willing to be the supervisory unit when they receive such requests. Therefore, although the freedom of organization is protected by Chinese Constitution, peasants face difficulties in forming a legal organization.

Based on the discussion above we see that although peasants have grievances, such as land confiscation without reasonable compensation for their loss of land rights, over-taxation, illegal fees, and corruption, existing literature indicates that “popular discontent may be running high, but no protests are on the horizon until one or more individuals openly confront officials, setting off a significant event” (Li and O’Brien 2008: 4). The geographical isolation, the difficulty of developing leadership in the loosely-organized rural social networks, and the difficulty of

recruiting individual peasants together leaves peasants with a low capacity for mobilization. In the following section I will talk about the grievance of workers, the incentive for them to engage in protests, and their capacity to do that.

#### 2.2.4 The Grievance of Workers

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China took about 10 years to nationalize all private industrial enterprises and to establish new socialist construction projects. Eventually all industries in China were owned by the state and operated under a centrally planned economy (Geng et al. 2009; Huang 2008). After almost three decades under a centrally planned economy, China started its economic reforms to open the doors of its economy to the outside world in late 1970s.

In the name of economic reform, Chinese authorities have initiated intensive reforms and privatization of state-owned enterprises (hereafter SOEs) step by step. Geng et al. (2009) categorize the SOE reforms into three phases. From 1978 to 1984, the Chinese government introduced the dual-price system: the coexisting of planned price and market price. During this period, the managers of enterprises were granted more authority over production: they were allowed to sell their products at market prices when the planned quotas were met. By doing so, more motivations were created for SOEs to pursue profit and growth: if SOE workers could produce more, they would enjoy the residuals. The second phase was from 1985 to 1993. During this period, a system of contract responsibility was introduced to "transform SOEs into truly independent economic entities that were responsible for their own profits and losses" (Geng et al. 2009: 157). The third phase which started in 1993 emphasizes transforming SOEs to modern corporations. Moreover, since the Fifteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist party

in 1997, numerous small- and medium-sized SOEs have been sold or leased to private individuals, merged with one another, or allowed to go bankrupt (Chen 2003). Table 2.2 reports the number of industrial SOEs has experienced a decreased trend in number.

Table 2.2. The Number of Industrial SOEs in China, 1995-2005

Year	Number of industrial SOEs (all sizes)	Number of industrial SOEs (large and medium-sized)
1995	118,000	15,107
2000	53,500	9,144
2005	27,500	3,999

Source: Geng et al. (2009)

Industrial economic reform not only involves the reform of SOEs, it also allows the entry of foreign investors and the emergence of domestic private firms to compete with SOEs in the market of China (Zhang and Song 2001; Yao 2006; Sun and Parikh 2001). Compared to the period of centrally planned economy, there are multiple types of business ownership coexisting in contemporary China. Besides SOEs that are still owned and operated by the state, some enterprises are owned and operated by domestic private investors. They are referred to as domestic privately owned enterprises (DPEs). Some enterprises are foreign-funded and controlled, and are referred to as foreign-owned enterprises (FOEs). Still others are owned and operated by townships and villages, so they are called township and village enterprises (TVEs) (Ralston et al. 2006; Bruton et al. 2000).

Economic reform is not only generating multiple ownerships types of business, but also bringing impacts to the lives of Chinese workers. The literature on worker protest in China has pointed out that broadly speaking, the grievances of today's worker mainly come from the issue of losses of working rights (Walder 1995; Chen and Tang 2013; Tong and Lei 2010). One thing I would like to point out here is that different types of workers do have their own working

conditions, sources of grievances, and incentives to protests. In this chapter I mainly focus on the grievance of workers, the incentives for them to engage in protest and their capacity to overcome the free rider effect in general. A discussion of that of each subtypes of workers will be offered in the next chapter.

In their research, Chen and Tang (2013) categorize labor disputes in contemporary China into three categories. The first one is about “pre-reform entitlement”. In the name of improving industrial efficiency, many workers, especially SOE workers, were collectively laid-off. For example, in his research on a medium-sized SOE restructuring in Henan province, Chen (2000) points out that 1,700 of the 2,000 employees of the SOE were laid-off. Furthermore, from May 1997 to August 1998, those laid-off workers only received 500 yuan totally. This amount of pensions was far from sufficient because “a nuclear family needed 250-300 yuan a month to maintain minimum living standards, 500 yuan over 16 months must have left most of these households destitute”(Chen 2000: 53).

Being laid off brings negative economic and emotional impacts to those SOE workers. From the economic perspective, those laid-off SOE workers lose not only their jobs, but also benefits such as insurance and subsistence guarantees that used to be offered by their enterprises (Lee 2007; Chen 2000; Walder 1991). A survey in Shanghai shows that about 80 per cent of laid-off workers do not go to a hospital for a minor illness but simply buy cheap medicine because they no longer have medical insurance (Chen 2000). In addition, those laid-off workers are generally older in age and lack marketable skills, so if they were laid-off, it is relatively difficult to find other jobs in current Chinese society (Walder 1991). From the emotional perspective, since SOE workers were deeply involved in the creation and development of SOEs back to the

history of centrally planned economy period, workers of SOEs believed they should have the right to participate in any restructuring process because SOEs are not only the enterprise where they work at, but also their legitimate property. Today SOE workers are totally excluded from the process of SOE restructuring: they play no role in the process of privatization of the enterprises to which they have devoted their whole lives. They simply receive a notice of layoff after the decision of privatization was made. A survey in 1997 shows that 78 per cent of respondents from SOEs considered that they benefited the least while 85 per cent of them believed that the managers of SOEs were benefited the most (Chen 2000). By protesting, SOE workers believe they are defending their property rights (Chen 2003). Since many of those affected SOE workers have experienced the Mao era and the planned economy period, today's economic reform and industrial restructuring that does away with the "iron rice bowl" of economic security from the Mao era simply brings unfairness to them (please see Jiang and Ashley 2000 for more details). Therefore, the feeling of deprivation functions as the impetus makes them to go to the streets in protest.

In contrast to the grievances of those laid-off SOE workers, the second and third types of labor issues are related to those who are currently employed but consider themselves deprived. The second source of grievances is called right-based dispute. With the introduction of Labor Law of the People's Republic of China in 1995 and Law of the People's Republic of China on Employment Contracts in 2008, workers have become aware that they are entitled to certain rights. In cases of labor rights violation, workers are encouraged to seek justice through the legal mechanism of labor dispute resolution. Table 2.3 contains the labor rights that are protected by the state.



Table 2.3. Employees' Individual Rights as Stipulated by Existing Statutes

Entitlements	
1	The right to be employed on an equal basis and to choose an occupation.
2	The right to obtain remuneration for one's labor.
3	The right to a minimum wage.
4	The right to economic compensation.
5	The right to take rest break, holidays, and leave.
6	The right to an eight-hour workday.
7	The right to protection of occupational safety and health.
8	The right to receive training for vocational skills.
9	The right to enjoy social insurance and welfare.
10	The right to submit applications for settlement of labor disputes and other rights relating to labor as stipulated by law.
11	The right to lawfully conclude, perform, change, dissolve, and terminate labor contracts with employing unit.
12	The right to a labor contract.

Source: Chen and Tang (2013: 572)

Although individual working rights are protected by the labor laws, in reality “labor dispute cases have become so widespread and complicated that enterprises mediation committees are no longer able to handle them” (Chen and Tang 2013: 573). Further, according to the law if workers are not satisfied with the mediation, they can take their cases to a second stage - local arbitration commissions - to seek help for problem solving. In China, however, labor arbitration commissions are part of the local governments' labor bureaus. As a result, “arbitration commissions' positions tend to be constrained by the government's economic concerns, especially in terms of the investment environment” (Chen and Tang 2013: 573). Since local governments are more concerned with economic development than law enforcement (Friedman and Lee 2010), workers might not receive fair arbitration at this stage of the legal process either. The last stage of the legal channel is litigation. If the previous two channels could not satisfy aggrieved workers, workers could seek justice through courts. If the whole legal process still could not offer workers a satisfactory solution, then workers might have to choose illegal means, such as protest, to get their voices heard.

The third type of grievance is termed interest-based disputes. When enterprises make profits, their workers' benefits do not necessarily increase correspondingly. Workers socialized in a socialist system might consider the firm's profits to be, at least in part, the fruits of workers' labor, so the workers should share in those benefits, above and beyond their regular salary. With this idea in mind, workers make claims for more bonuses and benefits. In contrast to rights-based disputes, the demand for increased compensation or shares of the company's profits is not backed by labor laws. That is, although the right to minimum wage is protected by the labor laws, labor laws neither require nor enforce employers' obligation to raise workers' salaries in correspondence to increasing profits of the firm. Therefore, in contrast to the rights-based claims, interest-based labor disputes cannot be resolved through judicial processes (Chen and Tang 2013). If workers ask for a raise in salary or better working condition, then they have to directly negotiate with the authorities of their enterprises; the judicial process has no role in these types of disputes. If the claim was made but workers do not receive satisfactory responses from their employers, disputes between workers and management are likely to occur.

#### 2.2.5 The Incentive for Workers to Protest

In the previous section I discuss the three sources of workers' grievances. An analysis regarding whether a certain type of grievance is inclusive public good is offered in this section.

In terms of the first source of grievance, the issue of industrial restructuring and collective layoff, Mason and Clement (2002) argue that since privatization or restructuring might threaten the job security of SOE workers, "if protesters can compel the government to abandon the privatization of SOEs, the benefits of a restored iron rice bowl will be available to all SOE employees" (2002: 176). This makes the benefits of successfully restoring the iron bowl a non-

exclusive and non-rival public good because “one worker’s receipt of benefits does not diminish the ability of others to receive those benefits” (Mason 1994: 415). Therefore, “as group size increases, the size of the contribution required from any one individual approaches zero while the probability of the good provision approaches one” (Mason 1994: 416). This consideration gives SOE workers a strong incentive to cooperate to increase the size of protest group, so the free rider effects are more likely to be overcome.

The redress of second source of grievance, the right-based dispute, might not be an inclusive public good for two reasons. First, although worker rights are protected by laws, what the laws cover and protect is workers’ individual rights. Most labor dispute cases occur because employers fail to implement labor contracts. In other words, violations of worker rights are mainly individual-level issues. These labor disputes are disputes between individual workers and their employers, so a successful redress of the individual’s situation does not necessarily benefit all employees of the enterprise. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that workers will have less incentive to act collectively to deal with those individual labor dispute cases. Second, since those claims are rights-based, they are supposed to be resolved through the judicial process. Workers might make collective rights claims because of a large number of lay-offs or overtime payments that affect the entire work unit. However, when facing this situation “the courts will break it down into a series of individual cases based on the number of people involved” to individualize the collective dispute (Chen and Tang 2013: 574-575; Lee 2009). Furthermore, in China judges in local courts or local officials could resolve those individual cases by various means, such as persuasion and intimidation. Therefore, given that those rights-based disputes are more likely to

be expressed and resolved in individual cases, rights-based disputes should be less likely to function as an impetus for protests.

The redress of third source of grievance, the interest-based dispute, is inclusive public good. In contrast to rights-based disputes, the demand for increased compensation or shares of the company's profits is not backed by labor laws. Although the right to minimum wage is protected by labor laws, the labor laws neither require nor enforce employers' obligation to raise workers' salaries in correspondence to increasing profits of the firm. Therefore, interest-based labor disputes cannot be "resolved through judicial processes" (Chen and Tang 2013: 576). If workers ask for a raise in salary or better working condition, then they have to directly negotiate with the authorities of their enterprises; the judicial process has no role in these types of disputes. Further, since interest-based demands are mainly about salary or working condition, if workers could successfully resolve their grievances, then all workers would be able to work under better condition with a higher salary. In other words, the achieved benefits will be enjoyed by all workers in the given work unit. This situation makes the resolution of this type of dispute a normal inclusive public good. Existing knowledge tells us that in a situation of normal inclusive public good, "increases in group size enhance rather than diminish the rational actor's incentive to contribute" (Mason 1994: 406; Chamberlin 1974). Therefore, in case of interest-based disputes, workers will have a strong incentive to cooperate to enlarge the size of the group, place more pressure on their employers, and increase the likelihood of success in these circumstances. Hence, interest-based disputes could function as impetus for protests.

The analyses above suggest that the incentive for workers to engage in protests varies: the redress of forced layoff issue and interest-based dispute are inclusive public good while that of right-based dispute might not.

#### 2.2.6 The Collective Action Problem for Workers

The analysis above suggests that whether or not Chinese workers have incentives to engage in collective actions for problem solving depends on the traits of labor issues. In case of forced layoff issues or interest-based issues, workers should be more willing to participate in protests; if the issue is about working rights, then collective actions will be less attractive to workers. In this section I introduce two factors that makes the collective action problem easier to overcome among Chinese workers.

The first factor that makes the collective action problem easier to overcome is the work-unit system (*danwei*). In the planned economy period, workers' residences were assigned according to their workplaces. Once their work-units were assigned, workers "usually live and work in the same unit for the rest of their lives" (Dittmer and Lu 1996: 248). Dittmer and Lu (1996) further point out that a work-unit had both control and welfare functions. Firstly, through the party cadres of a work-unit, the Chinese Communist Party were able to monitor and exercise political control over the members of the work-unit. Secondly, workers largely depend on their work-units for welfare benefits, such as housing, health care, transportation, child bearing and even entertainment (Bjorklund 1986; Inger 1995; Morris et al. 2001; Dittmer and Lu 1996; Wu 2002). As the result of living and working in the same place, "people are bound to develop a sense of place attachment-a sense of belonging to a productive community" (Bjorklund 1986: 21).

In the contemporary Chinese context, work-unit system still has impacts on the lives of SOE workers. Under the new market-oriented economy, on the one hand, work-unit system still largely determines the income of SOE workers. Wu (2002) points out that besides their regular salaries, bonuses are in fact the principal part of the total incomes of SOE workers. In addition, Wu's research shows that bonuses are allocated equally within *danwei*. Therefore, "the amount of economic rewards that employees received was largely contingent upon what work unit they were employed by rather than on their personal characteristics, the nature of their job, or how well they performed" (Wu 2002: 1076).

On the other hand, the monitoring and political control functions are weaker than before the reforms. According to the interviewees of Dittmer and Lu (1996), managers of SOEs are now exercising less monitoring of their employees but mainly concentrating on making profits in the competitive market-oriented society. Therefore, a reasonable expectation is that the system of work-units could function as a mechanism to organize and mobilize its members for collective actions. This expectation is confirmed by Chen's (2000: 59) study on SOE worker protests. Chen finds that almost all of the reported SOE worker protests are work-unit based and their claims are also work-unit specific. He further explains that the work-unit system has made Chinese SOE workers of the same work-unit work and act together for a long period of time. Therefore, the work-unit systems "leads to a parcelization of social life" to SOE workers. In case of protests, their claims are also limited to work-unit specific which do not extended to other SOE. Therefore, the *danwei* system of SOEs should still play a role in organizing and mobilizing SOE workers in contemporary China, making the collective action problem easier to overcome for SOE workers compared to peasants and other categories of urban workers.

The second factor that makes the collective action problem easier to overcome is related to the dormitory labor regime (Ren and Pan 2006a; 2006b). Like other developing countries trying to build their industrial sector, China has employed the strategy of building special economic zones to attract business, especially foreign investors (Wilson 2009; Huang 2008; Wu 1999; Liu 2007; Blanton and Blanton 2007). In addition, the workers of private-owned enterprises usually come from other parts of the country (Robertson and Teitebaum 2011). In order to exercise effective management and better control over their workers, private-owned enterprises in China adopt a dormitory labor regime to build a tight connection between employees' work and their private lives. This "living-at-work" (Ren and Pan 2006a: 23) means employees work at factories during the day time, while live in the dormitories that offered by the enterprises after duty. As a result, employers are able to exercise a 24-hour control over their employees.

On the one hand, the purpose of this dormitory regime is to create a system that benefits the employers. On the other hand, the living environment and condition of dormitory also increases residents' capacity for organizing. Like Mason (1994) points out, dense population and geographic concentration makes it easier for individuals to communicate with each other, as well as with their leaders. In a place with a dense population, people live close to each other so it should be easier to spread information, connect individuals, and coordinate behavior with each other. In the empirical studies, the effect of dormitory labor regime on protest organization and mobilization has been investigated regarding both student and worker protests in China. For example, Zhao (1998, 2001) studies the 1989 student movements and finds that biological environment was an important realm for student organization and mobilization. He argues that the dormitory not only assembled people with similar social status, but also facilitated

communications and interactions among students. In their study of Chinese worker protests in southern China, Cai et al. (2009) find that the dormitory functions as a platform for workers to share information and further to connect, organize, and mobilize workers for protests. Ren and Pan (2006a; 2006b) also point out that workers have used their dormitories as a platform for assembly, communication, organizing, and protest mobilization.

The discussion above suggests that in the contemporary Chinese context, workers and peasants have their sources of grievances respectively, as well as the incentive to engage in protests to redress for problem solving. Workers and peasants, however, have different capacities to overcome the collective action problems. On the one hand, geographical isolation and self-reliance, the difficulty of developing leadership in the loosely-organized rural social networks, and the difficulty of recruiting individual peasants together leave peasants with a low capacity for protest mobilization. On the other hand, the work-unit system in SOEs and the dormitory labor regime in private-owned enterprises give Chinese workers with higher capacity for protest mobilization. As the result, a hypothesis is generated as follow:

*H: In the contemporary Chinese context, workers are more likely than peasants to participate in protests.*

### 2.3 Research Design

In this chapter I use survey data from CGSS 2010 (Chinese General Social Survey in 2010) for empirical tests. The CGSS project is the first continuous national social survey project in China. The CGSS is “an annual or biannual questionnaire survey of China’s urban and rural households



aiming to monitor systematically the changing relationship between social structure and quality of life in urban and rural China”.<sup>1</sup>

The survey method of CGSS projects is face to face interview. The CGSS 2010 project employed a multi-stage stratified sampling design and covered all 31 provincial units, 100 county level units plus 5 metropolitan districts, 480 community level units, and 12,000 households in mainland China.<sup>2</sup> The number of valid respondents in CGSS 2010 dataset is 11,783. One thing I should point out is that this survey does ask questions about participation in protest, but it was not designed specifically to exam protest participation. However, there are items in the survey that enable us to measure respondents’ support for protests.

### 2.3.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of the empirical test of this chapter is protest participation. That is, whether or not the individual respondent has experience regarding protest participation. The information on respondents’ experience with protest participation comes from question D12a, D12c, and D20.

*D12a: In our daily lives we usually see some collective actions or activities happen, such as people protest unreasonable fees, against land confiscation, against certain polities, collective petitions, strikes, assembly, and demonstrations. Did any of them ever happen around your life in the past three years? (01. Yes; 02. No)*

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.src.ust.hk/survey/GSS\\_e.html](http://www.src.ust.hk/survey/GSS_e.html), access on March 10, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uchicago.cn/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Weidong-Wang.pdf>, access on March 10, 2017.

*D12c: Did you play any of the following role in those actions and activities that happened around your life? (01. I was the organizer; 02. I participated in the activities; 03. I did not participate in any of them in person, but I offer material supports; 04. I did not participate in any of them in person, but I offer moral supports; 05. Others; 06. I did not participate)*

*D20: In this past year, did you participated in any of the actions or activities that happened in your community? (01. Participated in the work of the villagers' committee, neighborhood committee, or owners' committee; 02. Offered suggestions or opinions to the villagers' committee, neighborhood committee, or owners' committee; 03. Participated in collective petitions; 04. Participated in writing collective petition letters; 05. Reported community problems to news media; 06. Reported community problems to responsible governmental authorities; 07. Participated in protests)*

Based on the answers to those questions, I created a dichotomous variable *Protest* which refers to individual respondent's experience with protest participation. A value of "1" is assigned to those answered "01. I was the organizer" or "02. I participated in the activities" to question D12c, or to those who answered "07. Participated in protests" to question D20. Others are assigned a value of "0" which refers to no experience of protest participation.

### 2.3.2 Independent Variables

The main concern of this chapter is the difference between Chinese workers and Chinese peasants regarding their protest participation. Therefore, variables that measure individuals' occupations are needed. For serving this purpose, information from questions A58 and A59a allow me to create variables about their occupations.

*A58: Which of the following best describes your working condition and experience? (01. I have a non-agriculture job; 02. I have an agriculture job, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs; 03. I have an agriculture job, and I never had any non-agriculture jobs; 04. I have no job now, and I only had agriculture jobs before; 05. I have no job now, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs; 06. I have never worked)*

*A59a: Which of the following best describes your current work condition? (01. I am the owner of an enterprises; 02. I am self-employed; 03. I am hired by someone (long-term); 04. I am a service worker; 05. I have a temporary job; 06. I work in my family business with no payment; 07. I work in my family business and get payment; 08. Freelance; 09. Other)*

On the one hand, for those who answered “02. I have an agriculture job, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs” or “03. I have an agriculture job, and I never have any non-agriculture jobs” to question A58, they are categorized as peasants. For those who answered “04. I have no job now, and I only had agriculture jobs before” or “05. I have no job now, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs”, they are categorized as unemployed. For those who answered “06. I have never worked” to question A58, they are categorized as never work.

On the other hand, for those who answered “01. I have a non-agriculture job” to question A58 and further answered “01. I am the owner of an enterprises” or “02. I am self-employed” or “06. I work in my family business with no payment” or “07. I work in my family business and get payment” to question A59a, they are categorized as entrepreneur. For those who answered “01. I have a non-agriculture job” to question A58 and further answered “08. Freelance” or “09. Others”, they are categorized as freelance. For those who answered “01. I have a non-agriculture

*job*” to question A58 and further answered “03. I am hired by someone (long-term)” or “04. I am a service worker” or “05. I am having a temporary job” to question A59a, they are categorized as worker. Therefore, variables worker, peasants, entrepreneur, freelance, unemployed, and never work are created. These occupational variables are exhaustive, so every individual respondent is categorized into one of them. Since the main concern of this chapter is about workers and peasants, in the section of empirical analysis I will focus on the difference of them regarding protest participation.

### 2.3.3 Control Variables

Several variables are added to the models as controls. Variable *Age* refers to the respondent’s age in 2010. Since existing literature points out that younger people have less obligation to families and careers, the young should be more likely than the elder to participate in protest (Schussman and Soule 2005). Scholars also find that males are more inclined to political protest than females (Wu 2012), so I expect males to be more likely than females to participate in protest. Variable *Male* refers to the respondent’s gender. A value of “1” is assigned to male, while a value of “0” is assigned to female.

Variable *Education* refers the respondent’s highest level of education in 2010. Scholars argue that well educated people are better informed and more critical so they are more likely to participate in protest (Machado et. al 2011), I expect a positive relationship between this level of education and protest participation.

Existing research also suggests that ethnic identities make it easier to generate the sentiment of “us” and “them” between ethnic groups (Tong and Lei 2010). Therefore ethnic

minorities might be more likely to feel deprived than the ethnic majority of the society, and further engage in protest. Variable *Ethnicity* refers the respondent's ethnicity. A value of "0" is assigned to those who are Han Chinese, while a value of "1" is assigned to those who are not Han Chinese.

Deprived actor model argues that poverty might cause social unrest (Russett 1964), so I add the Variable *Income* which refers the respondent's personal annual income measured in 1,000 Yuan of RMB. Existing literature also pointed out that with the feeling of relative deprivation in mind, people will be more likely to engage in social unrests (Gurr 1977). Further, Variable *Unfairtreatment* refers to whether or not the respondent considers he/she suffer any unfair treatment from government officials. A value of "1" refers to yes, while a value of "0" refers to no.

*D13a: In this past year, did you suffer any unfair treatment from governmental officials? (01. Yes; 02. No)*

Variable *incomefair* refers to what degree an individual believes his/her current income to be fair, which ranges from unfair, somewhat unfair, about ok, somewhat fair, and fair. I expect a negative relationship between this variable and the dependent variable.

*D5a: Considering your educational background, working skills, and working experience, do you think your current income is fair or not? (01. Unfair; 02. Somewhat unfair; 03. About ok; 04. Somewhat fair; 05. Fair)*

Table 2.4. Data Description

Related to	Variable	Definition	Sources
Resource Mobilization Theory Variable	Peasant	Respondents' occupation. 1 for peasant, 0 for others	A59,
	Worker	Respondents' occupation. 1 for worker, 0 for others	A59a
	Entrepreneur	Respondents' occupation. 1 for entrepreneur, 0 for others	
	Freelance	Respondents' occupation. 1 for Freelance, 0 for others	
	Unemployed	Respondents' occupation. 1 for unemployed, 0 for others	
Biographical Variables	Never worked	Respondents' occupation. 1 for never worked, 0 for others	
	Age	Respondent's age in 2010	A3a
	Male	Respondent's gender, 1 for male, 0 for female	A2
	Education	Respondent's highest level of education. 1= Do not have any education, 13= Graduate school or higher	A7a
	Minority	Whether or not the individual respondent is an ethnic minority. 1 for non-Han Chinese, 0 for Han Chinese	A4
Deprived Actor Theory Variable	Income	Respondent's annual personal income measured in thousand RMB (Yuan)	A8a
Relative Deprivation Theory Variable	Unfair treatment	Whether or not the individual respondent consider him/herself suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials. 1 for yes, 0 for no	D13a
	Incomefair	Whether or not the individual respondent consider his/her current income to be fair, 1 for unfair, 2 for somewhat unfair, 3 for about ok, 4 for somewhat fair, and 5 for fair	D5a

Table 2.5. Data Summary

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Peasant	0.248	0.432	0	1
Worker	0.286	0.452	0	1
Entrepreneur	0.093	0.291	0	1
Freelance	0.011	0.103	0	1
Unemployed	0.299	0.458	0	1
Never worked	0.062	0.242	0	1
Age	48.302	15.680	18	97
Male	0.482	0.500	0	1
Education	4.836	2.984	1	13
Minority	0.093	0.291	0	1
Income	19.21068	80.83592	0	6000
Unfair treatment	0.091	0.288	0	1
Income fair	2.867	1.234	1	5

### 2.3.4 Statistic Methodology

As the dependent variable of this research is a binary outcome, I use binary logistic regression for my analyses (Long1997).

In addition to ordinary binary logistic regression, in this chapter I also use multilevel logistic regression to compose advanced analyses and to compare the difference between the results of different models. Statistic software STATA 14 was employed for ordinary binary logistic regression analyses while HLM 7.0 was employed for multilevel logistic regression analyses.

## 2.4 Empirical Findings

### 2.4.1 Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

The results of binary logistic regression are reported in Table 2.6. In this section I discuss the result of each individual model to see if the hypothesis of this chapter receives supports from these empirical tests.

Table 2.6. Empirical Findings, Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression

	Model 2-1 (DV: Protest)	Model 2-2 (DV: Protest)
Occupations		
Peasant	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
Worker	0.450* (0.221)	0.476* (0.224)
Entrepreneur	0.589* (0.254)	0.559* (0.257)
Freelance	1.102* (0.518)	1.172* (0.573)
Unemployed	0.501* (0.204)	0.500* (0.210)
Never worked	0.178 (0.467)	-0.198 (0.625)
Age	-0.009 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.005)
Male	0.452** (0.144)	0.402** (0.148)
Education	-0.051 (0.029)	-0.048 (0.030)
Minority	-0.250 (0.269)	-0.162 (0.279)
Income	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)
Unfairtreatment	-	1.754*** (0.152)
Incomefair	-	-0.203**

		(0.061)
Cons	-3.435***	-3.414***
N	10,054	9,790
Pseudo R2	0.0124	0.0859
Note: *p<0.05, **p< 0.01, ***p<0.001		

Table 2.6 reports the result of two logistic regression models. All of occupational variables are included in both models, and the effects of them on the dependent variable are reported. In this section I mainly focus on the variables *Peasant* and *Worker* due to the main interest of this chapter is the difference between peasants and workers regarding their protest participations. The result of Model 2-1 shows that compared to peasants, workers are significantly more likely to participate in protests. Model 2-2 includes two perceptual variables, *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair*. The result of Model 2-2 also shows that the variable *Worker* is still positively associated with likelihood of protest participation. Further, its impact reaches 0.05 level of statistical significance, too. These results provide consistent supports for the hypothesis of this chapter: workers are more likely than peasants to participate in protests. Using these coefficients, I calculate the predicted probabilities of protests participation by peasants versus workers.

When the occupation changes from peasant to worker, the probability of individuals' protest participation goes up from 0.0199 to 0.0312 (Model 2-2). While the probability of participation for both groups is rather small - protesters generally constitute only a small proportion of the population - the probability of a worker participating is more than 50% greater for workers compared to peasants. This result of empirical test suggests that there is a significant difference between peasants and workers regarding their protest participations: in the



contemporary Chinese context, Chinese workers are more likely than Chinese peasants to engage in protests.

With respect to the control variables, the only controlled biographical variable that is significantly related to protest participation is gender. According to the results of both models, variable *Male* is positively related to protest participation, which suggests that males are more likely than females to participate in protests. This effect is statistically significant at the 0.01 level in both models: the odds-ratios suggests that males are about 50 % more likely than females to participate in protests. This finding is consistent with the research finding of McAdam (1992) that females are more fearful of participating in high risk activities such as protests. Further, protest leaders would me more worry about women’s safety so females would be less encouraged to participate in protest activities. The other three controlled biographical variables, *Age*, *Education*, and *Minority*, do not have statistical significant effects on protest participation. The statistical insignificance of variable *Income* on propensity to protest also implies that individual’s incomes are not significantly related to their propensity to protests. This finding suggests that deprivation is not driving protest participation; it is not the most impoverished who protest.

Two perceptual variables, *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair*, are added in to analysis in Model 2-2. The result of tests shows that these two variables both have statistically significant impacts on the dependent variables. More specifically, when an individual considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials, he/she will be 5.77 times more likely to participate in protests than those who do not consider themselves to have suffered unfair treatment. Further, this impact reaches statistical significance at 0.001 level. An individual who believes his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to participate in protests than

those who believe their current incomes is unfair (The odds ratio= 0.816). This effect reaches the 0.01 level of statistical significance. These findings conform to relative deprivation theory that people's perception matters to their participation of protest: in contemporary China, people who consider they are suffering some kind of unfairness are more likely to engage in protest activities to express their grievances (Tong and Lei 2010).

According to the result of ordinary logistic regression presented above, we could conclude that the hypothesis that workers are more likely than peasants to participate in protests receives supports from empirical tests. In the following section I will present some advanced analyses by using multilevel mixed-effect logistic regression models.

#### 2.4.2 Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Analysis

Resources mobilization theory tells us that in addition to organization being important for protest mobilization, the perception of risk matters to the decision regarding whether or not to participate in protests. As a result, a group of well-organized angry individuals might do nothing until they believe there is a chance that their protest will succeed (Tilly 1978; McAdam et al. 1996). This "changes in political opportunity structure" argument, however, mainly focuses on changes that happen within the level of central authority. Given that the power structure of central government is relatively stable, how could one step beyond this argument to study the protests that happen in contemporary China? Since protests in contemporary China are more motivated by more tangible and material local issues, and do not involve any calls for democratization or reform of national political systems, in this section I bring locales into analyses to see what local characteristics might influence the perception of risk in the local environment that might affect people's willingness to participate protests.

China has a huge population size and territory. Within China there are twenty-two provinces, five autonomous regions, and four municipalities. In addition to that, China has 334 prefectures (second level of administrative division) and more than 2,800 counties (third level of administrative division). One locale could be very different from another regarding their territorial size, population, and level of economic development. By taking local characteristics into account, I investigate what local factors might influence the perception of risk for potential protesters to make individuals more or less likely to engage in protests. Given the earlier findings that workers are more likely than peasants to participate, could the probability of a worker participating be influenced by the characteristics of the community in which that worker resides? Therefore, it will be beneficial to use multilevel modeling methods to investigate the effects of environmental factors on individual's behavior (Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Hox2002; Luke 2004).

In the following multilevel models I add several level-2 variables to determine what local factors might influence individuals' protest participation. The literature has pointed out that how many protests a locale has experienced should also affect its residents' perceptions of the risks of protest participation, and those perceptions will affect individuals' decision to participate or not participate in protests (Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 1996; 1997). A locale's past record of protest experience affects its residents' perceptions of the risks of protest participation for two reasons. First, on the one hand, for a locale with many protests in the recent past, the residents of this locale should be more likely to consider it feasible to protest there. In other words, it seems not so risky to have a protest in this locale because there have been many protests in the past without serious repercussions. This perception will further affect the decision of individuals

regarding whether or not participating in protests is a practical way to seek redress of their grievances. If a locale has never experienced any protest, on the other hand, then residents will be more uncertain about the risks of participation than are residents of localities that have experienced multiple protests in the recent past. Further, a potential protest participant will be more uncertain about whether others will participate in the protest. This perception will make residents more hesitant about participating in protests.

Second, if a locale has experienced many protests, that means there must be some level of dissident organization in the locale. Furthermore, the residents there also know how to mobilize people to participate in protests and how to organize a protest because they have successfully organized protests in the past. For dissident leaders, the knowledge about past protest mobilization and existing mobilization structures make it easier to mobilize and organize potential protesters for future actions (McAdam et al. 2001). With such existing organization, dissident leaders don't need to create the capacity to mobilize from nothing. For those who have successfully organized protests in the past, they know where the likely participants are, as well as how to mobilize them for a successful protest, so it will be less difficult to organize another protest in the future than would be the case in a locale with no prior history of protest.

Based on this logic, three variables were created to measure to how many protest incidents a province experienced from 1995 to 2009: variable *AOP* refers to the total numbers of protest a province experienced from 1995 to 2009. Further, variable *P9599* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 1995 to 1999. Variable *P0004* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 2000 to 2004. Variable *P0509* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 2005 to 2009. The source of such information is Wedeman

(2009). I expect a positive relationship between these control variables and the dependent variable.

In addition to how many protests a province experienced in the past, literature also points out that population also matters to individual protest participation (Chamberlin 1974). In a series of articles, Spilerman (1970; 1971) finds that the size of the black population was the strongest predictor of a city's riot-proneness in 1960s. Mason (1994) further offers three explanations of why the geographic concentration and population size affect the likelihood of protest in a given locale. First, aggrieved individuals won't automatically stick together as a group to protest; leadership is important for protest organization and mobilization. In a place with a larger population, the likelihood of someone with leadership ability and skills emerging to organize and mobilize others will be higher than a place with a smaller population. Secondly, geographic concentration makes it easier for individuals to communicate with each other, as well as to communicate with their leaders. In a place with a dense population, people live close to each other so it should be easier to spread information, connect individuals, and coordinate behavior with each other. Lastly, a larger population means there will be more potential participants for protest. Each potential participant must consider the risks of participation (Mason and Clement 2002). On the one hand, when the number of estimated protest participants increases, not only does the chance of success increase, but the risk for him/her to be arrested and punished for participation decreases. On the other hand, in a protest with a small number of participants, not only does the protest produce less pressure on the responsible authorities, but each individual protester has a higher risk of being identified, arrested, and punished. In a protest with a large number of participants, the responsible authorities will feel more threatened, and the chance for

any one individual participant being recognized and punished will be much lower. Therefore, a large number of potential participants increases the expected benefits of participation while reducing the expected costs of participation. When individuals estimate the number of other participants is large, he/she will be more likely to participate in protests. Therefore, variable *Provincial Population* which refers to the resident population of a province in 2010 was added to Model 2-3a and Model 2-3b, while variable *County Population* which refers to the resident population of a county in 2010 was added to Model 2-4a and Model 2-4b. Based on the discussion above, I expect a positive relationship between these variables and the likelihood of protest participation.

The third controlled local level variable is local economy. The local economy would affect individual's propensity to protest participation for two reasons. First, local economic development could be a resource for protest leaders for organization and mobilization. That is, in a locale with high level of economic development, the well-developed infrastructure such as better quality roads, convenient transportation, and prosperous business activities all could contribute to a high level of interaction and communication between residents of the locale. Protest leaders could take advantage of these factors for mobilizing. Second, in the transitioning Chinese society, a higher level of economic development might also imply changes to the daily lives of residents, such as urban encroachments. Therefore, the pressures for a high level of economic development could affect the lives of local residents and make them more likely to go to streets. Variable *POGDPPC* which refers to the provincial GDP per capita in 2010 was created and added into Model 2-3a and Model 2-3b, while variable *CTGDPPC* was created and added into Model 2-4a and Model 2-4b for empirical analyses.

Table 2.7. Data Description, Level-2 Variables

Variables	Definition	Source
AOP	The number of mass incident of a province from 1995 to 2009	Wedeman (2009)
P9599	The number of mass incident for a province from 1995 to 1999	Wedeman (2009)
P0004	The number of mass incident for a province from 2000 to 2004	Wedeman (2009)
P0509	The number of mass incident for a province from 2005 to 2009	Wedeman (2009)
Provincial population	The number of resident population of a province in 2010 measured in 1,000 people	Tabulation on the 2010 Population Cense of the People’s Republic of China by County
POGDPPC	Provincial GDP per capita in 2010 measured in Yuan (RMB)	China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy, 2011
County population	The number of resident population of a county in 2010 measured in 1,000 people	Tabulation on the 2010 Population Cense of the People’s Republic of China by County
CTGDPPC	County GDP per capita in 2010 measured in Yuan (RMB)	China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy, 2011

Table 2.8. Data Summary, Level-2 Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
AOP	36.032	37.922	2	173
P9599	8.753	9.657	0	30
P0004	10.190	11.285	0	53
P0509	17.089	24.450	0	118
Provincial Population	51497.79	26710.51	3002.165	104320.5
POGDPPC	35814.94	18029.59	13119	76074
County Population	678.4263	789.7413	91.2	7335.29
CTGDPPC	30997.88	38352.07	5174	394866

Based on the information above, several multilevel regression models were built for empirical tests in this section. The level-1 analysis of Model 2-3 is individual, while the level-2 of analysis is province. Table 2.9 presents the finding from these multilevel random-intercept models.

Table 2.9. Empirical Findings, Multilevel Random-Intercept Models, Province Level

	Model 2-3 (Level-2: Province)	Model 2-3a (Level-2: Province)	Model 2-3b (Level-2: Province)
Level-1			
Occupations			
	Peasants (baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
Workers	0.436* (0.201)	0.447* (0.199)	0.452* (0.195)
Entrepreneur	0.460* (0.223)	0.471* (0.224)	0.469* (0.218)
Freelance	1.192* (0.466)	1.206* (0.480)	1.189* (0.461)
Unemployed	0.476* (0.207)	0.486* (0.206)	0.487* (0.200)
Never worked	-0.175 (0.536)	-0.164 (0.541)	-0.174 (0.526)
Age	-0.007 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.004)
Male	0.404** (0.153)	0.401** (0.153)	0.398** (0.152)
Education	-0.040 (0.038)	-0.039 (0.041)	-0.038 (0.041)
Minority	-0.195 (0.258)	-0.231 (0.259)	-0.234 (0.266)
Income	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Unfairtreatment	1.726*** (0.185)	1.725*** (0.188)	1.721*** (0.186)
Incomefair	-0.171*** (0.050)	-0.172*** (0.051)	-0.173** (0.051)
Cons	-3.855*** (0.148)	-	-
Level-2	0.322*** (0.568)	0.303*** (0.550)	0.279*** (0.528)
	Var(_con)		
Intercept	-	-3.860*** (0.152)	-3.886*** (0.150)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009	-	-0.005 (0.003)	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999	-	-	0.014 (0.017)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2000 to 2004	-	-	-0.030 (0.020)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009	-	-	-0.004 (0.007)
Provincial Resident Population	-	0.000001 (0.000007)	0.000001 (0.000007)
Provincial GDP Per Capita	-	-0.000005 (0.000009)	-0.000000 (0.000001)
N	9,790	9,790	9,790
Number of groups	31	31	31



First of all, we see that the likelihood-ratio tests comparing to the ordinary logistic regression of Model 2-3 (Model 2-3 versus Model 2-2) is 32.36 and that of Model 2-4 (Model 2-4 versus Model 2-2) is 30.52, which suggest that Model 2-3 and Model 2-4 are both significantly better than Model 2-2. Therefore, it is appropriate to use multilevel modeling for empirical tests.

According to Model 2-3 in which provinces are taken into account, we see that compared to variable *Peasant*, variable *Worker* is positively related to the dependent variable at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover, the odds ratio suggests that workers are about 55 % more likely than peasants to participate in protests. Therefore, after I take the effect of different provinces and counties into account, the results of multilevel random-intercept models support the hypothesis that in the context of contemporary China, workers are more likely than peasants to participate in protests.

In terms of the effects of controls on the dependent variable, variable *Male*, *Unfairtreatment*, *Incomefair* are the only three control variables that have significantly effects on the dependent variable. The result of Model 2-3 indicates that first, males are more likely to participate in protests than females (odds ratios= 1.498 in Model 2-3, 1.493 in Model 2-3a, and 1.488 in Model 2-3b). Second, an individual who considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatments from government officials will be more likely to engage in protests (odds ratios= 5.616 in Model 2-3, 5.614 in Model 2-3a, and 5.591 in Model 2-3b). Third, an individual who considers his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to engage in protest activities (odds ratios= 0.842 in Model 2-3 and Model 2-3a, while 0.841 in Model 2-3b). These findings consist with what

Model 2-2 tells us about protest participation of Chinese citizen in the context of contemporary China: among all variables of models, the three factors that have significant impacts on people's protest participations are their ages, whether or not they consider they have suffer unfair treatments from government officials, and whether or not the individual considers his/her current income to be fair.

When it comes to the effect of locales' previous protest experience, Model 2-3a shows that the total number of protest a province experienced does not have a significant effect on individuals' protest participation. Model 2-3b further disaggregates the total number of protest experiences into three phases, but none of them has a significant effect on individuals' protest participation. In terms of the effect of local population and local economy on protest propensity, provincial population and provincial GDP per capita both have no significant impact on individual's protest propensity.

Model 2-4 is a multilevel random-intercept model in which individuals are the first level of analysis while county is the second level of analysis. Therefore, in addition to individual-level variables, three sets of level-2 variables – numbers of previous protest, local resident population, and local GDP per capita – are included in Model 2-4a and Model 2-4b. The result of these models are reported in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10. Empirical Findings, Multilevel Random-Intercept Models, County Level

	Model 2-4 (Level-2: County)	Model 2-4a (Level-2: County)	Model 2-4b (Level-2: County)
Level-1			
Occupations			
	Peasants (baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
Workers	0.568* (0.248)	0.596* (0.246)	0.613* (0.252)
Entrepreneur	0.491 (0.261)	0.506 (0.258)	0.510 (0.263)
Freelance	1.490* (0.592)	1.518* (0.599)	1.513* (0.592)
Unemployed	0.416 (0.222)	0.486* (0.206)	0.450* (0.219)
Never work	-0.004 (0.571)	0.016 (0.569)	-0.006 (0.558)
Age	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)
Male	0.384* (0.186)	0.375* (0.185)	0.382* (0.184)
Education	-0.055 (0.037)	-0.053 (0.037)	-0.051 (0.038)
Minority	-0.041 (0.310)	-0.098 (0.317)	-0.004 (0.291)
Income	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
Unfairtreatment	1.649*** (0.202)	1.644*** (0.201)	1.644*** (0.202)
Incomefair	-0.202*** (0.055)	-0.201*** (.055)	-0.206*** (0.057)
Cons	-3.833*** (0.123)	-	-
Level-2	0.541*** (0.735)	0.531*** (0.729)	0.460*** (0.678)
	Var(_con)		
Intercept	-	-3.866*** (0.121)	-3.913*** (0.123)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009	-	-0.0008 (0.002)	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999	-	-	0.024* (0.011)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2000 to 2004	-	-	0.023 (0.029)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009	-	-	-0.016* (0.007)
Provincial Resident Population	-	0.000003 (0.00009)	0.00006 (0.0001)
Provincial GDP Per Capita	-	-0.000004 (0.000003)	-0.000001 (0.000003)
N	7,171	7,171	7,171
Number of groups	89	89	89

When we check the finding from Model 2-4 in which counties are taken into account, being a worker is also more likely than a peasant to participate in protests at least at 0.05 level of significance. The odds ratios (1.76 in Model 2-4, 1.82 in Model 2-4a, and 1.85 in Model 2-4b) suggests that workers are about 80 % more likely than peasants to participate in protests. The results also suggest that when I take county into account, then age has a significant effect on individual's protest participation. As age increases, the likelihood of participating in protests decreases. This might be because younger people have less obligation to families and careers so they are likely than the elder to participate in protest (Schussman and Soule 2005).

In terms of the effect of county population and county economy on protest propensity, county population and county GDP per capita both have no significant impact on individual's protest propensity.

When it comes to the effect of locales' previous protest experience, Model 2-4a shows that the number of protest a province experienced does not have significant effects on individuals' protest participations. Compared to this result, the result of Model 2-4b suggests that a how many protests a province experienced from 1995 to 1999 has a significant positive effect on individual's protest propensity. That is, the more protests a province experienced from 1995 to 1999, the more likely the individual resident of this province would be to participate in protest. Furthermore, the result also shows that the more protests a province experienced from 2005 to 2009, the less likely the individual resident would participate in protests. The overall story the Model 2-4b tells us is that when we use a multilevel structure and take county as the second level

of our analysis, the number of protests a province's experienced in 1995-1999 has a positive impact on individuals' protest propensity, while the number of a province's experienced protest in 2005-2009 has a negative impact on individuals' protest propensity. Given that the theoretical expectation is that the more protests a locale had in the past, the more likely the residents of this locale are to consider participation as not so risky, why the total number of protest experiences in 2005-2009 have a negative impact on the likelihood of protest participation? A plausible explanation of mine is that China hosted the Summer Olympics Game in 2008. In order to host this international activity, it is reasonable to expect that the Chinese authorities suppressed protest activities with higher level of repression to make sure everything was under control. As a result, when individuals observes that protest activities are suppressed by governments, which means the risk of participate in protest increases, so it would deter them from participating in protests. We will be able to test this hypothesis if the information about how Chinese authorities respond to protests becomes available in the future.

From the result of these multilevel random-intercept models, we see that workers are significantly more likely than peasants to participate in protests. This result is robust across three models. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the in the context of contemporary China, workers are more likely than peasants to engage in protests.

Considering all of the above, the result of empirical tests offer a consistent and robust finding that workers are significantly more likely than peasants to participate in protests. In addition to that, empirical tests also shows that when someone perceives that s/he has suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials, he/she would be more likely to engage in protests. Also individuals who consider their income to be fair are less likely to participate in protests.

Gender also has an effect on protest participation. The results of two ordinary logistic regression models suggest that males are significantly more likely than females to participate in protests, and this effect reaches at least at 0.01 level of statistical significance. In the multilevel models Model 2-3 and Model 2-4, the effect of gender on protest participation also reach statistical significance at least at 0.05 level.

The results of the effect of level-2 variables on the dependent variable shows mixed findings. First, local population and local economy do not have a significant effect on individuals' protest participation regardless of the second level of models are province or county. In terms of the effect of previous protest number on the dependent variable, the result of Model 2-4b shows that the total number of protests a province experienced from 1995 to 1999 has a significant positive impact on individuals' protest participations, while the total number of protests a province experienced from 2005 to 2009 has a negative impact on individuals' protest participations. My explanation is that because of hosting the Summer Olympics Game in 2008, the Chinese authorities had employed a higher level of repression toward any protest activities, so it increased the perception of risk of participating in protests.

## 2.5 Summary and Discussion

Existing research on the protest in contemporary China has pointed out that Chinese workers and peasants engage in protests to express their grievances that come from the loss of land rights or labor rights. The existing literature, however, mainly discuss this topic by focuses on either worker protests or peasant protests. In other words, scholars have not offered a systematic analysis on why and which of them are more likely than other to engage in protests. By analyzing their sources of grievance, their incentives to engage in protests, and most

importantly, their capacities to overcome the collective action problem, the overall theoretical expectation of this chapter is that an aggrieved worker and an aggrieved peasant are not equally likely to participate in protests because of their different capacities to overcome the collective action problem. On the one hand, peasants confront difficulties like geographical isolation, traditional self-reliance, the difficulty of developing leadership in the loosely-organized rural social networks, and the difficulty of recruiting individual to make them with a low capacity for protest mobilization. On the other hand, the work-unit system in SOEs and the dormitory labor regime in private-owned enterprises give Chinese workers with a high capacity for organizing and mobilizing. As a result, I expect that workers should be more likely than peasants to participate in protests.

Using the 2010 Chinese General Social Survey to test my hypothesis, the results of ordinary logistic regression models and multilevel random-intercept models all suggest that Chinese workers are statistically more likely than peasants to participate in protests; this finding is robust across all models. This finding also echoes the perspective of resources mobilization theory: every angry individual wants to change the world, but the key point is whether or not they can be organized and mobilized to take action.

Stepping beyond the finding of this chapter, in the next chapter I will further disaggregate the working class into different subgroups of workers - SOE workers, TVE workers, DPE workers, and FOE workers - to compare their protest propensities. More specifically, in the coming chapter I will talk about their sources of grievance, their incentives to engage in protests, their capacities to overcome the collective action problem.

## CHAPTER 3

### A COMPARISON BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORKERS

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented an empirical analysis of the protest propensities of workers versus peasants in the contemporary Chinese context. On the one hand, peasants confront the difficulties such as geographical isolation, traditional self-reliance, and the difficulty of developing leadership and recruitment in the loosely-organized rural social networks, so the collective action problem is difficult for them to overcome. On the other hand, the work-unit system and the dormitory labor regime give Chinese urban workers a higher capacity for protest organizing and mobilizing. Therefore, the theoretical expectation of the previous chapter is that Chinese workers should be more likely than Chinese peasants to participate in protests. This argument receives supports from empirical tests: workers are statistically significantly more likely than peasants to engage in protests. This finding is robust across all models.

Stepping beyond this finding, a further research question is whether there are any difference between different types of workers regarding their protest participation. Chinese workers can be further categorized into several subtypes according to the ownership of enterprises. Besides the long history of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the reforms of the 1980s enabled the emergence of new types of enterprises that are owned and operated by townships and villages. These enterprises are called township and village enterprises (TVEs). In addition, the entry of foreign investors into the Chinese economy enable the emergence of a new set of enterprises that are owned (in whole or in party) and operated by foreign investors. These firms are called foreign-owned enterprises (FOEs). Still others are owned and operated by domestic



investors. This type of enterprise is referred to as domestic privately owned enterprises (DPEs). The employment conditions of the workers – e.g., wages, working conditions, benefits, and job security – vary across these enterprise types. Therefore, we would expect workers in the different enterprises to have different sources of grievances, different incentives to participate in protests, and different capacities to overcome the collective action problems and mobilize for protests. I expect that the likelihood of workers participating in protests should vary across these different types of enterprises.

In this chapter I intend to offer a comprehensive analysis of which type of workers are more likely than others to participate in protests and why this variation should exist. The results of empirical tests support the hypothesis that TVE workers are more likely than SOE workers to participate in protests, while tests also show that there is no significant differences between DPE workers and FOE workers regarding their protest participation.

This chapter is organized as follows. In the following section I describe the grievances of different types of workers, the incentives for them to participate in protests, and their capacities to overcome the collective action problem. In Section 3 and 4, I present my research design and the results of empirical tests. A brief summary and discussion is presented in Section 5.

## 3.2 Previous Literature

### 3.2.1 The Grievance of SOE Workers

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China took less than 10 years to nationalize all private industrial enterprises. From the 1950s to 1978 China operated its SOEs under a centrally planned economy. During the period of the centrally planned economy,

SOE workers enjoyed job security and a full range of services and benefits from their enterprises. Their job positions were guaranteed with stable and secure income with lifetime employment guarantees. Their enterprises also provided benefits, such as housing, medical care, schools for their children, pensions, and bonuses for their workers (Lee 2007; Blecher 2002; Walder 1991; Mason and Clements 2002; Giles 2006). The benefits that came with employment in an SOE are referred to as the “iron rice bowl” because once you have them, you won’t have to worry about how to feed your family for the rest of your life. This made SOE workers China’s labor aristocracy.

In 1978 China decided to begin reforming its centrally planned economy and open its economic doors to the outside world. Since then, the Chinese central government has carried out a series of SOE reforms. Geng et al. (2009) categorizes the SOE reforms into three phases. The first phase was from 1978 to 1984. During this period, the Chinese government introduced the dual-price system: the coexistence of planned price and market price. The managers of enterprises were granted more authority over production: they were allowed to sell their products at market prices when the planned quotas were met. By doing so, more motivations were created for SOEs to pursue profit and growth: if SOE workers could produce more, they would enjoy a share of the residuals in the form of bonuses. The second phase was from 1985 to 1993. During this period, a system of contract responsibility was introduced to “transform SOEs into truly independent economic entities that were responsible for their own profits and losses” (Geng et al. 2009: 157). The third phase which started in 1993 emphasized transforming SOEs into modern corporations. Since the Fifteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist party in 1997, numerous small- and medium-sized SOEs have been sold or leased to private individuals, merged with one another, or allowed to go bankrupt (Chen 2003). As a result, the number of

industrial SOEs dropped from 118,000 in 1995 to 27,500 in 2005 (Geng et al. 2009). In the name of enterprises restructuring, SOEs have experienced a series of intensive reforms. Since the Fifteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist party in 1997, “grasp the large and let go the small” SOE reform policy has resulted in numerous small and medium sized SOEs being privatized and sold off to private investors (Ralston et al. 2006; Chen 2003; Giles et al. 2006). These reforms of SOEs not only affected the ownership of SOEs, but also the lives of SOE employees. Researchers find that the process of SOEs restructuring “has been accompanied by severe measures against workers, including collective layoffs, deprivation of benefits, ruthless labor rights abuses, and brutal working conditions” (Chen 2003: 237-238).

Existing literature has pointed out that the grievances of SOE worker mainly come from two sources. The first source of grievance relates to the removal of redundant workers. Cai (2002) points that the laid-off workers of SOE numbered 3 million in 1993; this number increased to 17.24 million in 1998. Chen and Tang (2013) also indicate that from 1998 to 2004, over 30 million SOE workers lost their jobs. From the perspective of SOE workers, the restructuring of SOEs threatens their job security: they no longer have the iron rice bowl. Furthermore, those laid-off workers find it difficult to find other jobs because of the disadvantage of their age or their lack of marketable skills (Walder 1991). These disadvantages have not only made it hard for laid-off SOE workers to adapt to the new capitalist society, but have also made those who have not yet lost their jobs more sensitive to any further restructuring. Because many affected SOE workers experienced the Mao era, they see today’s economic reforms as generating inequality in society and reducing the social status of the working class. Therefore, they have a negative attitude toward the economic reforms, especially SOE restructuring. Since economic reform is still under

way and the re-organization and privatization of SOEs are still in progress, it would be reasonable to expect to see large numbers of SOEs employees continually affected by these reform policies.

The second source of grievance is that SOE workers were totally excluded from the process of SOE restructuring, which has had a huge impact on their employment status. Chen and Tang (2013: 568-569) point out that “in deals endorsed by local governments, numerous state factories across the country were sold to private companies at underestimated values...as most workers had spent all their working lives at an SOE had contributed to the accumulation of state assets by accepting low wages, they felt strongly that they had a legitimate share in the factory as a piece of property”. Because SOE workers were deeply involved in the creation and development of SOEs, workers in SOEs believed they should have the right to participate in any restructuring process because SOEs are not only the enterprise where they work but also their legitimate property. By protesting, SOE workers believe they are defending their property rights (Chen 2003).

### 3.2.2 The Incentive for SOE Workers to Protest

Existing literature has argued that SOE workers should have incentives to express their grievance collectively to redress the unfavorable situation that comes from restructuring of SOEs. For example, Mason and Clement argue that since privatization or restructuring of SOEs might threaten the job security of SOE workers, “if protesters can compel the government to abandon the privatization of SOEs, the benefits of a restored iron rice bowl will be available to all SOE employees” (2002: 176). This makes the benefits of successfully restoring the iron bowl a non-exclusive and non-rival public good because “one worker’s receipt of benefits does not diminish

the ability of others to receive those benefits” (Mason 1994: 415). This consideration gives SOE workers a strong incentive to cooperate to increase the size of protest group.

Chen (2003) mentions a case that best describes the incentive of SOE workers to resist SOEs restructuring. Due to the financial difficulties, the management of a state-owned factory SL Group in Henan Province decided to lease the enterprise to a private investor. The workers of SL group opposed this decision because they were afraid of a collective layoff by the new boss. In order to persuade the workers to accept the decision, the new boss promised to raise workers’ monthly wages. In addition, the new boss also organized a trip to another enterprise managed by the same private firm to let the worker representatives of SL Group observe how good the new management would be. However, after the trip, the worker representatives of SL Group realized that although the workers of new manager’s other enterprises might earn more wages, they also faced many unreasonable management policies, such as fines for minor mistakes, limited bathroom time, and heavy workload: 12 hours a day and seven days a week. As a result, the workers of SL Group collectively resisted this leasing proposal. They called for a referendum on the leasing agreement, and the leasing project was rejected. This case shows that when SOE workers face some enterprises reforms that might affect their current lives, they have a strong incentive to get engage in collective dissent to oppose such projects (Chen 2003).

Some factors, however, might make SOE workers hesitate to engage in protests. First, along with the economic reform, the Chinese government has undertaken legal reforms that emphasize the rule of law. Two major labor laws, The Labor Law in 1995 and Labor Contract Law in 2008, were introduced to protect the working rights of laborers. The introduction of labor laws not only makes workers realize they are entitled to certain rights but also encourages workers to

seek justice for violations of working rights through the legal mechanisms of labor dispute resolution, such as mediation, arbitration, and litigation. Therefore, when workers believe that their labor rights have been violated, they are encouraged and, more importantly, expected to seek justice through legal channels. Scholars such as Lai (2010) and Chen (2003) have pointed out that in many cases worker protests occurred because workers found that their labor rights had been violated, but legal channels had not given them justice. Under these circumstances, when grievances occur, they could motivate what Chen and Tang (2013) called rights-based protests. Although there are legal channels for workers to seek remedies, these legal channels cannot adjudicate all demands from all workers in contemporary China. For example, labor laws require every enterprise to establish mediation committees to deal with labor disputes. However, Chen and Tang (2013) indicate that compared to SOEs, the mediation committees in private sector firms (that is, DPEs and FOEs) are fewer in number.

The reality mentioned above tells us that, compared to other types of enterprises, SOEs generally have relatively well-established legal channels for grievance resolution. This factor leaves SOE workers with less legitimate reason to participate in protests. They are expected to exhaust legal options before engaging in protest. It is difficult to justify engaging in protests when, compared to other types of workers, SOE workers already have legal mechanisms to seek remedies for their workplace grievances. This is the first factor that might make SOE workers hesitate to engage in protests, compared to other categories of workers.

The second factor that might make SOE workers hesitate to participate in protests is that SOE workers still have better living and working conditions than many other segments of China's labor force (Taylor 1988; Walder 1991).

Table 3.1. Annual Wages of Chinese Workers in RMB, 1995-2015

Years	SOEs	TVEs	Share Cooperation Units	Associated Enterprises	Limited Liability Companies	Corporation Limited	Other DPEs	HMT- Owned Enterprises <sup>3</sup>	FOEs
1995	5,553	3,934	7,260	6,074			6,483	7,711	8,812
2000	9,441	6,241	7,479	10,608	9,750	11,105	9,888	12,210	15,692
2005	18,978	11,176	13,808	17,476	17,010	20,272	11,230	17,833	23,625
2006	21,706	12,866	15,190	19,883	19,366	24,383	13,262	19,678	26,552
2007	26,100	15,444	17,613	23,746	22,343	28,587	16,280	22,593	29,594
2008	30,287	18,103	21,497	27,576	26,198	34,026	19,591	26,083	34,250
2009	34,130	20,607	25,020	29,474	28,692	38,417	21,633	28,090	37,101
2010	38,359	24,010	30,271	33,939	32,799	44,118	25,253	31,983	41,739
2011	43,483	28,791	36,740	36,142	37,611	49,978	29,961	38,341	48,869
2012	48,357	33,784	43,433	42,083	41,860	56,254	34,694	44,103	55,888
2013	52,657	38,905	48,657	43,973	46,718	61,145	38,306	49,961	63,171
2014	57,296	42,742	54,806	49,078	50,942	67,421	42,224	55,935	69,826
2015	65,296	46,607	60,369	50,733	54,481	72,644	46,945	62,017	76,302

Source: Chinese Statistic Yearbooks, <http://www.tjsgl.com/m/data.aspx?d=179991>, access on March 10, 2017.

According to Table 3.1, the regular salary of SOEs workers might be less than that of workers in other types enterprises. However, non-SOEs generally do not provide subsidies, bonuses, or health insurance for their workers, nor do they provide the job security that SOE workers have traditionally enjoyed (Chen 2003; Giles et al. 2006). Furthermore, the positions of SOE workers are guaranteed, while non-SOE workers are more likely to face the loss of working rights. Therefore, compared to other categories of workers, SOE workers already enjoy certain privileges that make them less inclined to complain about workplace grievances. They might be less inclined to protest over wages, hours and working conditions, but SOE workers should be more likely to protest over SOE reform of their enterprise that would take away all the benefits that make SOE employment preferable to work in other types of enterprises. If they still decided to engage in protests for reasons other than SOE reform, then their protest engagement would

<sup>3</sup> HMT stands for Hong-Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.

receive less sympathy from other segments of the urban labor force. This is the second factor that might make SOE workers hesitate to engage in protests.

The discussion above suggests that the incentive for SOE workers to engage in protests depends on what labor issues they face. On the one hand, if the labor issue is about working rights of laborers, such as overtime working or arrears of wages, the relatively well-established legal channels of SOEs would encourage affected SOE workers to seek remedies via these legal mechanisms. On the other hand, if the issue is about SOE restructuring, especially the privatization of the firm and the loss of their iron-rice-bowl package of benefits, then the affected SOE workers would have a high level of incentive to participate in protests.

### 3.2.3 The Collective Action Problem for SOE Workers

In terms of the collective action problem facing SOE workers, Mason and Clement (2002: 176) point out that SOE workers are embedded in a long-standing and stable network, and this network “enables workers to communicate quickly and easily with a large number of potential participants.” The long-standing working network should not only make the sense of relative deprivation spread more readily among SOE workers, but also function as a mobilizing structure for dissident leaders to employ (Chen 2003). SOE workers’ lives give them “experience in organized collective action, even if those activities were organized by the firms or the party in the service of goals sanctioned by the state” (Mason and Clement 2002: 176). Many SOE workers, especially older ones, have experience regarding how to organize and mobilize protests: they participated in mass movements during the Mao era, so they have repertoires of contention with which they have past experience (Chen 2008). This situation also corresponds to Tarrow’s assertion that “workers know how to strike because generations of workers struck before them”



(1998: 21). Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the capacity for SOE workers to overcome the collective action problem is high.

In sum, on the one hand, the long standing history and well-organized structure of employment in SOEs leave SOE workers a high capacity to overcome the collective action problem, so they are more likely to mobilize than other segments of the urban industrial labor force. On the other hand, SOE workers still enjoy certain benefits that other segments of the workforce do not. SOE reforms might be the main and only threat to SOE workers; other than that, SOE workers have less to complain about. Further, the internal legal channels of SOEs are better-established compared those available to workers in other types of enterprises. These avenues for legal redress should decrease the need of illegal redress such as participating in protests, at least over issues that do not involve the restructuring of the SOE into another type of enterprise in which workers do not enjoy the iron rice bowl package of benefits and job security.

#### 3.2.4 The Grievance of TVE Workers

The origin of township and village enterprises (TVEs) can be traced back to the establishment of the people's communes in 1958 during the Great Leap Forward. In the pre-reform era, these enterprises were named commune-brigade enterprises (Bruton et al. 2000; Peng 2001). These enterprises were located in rural areas, created and owned collectively by the resident of the commune. Although they look like state-owned enterprises, these enterprises were not SOEs because they "were never part of central planning and thus not entitled to state subsidies such as cheap credit or low-price inputs" (Peng 2001: 1342). After 1984 these enterprises were renamed township and village enterprises. Today a TVE is defined as an

enterprise that is located in rural community, is owned by all residents of the given community, and is operated by the community government (Che and Qian 1998; Peng 2001; Peng 2007).

Scholars have pointed out several main differences between SOEs and TVEs (Huang 2008; Peng 2001; Che and Qian 1998; Fu and Balasubramanaym 2003; Perotti et al. 1998). First, TVEs are generally small in size, while SOEs are mostly large or medium sized enterprises. Second, community governments have full authority over all business activities of TVEs within their jurisdiction. On the one hand, these community governments have the power to make any policies that are considered beneficial to the business of their TVEs. On the other hand, these TVEs do not receive subsidies from the central government; they are responsible for their own profits and losses. Third, the Chinese government controls both SOEs and banks, so it can order banks to provide financing to SOEs if needed; although a community government controls its TVEs, the community government does not control local banks. As a result, compared to SOEs, “TVEs face harder budget constraints” (Che and Qian 1998: 3). Therefore, TVEs face a higher level of financial pressure than SOEs: the authorities of TVEs need to solve their financial problems.

In practice the close linkage between the community governments, TVEs within the locality, and the community residents has made the whole community like a firm: TVE workers are mainly local farmers who would like to earn more money for a better life, and the community government has full authority regarding the operation of TVEs. If the TVEs make profits, then ideally all residents of the given locality would be able to enjoy those profits. Among the more famous cases of TVE success is Huaxi village in Jiangsu Province, where the local TVE was able to build identical houses for all villagers and provide a Volkswagen sedan for every family (see Peng 2001: 1354).

The close linkage between community governments, TVEs within the locality, and the community residents also generates two sources of grievances among TVE workers. First, Peng (2001) has pointed out that cheap labor contributes to the success of TVEs. Since the prospects for promotion for local government officials largely depends on their success at facilitating local economic development and prosperity (Perotti et al. 1998), they should have the incentive to exaggerate profits by reducing production costs. In short, they have incentives to keep wage rates low for TVE workers. Fu and Balasubramanyam (2003) also pointed out that TVE workers are mostly paid by piece rates; this method makes their salaries tied to their performances. Table 3.1 also shows that the annual wages of TVE workers are less than those of most other classes of Chinese workers. In other words, it is very possible that a TVE could make profits because the management of TVE pays less to its workers. This would generate what Chen and Tang (2013) called interest-based disputes: workers protest to ask for more wages, benefits, or a better working condition. Second, not every TVE is as successful as TVEs of Huaxi village. An unsuccessful TVE would cause forced layoffs of TVE workers (Peng 2001; Jiang and Ashley 2000). Unlike the case with SOE workers, community governments have unrestricted authority over personnel in TVEs (Fu and Balasubramanyam 2003). They can hire more workers or lay off current workers according to the firm's needs; the central government has no say in it. As the result, TVE workers have no job security comparable to that of SOE workers. Consequently, "TVEs are more likely to reduce employment in response to a government's austerity program than SOEs" (Che and Qian 1998: 18). Therefore, the labor turnover rate in TVEs should be higher than in SOEs. This condition gives TVE workers a reason to protest.

From the discussion above we see that the two main sources of grievance of TVE workers are the issue of cheap labor and the lack of job security. The system of paid by piece rates and the significantly lower wages of TVE workers compared to other types of Chinese workers has given TVE workers a reason to engage in protests. In addition to that, the higher turnover rate of TVE workers could also function as a reason for them to engage in protests, although it could also make it harder to mobilize them for protest.

### 3.2.5 The Incentive for TVE Workers to Protest

According to Chen and Tang (2013), the issue of salary increases could not be resolved through judicial processes so the affected workers have to negotiate directly with the management of their enterprise, which in the case of TVEs are local governments. If all affected TVE workers could get together and put pressure on the authorities, then the achieved benefits, such as an increase in piece rates, will be enjoyed by all workers of the TVE. Therefore, if they cooperate to increase the size of protest, then more pressure will be imposed on the TVE management. Given this, TVE workers should have a strong incentive to participate in protests over these issues.

In terms of the second source of grievance, the redress of the job security issues might not always be an inclusive public good. On the one hand, since community governments have freedom in their management of labour, unless a large layoffs is made at once, then it is not reasonable to expect a large number of currently employed TVE workers to cooperate in protests against an individual layoff case. On the other hand, given that TVE workers face a higher risk than SOE workers of being laid off in response to the economic conditions of TVEs, TVE workers should have the incentive to act together against any unfair appointments and layoffs in their

TVE if they believe that the unfair treatment of others today might happen to them in the near future. From this perspective, the incentive for TVE workers to cooperate should be high.

### 3.2.6 The Collective Action Problem for TVE Workers

There are several factors that could make the collective action problem easier to overcome among TVE workers. First, TVEs are generally small in size compared to SOEs (Walder 1995; Peng 2001) and existing literature tells us that the collective action problem will be easier to overcome in a smaller group (Olson 1965; Axelrod 1984). Therefore, the collective action problem will be easier to overcome among TVE workers compared to SOE workers, which makes organization and protest mobilization easier among TVE workers. Second, as the history of TVEs can be traced back to 1958, many TVEs have been in operation in the same location for a long time. Although few original workers are likely to be left, employees are likely to be lifelong residents of the village. This factor enhances their prospects for mobilizing. Therefore, in addition to the structure of the enterprises, the village itself could function as the mobilizing structure. Third, for those local farmers now hired to work as TVE workers, they already have their own farmland so they don't have to worry as much about losing their jobs in TVEs for participating in protest. This factor makes the cost of participation low for them compared to those who have no other means of subsistence if they lose their jobs. If they participate in protests and gain the concessions they want, then they will enjoy a better life; otherwise, they could simply go back to their farmlands. Fourth, the close linkage between the community governments, TVEs within the locality, and the community residents has made issue framing easier for protest leaders. Peng (2001) analyzes the operation of TVEs and argues that the ownership and the management are much simpler and clearer than that of SOEs. For SOEs there are multiple authorities responsible

for different parts of operation: the upper-level management sets broad goals, the middle-level management make policies, and lower-level management implements those policies. In contrast, township and village officials are in charge of all aspects of TVE management. In case of any unfavorable incidents, such as forced layoffs or evidence of corruption, this relatively straightforward structure makes the local authorities clear targets to blame as they are in charge of all aspects of local firms. Further, when he talks about village heads, Peng (2001: 1353) points out that “although their appointment has to be officiated by township officials, they do need to have support of the villagers”. The legitimacy of village leaders’ power comes from their villagers’ support, and the state will not normally remove them as long as they have that support”. Therefore, a protest that targets local officials would hurt the political career of those officials because they would be seen by their superiors as failing to maintain the local stability. These four factors makes the collective action problem easier to overcome among TVE workers.

In previous sections I described the grievances, the incentives to protest, and the collective action problem of SOE workers compared to those of TVE workers. Although SOEs and TVEs are both publicly owned, they do have some different characteristics. In this section I focus on the differences between SOEs and TVEs to discuss how these differences affect their employees’ propensity to protests.

First, compared to SOEs, TVEs are generally smaller in size. This characteristic makes should makes mobilizing easier. Second, the clear ownership of TVEs also makes issue framing easier. Third, although a higher labor turnover rate makes a position in TVEs less secure and it make it harder for TVE workers to mobilize for collective action, the village could function as the mobilizing structure in addition to the TVE itself. Fourth, the strong connection between the

resident, the village, and the enterprise makes the remedying of unfavorable issues inclusive public goods. Fifth, given that most TVE workers are local farmers who have their own farmland, the cost of being layoff for participating in protests will be low because they can simply go back to their farmland. In other words, the cost of participation for TVE workers is low compared to those who have no other means of subsistence if they lose their jobs. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that all else being equal, TVE workers should be more likely than SOE workers to participate in protests. A hypothesis is developed as follow:

*H1a: In the contemporary Chinese context, Chinese TVE workers are more likely than Chinese SOE workers to participate in protests.*

A contrasting theoretical prediction could be generate based on these different characteristics. First, since compared to SOEs, TVEs are generally small in size, it makes it easier for local authorities and management to exercise greater control over these enterprises, so TVE workers should face more difficulty mobilizing for protests (Walder 1995). Second, because community governments have full authority over personnel, the labor turnover rate in TVEs should be higher than in SOEs. Compared to the long standing structure of SOEs, high turnover rate of TVEs makes it more difficult for TVE workers to build a well-organized working network, making it even more difficult for them to mobilize. Third, most TVE workers are local farmers who have their own farmland. Working in TVEs is one way to improve their standard of living by supplementing their income from farming (Peng 2001). If TVEs are not making a profit then some of TVE workers can be laid off, and the laid off workers can simply go back to being farmers again and wait for another labor job opportunity in the future. Fourth, in case of SOE restricting which is collective bad to SOE workers, SOE workers should have a strong incentive and capacity in

protest to stop the restricting of the entire firm. From these perspective, it is also reasonable to expect that all else being equal, SOE workers should be more likely than TVE workers to participate in protests. Another hypothesis is developed as follow:

*H1b: In the contemporary Chinese context, Chinese SOE workers are more likely than Chinese TVE workers to participate in protests.*

### 3.2.7 Workers of Private-Owned Enterprises

In contrast to SOEs that are owned and operated by the national government or TVEs that are owned and operated collectively by local communities, domestic private enterprises (DPEs) and foreign owned enterprises (FOEs) are owned by private investors. DPEs and FOEs share some characteristics with each other in some ways but are different in other ways.

The relationships between workers of privately owned enterprises and their employers were established after the economic reforms began in the 1980s. Workers in DPEs and workers in FOEs are hired by their employers; they offer their labor to the company in exchange for wages. More specifically, the relationship between workers and their enterprises is strictly a contractual one. Although the regular salary of DPE and FOE workers might be higher than that of SOE or TVE workers (Walder 1991; also see Table 3.1), workers of private enterprises do not enjoy the same range of benefits from their employers that SOE workers do. For example, unlike SOEs, DPEs and FOEs are less likely to provide health insurance to their employees (Giles et al. 2006). Nor do they enjoy the same level of job security that SOE workers have traditionally enjoyed.

Workers of private enterprises engage in protests for different reasons. They do not have any property rights claims to their companies as SOE workers might, nor do they see their



companies as their property. They protest because their legitimate employment rights are violated, or because they want more income and benefits (Chen and Tang 2013; Chen 2003). These two reasons shape different patterns of protest participation among DPE workers and FOE workers. In the following sections I introduce the different protest patterns of DPE workers and FOEs workers and then make a comparison to see which of them is more likely than the other to participate in protests.

#### 3.2.7.1 The Grievances of DPE Workers

The main conflict between DPE workers and their enterprises rights-based disputes (Chen and Tang 2013). With the introduction of the labor law in 1995 and Law of the People's Republic of China on Employment Contracts in 2007 that make workers aware that they are entitled to certain rights, workers are encouraged to seek justice through the legal mechanism of labor dispute resolution. In reality, however, the legal channels such as mediation committees are fewer in number in DPEs and FOEs. It is relatively difficult for DPE workers and FOE workers to seek help from those institutions because there might be no such institution in their firm at all. Furthermore, research also indicates that along with economic development, "labor dispute cases have become so widespread and complicated that enterprises mediation committees are no longer able to handle them" (Chen and Tang 2013: 573). According to the labor laws, if workers are not satisfied with the mediation, they can take their cases to a second stage, local arbitration commissions, to seek redress. In China, however, labor arbitration commissions are part of the local governments' labor bureaus. "Arbitration commissions' positions tend to be constrained by the government's economic concerns, especially in terms of the investment environment" (Chen and Tang 2013: 573). Since local governments are more concerned with economic development

than law enforcement (Friedman and Lee 2010), workers might not receive fair arbitration at this stage of the legal process. The last stage of the legal channel is litigation. If the previous two channels could not satisfy aggrieved workers, workers could seek justice through the courts. If the whole legal process still does not offer workers a satisfactory solution, then workers might have to choose illegal means, such as protest, to get their voices heard.

While enterprises might make profits, their workers' benefits do not necessarily increase correspondingly. Workers socialized in a socialist system might consider the firm's profits to be, at least in part, the fruits of workers' labor, so the workers believe they should share in those benefits, above and beyond their regular salary. With this idea in mind, workers make claims for more bonuses and benefits. If they do not receive satisfactory responses from their employers, disputes between workers and management are likely to occur. This type of labor dispute is labeled as an interest-based dispute: workers protest because they want more compensation (Chen and Tang 2013).

#### 3.2.7.2 The Incentive for DPE Workers to Protest

Two factors make affected DPE workers less likely than other categories of workers to use protest as a strategy to resolve their rights-based grievances. First, although worker rights are protected by laws, what the laws cover and protect is workers' individual rights. Most labor dispute cases occur because employers fail to implement labor contracts. In other words, violations of worker rights are mainly individual-level issues. Because these labor disputes are disputes between individual workers and their employers, a successful redress of the individual's situation does not necessarily benefit all employees of the enterprise. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that affected workers will have less incentive to act collectively to deal with those

individual labor disputes. Second, since those claims are rights-based, they are supposed to be resolved through the judicial process. Workers might make collective rights claims because of lay-offs or overtime payments that affect the entire work unit. However, in practice when facing this situation, “the courts will break it down into a series of individual cases based on the number of people involved” to individualize the collective dispute (Chen and Tang 2013: 574-575; Lee 2009). Furthermore, in China judges in local courts or local officials could resolve those individual cases by various means, such as persuasion and intimidation. Therefore, given that those rights-based disputes are more likely to be expressed and resolved in individual cases, rights-based disputes should be less likely to serve as an impetus for protests.

In contrast to rights-based disputes, the demand for increased compensation or shares of the company’s profits is not covered by labor laws. Although the right to minimum wage is protected by the labor laws, labor laws neither require nor enforce employers’ obligation to raise workers’ salaries in correspondence to increasing profits of the enterprises. Therefore, in contrast to the rights-based claims, interest-based labor disputes cannot be “resolved through judicial processes” (Chen and Tang 2013: 576). If workers ask for a raise in salary or better working condition, then they have to negotiate directly with the management of their enterprise; the judicial process has no role in these types of disputes.

Since interest-based demands are mainly about salary or working condition, if workers could successfully resolve their grievances, then workers would be able to work under better condition with a higher salary. In other words, the benefits from resolving interest-based grievances will be enjoyed by all workers in the given work unit. This situation makes the resolution of this type of dispute a normal inclusive public good. Existing knowledge tells us that

in a situation of normal inclusive public good, “increases in group size enhance rather than diminish the rational actor’s incentive to contribute” (Mason 1994: 406; Chamberlin 1974). Therefore, workers will have a strong incentive to cooperate to enlarge the size of the group, put more pressure on their employers, and increase the likelihood of success for collective action. It is more likely that they will be able to overcome the free rider problem. Hence, interest-based disputes could function as impetus for protests.

From this analysis we know that the incentive for DPE workers to participate in protests depends on the types of dispute. On the one hand, if the claim is about violations of legally entitled working rights, then DPE workers will have less incentive to resort to protest because it is not an effective strategy to resolve that type of problem. On the other hand, if the claim is about compensation and working conditions, then DPE workers will have a greater incentive to participate in protest not only because the judicial process has little to do with such issues, but also because protests would put pressure on their companies to provide benefits that all workers in the enterprise would enjoy.

### 3.2.7.3 The Collective Action Problem for DPE Workers

Two factors make the collective action problem difficult for DPE workers to overcome. First, compared to the long-standing history of SOEs and TVEs, the history of the emergence of DPEs is relatively recent. Therefore, unlike SOEs or TVEs, workers in DPEs do not have long-standing networks of fellow employees that could contribute to protest organization and mobilization. Second, without the lifetime employment guarantees, DPEs hire and lay off workers according to their own considerations. Hence, the labor turnover rate should be also be higher than that of SOEs. It is reasonable to expect that the relative short history and greater turnover

rate in employees leave DPE workers with less organizational capacity for mobilization compared to SOE workers and TVE workers.

The discussion above points out that DPE workers have more than one sources of grievance. On the one hand, if the dispute is interest-based, then protest will be effective. On the other hand, if the dispute is rights-based, then it will be more subject to individual action rather than collective action. In addition, the relatively short history of DPEs and the absence of lifetime employment guarantees make DPE workers not well-organized, which makes the collective action problem to be difficult to overcome.

#### 3.2.7.4 The Grievances of FOE Workers

Like DPE workers, FOE workers in contemporary China are also exposed to rights-based disputes and interest-based disputes (Chen 2003; Chen and Tang 2013). Further, existing literature points out that between rights-based disputes and interest-based disputes, FOE workers seems to be more likely to have interest-based disputes with their enterprises: they usually protest for higher pay or for better working conditions (Robertson and Teitebaum 2011; Chen 2003; Chen and Tang 2013; Butollo and Brink 2012).

One question that needs to be addressed is why FOE workers believe they deserve more. In their article, Robertson and Teitebaum argue that is because “multinational firms often have workers performing similar jobs in different countries under very different conditions and for very different wages” (Robertson and Teitebaum 2011: 667-668). FOE workers compare themselves with others who work for the same firm, realize they deserve more, and then engage in protests to ask for more. This argument, however, does not explain how Chinese FOE workers

find out how much workers are making in other nations. I believe this phenomena could be understood from the following perspective. Like other developing countries trying to build their industrial sector, China has employed the strategy of building special economic zones to attract foreign investors and workers from other parts of the county (Wilson 2009; Huang 2008; Wu 1999; Liu 2007; Blanton and Blanton 2007; Robertson and Teitebaum 2011). In order to make comparison between oneself and others, FOE workers need some channels to access the information about the working conditions and wages of workers in other locales. One plausible way for them to access this information is that FOEs are usually located in a limited number of locales in China, and many of FOE workers come from outside of those locales. FOE workers usually congregate with other workers from the same hometown to help each other find work, housing, and to support each other in their daily lives. Therefore, information spreads easily through these informal networks (Becker 2012; Cai et al. 2009; Solinger 1999b; Zhang 2001). Since FOEs offer no lifetime employment guarantees, FOEs can hire and lay off workers according to their own needs. Thus, workers in these informal networks might have had the experience of working in different FOEs, so comparisons of wages and working conditions of his/her own working experience can be shared and spread readily across these informal social networks.

FOEs usually located in special economic zones, and their workers come from other parts of the country. For those who come from other parts of the country, they leave their traditional social networks to work in a totally foreign place. As a result, FOEs workers are very vulnerable to abuse by their employers. The abuses include overtime working, delays in wages, unreasonable fines for minor mistakes, and corporal punishment (Butollo and Brink 2012;

Robertson and Teitebaum 2011). These abuses function as another sources of grievances of FOE workers.

### 3.2.7.5 The Incentive for FOE Workers to Protest

Moody (1997) argues that the multinational production has an impact on the protest behavior of their workers. Because of globalization and multinational production, international firms usually rely on a complex supply chain. Under this structure, any stoppage in one country will cause disruptions in production for the entire firm across all production units in the supply chain. This factor gives FOE workers an expectation that protesting would be an effective and powerful strategy to negotiate with their employers: if the management of the enterprise refuses to satisfy worker demands of workers, then worker strikes or protests could disrupt production not only at that production unit but at others up and down the firms supply chain. The potential losses to the firm are thus multiplied what they would be for a Chinese domestic firm. As a result, to engage in protest would be an effective strategy for FOE workers to redress the unfavorable conditions they face (Butollo and Brink 2012).

The achievement of higher pay or better working conditions would be an inclusive benefits for FOE workers. If FOE workers could get together to put pressure on the enterprises, then all workers of the enterprises will be able to enjoy the benefits of better working conditions and higher pay. This should give FOE workers a high incentive to participate in protest to enlarge the size of protests. Existing research on FOE worker protest shows that the demands and strategies of FOE workers protests are narrow and specific (Butollo and Brink 2012; Becher 2012; Huang 2011). Although the exchange of information among workers of different FOEs in the same locale might lead to similar protests at other factories in that given locale, researchers rarely

found a coalition of FOE worker protests across enterprises; FOE worker protests typically involve workers from one firm, and the demands are directed at that firm only. That is, FOE workers of a given unit usually act collectively to demand better remuneration or working condition their own production facility, but they do not form cross-unit coalitions to include workers of other FOEs. In short, FOE workers usually cooperate against “their” employers to ask for “their own” interests. If FOE workers receive concessions from their employers, the benefits will be enjoyed by all workers of the given unit but not by workers in other units in that locale or by workers at other units owned by the same foreign firm. This situation reveals that the achievement of protests is an inclusive good, so FOE workers should have high incentives to cooperate.

Huang’s (2011) study on a protest event best describes this situation. A Taiwanese company TC had five factories, TS, TP, TH, TT, and TL, at DG city in southern China. These five factories are geographically close to each other within a 6-mile distance. They have identical regulations for salary and management. These five factories together hire more than 30,000 workers, and workers from different factories interact with each other frequently outside of work. In April 2004, about 2,000 workers of TS and TP protested. The managers of those two factories quickly responded and promised to increase the salary and to improve the quality of meal services. The protesters were satisfied with the concessions and ended their protest. Three days later, workers of TH, TT, and TL protested asking for better remuneration as well. However, this time the protesters did not receive a favorable response from their managers. Subsequently the protesters escalated the incident into a violent form: thousands of workers destroyed factory property, and several local policemen were attacked and injured. Later, the company promised to make improvements, but still seven workers were sentenced by the local court. Although all



the workers expressed their grievances by protest, workers of different factories did not form a coalition against their common employer. Instead, they acted with their own factory members, targeted only their own individual factory's management, and asked for factory-specific benefits. As long as their individual demands were satisfied, workers terminated their protests and went back to work; they did not care too much about whether or not the workers of other factories successfully reach their goals.

#### 3.2.7.6 The Collective Action Problem for FOE Workers

Similar to DPEs, the history of the entry of FOEs is relatively short compared to the long standing history of SOEs and TVEs. Workers in FOEs are hired or laid off based on the interests of their FOE employer; unlike SOEs, there is no guarantee of lifetime employment. From these perspective, it is reasonable to argue that the formal organization of enterprises offers less capacity for FOE workers to mobilize than is the case with SOEs and TVEs.

The case of protest mentioned in the previous section reveals that FOE protests are mainly factory-based. This is consistent with the study of Ren and Pan (2006a) on the dormitory labor regime. Ren and Pan argue that in order to exercise effective management and better control over their workers at all times, a dormitory labor regime is adopted by FOEs to build a tight connection between employees' work and their private time. The effect of this dormitory labor regime on protests is that the dormitory functions as a platform for workers to share information and to organize and mobilize workers for protests (Cai et al. 2009; Ren and Pan 2006a; 2006b).

The differences between DPEs and FOEs could generate different protest participation patterns between them. Because many FOE workers are not local residents and are vulnerable to abuse by their employers, they should have more grievances than DPE workers. Because many FOE workers are not local residents and usually socialize outside of work with other migrant workers from the same hometown, information on unfairness is easily spread among FOE workers through these personal networks. Multinational production chains make FOEs sensitive to any work stoppage, and this gives FOE workers an expectation that protest is a useful tool to negotiate with their employers. In addition, the redress of unfavorable conditions would apply to all workers in the factory unit, which makes achievement of concessions a non-exclusive and non-rival public good. Thus, FOE workers have the incentive and capacity to cooperate to increase the size of protest group. Therefore, I expect that all else being equal, FOE workers should be more likely than DPE workers to participate in protest.

*H2: In the contemporary Chinese context, Chinese FOE workers are more likely than Chinese DPE workers to participate in protests.*

### 3.3 Research Design

In this chapter I use survey data from CGSS 2010 (Chinese General Social Survey in 2010) for empirical tests. The CGSS project is the first continuous national social survey project in China. The CGSS is “an annual or biannual questionnaire survey of China’s urban and rural households aiming to monitor systematically the changing relationship between social structure and quality of life in urban and rural China”.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.src.ust.hk/survey/GSS\\_e.html](http://www.src.ust.hk/survey/GSS_e.html), access on March 10, 2017.

The survey method of CGSS projects is face to face interview. The CGSS 2010 project employed a multi-stage stratified sampling design and covered all 31 provincial units, 100 county level units plus 5 metropolitan districts, 480 community level units, and 12,000 households in mainland China.<sup>5</sup> The number of valid respondents in CGSS 2010 dataset is 11,783. This survey does ask questions about participation in protest, but it was not designed specifically to exam protest participation. . However, there are items in the survey that enable us to measure respondents' support for protests.

### 3.3.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of this empirical tests of this chapter is protest participation: whether or not the individual respondent has experience regarding protest participation. The information on respondents' experience with protest participation comes from question D12a, D12c, and D20.

*D12a: In our daily lives we usually see some collective actions or activities happen, such as people protest against unreasonable fees, against land confiscation, against certain policies, collective petitions, strikes, assembly, and demonstrations. Did any of them ever happen around your life in the past three years? (01. Yes; 02. No)*

If respondents answer “Yes” to question D12a, then they are asked question D12c. Otherwise, question D12c will be skipped.

*D12c: Did you play any of the following roles in those actions and activities that happened around your life? (01. I was the organizer; 02. I participated in the activities; 03. I did not participate in*

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.uchicago.cn/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Weidong-Wang.pdf>, access on March 10, 2017.

*any of them in person, but I offered material support; 04. I did not participate in any of them in person, but I offered moral support; 05. Other; 06. I did not participate)*

*D20: In this past year, did you participate in any of the actions or activities that happened in your community? (01. Participated in the work of the villagers' committee, neighborhood committee, or owners' committee; 02. Offered suggestions or opinions to the villagers' committee, neighborhood committee, or owners' committee; 03. Participated in collective petitions; 04. Participated in writing collective petition letters; 05. Reported community problems to news media; 06. Reported community problems to responsible governmental authorities; 07. Participated in protests)*

Based on the answers to those questions, I created a dichotomous variable *Protest* which refers to individual respondent's experience with protest participation. A value of "1" is assigned to those answered "01. I was the organizer" or "02. I participated in the activities" to question D12c, or to those who answered "07. Participated in protests" to question D20. Others are assigned a value of "0" which refers to no experience of protest participation

### 3.3.2 Independent Variables

The main concern of this chapter is the difference between different types of Chinese workers regarding their protest participation. Therefore, variables that measure individuals' occupations are needed. For serving this purpose, information from questions A58, A59a, and A59K allow me to create variables about their occupations.

*A58: Which of the following best describes your working condition and experience? (01. I have a non-agriculture job; 02. I have an agriculture job, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs; 03. I*

*have an agriculture job, and I never had any non-agriculture jobs; 04. I have no job now, and I only had agriculture jobs before; 05. I have no job now, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs; 06. I have never worked)*

*A59a: Which of the following best describes your current work condition? (01. I am the owner of an enterprises; 02. I am self-employed; 03. I am hired by someone (long-term); 04. I am a service worker; 05. I have a temporary job; 06. I work in my family business with no payment; 07. I work in my family business and get payment; 08. Freelance; 09. Other)*

On the one hand, for those who answered *“02. I have an agriculture job, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs”* or *“03. I have an agriculture job, and I never have any non-agriculture jobs”* to question A58, they are categorized as peasants. For those who answered *“04. I have no job now, and I only had agriculture jobs before”* or *“05. I have no job now, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs”*, they are categorized as unemployed. For those who answered *“06. I never worked”* to question A58, they are categorized as never work.

On the other hand, for those who answered *“01. I have a non-agriculture job”* to question A58 and further answered *“01. I am the owner of an enterprises”* or *“02. I am self-employed”* or *“06. I work in my family business with no payment”* or *“07. I work in my family business and get payment”* to question A59a, they are categorized as entrepreneur. For those who answered *“01. I have a non-agriculture job”* to question A58 and further answered *“08. Freelance”* or *“09. Others”*, they are categorized as freelance.

For those who answered *“01. I have a non-agriculture job”* to question A58 and further answered *“03. I am hired by someone (long-term)”* or *“04. I am a service worker”* or *“05. I am*

*having a temporary job*” to question A59a, they are categorized as worker. In order to test the hypotheses of this chapter, I disaggregate workers into several sub-types of workers based on their answers to question A59k.

*A59k: What is the ownership type of the company you work for? (01. State-owned Enterprises; 02. Collective-owned Enterprises; 03. Private Domestic Enterprises; 04. Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan owned Enterprises; 05. Foreign-owned Enterprises; 06. Others)*

For those who were categorized as worker and further answered “*01. State-owned Enterprises*” to question A59k, they are categorized as SOE worker. For those who were categorized as worker and further answered “*02. Collective-owned Enterprises*” to question A59k, they are categorized as TVE worker. For those who were categorized as worker and further answered “*03. Private Domestic Enterprises*” to question A59k, they are categorized as DPE worker. For those who were categorized as worker and further answered “*04. Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan owned Enterprises*” or “*05. Foreign-owned Enterprises*” to question A59k, they are categorized as FOE worker. For those who were categorized as worker and further answered “*06. Others*” to question A59k or refused to answer question A59k, they are categorized as others. Therefore, variables *SOE worker*, *TVE worker*, *DPE worker*, and *FOE worker* are created for empirical tests. This coding process serves my purpose to categorize all respondents of this survey into several sectors as exogenous variables based on their occupations.

### 3.3.3 Control Variables

The control variables for the models in this chapter are identical to those for the models in the previous chapter. Variable *Age* refers to the respondent’s age in 2010. Since existing

literature points out that younger people have fewer obligations to families and careers, they should be more likely than older adults to participate in protests (Schussman and Soule 2005). Scholars also find that males are more likely than females to participate in protests (Wu 2012). Variable *Male* refers to the respondent's gender. A value of "1" is assigned to male, while a value of "0" is assigned to female.

Variable *Education* refers to the respondent's highest level of education in 2010. Scholars argue that well educated people are better informed and more critical so they are more likely to participate in protests (Machado et. al 2011), I expect a positive relationship between level of education and protest participation.

Existing research also suggests that ethnic minority identity makes it easier to generate the sentiment of "us" versus "them" between ethnic groups (Tong and Lei 2010). Therefore ethnic minorities might be more likely to feel deprived than the ethnic majority, and can make them more likely to engage in protest than members of the majority ethnic group. Variable *Ethnicity* refers to the respondent's ethnicity. A value of "0" is assigned to those who are Han Chinese, while a value of "1" is assigned to those who are not Han Chinese.

Deprived actor models argue that poverty might be associated with social unrest (Russett 1964), so I add the Variable *Income* which refers to the respondent's personal annual income measured in 1,000 Yuan of RMB. Existing literature also points out that with the feeling of relative deprivation in mind, people will be more likely to engage in social unrest (Gurr 1977). The variable *Unfairtreatment* refers to whether or not the respondent considers himself or herself to be a

victim of any unfair treatment by government officials. A value of “1” refers to yes, while a value of “0” refers to no.

*D13a: In this past year, did you suffer any unfair treatment from governmental officials? (01. Yes; 02. No)*

Variable *incomefair* refers to what degree an individual believes his/her current income to be fair, which ranges from unfair, somewhat unfair, about ok, somewhat fair, and fair. I expect a negative relationship between this variable and the dependent variable.

*D5a: Considering your educational background, working skills, and working experience, do you think your current income is fair or not? (01. Unfair; 02. Somewhat unfair; 03. About ok; 04. Somewhat fair; 05. Fair)*

Table 3.2. Data Description

Related to	Variable	Definition	Sources
Resource Mobilization Theory Variable	Peasant	Respondents' occupation. 1 for peasant, 0 for others	A58,
	SOE worker	Respondents' occupation. 1 for SOE worker, 0 for others	A59a,
	TVE worker	Respondents' occupation. 1 for TVE worker, 0 for others	A59k
	DPE worker	Respondents' occupation. 1 for DPE worker, 0 for others	
	FOE worker	Respondents' occupation. 1 for FOE worker, 0 for others	
	Others	Respondents' occupation. 1 for other types of workers, 0 for others	
	Entrepreneur	Respondents' occupation. 1 for entrepreneur, 0 for others	
	Freelance	Respondents' occupation. 1 for freelance, 0 for others	
	Unemployed	Respondents' occupation. 1 for unemployed, 0 for others	
	Never work	Respondents' occupation. 1 for never work, 0 for others	
Biographical Variables	Age	Respondent's age in 2010	A3a
	Male	Respondent's gender, 1 for male, 0 for female	A2
	Education	Respondent's highest level of education. 1= Do not have any education, 13= Graduate school or higher	A7a
	Minority	Whether or not the individual respondent is an ethnic minority. 1 for non-Han Chinese, 0 for Han Chinese	A4
Deprived Actor Theory Variable	Income	Respondent's annual personal income measured in thousand RMB (Yuan)	A8a
Relative Deprivation Theory Variable	Unfair treatment	Whether or not the individual respondent consider him/herself suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials. 1 for yes, 0 for no	D13a



Incomefair	Whether or not the individual respondent consider his/her current income to be fair, 1 for unfair, 2 for somewhat unfair, 3 for about ok, 4 for somewhat fair, and 5 for fair	D5a
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Table 3.3. Data Summary

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Peasant	0.248	0.432	0	1
SOE worker	0.089	0.285	0	1
TVE worker	0.024	0.153	0	1
DPE worker	0.117	0.322	0	1
FOE worker	0.009	0.096	0	1
Others	0.031	0.172	0	1
Entrepreneur	0.093	0.291	0	1
Freelance	0.011	0.103	0	1
Unemployed	0.299	0.458	0	1
Never work	0.062	0.242	0	1
Age	48.302	15.680	18	97
Male	0.482	0.500	0	1
Education	4.836	2.984	1	13
Minority	0.093	0.291	0	1
Income	19.210	80.836	0	6000
Unfair treatment	0.091	0.288	0	1
Income fair	2.867	1.234	1	5

### 3.3.4 Statistical Methodology

Because the dependent variable of this research is a binary outcome, I use binary logistic regression for my analyses (Long 1997).

In addition I also use multilevel logistic regression to test whether the context in which the individual resides affects his/her propensity to participate in protests. Statistic software STATA 14 was employed for ordinary binary logistic regression analyses while HLM 7.0 was employed for multilevel logistic regression analyses.

### 3.4 Empirical Findings

#### 3.4.1 Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression Analysis, SOE workers versus TVE workers

Table 3.4 reports the result of two ordinary logistic regression models. The main difference between Model 3-1 and Model 3-2 is that Model 3-1 does not include two perceptual variables, *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair*, while Model 3-2 includes them.

The results in Model 3-1 show that compared to SOE workers, TVE workers are significantly more likely to participate in protests ( $p < 0.05$ ). Further, when the occupation changes from SOE worker to TVE worker, the probability of individuals' protest participation goes up from 0.0214 to 0.0473 (Model 3-1), which means the probability of a TVE worker participating in protests is about 2.2 times greater than that of a SOE worker. This suggests that there is a significant difference between SOE workers and TVE workers regarding their protest participations: in the contemporary Chinese context, Chinese TVE workers are more likely than Chinese SOE workers to engage in protests. This result supports hypothesis *H1a*.

Table 3.4. Empirical Findings, Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression

	Model 3-1 (DV: Protest)	Model 3-2 (DV: Protest)
Occupations		
Peasant	-0.064 (0.351)	-0.102 (0.356)
SOE Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
TVE Worker	0.823* (0.417)	0.761 (0.429)
DPE Worker	0.388 (0.339)	0.404 (0.337)
FOE Worker	0.415 (0.785)	0.224 (0.811)
Others Refuse	0.648 (0.429)	0.570 (0.446)
Entrepreneur	0.512 (0.355)	0.441 (0.358)
Freelance	1.014 (0.568)	1.048 (0.617)

	Unemployed	0.421 (0.326)	0.385 (0.329)
	Never work	0.086 (0.516)	-0.318 (0.671)
Age		-0.008 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.005)
Male		0.452** (0.145)	0.406** (0.150)
Education		-0.034 (0.032)	-0.034 (0.032)
Minority		-0.233 (0.270)	-0.160 (0.282)
Income		-0.005 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.002)
Unfairtreatment		-	1.767*** (0.153)
Incomefair		-	-0.205** (0.062)
Cons		-3.445*** (0.462)	-3.366*** (0.472)
N		9,831	9,569
Pseudo R2		0.0150	0.0901
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001			

Two perceptual variables, *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair*, are included in Model 3-2. After adding these two variables to the model, the results in Model 3-2 show that the difference between TVE workers and SOE workers regarding their protest participation is no longer significant. This suggests that there is no significant difference between SOE workers and TVE workers regarding their protest participation. Instead, perception of unfair treatment is what affects their propensity to protest. Therefore, the perception of unfair treatment affects protest behavior more than differences in the type of firm one works for. Moreover, it might be the case that workers in TVEs are more likely to perceive themselves as being treated unfairly. According to the result of Model 3-2, neither *H1a* nor *H1b* receives support.

In terms of the effect of control variables on the dependent variable, many of the findings are comparable to what we have found in the previous chapter. Males are significantly more

likely than females to participate in protests ( $p < 0.01$ ). The odds-ratio indicates that males are about 57% more likely than females to participate in protests. Two perceptual variables also have statistically significant effects on the dependent variable. When an individual considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials, he/she will be 5.85 times more likely to participate in protests than those who do not see themselves as having suffered unfair treatment. An individual who believes his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to participate in protests than those who believe their current incomes is unfair (The odds-ratio = 0.814).

In addition to the analyses based on the findings from ordinary logistic regression models, I will present advanced analyses by using multilevel mixed-effect logistic regression models in the following section to see if the results of ordinary logistic regression models are affected by the context in which the respondent resides.

### 3.4.2 Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Analysis, SOE workers versus TVE workers

Individual propensity to protest examined in earlier models might be affected by characteristics of the locale in which the individual resides, so several level-two variables in to see what contextual factors might influence an individuals' protest participation.

Like what I have mentioned in the previous chapter, resources mobilization theory tells us that in addition to organization being important for protest mobilization, the perception of risk matters to the decision regarding whether or not to participate in protests. As a result, a group of well-organized angry individuals might do nothing until they believe there is a chance that their protest will succeed (Tilly 1978; McAdam et al. 1996). This "changes in political

opportunity structure” argument, however, mainly focuses on changes that happen within the level of central authority. Given that the power structure of central government is relatively stable, how could one step beyond this argument to study the protests that happen in contemporary China? Since protests in contemporary China are more motivated by more tangible and material local issues, and do not involve any calls for democratization or reform of national political systems, in this section I bring locales into analyses to see what local characteristics might influence the perception of risk in the local environment that might affect people’s willingness to participate protests.

China has a huge population size and territory. Within China there are twenty-two provinces, five autonomous regions, and four municipalities. In addition to that, China has 334 prefectures (second level of administrative division) and more than 2,800 counties (third level of administrative division). One locale could be very different from another regarding their territorial size, population, and level of economic development. By taking local characteristics into account, I investigate what local factors might influence the perception of risk for potential protesters to make individuals more or less likely to engage in protests. Given the earlier findings that workers are more likely than peasants to participate, could the probability of a worker participating be influenced by the characteristics of the community in which that worker resides? Therefore, it will be beneficial to use multilevel modeling methods to investigate the effects of environmental factors on individual’s behavior (Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Hox2002; Luke 2004).

The literature has pointed out that how many protests a locale has experienced should also affect its residents’ perceptions of the risks of protest participation, and those perceptions

will affect the individual's decision on whether or not to participate in protests (Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 1996; 1997). A locale's past record of protest experience affects its residents' perceptions of the risks of protest participation for two reasons. First, on the one hand, a locale with many protests in the recent past, the residents of this locale should be more likely to consider it feasible to protest there. In other words, it seems not so risky to have a protest in this given place because there have been many protests in the past without serious repercussions. This perception will further affect the decision of individuals regarding whether or not participating in protests is a practical way to seek redress of their grievances. If a locale has never experienced any protest, on the other hand, then residents will be less inclined to estimate the risks of participation to be low or at least acceptable; they will be more uncertainty about the risk than are residents of localities that have experienced multiple protests in the recent past. Further, a potential protest participant will be more uncertain about whether others will participate in the protest. This perception will make residents more hesitant about participating in protests.

Second, if a locale has experienced many protests, that means there must be some level of dissident organization in the locale. Furthermore, the residents there also know how to mobilize people to participate in protests and how to organize a protest because they have successfully organized protests in the past. For dissident leaders, the knowledge about past protest mobilization and existing mobilization structures make it easier to mobilize and organize protests in the future (McAdam et al. 2001). With such existing organization, dissident leaders don't need to create the capacity to mobilize from nothing. For those who have successfully organized protests in the past, they know where the resources are, as well as how to organize a

successful protest, so it won't be too difficult to mobilize another protest in the future if they choose to do so. Four variables were created to measure to how many protest incidents a province experienced from 1995 to 2009. Variable *AOP* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 1995 to 2009. I further disaggregate the protest experience into three phases. Variable *P9599* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 1995 to 1999. Variable *P0004* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 2000 to 2004. Variable *P0509* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 2005 to 2009. The source of such information come from Wedeman (2009). I expect a positive relationship between these control variables and the dependent variable.

In addition to how many protests a province experienced in the past, the literature also points out that population matters for individual protest participation. In a series of articles, Spilerman (1970; 1971) finds that the size of the black population was the strongest predictor of a U.S. city's riot-proneness in 1960s. Mason (1994) further offers three explanations of why the geographic concentration and population size affect the likelihood of protest in a given locale. First, aggrieved individuals won't automatically stick together as a group to protest; leadership is important for protest organization and mobilization. In a place with a larger population, the likelihood of someone with leadership ability and skills emerging to organize and mobilize others will be higher than a place with a smaller population. Secondly, geographic concentration makes it easier for individuals to communicate with each other, as well as to communicate with their leaders. In a place with a dense population, people live close to each other so it should be easier to spread information, connect individuals, and coordinate behavior with each other. Lastly, a larger population means there will be more potential participants for protest. Each potential

participant must consider the risks of participation (Mason and Clement 2002). On the one hand, when the number of estimated protest participants increases, not only does the chance of success increase, but the risk for him/her to be arrested and punished for participation decreases. On the other hand, in a protest with a small number of participants, not only does the protest produce less pressure on the responsible authorities, but each individual protester has a higher risk of being identified, arrested, and punished. In a protest with a large number of participants, the responsible authorities will feel more threatened, and the chance for any one individual participant being recognized and punished will be much lower. Therefore, a large number of potential participants increases the expected benefits of participation while reducing the expected costs of participation. When individuals estimate the number of other participants is large, he/she will be more likely to participate in protests. Therefore, variable *Provincial Population* which refers to the resident population of a province in year 2010 was added to Model 3-3a and Model 3-3b, while variable *County Population* which refers to the resident population of a county in year 2010 was added to Model 3-4a and Model 3-4b. Based on the discussion above, I expect a positive relationship between these variables and the likelihood of protest participation.

The third context variable the in multilevel models is the local economy. Local economy would affect individual's propensity to protest for two reasons. First, in a locale with high level of economic development, the well-developed infrastructure such as better quality roads, convenient transportation, and prosperous business activities all could contribute to a high level of interaction and communication between residents of the locale. Protest leaders could take advantage of these factors for mobilizing. Second, in the transitional Chinese society, a higher level of economic development might also imply changes to the daily lives of residents, such as



urban encroachments. Therefore, the pressures for a high level of economic development could affect the lives of local residents and make them more likely to go to streets. Variable *POGDPPC* which refers to the provincial GDP per capita in 2010 was created and added into Model 3-3a and Model 3-3b, while variable *CTGDPPC* which refers to the county GDP per capita in 2010 was created and added into Model 3-4a and Model 3-4b for empirical analyses.

Table 3.5. Data Description, Level-2 Variables

Variables	Definition	Source
AOP	The number of mass incident of a province from 1995 to 2009	Wedeman (2009)
P9599	The number of mass incident of a province from 1995 to 1999	Wedeman (2009)
P0004	The number of mass incident of a province from 2000 to 2004	Wedeman (2009)
P0509	The number of mass incident of a province from 2005 to 2009	Wedeman (2009)
Provincial population	The number of resident population of a province in 2010 measured in 1,000 people	Tabulation on the 2010 Population Cense of the People’s Republic of China by County
POGDPPC	Provincial GDP per capita in 2010 measured in Yuan (RMB)	China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy, 2011
County population	The number of resident population of a county in 2010 measured in 1,000 people	Tabulation on the 2010 Population Cense of the People’s Republic of China by County
CTGDPPC	County GDP per capita in 2010 measured in Yuan (RMB)	China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy, 2011

Table 3.6. Data Summary, Level-2 Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
AOP	36.032	37.922	2	173
P9599	8.753	9.657	0	30
P0004	10.190	11.285	0	53
P0509	17.089	24.450	0	118
Provincial Population	51497.79	26710.51	3002.165	104320.5
POGDPPC	35814.94	18029.59	13119	76074
County Population	678.4263	789.7413	91.2	7335.29
CTGDPPC	30997.88	38352.07	5174	394866

According to the results presented in Table 3.7, we see that the likelihood-ratio tests compared to the ordinary logistic regression of Model 3-3 (Model 3-3 versus Model 3-2) is 34.65 while that of Model 3-4 (Model 3-4 versus Model 3-2) is 32.17. This suggests that Model 3-3 and

Model 3-4 are both significantly better fits to the data than Model 3-2. Therefore, it is appropriate to use multilevel modeling for empirical tests.

Model 3-3 is a multilevel random-intercept model in which the first level of analysis is the individual while province is the second level of analysis. In this model there is no provincial level variable added. In addition to Model 3-3, three sets of level-2 variables – numbers of previous protest, provincial resident population, and provincial GDP per capita – are included in Model 3-3a and Model 3-3b. The result of these models are reported in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Multilevel Random-Intercept Models with Level-2 Provincial Variables, SOE workers versus TVE workers

	Model 3-3 (Level 2: Province)	Model 3-3a (Level 2: Province)	Model 3-3b (Level 2: Province)
<b>Level-1</b>			
<b>Occupations</b>			
Peasant	-0.028 (0.322)	-0.031 (0.328)	-0.038 (0.330)
SOE Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
TVE Worker	0.857* (0.412)	0.857* (0.422)	0.858* (0.427)
DPE Worker	0.424 (0.314)	0.441 (0.323)	0.435 (0.324)
FOE Worker	0.328 (0.739)	0.358 (0.783)	0.337 (0.778)
OtherRefuse	0.585 (0.402)	0.585 (0.407)	0.595 (0.411)
Entrepreneur	0.413 (0.328)	0.422 (0.335)	0.414 (0.335)
Freelance	1.138* (0.570)	1.153 (0.591)	1.128 (0.586)
Unemployed	0.429 (0.305)	0.436 (0.312)	0.430 (0.313)
Never worked	-0.238 (0.584)	-0.230 (0.594)	-0.247 (0.598)
Age	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)
Male	0.408** (0.142)	0.404** (0.144)	0.400** (0.144)
Education	-0.023 (0.032)	-0.021 (0.033)	-0.021 (0.034)
Minority	-0.178	-0.223	-0.227

		(0.290)	(0.290)	(0.292)
Income		-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Unfairtreatment		1.741*** (0.149)	1.742*** (0.150)	1.738*** (0.150)
Incomefair		-0.173** (0.057)	-0.173** (0.058)	-0.175** (0.058)
Cons		-3.860*** (0.138)	-	-
Level-2		0.344*** (0.586)	0.319*** (0.565)	0.290*** (0.538)
	Var(_con)			
Intercept		-	-3.867*** (0.138)	-3.896*** (0.135)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009		-	-0.005 (0.005)	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999		-	-	0.015 (0.017)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2000 to 2004		-	-	-0.030 (0.020)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009		-	-	-0.005 (0.009)
Local Resident Population		-	0.00000 (0.00001)	-0.00000 (0.00001)
Local GDP Per Capita		-	-0.00001 (0.00001)	-0.00000 (0.00001)
N		9,569	9,569	9,569
Number of groups		31	31	31
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001				

According to the result of Model 3-3, the difference between TVE workers and SOE workers regarding their protest participation reaches the 0.05 level of statistical significance. Three provincial variables -- numbers of previous protests from 1995 to 2009, provincial resident population in 2010, and provincial GDP per capita in 2010 -- are added into Model 3-3a and Model 3-3b. In these models, the difference between TVE workers and SOE workers regarding their protest participation also reaches at least at 0.05 level of statistical significance, which means TVE workers are more likely than SOE workers to participate in protest activities. Further, the odds-ratios show that TVE workers are about 2.36 times more likely to participate in protests than SOE workers. Therefore, the result of empirical tests support the hypothesis that in the

contemporary Chinese context, Chinese TVE workers are more likely than Chinese SOE workers to participate in protests.

In terms of the effects of control variables on the dependent variable, variable *Male*, *Unfairtreatment*, *Incomefair* are still the three most important factors that affect individuals' protest participation. According to Model 3-3b, first, males are about 50% more likely to participate in protests than females. Second, an individual who considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatments from government officials will be more likely to engage in protests (odds ratios= 5.71 in Model 3-3a and 5.68 in Model 3-3b). Third, an individual who considers his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to engage in protest activities (odds ratios= 0.841 in Model 3-3a and 0.839 in Model 3-3b). These findings are also consistent with the result of Model 3-2: the three important factors that have significant effects on an individual's protest participation are their gender, whether or not they consider they have suffered unfair treatment from government officials, and whether or not the individual considers his/her current income to be fair. In terms of the effect of provincial variables, none of them has statistically significant effects on individuals' protest participation.

From the results of these three multilevel regression models, it would be fair to say that after taking into account provincial factors, TVE workers are statistically more likely than SOE workers to participate in protests. Now I take county to be the second level of multilevel models. The result of these models are reported in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8. Multilevel Random-Intercept Models with Level-2 County Variables, SOE workers versus TVE workers

		Model 3-4 (Level 2: County)	Model 3-4a (Level 2: County)	Model 3-4b (Level 2: County)
Level-1				
Occupations				
	Peasant	-0.350 (0.431)	-0.366 (0.434)	-0.373 (0.435)
	SOE Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
	TVE Worker	0.716 (0.534)	0.715 (0.539)	0.727 (0.537)
	DPE Worker	0.198 (0.441)	0.217 (0.450)	0.225 (0.451)
	FOE Worker	0.770 (0.682)	0.865 (0.714)	0.828 (0.722)
	OtherRefuse	0.312 (0.496)	0.321 (0.502)	0.340 (0.506)
	Entrepreneur	0.136 (0.395)	0.137 (0.401)	0.132 (0.399)
	Freelance	1.133 (0.627)	1.148 (0.643)	1.133 (0.630)
	Unemployed	0.053 (0.393)	0.059 (0.400)	0.062 (0.401)
	Never work	-0.377 (0.652)	-0.373 (0.655)	-0.407 (0.638)
	Age	-0.009 (0.005)	-0.009 (0.005)	-0.009 (0.005)
	Male	0.373 (0.190)	0.363 (0.189)	0.367 (0.188)
	Education	-0.036 (0.049)	-0.033 (0.049)	-0.031 (0.050)
	Minority	-0.040 (0.318)	-0.109 (0.326)	-0.019 (0.299)
	Income	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
	Unfairtreatment	1.666*** (0.198)	1.661*** (0.197)	1.660*** (0.198)
	Incomefair	-0.201*** (0.057)	-0.200*** (0.057)	-0.205*** (0.059)
	Cons	-3.836 *** (0.123)	-	-
	Level-2	0.556***	0.546***	0.470***
	Var(_con)	(0.746)	(0.739)	(0.685)
	Intercept	-	-3.875*** (0.117)	-3.928*** (0.119)
	NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009	-	-0.002 (0.002)	-
	NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999	-	-	0.025* (0.011)
	NO. of Previous Protest	-	-	0.019

	from 2000 to 2004		(0.030)
	NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009	-	-0.016* (0.007)
Local Resident Population	-	-0.00003 (0.0001)	0.0003 (0.007)
Local GDP Per Capita	-	-0.00004 (0.000003)	-0.000001 (0.000003)
N	7,005	7,005	7,005
Number of groups	89	89	89
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001			

According to the results of Model 3-4, Model 3-4a, and Model 3-4b, there is no statistically significant difference between TVE workers and SOE workers regarding their protest participations. Therefore, neither *H1a* nor *H1b* receive support from empirical test when I use multilevel analyses with county as the second level of analysis.

In terms of the effects of control variables on the dependent variable, an interesting finding is the effect of gender on protest participation. According to the result of three multilevel models reported in Table 3.8, the effect of gender on protest participation does not reach statistical significance at least at level 0.05: the p-value is 0.050 in Model 3-4, 0.055 in Model 3-4a, and 0.051 in Model 3-4b. Although it has been suggested in previous models that males are more likely than females to participate in protest activities, the effect of gender on protest participation does not reach statistical significance after taking county as the second level of analyses in multilevel models. The two perceptual variables still have significant effects on individuals' protest participation. An individual who considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatments from government officials will be more likely to engage in protests (odds ratios= 5.27 in Model 3-4a and 5.26 in Model 3-4b). An individual who considers his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to engage in protest activities (odds ratios= 0.819 in Model 3-4a and 0.814

in Model 3-4b). These findings are also consistent with the result of Model 3-2: the three important factors that have significant impacts on individual's protest participations are their gender, whether or not they believe they have suffered unfair treatment from government officials, and whether or not the individual considers his/her current income to be fair. In terms of the effect of provincial variables, none of them has statistically significant effects on individuals' protest participation.

Another interesting finding from these models is the effect of previous protest experience on individuals' protest participation. According to Model 3-4a and Model 3-4b, the total number of previous protest a province experienced from 1995 to 2009 does not have a significant impact on individuals' protest participation. I further disaggregate the total number of previous protest into three phases. The number of protest from 1995 to 1999 has a positive significant impact on individuals' protest participation, while the number of protest from 2005 to 2009 has a negative impact on individuals' protest participation. This finding is similar to what I found in previous chapter. On the one hand, the positive effect of the number of protest from 1995 to 1999 is consistent with the theoretical expectation of this study: the more protests a locale has experienced in the past, the more likely it is that there mobilizing structures in place for protest organization and mobilization. Further, the more protests a locale has experienced, the more likely the residents of this locale would consider the risks of participation to be low. The reason why the total number of protest experiences in 2005-2009 has a negative impact on the likelihood of protest participation might be the effect of hosting the Summer Olympics Game in 2008. In order to host this activity, the Chinese authorities suppressed protest activities with

higher levels of repression to make sure everything was under control for this event. Hence, the risk of participation in protests increase for the years leading up to the Olympics.

In sum, the results of ordinary logistic regression models show that TVE workers are 2.2 times more likely than SOE workers to participate in protests. The results of multilevel logistic regression models show that on the one hand, when the second level of analysis is province, TVE workers are statistically more likely than SOE workers to participate in protests. On the other hand, when the second level of analysis is county, there is no significant difference between TVE workers and SOE workers regarding their protest participation.

### 3.4.3 Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression Analysis, DPE workers versus FOE workers

The second hypothesis of this chapter is about a comparison between DPE workers and FOE workers regarding their protest participation. Because many FOE workers are not local residents and are vulnerable to abuse by their employers, they should have more grievances than DPE workers. In addition, because many FOE workers are not local residents and usually socialize outside of work with other migrant workers from the same hometown, information on unfairness is easily spread among FOE workers by these personal networks. Further, multinational production chains make FOEs sensitive to any work stoppage, and this gives FOE workers an expectation that protest is a useful tool to negotiate with their employers. Nevertheless, the redress of unfavorable conditions would apply to all workers in the factory-unit, which makes achievement of concessions a non-exclusive and non-rival public good. Therefore, the theoretical expectation of mine is that FOE workers have an incentive and capacity to cooperate to increase the size of protest group, so FOE workers should be more likely than DPE workers to participate in protest.



Although readers of this study could calculate the difference based on the results of all of previous models, in this and the following section I build several models by using DPE worker as the baseline category to make the results easier to read and understand.

Table 3.9 reports the result of two ordinary logistic regression models. The main difference between Model 3-5 and Model 3-6 is that Model 3-5 does not include two perceptual variables, *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair*, while Model 3-6 does. The results of Model 3-5 and Model 3-6 both show that there is no statistically significant difference between DPE workers and FOE workers regarding their protest participation. Therefore, the hypothesis that FOE workers are more likely than DPE workers to participate in protests does not receive support from these two models.

Table 3.9. Empirical Findings, Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression, DPE workers versus FOE workers

	Model 3-5 (DV: Protest)	Model 3-6 (DV: Protest)
<b>Occupations</b>		
Peasant	-0.451 (0.260)	-0.505 (0.262)
SOE Worker	-0.388 (0.339)	-0.404 (0.337)
TVE Worker	0.435 (0.360)	0.358 (0.375)
DPE Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
FOE Worker	0.028 (0.764)	-0.180 (0.790)
Others	0.260 (0.351)	0.166 (0.372)
Entrepreneur	0.124 (0.262)	0.037 (0.267)
Freelance	0.627 (0.521)	0.644 (0.574)
Unemployed	0.034 (0.244)	-0.019 (0.243)
Never work	-0.302 (0.464)	-0.722 (0.632)
Age	-0.008 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.005)

Male	0.452** (0.145)	0.406** (0.150)
Education	-0.034 (0.032)	-0.034 (0.032)
Minority	-0.233 (0.270)	-0.160 (0.282)
Income	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.002)
Unfairtreatment	-	1.767*** (0.153)
Incomefair	-	-.205** (0.062)
Cons	-3.058*** (0.327)	-2.962*** (0.364)
N	9,831	9,569
Pseudo R2	0.0150	0.0901
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001		

### 3.4.4 Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Analysis, DPE workers versus FOE workers

Table 3.10, and Table 3.11 report the results of all of the multilevel logistic regression models. These results are in fact reported in previous tables. The only difference between these new models and previous models is that the baseline category of these new models is DPE worker instead of SOE worker.

Table 3.10. Multilevel Random-Intercept Models with Level-2 Provincial Variables, DPE workers versus FOE workers

	Model 3-7 (Level 2: Province)	Model 3-7a (Level 2: Province)	Model 3-7b (Level 2: Province)
Level-1			
Occupations			
Peasant	-0.453 (0.304)	-0.472 (0.250)	-0.474 (0.250)
SOE Worker	-0.424 (0.453)	-0.441 (0.323)	-0.435 (0.324)
TVE Worker	0.433 (0.379)	0.417 (0.381)	0.423 (0.387)
DPE Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
FOE Worker	-0.096 (0.692)	-0.083 (0.764)	-0.098 (0.758)
Others	0.161 (0.278)	0.144 (0.349)	0.160 (0.352)
Entrepreneur	-0.011	-0.019	-0.022

	(0.252)	(0.269)	(0.268)
Freelance	0.714 (0.546)	0.712 (0.558)	0.693 (0.551)
Unemployed	0.005 (0.268)	-0.005 (0.241)	-0.005 (0.240)
Never work	-0.662 (0.497)	-0.671 (0.558)	-0.682 (0.562)
Age	-0.007 (0.004)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)
Male	0.408** (0.150)	0.404** (0.144)	0.400** (0.144)
Education	-0.023 (0.044)	-0.021 (0.033)	-0.021 (0.034)
Minority	-0.178 (0.250)	-0.223 (0.290)	-0.227 (0.292)
Income	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Unfairtreatment	1.741*** (0.178)	1.742*** (0.150)	1.738*** (0.150)
Incomefair	-0.173*** (0.052)	-0.173** (0.058)	-0.175** (0.058)
Cons	-3.860*** (0.147)	-	-
Level-2	0.344*** (0.586)	0.319*** (0.565)	0.290*** (0.538)
Var(_con)			
Intercept	-	-3.867*** (0.138)	-3.896*** (0.135)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009	-	-0.005 (0.005)	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999	-	-	0.015 (0.017)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2000 to 2004	-	-	-0.030 (0.020)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009	-	-	-0.005 (0.009)
Local Resident Population	-	0.00000 (0.00001)	-0.00000 (0.00001)
Local GDP Per Capita	-	-0.00001 (0.00001)	-0.00000 (0.00001)
N	9,569	9,569	9,569
Number of groups	31	31	31
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001			

Table 3.11. Multilevel Random-Intercept Models with Level-2 County Variables, DPE workers versus FOE workers

	Model 3-8 (Level 2: County)	Model 3-8a (Level 2: County)	Model 3-8b (Level 2: County)
Level-1			
Occupations			
Peasant	-0.547 (0.297)	-0.583* (0.295)	-0.598* (0.299)
SOE Worker	-0.198 (0.441)	-0.217 (0.450)	-0.225 (0.451)
TVE Worker	0.519 (0.425)	0.498 (0.423)	0.502 (0.434)
DPE Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
FOE Worker	0.572 (0.651)	0.648 (0.672)	0.603 (0.687)
OtherRefuse	0.115 (0.346)	0.104 (0.347)	0.115 (0.352)
Entrepreneur	-0.061 (0.269)	-0.080 (0.271)	-0.093 (0.279)
Freelance	0.936 (0.625)	0.931 (0.637)	0.908 (0.632)
Unemployed	-0.145 (0.257)	-0.158 (0.257)	-0.163 (0.260)
Never work	-0.575 (0.549)	-0.590 (0.551)	-0.631 (0.537)
Age	-0.009 (0.005)	-0.009 (0.005)	-0.009 (0.005)
Male	0.373 (0.190)	0.363 (0.189)	0.367 (0.188)
Education	-0.036 (0.049)	-0.033 (0.049)	-0.031 (0.050)
Minority	-0.040 (0.318)	-0.109 (0.326)	-0.019 (0.299)
Income	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Unfairtreatment	1.666*** (0.198)	1.661*** (0.197)	1.660*** (0.198)
Incomefair	-0.201*** (0.057)	-0.200*** (0.057)	-0.205*** (0.059)
Cons	-3.836 *** (0.123)	-	-
Level-2			
Var(_con)	0.556*** (0.746)	0.546*** (0.739)	0.470*** (0.685)
Intercept	-	-3.875*** (0.117)	-3.928*** (0.119)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009	-	-0.002 (0.002)	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999	-	-	0.025* (0.011)
NO. of Previous Protest	-	-	0.019

	from 2000 to 2004		(0.030)
	NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009	-	-0.016* (0.007)
Local Resident Population	-	-0.00003 (0.0001)	0.0003 (0.007)
Local GDP Per Capita	-	-0.00004 (0.000003)	-0.000001 (0.000003)
N	7,005	7,005	7,005
Number of groups	89	89	89
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001			

According to the results of these multilevel models, none of them suggests that there is any significant differences between DPE workers and FOE workers regarding their protest participations. In other words, the hypothesis that FOE workers are more likely than DPE workers to participate in protests receives no support from empirical tests.

Considering all of the above, the results of empirical tests suggest that in contemporary China, Chinese TVE workers are more likely than Chinese SOE workers to participate in protests. Several factors might contribute to this difference.

First, TVEs are generally small in size, while SOEs are medium or large in size. Smaller size makes the collective action problem easier to overcome, so protest mobilization should be easier for TVE workers. Second, the clear ownership of TVEs also makes issue framing easier: TVE workers have a clear idea about who is in charge of their enterprises, and who should take the responsibility in case grievances arise. Third, although without the job security that SOE workers enjoy, a higher labor turnover rate makes a position in TVEs less secure and harder for them to mobilize for collective action, the village in fact could function as the mobilizing structure in addition to the TVE itself. Fourth, the strong connection between the resident, the village, and the enterprise makes the remedying of unfavorable situation inclusive public goods. Fifth, given

that most TVE workers are local farmers who have their own farmland (Peng 2001), the cost of being layoff for participating in protests will be low because they can simply go back to their farmland. In other words, the cost of participation for TVE workers is low compared to those who have no other means of subsistence if they lose their jobs. Therefore, Chinese TVE workers are more likely than SOE workers to participate in protests.

The result of empirical tests also suggest that there is no significant difference between DPE workers and FOE workers regarding their protest participation. In other words, empirical tests find no evidence that DPE workers are more likely than FOE workers to participate in protests.

### 3.5 Summary and Discussion

Existing research on the protest in contemporary China has pointed out that Chinese workers and peasants engage in protests to express their grievances that come from the loss of land rights or labor rights. By analyzing their sources of grievance, their incentives to engage in protests, and most importantly, their capacities to overcome the collective action problem, the results of the previous chapter suggest that an aggrieved worker and an aggrieved peasant are not equally likely to participate in protests: Chinese workers are more likely than Chinese peasants to participate in protests in the context of contemporary China.

Stepping beyond this finding, this chapter aims to offer a comprehensive analysis on why and which type of workers are more likely than others to participate in protests. The results of empirical tests show that TVE workers are significantly more likely than SOE workers to engage in protests. In this paper I argue that several factors contribute to this difference. First, TVEs are

generally small in size compared to SOEs, and smaller size makes the collective action problem easier to overcome. Second, the clear ownership and operation system of TVEs also makes issue framing easier. More specifically, TVE workers have a clear idea about who is in charge of their enterprises, and who should take the responsibility should grievances arise. Third, although a higher labor turnover rate makes a position in TVEs less secure and harder for them to mobilize for collective action, the village in fact could function as the mobilizing structure in addition to the TVE itself. Fifth, as most TVE workers are local farmers who have their own farmland, the cost of being layoff for participating in protests will be low because they can simply go back to their farmland.

The results of empirical tests also suggest that there is no significant difference between DPE workers and FOE workers regarding their protest participation. This result might relate to the limitation of the survey data I use for empirical tests. That is, the questions on the survey allow me to categorize all respondents into different occupational groups. The information, however, might not be sufficient to capture the difference in ownership types. For example, the survey questions ask respondents what the ownership type of their companies are. When someone answers foreign-owned enterprise to this question, then this respondent will be categorized as a FOE worker. The problem of this method is that when this respondent answered his/her company is a foreign-owned enterprise, which means his/her company is an FOE in 2010. More specifically, it is possible that his/her company used to be an SOE but was privatized sometime before 2010. If the respondent has been working in the enterprise with his/her coworkers for decades, and the structure of company and the network of workers do not experience huge changes after privatization, then this enterprises should be more like a SOE

instead of a typical FOE. There is no way for me to solve this potential problem when I use this survey data for empirical tests. In sum, although the theoretical argument of mine is individual's occupation matters to his/her protest propensity and capacity, the CGSS 2010 project might not ideal for me to measure what I need for empirical test.

In addition to the argument that occupation matters to individual's protest propensity, in the next chapter I will bring workers' status of residency into the analysis. There is a lot of literature on the differences between migrant workers and urban registered workers regarding the kinds of jobs they get and the different of their living conditions. Existing literature, however, pays less attention to how these differences influence workers' protest participation. By discussing their sources of grievance, incentive, and capacity to protest, in the next chapter I will analyze which of them would be more likely than the other to participate in protests.



## CHAPTER 4

### MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR PROTEST PARTICIPATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have presented empirical analyses on the protest propensity of different segments of the Chinese rural and urban work force. The findings of chapter 2 suggest that Chinese workers are more likely than Chinese peasants to participate in protests. I argue this is because, on the one hand, peasants confront difficulties like geographical isolation, a tradition of self-reliance, the difficulty of developing leadership in the loosely-organized rural social networks, and the difficulty of recruiting individuals to participate in protests; in short, compared to urban workers, peasants have a low capacity for protest mobilization. On the other hand, the work-unit system in SOEs and the dormitory labor regime in private-owned enterprises give urban Chinese workers a high capacity for organizing and mobilizing. Therefore, workers are more likely than peasants to participate in protests.

In chapter 3 I further disaggregated workers into 4 types based on the ownership of their enterprises. The results of empirical tests suggest that workers of township and village enterprises (TVE workers) are more likely than the workers of state-owned enterprises (SOE workers) to participate in protests. This difference might be the consequence of several factors. First, TVEs are generally small in size compared to SOEs, and smaller size makes the collective action problem easier to overcome. Second, the clear ownership and operation system of TVEs also makes issue framing easier. More specifically, TVE workers have a clear idea about who is in charge of their enterprises, and who should take the responsibility for unfavorable situations that are the source of shared worker grievances. Third, without the job security that SOE workers

enjoy, a higher labor turnover rate makes a position in TVEs less secure, while TVEs workers generally earn less money and receive fewer benefits than SOE workers. Fourth, the strong connection between the resident, the village, and the enterprise makes the village function as the mobilizing structure in addition to the TVE itself. Fifth, as most TVE workers are local farmers who have their own farmland, the cost of being laid off for participating in protests will be low because they can simply go back to their farmland. Therefore, TVE workers are more likely than SOE workers to engage in protests.

Based on their residencies, in contemporary China workers can be further categorized into two groups: urban registered workers and migrant workers. Migrant workers face many unfavorable situations regarding what kinds of jobs they get and their living conditions. Thus far one might argue that migrant workers should be very likely to participate in protests. Based on resources mobilization theory to analyze the sources of their grievance, their incentives and capacity to protest, I expect that migrant workers should be less likely than urban workers to participate in protests because they not only have low incentive to engage in protests but also low capacity to mobilize for protests, despite their have more reasons to do so. This expectation is supported by empirical tests.

This chapter is organized as follows. In Section 2, I first introduce the Household Registration System and how it affects the living and working conditions of migrant workers. In Section 3, I discuss what migrant workers' grievances are, their incentives and capacity to protest. In Section 4 and 5, I present my research design and the results of empirical tests. A brief summary is offered in Section 6.

## 4.2 The *Hukou* System and the Origin of Migrant Workers

After establishing the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party opted for the Stalinist strategy of development that concentrated on expanding heavy industry in the cities while extracting agricultural surplus from countryside to finance rapid industrialization (Chan 2010). Therefore, a strict system urban-rural segregation was needed to prevent the internal migration or surplus labor from the countryside to the city. Thus, the Household Registration System (hereafter the *hukou* system) was introduced in the mid-1950s to control population mobility.

According to the *hukou* system, for those who live in urban area to work as a laborer, they were assigned an urban *hukou*. Meanwhile, a rural *hukou* was assigned to those who live in rural areas for doing farm works. As a result, each Chinese citizen either has an urban *hukou* or a rural *hukou*. The general purpose of the *hukou* system is to make a clear and strict regulation: people live in rural areas hold rural *hukou* thus they are supposed to do farm works, while people live in urban areas hold urban *hukou* so they are supposed to work in industrial sectors. In order to control the population flows, the *hukou* system defines Chinese citizens' education, housing, social welfare and employment (Zhao 1999; Cheng and Selden 1994). The general idea is that people are registered residents of one place and all of their state-provided benefits are available to them only in the location where they are registered. For this reason they have little reason or ability to move to another locale; if they do, they lose access to those benefits. Further, this system "reflected the state's bias toward urbanites" (Fan 2002: 106), given that the goal of state was to develop heavy industry. Urban workers had full access to social welfare benefits from the state, largely through the state-owned enterprise where they worked. , By contrast, peasants and

workers in rural areas received only minimal social welfare benefits from the state. For example, in 1954 the fixed amount of personal consumption on flour or rice were 184-212 kg per urban residents while 143-186 kg per rural resident, despite the fact that farm work was more labor intensive (Cheng and Selden 1994).

Under these circumstances, people living in the countryside might want to move to urban areas to find more lucrative work there. The Chinese Communist Party wanted to discourage this. The main method to prevent this from happening was to impose a high opportunity cost for those peasants who wanted to leave their native villages (Zhao 1999). More specifically, if a peasant wanted to leave his/her village, he/she would lose his/her income from the commune since he/she did not participate in daily collective farm work. In addition, he/she would not be able to receive any guaranteed employment, housing or food in the urban area because he/she had no urban *hukou*. People's access to benefits is only at their place of household registration. If they move, they cannot access many of benefits such as housing, health insurance, education for their children, and public transportation in their new location. Therefore, scholars have pointed out that the *hukou* functions as an internal passport system to regulate the flow of population. Given that, "Chinese citizens lost the freedom of residence and migration within their own country" (Qiu et al. 2011: 198). Chan (2010: 358) also concludes that the *hukou* system "effectively circumscribed the peasantry's economic, social, and political opportunities and rights, creating a massive pool of super-low-cost rural labor tied to land of very little market value".

Beginning in the early 1980s, economic reforms began to generate strains in the *hukou* system. The Household Responsibility System (HRS) was launched in the early 1980s to replace the commune system of agricultural production. Before the HRS was launched, surplus rural

labors were bound to the commune system. Started at the mid-1950s all previous distributed lands were forced to joint together and individual peasants were compelled to work collectively. This policy of land collectivization eventually “developed an institution called the People’s Commune” (Cheng and Davis 1998: 124). Scholars have pointed out that the system of collective ownership and collective operation provided farmers little incentive to generate additional revenues (Oi 1999; Zweig 1983; Shue 1984). Under this policy, each localities “were required to turn over all or most of their revenues to the upper levels” (Oi 1999: 6). In other words, peasants were denied the right of the residuals they created. They worked together and submitted their harvests to the government; they did not own the product of their efforts. Therefore, “the communes destroyed farmers’ operational freedom and their enthusiasm for production” (Chen and Davis 1998: 124).

Differing from the commune system and its collectivization, the idea of HRS is decollectivization: the basic production and accounting unit changed from collective units to the individual household (Oi 1999). HRS enables peasants to lease their own farmland and take responsibility for production on those lands themselves. In other words, HRS makes peasants receive a piece of farmland from the state. Terms of the lease vary, but the basic principle is that, in return for use of the land, the household is required to turn over a certain amount of their output to the state. Beyond that quota, peasants are allowed to sell the remaining output in free markets to earn money. This system gives peasants incentives to produce more because their rewards are linked with their performance: if peasants produce more, then their incomes will increase accordingly. This policy brings three main impact on the life of peasants. First, it improves the economic conditions of peasants. By allowing peasants to keep and sell the any

surplus above the quota, HRS grants peasants a higher incentive to produce more food for earning more money. Second, Zhao (1999: 768) argues that “the HRS returned personal freedom to rural people... rural laborers could now freely allocate their time”. As long as the required quota is met, peasants are free to engage in other economic activities. Third, the HRS also created a surplus of rural labor. Before the launch of HRS, communes had always served as a holding tank for surplus labors. When land was parceled out to households, there just was not enough land to accommodate all of the workers on the commune. That raised the issue of how to employ the surplus rural labor created by the dismantling of the commune system.

Expansion of export oriented industrial production was also part of the solution. Learning from the experience of four Asian tigers, China adopted a labor-intensive, export-oriented strategy of development in the mid-1980s. This new strategy generated demand for low-skilled labor, not only as factory workers but in construction as well. Hence, surplus rural labors were attracted and brought into cities to satisfy labor needs (Chan 2010). Further, these rural laborers can earn more income as wage laborers in urban areas than they can earn from farming (Wong et al. 2007). For example, Knight et al. (2011) found that the average monthly wage they make as a wage worker is 2.43 times greater than what they could make if they stay in their village to do farm work. Wang and Zao (1999) also point out that migrant workers could earn at least double the income by moving to Shanghai and working there. Therefore, some of peasants leave their family to migrate to cities as temporary wage laborers to supplement the family’s income from farming (Becker 2012).

Although peasants are allowed to leave rural areas to find jobs in urban areas, the *Hukou* system, however, means that those rural workers cannot become registered residents in the city

where they work regardless how long they live there (Chan et al. 2014; Solinger 1999a). This group of people are called migrant workers (Nong-Ming-Gong): people with rural *Hukou* who leave their registered locale to work in urban areas as wage labor workers (Gui et al. 2012; Qiu 2011).

Research has pointed out that a migrant worker under this guest worker system faces many unfair treatments regarding working and living conditions compared to registered urban workers. Without an urban *hukou*, these peasants cannot receive any local benefits, such as urban unemployment relief and social security, nor public school education for their children (Butollo and Brink 2012; Golley and Meng 2011). In addition, local governments usually only allow them to take low-skilled dangerous, dirty, and demeaning jobs that are not desirable to urban workers (Chan 2010).

Do those conditions generate grievances that might make migrant workers more likely than other categories of workers to engage in protests? According to relative deprivation theory, on the one hand, migrant workers should be more likely than urban workers to engage in protests since they are more deprived. On the other hand, resource mobilization theory would suggest that the guest worker system makes migrant workers less likely to protest because they cannot create a stable network for social organizations and mobilizing structures. Their insecure residency status in urban areas also makes them hesitant to engage in protests because they might be expelled from the cities. These factors negatively affect migrant workers' capacity for mobilization and further make them less likely to engage in protests.

### 4.3 Previous Literature

Many studies on Chinese workers protest have contributed to our understanding on why workers protests (Geng et al. 2009; Chen 2003; Tong and Lei 2010). Chen and Tang (2013) further categorize labor disputes in contemporary China into three groups: pre-reform entitlement disputes, rights-based disputes and interest-based disputes. Pre-reform entitlement disputes refers to the conflicts between SOE workers and the management of their enterprises over the issues about collective layoff or privatization. Rights-based disputes refers to those cases where workers consider their legal rights, such as minimum wages and working hours, to have been violated. Interest-based disputes refers to those cases where workers make claims for more bonuses and benefits than what they have received. These studies contribute to our understanding of what problems workers face in contemporary China. In addition to these studies, some other scholars focus on the working and living conditions of migrant workers (Chan 2010; Fan 2002; Liu 2004). In the following section I describe the grievances of migrant workers, the incentives for them to participate in protests, and their capacities to overcome the collective action problem and participate in protests.

#### 4.3.1 The Grievances of Migrant Workers

Migrant workers are peasants who move to urban areas in search of jobs. Although they work as wage laborers, migrant workers cannot register as residents of the city where they work because of the *hukou* system. In other words, migrant workers live and work in urban areas but cannot get an urban *Hukou*. This reality has brought at least two significant impacts to the lives of migrant workers.



The first impact of the *hukou* system concerns their job security. In urban areas it is not uncommon for certain types of work to be reserved for local registered residents. Scholars have pointed out that in cities local governments impose regulations to prevent migrant workers from taking better occupations with higher pay and better benefits (Wang and Zuo 1999; Fan 2002; Wong et al. 2007). Even more so with the privatizing of state-owned enterprises (SOEs); governments want to preserve better jobs for displaced SOE workers. Therefore, migrant workers can only take up marginal jobs or what are called 3D jobs: dangerous job, dirty job, and demeaning job (Chan 2010). Statistics also indicate that migrant workers “account for 68% in processing and manufacturing industries, and 80% in construction industry” (Gu et al. 2007: 1). Given that they can only get some of the most unskilled, undesirable and dangerous jobs, Chan (2001) and Liu (2004) point out that for migrant workers, injuries, corporal punishments, and being forced to work for low pay under unsafe working conditions are not uncommon. Also because migrant workers are not registered residents and have few resources, they are vulnerable to exploitation by their employers. Meng and Zhang (2001) focus on Shanghai and find that migrant workers on average work 14 hours more per week than urban residents, but their monthly income is 61% of that of urban residents. In their study that focuses in Hunan, Sichuan, and Henan, Gu et al. (2007: 3) find that “the actual average monthly working hours of rural migrant workers is over 1.5 times of those urban workers, whereas the average monthly income of rural migrant workers is 60% lower than that of urban workers”. Knight et al. (2011: 587) also point out that according to the 2007 national household survey of the China Household Project “the ratio of the average monthly wage of urban residents to that of rural-urban migrants to be 1.49”. Even when migrant workers work in the same enterprises and perform same kind of

work as registered urban residents, they still get less pay (Meng and Zhang 2001). These realities suggest that in urban areas, migrant workers can only get undesirable jobs and work for a longer hours but receive lower wages compared to registered urban residents. Besides, migrant workers also make easy targets for criminal gangs and other illegal enterprises, such as “vampire gangs [that] lure unsuspecting migrants with the promise of jobs, forcing them instead to sell their blood for money” (Solinger 1991: 136). Therefore, migrant workers more subject to exploitation than registered urban workers (Chan et al. 2014; Solinger 1999a; 1999b; Chan 2001; Liu 2004; Qiu et al 2011).

Table 4.1. Working Condition of Migrant Workers

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Work for more than 8 hours a day (%)	-	49.3	42.4	39.6	41.0	40.8	39.1
Work for more than 44 hours a week (%)	89.8	90.7	84.5	84.4	84.7	85.4	85.0

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China,

[http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201604/t20160428\\_1349713.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201604/t20160428_1349713.html), access on March 10, 2017.

The second impact of the *hukou* system concerns what benefits migrant workers have. In China, registered residents are entitled to several benefits provided by local government, such as pensions, state-funded education, and medical care (Butollo and Brink 2012; Zhao 1999; Wang and Zuo 1999). Migrant workers, however, are excluded from those benefits from the local government where they work because they are not registered urban residents. The compulsory education, for example, offers tuition-free primary and secondary education to children. Public schools, however, are only for the children of registered residents. Therefore, in urban areas only children of urban registered residents can go to urban public schools. Children of migrant workers can have tuition-free schooling in their native villages, but not in the urban cities where they currently work and live. Migrant workers have three choices regarding the education for their children. First, they could leave their children in their native villages for schooling. Second, if

migrant workers want their children to be able to enter urban public schools, they will be charged exorbitant fees that migrant workers cannot afford (Zhao 1999). In their study Fleisher and Yang (2003) point out that migrant families have to pay about 3,000 to 30,000 Yuen in fees to have their children enter public schools. This is a large amount of money compared to their monthly wages that are reported in Table 4.2. Third, they could send their children to private schools in which the educational fee is lower but educational quality is also poorer compared to that of public schools (Gui et al. 2012; Wong et al. 2007).

Table 4.2. Average Monthly Wage of Migrant Workers in Yuen

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Monthly Wages	1,340	1,417	1,690	2,049	2,290	2,609	2,864	3,072

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201305/t20130527\\_12978.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201305/t20130527_12978.html), access on March 10, 2017.

In addition to *hukou*, an important concern of local governments that prevents migrant workers from getting local benefits is the budget (Pun and Chan 2013; Wong et al. 2007). Local governments do not receive any funding from higher levels of government to offer migrant workers the benefits that are enjoyed by registered urban residents. The money they do receive from above is for the provision of benefits to registered residents only. Although urban areas need migrant workers to take up jobs that local residents avoid (Qiu et al. 2011), to offer them benefits would increase the financial burden of local governments. Therefore, due to the limited resources, the priority of local governments is to take care the interests of local registered residents, so cities treat those migrant workers in the manner of “taking while not giving” and “hiring while not supporting” (Gu et al. 2007: 3).

According to relative deprivation theory, the discussion above suggests that migrant workers have reasons to protest: they leave their native villages to take up low-end jobs for long

hours at low wages in urban areas, plus they are excluded from local benefit because they are not registered residents. Their economic situation and treatment by government is worse than that of the registered residents in the cities where they work. The living and working conditions that migrant workers confront, however, also give them less capacity to overcome the collective action problem, and make them less likely to participate in protests. In the following section I will introduce what factors make migrant workers hesitate to engage in protests are and why.

#### 4.3.2 The Incentive for Migrant Workers to Protest

The economic cost of protest is high for migrant workers. Zhao (1999) points out that being unemployed in unfamiliar cities is a big uncertainty for making migration decisions. Since migrant workers have already made the decision to leave their native village to work in cities, job security should be their primary concern. Knight et al. (1999) conducted a survey and found that most migrant workers see a secure and a stable job as the priority. Their survey further reveals that for those who already have a job, only about 13 percent of them want to change their current job for higher wages. Furthermore, “the higher the migrant’s wage and the poorer his rural household, the keener he is to stay as long as possible” (Knight et al. 1999: 89). The reform of the state-owned sector, the abolition of the commune system, and the growth of population generate much surplus labor in rural areas. Peasants move to urban areas to find jobs, but the urban areas cannot absorb all of these workers (Taylor 1988; Wilson 1990). There is a surplus of migrant workers competing for those low-end jobs in every big city. Given this labor surplus, it is reasonable to expect that each current migrant employee is replaceable for his/her employer. If migrant workers dare to protest, then the management of the enterprises could simply fire them and hire someone else to take their jobs. Therefore, participating in protest is costly for migrant

workers as they might be fired from their jobs. Given that job security is their main concern, this factor should deter migrant workers from protesting.

Table 4.3. Total Number of Migrant Workers (in million)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
No. of Migrant workers	140.41	145.33	153.35	158.63	163.36	166.1	168.21	168.84

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, various years.

In addition to the concern of job security above, migrant workers also face discrimination by urban governments and residents in their daily lives. Migrant workers are stereotyped as stupid and ignorant by urban residents, and are regarded as a source of social instability by local governments (Meng and Zhang 2001; Wong et al. 2007). In interview with migrant workers in Sichuan and Anhui, Fan (2002) finds that migrant workers are often fined by local polices if they do not have their temporary resident permit with them in the streets. Most of interviewees have experienced verbal disrespect or violence. They know urban residents look down upon them, so they don't talk or interact too much with the locals. If migrant workers engage in protests, they might not only be fired from their current works, but also charged by the urban government with causing disturbances, which can get them expelled from the city (Chan et al. 2014; Becker 2012; Meng and Zhang 2001). Therefore, to participate in protest would not be a wise decision for those migrant workers who want to stay in urban cities to make more money.

Thus far, someone might argue that increasing amounts of job opportunities should be better for migrant workers, so theoretically that might give all migrant workers of a given city a shared interest in cooperating to put pressure on the local government to provide more government-created jobs. If migrant workers successfully do that, this payoff from protest, however, is not necessarily an inclusive public good to migrant workers. A dilemma that the

migrant workers face is that they might not be the ones who get those jobs. In order to reduce the unemployment level of registered residents, local urban governments generally offer assistance to urban residents to enter the job market. For example, in Beijing 35 types of jobs are closed to migrant workers (Wang and Zuo 1999). Besides, better occupations are also reserved for local residents (Fan 2002). Further, from the perspective of current migrant workers, when the supply of jobs increases in a given city, then it is very likely to attract more migrant workers to the city, making the job market more competitive. Mason and Clements (2002: 176-177) note that “for each person who receives a government-created job, there is one less job for other floaters to consume. In effect, floaters are in competition with each other over jobs and other private goods, and this undermines their incentive to cooperate in collective action”. Therefore, protest is in fact less attractive for migrant workers.

#### 4.3.3 The Collective Action Problem to Migrant Workers

Organization and mobilization are needed for dissident leaders to organize and mobilize potential protests. The presence or absence of such mobilization capacity affects the calculation of cost and benefits of those participating in protests. Although migrant workers should have a high level of grievance as they suffer so much unfairness, some factors make it difficult to organize and mobilize migrant workers. Some scholars have examined whether there is a changing pattern to their demands (Butollo and Brink 2012), empirical studies point out that in most cases migrant workers protest over their legal rights being violated, but not over better working conditions or higher pay (Friedman and Lee 2010). Scholars also find that migrant worker protests are factory-based and “each strike was fought and settled on its own” (Butollo and Brink 2012: 434; Pun and Chan 2013). These findings suggest that although the number of migrant

workers in urban areas is increasing, they have not established a community of migrant workers that could serve as mobilizing structures for a migrant worker protest movement. Therefore, “atomized protest is prevalent, not the formation of a generalized class interest” (Butollo and Brink 2012: 422). This empirical finding is consistent with the importance of migrants’ organization. Given that generally migrant workers work those dangerous and low-skill jobs that local residents are unwilling to do, and each individual migrant worker is easily replaced at any time, the situation of migrant workers is something like “get the job done and get lost” (Solinger 1999b). Research also indicates that the average job tenure for migrant workers is significantly shorter than that of urban residents (Knight and Yueh 2004). Therefore, the high job turnover makes it difficult for these floaters to build a stable and strong organization (Becker 2012; Fan 2002; Gu et. al 2007; Butollo and Brink 2012). In other words, “because of the fluidity of migrant workers, there are no powerful organizations such as trade unions to safeguard the migrant workers’ rights” (Gui et. al 2012). This factor should increase the difficulty for protest organization and mobilization, so migrant workers should be less likely to participate in protests.

Table 4.4. Average and Median Tenure of Urban Residents and Migrant Workers in 1999

	Average Tenure (Years)	Median Tenure (Years)	Distribution of Tenure (%)	
			Under 2 Years	Over 20 Years
Urban Residents	19.9	19.0	5.6	45.5
Migrant Workers	4.5	3.0	39.2	1.3

Source: Knight and Yueh (2004)

Based on the factors discussed above, I expect that protest is less attractive for migrant workers than for other classes of urban workers. The structural difficulties further make it hard for them to organize and mobilize effectively for participation in protests. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

*H: All else being equal, migrant workers are less likely than urban registered workers to participate in protests.*

#### 4.4 Research Design

In this chapter I use survey data from CGSS 2010 (Chinese General Social Survey in 2010) for empirical tests. The CGSS project is the first continuous national social survey project in China. The CGSS is “an annual or biannual questionnaire survey of China’s urban and rural households aiming to monitor systematically the changing relationship between social structure and quality of life in urban and rural China”.<sup>6</sup>

The survey method of CGSS projects is face to face interview. The CGSS 2010 project employed a multi-stage stratified sampling design and covered all 31 provincial units, 100 county level units plus 5 metropolitan districts, 480 community level units, and 12,000 households in mainland China.<sup>7</sup> The number of valid respondents in CGSS 2010 dataset is 11,783. One thing I should point out is that this survey does ask questions about participation in protest, but it was not designed specifically to exam protest participation. However, there are items in the survey that enable us to measure respondents’ support for protests.

##### 4.4.1 The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of this empirical tests of this chapter is protest participation: whether or not the individual respondent has experience regarding protest participation. The

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.src.ust.hk/survey/GSS\\_e.html](http://www.src.ust.hk/survey/GSS_e.html), access on March 10, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.uchicago.cn/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Weidong-Wang.pdf>, access on March 10, 2017.



information on respondents' experience with protest participation comes from question D12a, D12c, and D20.

*D12a: In our daily lives we usually see some collective actions or activities happen, such as people protest against unreasonable fees, against land confiscation, against certain polities, collective petitions, strikes, assembly, and demonstrations. Did any of them ever happen around your life in the past three years? (01. Yes; 02. No)*

If respondents answer "Yes" to question D12a, then they are asked to answer question D12c. Otherwise, question D12c is be skipped.

*D12c: Did you play any of the following role in those actions and activities that happened around your life? (01. I was the organizer; 02. I participated in the activities; 03. I did not participate in any of them in person, but I offer material supports; 04. I did not participate in any of them in person, but I offer moral supports; 05. Others; 06. I did not participate)*

*D20: In this past year, did you participated in any of the actions or activities that happened in your community? (01. Participated in the work of the villagers' committee, neighborhood committee, or owners' committee; 02. Offered suggestions or opinions to the villagers' committee, neighborhood committee, or owners' committee; 03. Participated in collective petitions; 04. Participated in writing collective petition letters; 05. Reported community problems to news media; 06. Reported community problems to responsible governmental authorities; 07. Participated in protests)*

Based on the answers to those questions, I created a dichotomous variable *Protest* which refers to individual respondent's experience of protest participation. A value of "1" is assigned to

those answered “01. I was the organizer” or “02. I participated in the activities” to question D12c, or to those who answered “07. Participated in protests” to question D20. Others are assigned a value of “0” which refers to no experience of protest participation.

#### 4.4.2 The Independent Variables

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the concept “migrant workers” includes two types of peasant workers. The first type of migrant workers is a person with rural *hukou* who leaves his/her registered village to work as a wage labor worker in another locale. This is the migrant worker analyzed in this chapter. The second type of peasant workers is a person with rural *hukou* who does not leave his/her registered locale but stays in his/her registered village to work as a wage labor.<sup>8</sup> In other words, in addition to those who leave their native villages to work as a wage labor in an unfamiliar urban cities, peasants might also choose to stay in their registered village and work at the TVEs of their registered villages if there is any such enterprises in their villages (Zhao 1999). This type of peasant worker is not the concern of this chapter.

In this chapter I classify all workers into sectors as exogenous variables: urban registered workers, migrant workers (leave their registered locale), and rural workers (do not leave their registered locale). Since the discussion of this chapter is about the first type of migrant workers, in this and following sections I only focus on the different protest participation behaviors between urban workers and migrant workers.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201604/t20160428\\_1349713.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201604/t20160428_1349713.html) , access on March 10, 2017.

The main concern of this chapter is the difference between urban workers and migrant workers. To create variables that measure individuals' occupations, I use information from questions A58, A59a, and A59K.

*A58: Which of the following best describes your working condition and experience? (01. I have a non-agriculture job; 02. I have an agriculture job, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs; 03. I have an agriculture job, and I never have had any non-agriculture jobs; 04. I have no job now, and I only had agriculture jobs before; 05. I have no job now, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs; 06. I have never worked)*

*A59a: Which of the following best describes your current work condition? (01. I am the owner of an enterprises; 02. I am self-employed; 03. I am hired by someone (long-term); 04. I am a service worker; 05. I have a temporary job; 06. I work in my family business with no payment; 07. I work in my family business and get payment; 08. Freelance; 09. Others)*

On the one hand, for those who answered *"02. I have an agriculture job, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs"* or *"03. I have an agriculture job, and I never have any non-agriculture jobs"* to question A58, they are categorized as peasants. For those who answered *"04. I have no job now, and I only had agriculture jobs before"* or *"05. I have no job now, and I used to have non-agriculture jobs"*, they are categorized as unemployed. For those who answered *"06. I have never worked"* to question A58, they are categorized as never worked.

On the other hand, for those who answered *"01. I have a non-agriculture job"* to question A58 and further answered *"01. I am the owner of an enterprise"* or *"02. I am self-employed"* or *"06. I work in my family business with no payment"* or *"07. I work in my family business and get*

*payment*” to question A59a, they are categorized as entrepreneur. For those who answered “01. *I have a non-agriculture job*” to question A58 and further answered “08. *Freelance*” or “09. *Others*”, they are categorized as freelance. In this chapter I collapse entrepreneur, freelance, unemployed, and never work into a residual category named others.

For those who answered “01. *I have a non-agriculture job*” to question A58 and further answered “03. *I am hired by someone (long-term)*” or “04. *I am a service worker*” or “05. *I have a temporary job*” to question A59a, they are categorized as worker. In order to categorize workers into different types, the information from the following questions is needed.

*A21: What is your current registered locale? ( 01. This village/township; 02. This county/city but not this village/township; 03. Outside this district/county/city; 04. Undetermined; 99. Refuse to answer)*

For those who answer “01. *This village/township*” to question A21, they are in his/her registered locale. For those who answered “02. *This county/city but not this village/township*” or “03. *Outside this district/county/city*”, they are currently out of their registered locale. Variable *Urban Worker* is created to refer to those workers with non-agricultural *hukou*. Variable *Migrant Worker* is created to refer to those who are not in their registered local to work as a worker with agricultural *hukou*. Variable *Rural Worker* is created to refer to those who are in their registered locale to work as a worker with agricultural *hukou*. Therefore, all workers are further categorized into three sub categories: *Urban Worker* refers to those urban registered workers, *Migrant Worker* refers to those peasants who leave their registered village to work as a wage worker, and *Rural Worker* refers to those who remain in their registered villages to work as a wage labor.

Therefore, three types of wage labor workers are distinguished and included in all models for empirical tests.

#### 4.4.3 The Control Variables

The control variables of the models of this chapter are identical to those of models in previous two chapters. Variable *Age* refers to the respondent's age in 2010. Since existing literature points out that younger people have less obligation to families and careers, the young should be more likely than the elder to participate in protest (Schussman and Soule 2005). Scholars also find that males are more inclined to political protest than females (Wu 2012), so I expect males to be more likely than females to participate in protest. Variable *Male* refers to the respondent's gender. A value of "1" is assigned to male, while a value of "0" is assigned to female.

Variable *Education* refers the respondent's highest level of education in 2010. Scholars argue that well educated people are better informed and more critical so they are more likely to participate in protest (Machado et. al 2011), I expect a positive relationship between this level of education and protest participation.

Existing research also suggests that ethnic identities make it easier to generate the sentiment of "us" and "them" between ethnic groups (Tong and Lei 2010). Therefore ethnic minorities might be more likely to feel deprived than the ethnic majority of the society and, therefore, are more likely to engage in protest. Variable *Ethnicity* refers the respondent's ethnicity. A value of "0" is assigned to those who are Han Chinese, while a value of "1" is assigned to those who are not Han Chinese.

Deprived actor models argues that poverty might cause social unrest (Russett 1964), so I add the Variable *Income* which refers the respondent’s personal annual income measured in 1,000 Yuan of RMB. Existing literature also points out that with the feeling of relative deprivation in mind, people will be more likely to engage in social unrest (Gurr 1977). Further, Variable *Unfairtreatment* refers to whether or not the respondent considers that he/she has suffered any unfair treatment from government officials. A value of “1” refers to “yes”, while a value of “0” refers to “no”.

*D13a: In this past year, did you suffer any unfair treatment from governmental officials? (01. Yes; 02. No)*

Variable *incomefair* refers to what degree an individual believes his/her current income to be fair, which ranges from unfair, somewhat unfair, about ok, somewhat fair, and fair. I expect a negative relationship between this variable and the dependent variable.

*D5a: Considering your educational background, working skills, and working experience, do you think your current income is fair or not? (01. Unfair; 02. Somewhat unfair; 03. About ok; 04. Somewhat fair; 05. Fair)*

Table 4.5. Data Description

Related to	Variable	Definition	Sources
Resource Mobilization Theory Variable	Urban Workers	Type of workers. 1 for urban workers, 0 for migrant worker or rural workers or peasants or others.	A18 A21
	Migrant Workers	Type of workers. 1 for migrant workers, 0 for urban workers or rural workers or peasants or peasants or others.	A58 A59a
	Rural Workers	Type of workers. 1 for rural workers, 0 for urban workers or migrant workers or peasants or others.	
	Peasants	Respondents’ occupation. 1 for peasants, 0 for urban workers or migrant workers or rural workers or others.	
	Others	Respondents’ occupation. 1 for entrepreneur or freelance or unemployed or never worked, 0 for urban workers or migrant workers or rural workers or peasants.	

Biographical Variables	Age	Respondent's age in 2010	A3a
	Male	Respondent's gender, 1 for male, 0 for female	A2
	Education	Respondent's highest level of education. 1= Do not have any education, 13= Graduate school or higher	A7a
	Minority	Whether or not the individual respondent is an ethnic minority. 1 for non-Han Chinese, 0 for Han Chinese	A4
Deprived Actor Theory Variable	Income	Respondent's annual personal income in Yen	A8a
Relative Deprivation Theory Variable	Unfair treatment	Whether or not the individual respondent consider him/herself suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials. 1 for yes, 0 for no	D13a
	Incomefair	Whether or not the individual respondent consider his/her current income to be fair, "(1) unfair", "(2) somewhat unfair", "(3) about ok", "(4) somewhat fair", and "(5) fair	D5a

Table 4.6. Data Summary

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Urban Worker	0.196	0.397	0	1
Migrant Worker	0.032	0.175	0	1
Rural Worker	0.057	0.232	0	1
Peasant	0.249	0.432	0	1
Others	0.466	0.499	0	1
Age	48.302	15.680	18	97
Male	0.482	0.500	0	1
Education	4.836	2.984	1	13
Minority	0.093	0.291	0	1
Income	19.210	80.836	0	6000
Unfairtreatment	0.091	0.288	0	1
Incomefair	2.867	1.234	1	5

#### 4.4.4 Statistic Methodology

As the dependent variables of models are binary variables, binary logistic regression is employed for empirical tests (Long1997). In addition to ordinary binary logistic regression, in this chapter I also use multilevel logistic regression to compose advanced analyses and to compare the difference between the results of different models. Statistic software STATA 14 was employed for ordinary binary logistic regression analyses while HLM 7.0 was employed for multilevel logistic regression analyses.

## 4.5 Empirical Findings

### 4.5.1 Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

The results of binary logistic regression are reported in the following Table. In this section I discuss the result of each individual model to see if my hypothesis receives support from these empirical tests.

Table 4.7. Empirical Findings, Ordinary Binary Logistic Regression

	Model 4-1 (DV: Protest)	Model 4-2 (DV: Protest)
Occupations		
	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
Migrant Worker		
Urban Worker	1.249* (0.505)	1.200* (0.521)
Rural Worker	1.165* (0.521)	1.195* (0.537)
Peasant	0.687 (0.499)	0.645 (0.512)
Others	1.215* (0.482)	1.153* (0.498)
Age	-0.010* (0.004)	-0.007 (0.005)
Male	0.473** (0.144)	0.423** (0.148)
Education	-0.063* (0.032)	-0.057 (0.032)
Minority	-0.252 (0.269)	-0.168 (0.279)
Income	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Unfairtreatment	-	1.765*** (0.152)
Incomefair	-	-0.197** (0.0604)
Cons	-4.037*** (0.532)	-4.022*** (0.574)
N	10,042	9,779
Pseudo R2	0.0140	0.0873

Note: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 4.7 reports the result of two logistic regression models. All occupational variables are included in both models, and the effects of them on the dependent variable are reported. In



this section I mainly focus on the difference between urban registered workers and migrant workers regarding their protest participation. The results in Model 4-1 shows that compared to migrant workers, urban registered workers are significantly more likely to participate in protests. After adding two perceptual variables, *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair*, the results in Model 4-2 also shows that the variable *Urban Worker* is still positively associated with likelihood of protest participation. Further, the odds-ratio shows that urban registered workers are about 3.3 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests. These results provide consistent supports for the hypothesis of this chapter that migrant workers are less likely than urban registered workers to participate in protests.

With respect to the control variables, Age has a significant negative impact on the dependent variable in Model 4-1, which suggest that when age goes up, the likelihood of engage in protests decreases. The effect of variable Age, however, does not reach at least at 0.05 level of significance in Model 4-2. In addition the results of two models suggest that males are significantly more likely than females to participate in protests ( $p < 0.01$ ), the odds-ratio also suggests that males are about 53% more likely than females to participate in protests. Two perceptual variables also have statistically significant effects on protest behavior. When an individual considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials, he/she will be 5.85 times more likely to participate in protests than those who do not consider themselves to have suffered unfair treatment. An individual who believes his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to participate in protests than those who believe their current income is unfair (The odds-ratio = 0.821). These findings conform to relative deprivation theory that people's perception matters to their participation of protest: in contemporary China, people who

consider themselves to be suffering unfair treatment of various sorts are more likely to engage in protest activities (Tong and Lei 2010).

According to the result of Model 4-1, the effect of level of education on protest participation does not reach at least at 0.05 level of significance in Model 4-2.

In addition to the analyses based on the findings from ordinary logistic regression models which analyze the effects of individual characteristics on protest propensities, one's propensity to protest may be conditioned by the characteristics of the community in which one lives. Therefore, I will present advanced analyses by using multilevel mixed-effect logistic regression models in the following section to see if there is any differences between the results of ordinary logistic regression models and that of multilevel logistic regression models.

#### 4.5.2 Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Analysis

Resources mobilization theory tells us that in addition to organization being important for protest mobilization, the perception of risk matters to the decision regarding whether or not to participate in protests. As a result, a group of well-organized angry individuals might do nothing until they believe there is a chance that their protest will succeed (Tilly 1978; McAdam et al. 1996). This "changes in political opportunity structure" argument, however, mainly focuses on changes that happen within the level of central authority. Given that the power structure of central government is relatively stable, how could one step beyond this argument to study the protests that happen in contemporary China? Since protests in contemporary China are more motivated by more tangible and material local issues, and do not involve any calls for democratization or reform of national political systems, in this section I bring locales into analyses to see what local

characteristics might influence the perception of risk in the local environment that might affect people's willingness to participate protests.

China has a huge population size and territory. Within China there are twenty-two provinces, five autonomous regions, and four municipalities. In addition to that, China has 334 prefectures (second level of administrative division) and more than 2,800 counties (third level of administrative division). One locale could be very different from another regarding their territorial size, population, and level of economic development. By taking local characteristics into account, I investigate what local factors might influence the perception of risk for potential protesters to make individuals more or less likely to engage in protests. Given the earlier findings that workers are more likely than peasants to participate, could the probability of a worker participating be influenced by the characteristics of the community in which that worker resides? Therefore, it will be beneficial to use multilevel modeling methods to investigate the effects of environmental factors on individual's behavior (Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Hox2002; Luke 2004).

In the following multilevel models I add several level-2 variables to determine what local factors might influence individuals' protest participation. The literature has pointed out that how many protests a locale has experienced should also affects its residents' perceptions of the risks of protest participation, and those perceptions will affect individuals' decision to participate or not participate in protests (Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 1996; 1997). A locale's past record of protest experience affects its residents' perceptions of the risks of protest participation for two reasons. First, on the one hand, for a locale with many protests in the recent past, the residents of this locale should be more likely to consider it feasible to protest there. In other words, it

seems not so risky to have a protest in this locale because there have been many protests in the past without serious repercussions. This perception will further affect the decision of individuals regarding whether or not participating in protests is a practical way to seek redress of their grievances. If a locale has never experienced any protest, on the other hand, then residents will be more uncertain about the risks of participation than are residents of localities that have experienced multiple protests in the recent past. Further, a potential protest participant will be more uncertain about whether others will participate in the protest. This perception will make residents more hesitant about participating in protests.

Second, if a locale has experienced many protests, that means there must be some level of dissident organization in the locale. Furthermore, the residents there also know how to mobilize people to participate in protests and how to organize a protest because they have successfully organized protests in the past. For dissident leaders, the knowledge about past protest mobilization and existing mobilization structures make it easier to mobilize and organize potential protesters for future actions (McAdam et al. 2001). With such existing organization, dissident leaders don't need to create the capacity to mobilize from nothing. For those who have successfully organized protests in the past, they know where the likely participants are, as well as how to mobilize them for a successful protest, so it will be less difficult to organize another protest in the future than would be the case in a locale with no prior history of protest.

Based on this logic, three variables were created to measure to how many protest incidents a province experienced from 1995 to 2009: variable *AOP* refers to the total numbers of protest a province experienced from 1995 to 2009. Further, variable *P9599* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 1995 to 1999. Variable *P0004* refers to the numbers of

protest a province experienced from 2000 to 2004. Variable *P0509* refers to the numbers of protest a province experienced from 2005 to 2009. The source of such information is Wedeman (2009). I expect a positive relationship between these control variables and the dependent variable.

In addition to how many protests a province experienced in the past, literature also points out that population also matters to individual protest participation (Chamberlin 1974). In a series of articles, Spilerman (1970; 1971) finds that the size of the black population was the strongest predictor of a city's riot-proneness in 1960s. Mason (1994) further offers three explanations of why the geographic concentration and population size affect the likelihood of protest in a given locale. First, aggrieved individuals won't automatically stick together as a group to protest; leadership is important for protest organization and mobilization. In a place with a larger population, the likelihood of someone with leadership ability and skills emerging to organize and mobilize others will be higher than a place with a smaller population. Secondly, geographic concentration makes it easier for individuals to communicate with each other, as well as to communicate with their leaders. In a place with a dense population, people live close to each other so it should be easier to spread information, connect individuals, and coordinate behavior with each other. Lastly, a larger population means there will be more potential participants for protest. Each potential participant must consider the risks of participation (Mason and Clement 2002). On the one hand, when the number of estimated protest participants increases, not only does the chance of success increase, but the risk for him/her to be arrested and punished for participation decreases. On the other hand, in a protest with a small number of participants, not only does the protest produce less pressure on the responsible authorities, but each individual

protester has a higher risk of being identified, arrested, and punished. In a protest with a large number of participants, the responsible authorities will feel more threatened, and the chance for any one individual participant being recognized and punished will be much lower. Therefore, a large number of potential participants increases the expected benefits of participation while reducing the expected costs of participation. When individuals estimate the number of other participants is large, he/she will be more likely to participate in protests. Therefore, variable *Provincial Population* which refers to the resident population of a province in 2010 was added to Model 4-3a and Model 4-3b, while variable *County Population* which refers to the resident population of a county in 2010 was added to Model 4-4a and Model 4-4b. Based on the discussion above, I expect a positive relationship between these variables and the likelihood of protest participation.

The third controlled local level variable is local economy. The local economy would affect individual's propensity to protest participation for two reasons. First, local economic development could be a resource for protest leaders for organization and mobilization. That is, in a locale with high level of economic development, the well-developed infrastructure such as better quality roads, convenient transportation, and prosperous business activities all could contribute to a high level of interaction and communication between residents of the locale. Protest leaders could take advantage of these factors for mobilizing. Second, in the transitioning Chinese society, a higher level of economic development might also imply changes to the daily lives of residents, such as urban encroachments. Therefore, the pressures for a high level of economic development could affect the lives of local residents and make them more likely to go to streets. Variable *POGDPPC* which refers to the provincial GDP per capita in 2010 was created

and added into Model 4-3a and Model 4-3b, while variable *CTGDPPC* was created and added into Model 4-4a and Model 4-4b for empirical analyses.

Table 4.8. Data Description, Level-2 Variables

Variables	Definition	Source
AOP	The number of mass incident of a province from 1995 to 2009	Wedeman (2009)
P9599	The number of mass incident for a province from 1995 to 1999	Wedeman (2009)
P0004	The number of mass incident for a province from 2000 to 2004	Wedeman (2009)
P0509	The number of mass incident for a province from 2005 to 2009	Wedeman (2009)
Provincial population	The number of resident population of a province in 2010 measured in 1,000 people	Tabulation on the 2010 Population Cense of the People’s Republic of China by County
POGDPPC	Provincial GDP per capita in 2010 measured in Yuan (RMB)	China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy, 2011
County population	The number of resident population of a county in 2010 measured in 1,000 people	Tabulation on the 2010 Population Cense of the People’s Republic of China by County
CTGDPPC	County GDP per capita in 2010 measured in Yuan (RMB)	China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy, 2011

Table 4.9. Data Summary, Level-2 Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
AOP	36.032	37.922	2	173
P9599	8.753	9.657	0	30
P0004	10.190	11.285	0	53
P0509	17.089	24.450	0	118
Provincial Population	51497.79	26710.51	3002.165	104320.5
POGDPPC	35814.94	18029.59	13119	76074
County Population	678.4263	789.7413	91.2	7335.29
CTGDPPC	30997.88	38352.07	5174	394866

Based on the information above, several multilevel regression models were built for empirical tests in this section. The level-1 analysis of Model 4-3 is individual, while the level-2 of analysis is province. Table 4.10 presents the finding from these multilevel random-intercept models.

Table 4.10. Empirical Findings, Multilevel Random-Intercept Models, Province Level

	Model 4-3 (Level-2: Province)	Model 4-3a (Level-2: Province)	Model 4-3b (Level-2: Province)
Level-1			
Occupations			
	Migrant Worker (baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
	Urban Worker	1.240* (0.575)	1.242* (0.583)
	Rural Worker	1.216* (0.594)	1.212* (0.602)
	Peasant	0.701 (0.575)	0.689 (0.582)
	Others	1.172* (0.564)	1.172* (0.572)
Age		-0.007 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.005)
Male		0.421** (0.141)	0.418** (0.142)
Education		-0.051 (0.032)	-0.049 (0.033)
Minority		0.217 (0.291)	-0.255 (0.291)
Income		-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
Unfairtreatment		1.731*** (0.148)	1.732*** (0.149)
Incomefair		-0.166** (0.074)	-0.166** (0.057)
Cons		-3.866*** (0.134)	-
Level-2		0.314*** (0.561)	0.296*** (0.544)
	Var(_con)		0.272*** (0.521)
Intercept		-	-3.874*** (0.186)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009		-	-0.004 (0.005)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999		-	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 2000 to 2004		-	0.0143 (0.016)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009		-	-0.029 (0.019)
Provincial Resident Population		-	-0.004 (0.009)
Provincial GDP Per Capita		-	0.000001 (0.000006)
		-	-0.000001 (0.00001)
N		9,779	9,779
Number of groups		31	31

Note: \*p&lt;0.05, \*\*p&lt;0.01, \*\*\*p&lt;0.001



First of all, the likelihood-ratio tests compared to the ordinary logistic regression of Model 4-3 (Model 4-3 versus Model 4-2) is 30.8, which suggest that Model 4-3 is significantly better fit to the data than Model 4-2. Therefore, it is appropriate to use multilevel modeling for empirical tests.

Model 4-3 is a multilevel random-intercept model in which individuals are the first level of analysis while province is the second level of analysis. Therefore, in addition to individual-level variables, three sets of level-2 variables – numbers of previous protest, local resident population, and local GDP per capita – are included in Model 4-3a and Model 4-3b. According to the results, we see that compared to migrant workers, urban registered workers are more likely to participate in protest at 0.05 level of significance. This difference is robust across three models. Moreover, the odds ratio suggests that urban workers are about 3.46 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests (Model 4-3). These results are consistent with the results of Model 4-2 that urban registered workers are about 3.3 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests. Therefore, the hypothesis of this chapter receives empirical supports after I bring province into the analyses.

With respect to the control variables, the only controlled biographical variable that is significantly related to protest participation is gender, which is also consistent with the findings from the earlier regressions. According to the results of the multilevel models, males are more likely than females to participate in protests. This effect is statistically significant at the 0.01 level in all of three models. Further, the odds-ratio (Model 4-3) suggests that males are about 52% more likely than females to participate in protests. This finding is consistent with the findings of McAdam (1992) that females are more fearful of participating in high risk activities such as

protests. Further, protest leaders would be more worried about women's safety so females would be less encouraged to participate in protest activities.

The other three biographical variables, *Age*, *Education*, and *Minority*, do not have statistically significant effects on protest participation. The statistical insignificance of variable *Income* on propensity to protest also implies that individual's incomes are not significantly related to their propensity to protests. That suggests that deprivation is not driving protest participation; it is not the most impoverished who protest.

Variables *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair* both have significant impact on the dependent variable. The results suggest that an individual who considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatment from government officials will be 5.65 times more likely to engage in protests (Model 4-3). Further, an individual who considers his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to engage in protest activities (odds ratio= 0.837 in Model 4-3). These findings consist with what Model 4-2 tells us about protest participation of Chinese citizen in the context of contemporary China: among all variables, the three factors that have significant impacts on people's protest participations are their gender, whether or not they consider they have suffered unfair treatments from government officials, and whether or not the individual considers his/her current income to be fair.

When it comes to the effect of locales' previous protest experience, Model 4-3a shows that the total number of protest a province experienced does not have a significant effect on individuals' protest participation. Model 4-3b further disaggregates the total number of protest experiences into three phases, but none of them has a significant effect on individuals' protest

participation. In terms of the effect of local population and local economy on protest propensity, provincial population and provincial GDP per capita both have no significant impact on individual's protest propensity.

From the result of these three provincial level multilevel random-intercept models, we see that urban registered workers are significantly more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests. This result is robust across all three models: the result of Model 4-3, Model 4-3a, and Model 4-3b suggest that urban registered workers are about 3.46 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests. From the results of models presented in this chapter, it is reasonable to conclude that in the context of contemporary China, urban registered workers are more likely than migrant workers to engage in protests.

In addition to the three provincial level multilevel models, I also create three multilevel models that takes county as the second level of analysis for empirical tests. Table 4.11 presents the finding from these multilevel random-intercept models.

Table 4.11. Empirical Findings, Multilevel Random-Intercept Models, County Level

	Model 4-4 (Level-2: County)	Model 4-4a (Level-2: County)	Model 4-4b (Level-2: County)
Level-1			
Types of Worker			
Migrant Worker	(baseline category)	(baseline category)	(baseline category)
Urban Worker	1.335** (0.495)	1.335** (0.511)	1.405** (0.516)
Rural Worker	1.186** (0.452)	1.159* (0.464)	1.228** (0.465)
Peasant	0.618 (0.399)	0.576 (0.416)	0.616 (0.420)
Others	1.085* (0.437)	1.064* (0.450)	1.112* (0.455)
Age	-0.011* (0.005)	-0.011* (0.005)	-0.011* (0.005)
Male	0.423* (0.188)	0.416* (0.187)	0.424* (0.186)

Education	-0.072 (0.043)	-0.071 (0.043)	-0.070 (0.044)
Minority	-0.073 (0.306)	-0.122 (0.313)	-0.026 (0.285)
Income	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Unfairtreatment	1.656*** (0.205)	1.652*** (0.205)	1.654*** (0.207)
Incomefair	-0.195*** (0.055)	-0.193*** (0.055)	-0.198*** (0.058)
Cons	-3.846*** (0.128)	-	-
Level-2	0.515*** Var(_con) (0.717)	0.505*** (0.710)	0.426*** (0.653)
Intercept	-	-3.879*** (0.124)	-3.930*** (0.130)
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 2009	-	-0.0004 (0.002)	-
NO. of Previous Protest from 1995 to 1999	-	-	0.025* (0.011)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2000 to 2004	-	-	0.024 (0.029)
NO. of Previous Protest from 2005 to 2009	-	-	-0.016* (0.007)
County Resident Population	-	0.00003 (0.0001)	0.0001 (0.0001)
County GDP Per Capita	-	-0.000004 (0.000003)	-0.000002 (0.000003)
N	7,166	7,166	7,166
Number of groups	89	89	89

Note: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

The likelihood-ratio tests comparing to the ordinary logistic regression of Model 4-4 (Model 4-4 versus Model 4-2) is 28.9, which suggest that Model 4-4 and is a significantly better fit to the data than Model 4-2. Therefore, it is appropriate to use multilevel modeling for empirical tests.

Model 4-4 is a multilevel random-intercept model in which individuals are the first level of analysis while county is the second level of analysis. Therefore, in addition to individual-level variables, three sets of level-2 variables – numbers of previous protest, local resident population, and local GDP per capita – are included in Model 4-4a and Model 4-4b.

According to the results, we see that compared to migrant workers, urban registered workers are more likely to participate in protest at 0.01 level of significance. This difference is robust across three models. Moreover, the odds ratio suggests that urban workers are about 3.8 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests (Model 4-4). This result is consistent with the result of Model 4-2 that urban registered workers are about 3.3 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests and the result of Model 4-3 that urban registered workers are about 3.46 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests. Therefore, the hypothesis of this chapter receives empirical supports after I bring county into analyses.

With respect to the control variables, two controlled biographical variables are significantly related to protest participation. According to the results of empirical tests, males are more likely than females to participate in protests. This effect is statistically significant at the 0.05 level in all of three models. Further, the odds-ratio (Model 4-4) suggests that males are about 53 % more likely than females to participate in protests. This finding is consistent with the research finding of McAdam (1992) that females are more fearful of participating in high risk activities such as protests. Further, protest leaders would be more worried about women's safety so females would be less encouraged to participate in protest activities. The results also suggest that, compared to the results of Model 4-2 and Model 4-3, age has a significant effect on individual's protest participation. As age increases, the likelihood of participating in protests decreases. This might be because younger people have less obligation to families and careers so they are likely than the elder to participate in protest (Schussman and Soule 2005).

Variables *Unfairtreatment* and *Incomefair* both have significant impact on the individual protest behavior. The results suggest that an individual who considers him/herself to have suffered unfair treatment from government officials will be 5.24 times more likely to engage in protests (Model 4-4). Further, an individual who considers his/her current income to be fair will be less likely to engage in protest activities (odds ratio= 0.823 in Model 4-4). These findings tell us that when we bring county into analyses, then the factors that have significant impacts on people's protest participations are their gender, age, whether or not they consider they have suffered unfair treatment from government officials, and whether or not the individual considers his/her current income to be fair.

When it comes to the effect of locales' previous protest experience, Model 4-4a shows that the total number of protest a province experienced does not have significant effects on individuals' protest participations. Model 4-4b further disaggregates the total number of protest experience into three phases. The result of Model 4-4b suggests that a how many protests a province experienced from year 1995 to year 1999 has a significant positive effect on individual's protest propensity. That is, the more protests a province experienced from 1995 to 1999, the more likely the individual resident of this province would be to participate in protest. The results of Model 4-4b also reveal that the more protests a province experienced from 2005 to 2009, the less likely the individual would participate in protests. The overall story the Model 4-4b tells us is that when we use a multilevel structure and take county as the second level of our analysis, the number of protests a province experienced in 1995-1999 has a positive impact on individuals' protest propensity, while the number of a province's experienced protest in 2005-2009 has a negative impact on individuals' protest propensity. Given that the theoretical expectation is that

the more protests a locale had in the past, the more likely the residents of this locale are to consider participation as not so risky, why would the total number of protest experiences in 2005-2009 have a negative impact on the likelihood of individual protest participation? As I mentioned in previous chapters, a plausible explanation is that China hosted the Summer Olympics Game in 2008. In order to host this international activity, it is reasonable to expect that the Chinese authorities suppressed protest activities more extensively to prevent them from disrupting this major event. As a result, when individuals observe that protest activities are suppressed by governments, thereby increasing the risk of participation in protest, it would deter them from participating in protests. We would be able to test this hypothesis if the information about how Chinese authorities respond to protests becomes available in the future. Lastly, the other two county level variables, county GDP per capita and county population, do not have a significant effect on individuals' protest propensity.

Considering all of the above, the results of empirical tests offer a consistent and robust finding that migrant workers are significantly less likely than urban registered workers to participate in protests. In addition to that, empirical tests also show that when someone perceives that s/he has suffered unfair treatment from governmental officials, he/she would be more likely to engage in protests. Also individuals who consider their income to be fair are less likely to participate in protests. Individuals' gender also matters to protest participation. The results of ordinary logistic regression models and multilevel regression models all suggest that males are significantly more likely than females to participate in protests. When I take county as the second level of analysis, the results show that individual's age has a negative effect on protest participation. That is, as one gets older, he/she will become less likely to participate in protests.

The result of the multilevel models suggest that local GDP per capita and local population do not have a significant effect on individuals' protest participation, regardless of whether the second level of the models is province or county. A locale's previous protest experience does not have a significant effect on individual's protest participation when the second level of analysis is province. However, when the second level of analysis is county, then a province's protest experience from 1995 to 1999 has a significant positive impact on individuals' protest participations, while the history of protest from 2005 to 2009 has a negative impact on individuals' protest participation. My explanation is that because of hosting the Summer Olympics Game in 2008, the Chinese authorities had employed a higher level of repression toward any protest activities, so it increased the perception of risk of participating in protests.

#### 4.6 Summary and Discussion

Existing literature has offered fruitful knowledge on the living and working conditions of peasants who leave their native villages to seek wage labor jobs in unfamiliar urban environments where they cannot access the public benefits that are available to registered residents of those cities. Although they live and work in cities, they are not registered urban resident because of the *hukou* system. Because they are not registered residents, migrant workers are eligible only for those dangerous low-paying jobs that local residents are unwilling to take. Further, their working hours are longer than those of urban workers, and they earn less than urban workers. In addition, migrant workers do not enjoy public goods benefits offered to registered residents by local governments. These include such benefits as health care and education for their children. These factors, according to relative deprivation theory, should give migrant workers incentive to engage in protests to ask for better living and working condition.



Based on the arguments of resource mobilization theory, the living and working condition of migrant workers, however, should leave migrant workers with a low capacity to mobilize for protests. Although migrant workers should have a higher level of grievance than registered urban workers, they are in fact less likely than urban registered workers to engage in protests for several reasons. First, the cost of participating in protests is high to them. Peasants leave rural areas to chase a better life. They can significantly earn more in urban cities compared to what they can make in their hometown. Given that there is a surplus of migrant workers in urban cities competing for those low-end jobs, each migrant worker is easily replaced at any time. If they engage in protest activities, they are subject to being fired from their jobs and expelled from the city. Next, it is difficult for protest leaders to persuade migrant workers to join together to put pressure on local government for more job opportunities. If job opportunities increase, then it will be very likely to attract more migrant workers to the city to make the job market more crowded. Finally, the high job turnover rate makes it difficult for these floaters to build stable and strong organizations for protests mobilization. These factors together bring migrant workers less capacity to protest, despite the fact that they should have more reasons to protest. This theoretical argument is supported by empirical tests: compared to urban registered workers, migrant workers are significantly less likely to participate in protests. This finding is robust across all ordinary regression models and multilevel regression models.

Despite migrant workers having more reasons to protest, the high cost for protest participation and the lack of a stable and strong organization make them in fact less likely to protest. Although they are facing more unfavorable situation, such as only being able to get the jobs that urban registered workers are unwilling to take, they have to work for longer hours for

less pay, and they are not eligible for benefits from local government, migrant workers are still about 3 times less likely than urban register workers to participate in protest. The high cost of protest participation and lack of capacity to mobilize for protest keep migrant workers from participating in protests. Therefore, this empirical study tells us that when it comes to protest participation, the capacity to organize and mobilize is the key factor that determines whether or not people would engage in protests.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Summary of Major Findings

Statistics show that the number of protest incidents in China is increasing annually. Although there has not been a major national movement since 1989, local protests have proliferated. For example, according to *China Labour Bulletin*, the number of labor protest incidents in 2013 was 656, 1,379 in 2014, 2,775 in 2015, and 2,664 in 2016. Why has the number of local incidents steadily increased even though there have been no national pro-democracy protests since 1989? And why are the Chinese people more inclined to participate in these events even as their standard of living continues to increase? If the standard of living of most Chinese is improving, then which segments of Chinese society are more inclined to participate in these events?

The contribution of this dissertation is that I have identified different segments of Chinese society who have been affected differently by the reforms of the post-Mao era. Those effects determine their incentive to participate. However, their ability to mobilize turns out to be critical to whether or not they participate, and I have identified different sectors of Chinese society that differ from each other not so much in terms of grievances but in terms of their capacity to mobilize. More specifically, by analyzing their sources of grievance, their incentives to engage in protests, and their capacities to overcome the collective action problem, I present analyses of which segments of China's population are more likely to participate in protests and why.

Existing literature on the protest in contemporary China has pointed out that Chinese workers and peasants engage in protests to seek redress of their grievances that arise from the

loss of land rights or labor rights. However, this literature has not yet offered a systematic analysis of which of them are more likely than others to engage in protests and why. In the first empirical chapter of this dissertation I argue that although peasants have grievances arising from the confiscation of their lands and from abuses by local officials such as excessive taxes and fees, peasants confront severe difficulties in mobilizing for collective action because of their geographical isolation, their tradition of self-reliance, the difficulty of developing leadership in the loosely-organized rural social networks, and the difficulty of recruiting individuals to participate in protests. In short, compared to urban workers, peasants have less capacity to mobilize for dissident collective action. By contrast, privatization of state-owned enterprises has confronted SOE workers with collective lay-offs and loss of the job security and benefits that constituted what has been called the “iron rice bowl”. Those laid-off SOE workers lose not only their jobs, but also benefits such as pensions, insurance, housing, and subsistence guarantees that used to be offered by their enterprises. Further, those laid-off workers find it difficult to find other jobs because of the disadvantage of their age or their lack of marketable skills. The grievances of other classes of Chinese urban workers come from violations of their working rights, such as mandatory overtime, delays in wages, unreasonable fines for minor mistakes, and corporal punishment. In contrast to peasants, the work-unit system in SOEs and the dormitory labor regime in private-owned enterprises give Chinese workers a high capacity for protest organizing and mobilizing. As a result, I hypothesized that urban workers should be more likely than peasants to participate in protests in China. This theoretical expectation received robust support from empirical tests: my findings suggest that Chinese workers are at least about 50% more likely than peasants to participate in protests. This finding also echoes the perspective of

resources mobilization theory: every angry individual wants to change the world, but the key point is whether or not they can be mobilized to take action. The implication of these findings for Chinese authorities, especially local governments, is that they should improve the legal mechanisms of labor dispute resolution. On the one hand, workers could seek help from the well-established legal channels for grievance resolution, then the incentive for them to engage in protest will be lower. On the other hand, when the legal channels do not function well or are not existed, then workers would be easily mobilized to protest given that they have a high capacity to do so.

Going beyond the finding mentioned above, I disaggregate the urban working class into different subgroups of workers based on the type of ownership of their enterprises. I then compared the differing protest propensities among different classes of urban workers. In terms of the comparison between SOE workers and TVE workers, the literature has pointed out that the long history and guaranteed lifelong employment that SOE workers enjoyed gives them a high capacity to organize and mobilize for protests. However, my theoretical argument suggests that the primary reason for SOE workers to participate in protests would be for the restructuring of the SOE itself because this would represent a collective “bad” for SOE employees that could be remedied only by collective action. The reforms of SOEs over the last twenty years has meant that many SOE workers have been laid off collectively. On the one hand, the laid-off SOE workers consider the restructuring of SOEs as a threat to their job security. On the other hand, as long as their enterprise is not privatized, SOE workers are less likely to experience violations of working rights, such as overtime work or delays in wages, so they have less reasons to protest. The literature also points out that are the TVE workers are facing the issue of cheap labor and the

lack of job security. TVE managers exaggerate profits by reducing production costs, and they do this by keeping wage rates low for TVE workers. Statistics reports that TVE workers have significantly lower wages compared to other types of Chinese workers. In addition to that, community governments have unrestricted authority over personnel in TVEs, so they can hire more workers or lay off current workers according to the firm's needs. As the result, TVE workers have no job security comparable to that of SOE workers. Although the high turnover rate of TVE workers could undermine their ability to mobilize, the village in fact could function as the mobilizing structure in addition to the TVE itself. The results of empirical tests show that TVE workers are significantly more likely than SOE workers to engage in protests. I argue several factors contribute to this difference. First, TVEs are generally small in size compared to SOEs, and smaller size makes the collective action problem easier to overcome. Second, the clear ownership and operation system of TVEs also makes issue framing easier. More specifically, TVE workers have a clear idea about who is in charge of their enterprises, and who should take the responsibility should grievances arise. Third, without the job security that SOE workers enjoy, a higher labor turnover rate makes a position in TVEs less secure. TVEs workers also earn less money and receive fewer benefits than SOE workers. These conditions give TVE workers more reasons to protest. Fourth, although TVEs have a higher labor turnover rate compared to that of SOEs, and a higher labor turnover rate makes it harder for TVE workers to develop a well-established organization, nevertheless the strong social networks among residents of the villages where TVEs are located makes the village function as mobilizing structure in addition to the TVE itself. Therefore, the collective action problem still can be overcome among TVE workers. Fifth, from the calculation of costs and benefits, as most TVE workers are local farmers who have their

own farmland, the cost of being layoff for participating in protests will be low because they can simply go back to their farmland. In other words, the cost of participating in protest is low to TVE workers. Although the long history and lifelong guarantee position in SOE give SOE workers a high capacity to organize and mobilize, SOE workers have less reason to protest unless they face the reconstructing of their enterprises. Therefore, TVE workers are more likely than SOE workers to engage in protest activities.

Given that SOE workers should have a high capacity to mobilize, and that SOE restructuring is the main reason for SOE workers to protest, if systematic data on protest events measured at the province or county level is available, then we should be able to examine the relationship between the number of SOE privatizations in a locale and the number of protest the locale experiences. Further, the existing literature points out that one of the reasons why SOE workers protest against SOE privatization is that they had spent all their working lives contributing to their enterprise, so they consider the enterprise to be their legitimate property. According to this logic, the older SOE workers should be more likely than the younger SOE workers to protest against SOE restructuring because the younger SOE workers should be less likely to see the enterprise as their legitimate property given that they were not deeply involved in the creation and development of their enterprise.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation analyzes the difference in protest propensity between migrant workers and registered urban workers. Migrant workers are peasants who leave their native villages to go to urban areas in search of jobs. Because of they are not registered resident of the locale they live and work, migrant workers are not entitled to several benefits such as medical care and state-funded education provided by local governments.

Further, since they are not registered residents, they can only take up marginal jobs or what are called 3D jobs: dangerous job, dirty job, and demeaning job. They are vulnerable to exploitation by their employers. Migrant workers receive lower wages compared to registered urban residents. From the perspective of relative deprivation theory, the living and working conditions that migrant workers confront suggests that migrant workers have more reasons to protest than registered urban workers:.

However, from the perspective of resource mobilization theory, the living and working conditions that migrant workers confront also give them less capacity to overcome the collective action problem. This makes them less likely to participate in protests for several reasons. First, the cost of participating in protests is high to them. Given that there is a surplus of migrant workers in urban cities competing for those low-end jobs, each migrant worker is easily replaced at any time. If they engage in protest activities, they are subject to being fired from their jobs and expelled from the city. Next, it is difficult for protest leaders to persuade migrant workers to join together to put pressure on local government for more job opportunities. If job opportunities increase, then it will be very likely to attract more migrant workers to the city to make the job market more crowded. Finally, the high job turnover rate makes it difficult for them to build stable and strong organizations. These factors together bring migrant workers less capacity to protest, despite the fact that they should have more reasons to protest. Therefore, although migrant workers should have a higher level of grievance than registered urban workers, I proposed and confirmed that migrant worker are less likely than urban registered workers to engage in protests. This theoretical argument is supported by empirical tests: urban registered workers are at least 3 times more likely than migrant workers to participate in protests. Although



migrant workers are less likely than urban registered workers to engage in protests, the literature also points out that migrant workers do participate in protest activities. Therefore, the mechanism for dissident leaders to mobilize migrant workers is an important topic for future research. On the one hand, if the mechanism could only exist in intra-factory level, then a large scale of migrant worker protest will be less likely to occur. On the other hand, if the mechanism could be expanded to regional or province level in the future, then the occurrence of a large scale migrant worker protest will not be a surprise.

## 5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

In this study I mainly use survey data from CGSS 2010. CGSS survey is an annual or biannual questionnaire survey of China's citizens. Therefore, the research structure of my dissertation project will be regularly extended with each future release, incorporating the newest version of the CGSS dataset. This allows for the expansion and retesting of my hypotheses, and expansion of the project as the CGSS grows and becomes more comprehensive. For those who are interested in this topic, CGSS survey is a valuable source for composing empirical research. Further, while it is important to do individual level analysis of who protests, it would be good to supplement this with studies of where protests occur and what characteristics of a community make it more or less likely to experience protest. In other words, a research applies the same analytical framework to both aggregate level and individual level will increase explanatory power of my theoretical arguments. The individual level information on protest participation is available from CGSS survey, but the data on protest events measured at the county level are not available as yet.

Further, the analytical framework of this dissertation project also can be applied to future cross-national studies to see whether the argument proposed and confirmed in this research project also find supports from other societies. Future research on this topic could also focus on the relationship between the history of one's current enterprises and how long s/he has been working there. The longer the history of an enterprise, the more likely the enterprise has built a strong and well-established organization which affects the capacity of its employees to mobilize. Further, a long tenure of service might also help an individual create a strong connection between him/herself and coworkers, which also matters to protest mobilization.

### 5.3 Policy Implications

The findings of this research project suggest that different segments of Chinese society have different reasons, incentives, and capacities to protest. In other words, different sectors of Chinese society differ from each other regarding their protest participations. These findings imply that although the number of protest incidents in China is in fact increasing annually, different sectors in the society are not equally likely to protest: some segments are more likely than others to engage in such activities. Further, different sectors protest for their own reasons; there is no one general demand for every one of the society. As a result, as long as the central authorities of Chinese Communist Party could properly hear and answer the individual demands of protesters, then the legitimacy of the CCP regime will not be damaged but in fact strengthened given that there is a hierarchical political trust for Chinese people: they evaluate each level of government differently (Cai 2008b; Li 2016). Therefore, the topic for the CCP government is how to maintain its capacity to response requests from different segment of society. On the one hand, if the central authorities could satisfy the needs of protesters while leave the blame to the local

authorities, then a strong and powerful CCP central government will be the arbitrator for justice and redress the unfavorable situation for victims. On the other hand, once the central authorities no longer have a sufficient capacity to do so, then the legitimacy of the Communist government will start being questioned.

The Chinese style of economic development has become a model for many authoritarian countries. The topic for those authoritarian leaders who want to open the door of their economies to the outside world is whether they could duplicate the experience of China to their countries. For example, in China the *hukou* system imposes a high cost for migrant workers to engage in protest activities. If a developing country has no such as a registration system like *hukou*, will the absence of that increase the propensity of internal migrant workers to protest and eventually endanger the regime? This is an important topic for political scientists, as well as for the leaders in the real world.

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