3.1 Definitions of Mobilization

Political mobilization is defined above as “the process by which citizens are selected for involvement in politics”. This definition is quite general and can probably be seen as more or less a “common denominator” of past conceptualizations of this term. However, the generality of this definition doesn’t necessarily mean that it can be readily applied to the political context of Mainland China or can easily fit into the theoretical framework developed below. Worse still, as Verba, Schlozman & Brady (1995, 133) pointed out, mobilization “have multiple meanings and, therefore, might lead to misunderstanding concerning the process we are discussing”.

“Mobilization” can mean at least three quite different social phenomena. First, in the social economic sense, mobilization, as defined in the traditional “social mobilization theory”, may refer to a process of “considerable social and economic development”. In this process, large numbers of individuals have been urbanized, have become literate, and have been exposed to differentiated economic enterprises (Almond & Powell 1966, 284) and to “the media of communication” (Almond, Powell & Mundt 1996, 184).

Second, “mobilization” can mean the sweeping effort by the totalitarian regime as portrayed in the “mobilization model”. Barnett (1962, 31), for example, presented the following picture of the Maoist regime in China:

The Communists in China are true believers in, and practitioners of “totalism”, involving maximum control and supervision of ordinary people’s lives, maximum involvement of the entire Chinese population in state-directed activities, maximum control over people’s thoughts and behavior, and maximum mobilization of China’s millions to serve the purpose of the nation’s new Communist regime.

Third, “mobilization” can also refer to the selective process to involve citizens in politics. For the research discussed in this thesis, apparently only the third meaning of “mobilization” is relevant. The theoretical concern of this study and the political reality of contemporary Mainland China render the former two definitions mostly irrelevant.

3.2 Defining Mobilization in China

To avoid confusion, Verba, Schlozman & Brady (1995, 133) used the term “recruitment” instead of “mobilization” to denote the process by which citizens are selected for involvement in politics. In this research I shall follow their usage. Another candidate is “activation.” Schier (2000, 7) made a clear (and useful) distinction between “mobilization” and “activation,” which he defines as “the more contemporary methods that parties, interest groups, and candidates employ to induce particular, finely targeted portions of the public to become active in elections, demonstrations, and lobbying”. This seems to be a more appropriate counterpart in a liberal democracy of the selection process that I discuss here. Since I regard this issue as more of a word choice than of theoretical significance, I shall still use the general term “recruitment” mentioned above.
However, as with many other terms in social science research, the use of “recruitment” is not immune from problems. Generally defined as the inclusion of citizens among political elite, this term appears too narrow to capture the more general process in the theoretical framework that will be developed below, since political elite are not the only group that carry the expectation to be active in politics.

In the political context of contemporary Mainland China, political mobilization takes on the form of recruitment of members by the Communist Party. The Communist Party of China is an “elite-dominated” Leninist party (Dickson 1997, 2). Although it also recruits power elite at the top of the political system, the Party as a whole is not an elite club. The Party is a mass political organization, with 64.5 million members by the end of 2000 (People’s Daily, July 26, 2001), constituting 5.1% of the then total population in Mainland China and 6.6% of the population aged 15 or above, according to the 2000 census. The following table shows the number of Party members at the time of each Party Congress in the post-Mao era.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Congress</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>35 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>39.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>46 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>51 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>59 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>64.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The following Figure 3.1 shows that Party membership has had phenomenal increase not only in absolute numbers, but also as a percentage of the Mainland population. From 1978 to 2000, Party membership increased by three-quarters, and their proportion in the population grew from 3.8% to 5.1%.

The Chinese Communist Party has been built according to the Leninist principles of party organization since it was founded in the early 1920s. During its long history, recruitment of members has always been a vital part of the Party’s political strategies (Martin 1981, 1). During the reform era in Mainland China, since the Party no longer employs mass mobilization of political campaigns to achieve its goals, recruitment of Party members has become the dominant mode of political mobilization. Ironically, after the violence and destruction of the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” (1966 – 1976), Deng Xiaoping’s following assertion made in 1956 has once again become largely true in Mainland China’s political reality:

> It is on all its members and organizations that the Party depends to maintain contact with the people. Generally speaking, collecting opinions and experience from the masses, propagating the Party’s views until they become the views of the masses, and organizing the masses to put these views into effect — all this must be done through the efforts of Party members and Party organizations at lower levels.

Most recently, this idea was echoed in a speech made by Hu Jintao, a member of the standing committee of the Politburo, at the forum to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Party (People’s Daily, 2001 July 3: 1).

### 3.3 Measurement of Recruitment

#### 3.3.1 Party Members and Applicants

For the empirical analysis, I used the citizen’s membership in the Chinese Communist Party or whether the citizen has applied to join the Communist Party as a measure of mobilization. Unlike most political parties in Western liberal democracies, the Chinese Communist Party is still a membership party built according to
the Leninist principles of party organization. A citizen’s membership in the Party, although in most cases
doesn’t indicate being a political elite, directly carries the meaning of being “selected for involvement in
politics”, according to the above definition of mobilization. As Townsend & Womack (1986, 282) pointed
out,

Admission to the CCP is the decisive act of political recruitment. . . . Party membership alone
implies a life-long commitment to politics, confers a political status independent of work assign-
ment.

Less straightforward than Communist Party membership, however, is the meaning of having ever applied
to join the Party. In the Mainland China context, to apply to join the Party is not a totally self-initiated
personal decision made by the individual. Rather, it is an indication of repeated Party contacts and attempts
to recruit the citizen, part of the mobilization process that is referred to by the Party as to “develop” new
Party members. “Develop” seems a quite appropriate characterization, as according to the American Heritage
Dictionary it is literally defined as “to bring, grow, or evolve to a more complete, complex, or desirable state”.

The dichotomous variable indicating Party recruitment takes on a value of “1” if the respondent chose
“Communist Party member” for Question 134 in the survey questionnaire or answered “Applied to join the
Party” for Question 136, and “0” otherwise. The actual wording of Question 134 and 136 is as follows, and
Table 3.2 shows the coding scheme for the dichotomous variable of Party recruitment.

Question 134. What is your political affiliation?
Question 136. [If not a Party member] Have you ever applied to join the Communist Party?

Note that using this variable as a measure of Party recruitment assumes that when the Party decides
to recruit a citizen, s/he always accepts. It is not inconceivable that when the Party decides to recruit a
citizen s/he may simply refuse it. There is no empirical measurement as to whether or how this phenomenon
exists in contemporary Mainland China, but in theory the Party should have taken this possibility into

![Figure 3.1: Growth in Party Membership since 1978](image-url)
Table 3.2: Party Members and Applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party member</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven’t applied</td>
<td>2637</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Source:** Shi, Tianjian et al., the Project on Political Participation and Political Culture in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, 1993 – 1994.

N = 3287 for the Mainland China portion, unweighted.

consideration when it makes the choice to recruit a citizen. That is, to the Party it is less costly to recruit those citizens who are more “mentally open” to such recruitment.

### 3.3.2 Youth League and Democratic Parties

For “political affiliation”, Question 134 in the survey gave two choices besides “Communist Party member”. They are “Youth League member” and “democratic parties member”. Table 3.3 gives the composition of political affiliations among the survey sample.

Table 3.3: Political Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unaffiliated</td>
<td>2691</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth League member</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party member</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democratic parties member</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Source:** Shi, Tianjian et al., the Project on Political Participation and Political Culture in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, 1993 – 1994.

N = 3287 for the Mainland China portion, unweighted.

As mentioned above, in contemporary Mainland China Party recruitment has become the dominant mode of political mobilization. Neither the Youth League nor the democratic parties is included in my measurement of political recruitment. This warrants some discussion here.

The Chinese Communist Youth League “is a mass organization of advanced youth under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party”, which has been the first sentence in its constitution since 1982 (“under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party” was added that year at its 11th National Congress). A Youth League member has to be between 14 and 28, and thus it’s no wonder that 25,830,000 of its 68,710,000 members are students (Chinese Communist Youth League web file on the Internet at http://www.ccyl.org.cn/zuzhi/number). Membership in the Youth League does not imply “a life-long commitment to politics” (Townsend & Womack 1986, 282). Ordinary members automatically lose their membership at the age of 28, and four fifths of the Youth League members in the 1993 – 1994 national survey never bothered to submit an application to join the Party. Therefore I did not include Youth League membership as a measure of political recruitment.

The eight democratic parties are part of the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The total membership of these parties is less than half a million. Townsend (1967, 146) summarizes their political role as follows, which remains true to this day:

> It suffices to say that the parties as a whole represent the nonlaboring elements within the United Front — intellectuals, bureaucrats, professional and technical workers, merchants and industrialists, and overseas Chinese. The democratic parties are not associations for mass political representation or mobilization.
3.4 Historical Timing of Recruitment

One limitation of the survey data set I use for this research is that it doesn’t contain any information on when a Party member is recruited. This presents difficulty for the statistical analysis, since the Party’s recruitment strategy in the post-Mao era is different from those in the earlier historical periods. There have been at least three major shifts in the Party’s preferences concerning recruitment and participation, in 1949, 1966, and 1978, respectively (Martin 1981, 2 – 4), (Bian, Shu & Logan 2001, 809). Two big changes after 1978 are that education was added and class origin was dropped as criteria in the Party’s decision to recruit a member. This has to be taken into account when interpreting the results of the statistical analysis in this research, as I shall discuss later.

One possible remedy to this problem is to infer the timing of recruitment from the age of a Party member. That is, to set a cut point, say 45, in a respondent’s age and to regard all Party members younger than that as having been recruited in the reform era. However, this solution is based on the assumption that Party members are recruited at a certain age with reasonably small variation across historical periods. Since the data set I use doesn’t allow me to test whether this is true or not, it remains a hypothesis. However, a China Housing Survey conducted in the cities of Shanghai and Tianjin by John R. Logan and Yanjie Bian did ask both a Party member’s age and when s/he was recruited. This survey was also conducted in 1993, around the same time when the national sample data that I use for this research was collected. The following Figure 3.2 is a scatter plot of those Party members’ age in 1993 and the year when they were recruited, from the China Housing Survey data.

![Figure 3.2: Party Members’ Age and Recruitment Year](image)


The horizontal axis represents the age of the Party members in the Shanghai and Tianjin sample. I marked 45 as a cut point. The vertical axis represents the year when those Party members were recruited.
I marked 1949 (when the Communist Party took power), 1966 (when the Cultural Revolution started), and 1978 (when the reforms started). Judging from this figure, if 45 were used as a cut-off point to distinguish pre-reform and reform era Party recruitment, a substantial proportion of those recruited during the Cultural Revolution would have been included while about half of those recruited during the reform era would have been excluded. It appears that using a cut-off age would be problematic forremedying the recruitment timing issue in the data and thus is not employed.

3.5 Recruitment as Party’s Choice

Recruitment of members to the Party is in effect a long and deliberate process of decision-making by the basic level organizations of the Party. This implies two things for the theoretical model. First, even though people sometimes talk about “joining” the Party in everyday life, the recruitment of Party members is to a large extent a choice made not by an individual citizen, but by the Party organizations, and in theory it can be modeled that way. Second, in terms of the specific choice of whom to recruit, the Party can not be modeled as a unitary actor, even though its recruitment policy has been carried out in an impressively consistent way. In the end, local Party organizations, especially the Party branches and their respective superior Party committees, are the decision-makers as regards recruitment.

To justify these two theoretical assumptions, we have to turn to a somewhat “thicker description” of how a Party member is recruited at the grassroots level.

3.5.1 Recruiting vs. Joining

Practically, the general aggregate patterns of Party recruitment are largely determined by the Party, not by self-initiated actions taken by individual citizens. First of all, the whole recruitment process normally begins with the local Party organization obtaining some quota and/or guidelines for recruiting new members from the upper level (Lee 1991, 305). As the director of the organization department in a county Party committee told me:

The recruitment work has to follow the Party center’s policy of “adhering to standards, ensuring quality, improving structure, and recruiting prudently”. Every year we made plans of recruitment for basic level Party organizations. These plans include how many members can be recruited, and the extent of adjustments to those quotas. We also specify the emphases of recruitment. Four areas have preferences, that is, the production frontline, youth below the age of 35, women, and work units where there has been no recruitment for some years.

At the aggregate level, it would be inappropriate to characterize Party recruitment as starting from a citizen’s self-selection process of applying to join the Party (Bian, Shu & Logan 2001, 814). By the time a citizen formally submits the application to a Party branch, some macro level conditions have already been set. In 1990, the Party promulgated a Detailed Regulations on Recruitment of Party Members [Zhongguo Gongchandang Fazhan Dangyuan Gongzuo Xize], which starts by stipulating that “basic level organizations shall regard the recruitment of advanced elements with communist consciousness to the Party as a regular and important work” (Article 2). Later on it states more explicitly:

Article 5 Party organizations shall, through the propaganda of the Party’s political stand and in-depth and elaborate ideological and political work, enhance the non-Party masses’ understanding of the Party and constantly enlarge the ranks of activists who apply to join the Party.

3.6 Recruitment Decision at Local Level

3.6.1 Basic Level Party Organizations

Hierarchical Relationship

According to the Party Constitution, “basic level Party organizations are formed in enterprises, countryside, organs, schools, scientific research institutions, city neighborhoods, companies of the People’s Liberation
Army and other basic units, wherever there are three or more full Party members” (Article 29, Chapter 5). In the countryside, according to the Organization Work Rules of Basic Level Organizations in the Countryside [Zhongguo Gongchandang Nongcun Jiceng Zuzhi Gongzuo Tiaoli], Party committees should be established at the town or township level and Party branches should be established at the village level. A village with more than 50 full Party members can set up a general branch, and a village with more than 100 full Party members can set up a Party committee. However, a general branch or committee thus set up is still under the leadership of its superior town or township Party committee.

Breakdown by Location

Nationally, there are currently 3.5 million basic level Party organizations, which include Party branches, general branches, and committees. The following Table 3.4 breaks them down according to locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural area</td>
<td>1,357,000</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-owned enterprises</td>
<td>174,000</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-state-owned enterprises</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organs (non-productive units)</td>
<td>279,600</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban neighborhoods/ communities</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,613,400</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,518,000</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: China Central Television web file on the Internet at http://www.cctv.com/specials/80zhouan/sanji/fenbei0629_1.html (percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding)

Non-state-owned Enterprises

From Table 3.4, it appears that the Party doesn’t have a strong presence in non-state-owned enterprises. According to a People’s Daily report (September 12, 2000: 11), 86% of the 1.2 million private enterprises in Mainland China do not even have any Party member, and only 0.9% of them has established Party organizations. The situation seems worst in the coastal region, where most of those enterprises are located. In Shenzhen, the city that neighbors Hong Kong, among the 34 thousand private enterprises, there are only 45 basic level Party organizations. In Datong, a city close to Inner Mongolia, 8 of the 88 private enterprises have Party organizations.

As I shall discuss later, now that the Party has shifted its basis of legitimacy to economic prosperity, the “loss” of the non-state sector is detrimental to the Party, given its growing importance in the economy. During my field research, a Party committee secretary explained that the Party is under ideological constraints in recruiting employers or employees from the private sector. However, he said he would expect some “breakthrough” at the Party Center sometime soon. In May 2000, Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin had already urged “Party committees at various levels, especially the main leaders” to “firmly grasp the development of the Party’s work in non-state economic organizations”. He also emphasized that this “strengthens the mass basis of Party’s rule under the new circumstances” (People’s Daily September 12, 2000: 11). In July 2001, he in effect repealed the ban imposed in 1989 on recruiting private entrepreneurs in a public speech commemorating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Party. Since these are very recent developments, their long-term impact remains to be seen, but they have in a sense confirmed the hypothesis on basis of legitimacy that I shall enlarge upon later.
3.6.2 Recruitment Procedures

Application

As mentioned above, part of the routine work of the Party organizations at the basic level is to enlarge the pool of applicants through contacting and propaganda. In practice, the formal recruitment process at the local level can be generalized like this. At some Party branch meeting, some Party members are assigned to “observe” and talk to prospective candidates. At this stage, those candidates may have turned in formal written applications to join the Party to the basic level organization, but may not in some cases. When a Party member talks to a prospective applicant, it is normally on a very informal occasion, since in most cases they already know each other. A typical scenario is that the Party member starts by almost casually asking about how the candidate is doing in work or study, and compliments or praises are inserted whenever appropriate. Then the subject turns to the candidate’s view about the Party, by which time the flattered candidate knows roughly what the talk is actually about. If the candidate has not submitted a written application yet, before the talk ends the Party member normally reminds him or her to do that sometime soon.

Observation and Training

After the application is turned in, the Party branch has to do even more observation, evaluation, training, and education on the applicants, mainly through the one or two full Party members (not probationary) who are assigned as the “contact persons” or “trainers” for each applicant. The Party organization also seeks opinions about the candidates from all Party members, and even from non-Party members. The secretary of a Party committee described to me how that is done in his location:

Every year we put up the activists’ name on a board in the Party committee compound, and both Party members and non-Party masses can see it. We also write down two telephone numbers below the list of names, so that the masses can call to tell us problems with the quality and conduct of the applicants. If the problems are serious, we’ll carry out investigations and postpone the recruitment.

Probation and Admission

After at least one year of “fostering” and education, Party branch will handpick some “recruitment targets” and carefully examine their political background. Party committee will organize 5 to 7 days of intensive study of Party documents for the recruitment targets, and then an all-member meeting of the Party branch will discuss and vote on whether to admit the targets as probationary Party members. The admission of probationary Party members has to be examined and approved by superior Party organizations, normally the Party committees. The probation period for a new Party member is normally a year, but can be longer if it is decided that more examination and education are needed. Then a probationary Party member becomes a full member after another discussion and vote session at the Party branch level and examination and approval again at the superior Party organization.

3.7 Strategic Rationality

Past research on Party recruitment in Mainland China has mainly focused on such personal characteristics as family background, social relations, education, age, etc., and sometimes political participation is also included as a factor (Lee 1991, 306), (Bian, Shu & Logan 2001, 809). In my opinion, however, political participation is qualitatively different from the other factors in two important aspects. First, political participation clearly indicates a decision or choice made by an individual citizen, whereas it is hardly sensible to say so for the other factors, which are mostly personal qualities. Second, political participation enters into the Party’s consideration mainly as an expectation. For each prospective target of recruitment, the Party organizations implicitly ponder the question: “what will s/he do if recruited?” Although the Party organizations observe participatory activities by the citizen before recruitment, in the final analysis it is the citizen’s expected participatory behavior after recruitment that enters the Party’s utilities over recruitment. That is, the Party organization’s decision of recruitment depends on its expectation of political participation.
From this section on I shall turn to constructing the main theoretical framework of this research. As mentioned above, the aggregate patterns of political participation and mobilization are the consequences of the micro-level decision making by the political parties as to whether to recruit an individual citizen and by each individual citizen as to whether to participate in politics. And more importantly, these two decision making processes are not just choosing from a menu of determinate outcomes fixed by nature. Instead, they are interdependent, in the sense that for either of the two decision-makers which action is the better choice depends not only on exogenous background variables but also on the decision made by the other. That is, the final outcome is jointly determined by the actions of both the party and the citizen. This kind of situation is still within the rational choice paradigm, although it belongs to a special class of cases, that of “strategic rationality” (Little 1991a, 52). I shall discuss below the strategic aspects of the party’s and the citizens’ rational calculations, respectively, and derive hypotheses from these discussions in terms of the utility functions (costs and benefits) of the party and of each citizen.

For a political party in general, its decision of whether to mobilize an individual citizen or not depends on a calculation of expected returns and costs for each outcome, as above mentioned. It has to take into consideration whether this citizen will continue to participate or not, since the outcome also depends on the citizen’s action. As a rational actor, the party only mobilizes a citizen if its expected returns from that citizen’s future political behavior outweigh the necessary investment of time and efforts to mobilize him or her. For the Communist Party of China, when its local organizations make the decision of recruitment, their choices depend on the expected participatory behavior of the citizens, which has a major impact on their expected utilities over recruitment.

### 3.8 Behavioral Standards for a Party Member

Historically there have been fundamental transformations in the Party’s ideologies, goals, agendas, the basis of legitimacy, and even membership composition (Dickson 1997, 70), (Martin 1981, 2 – 4). However, few changes have taken place in the way the Party utilizes those citizens who “are selected for involvement in politics” or, as I have explained above, the Party members. That is to say, the Party prefers to recruit those citizens who will be useful to them. There are non-behavioral criteria for a Party member’s usefulness, to be sure, such as contribution to the Party’s legitimacy, and I shall discuss those later in this dissertation. At the same time, the behavioral standards of a Party member has been specified in the Constitution of the Communist Party of China as a Party member’s duties and rights as follows.

#### Article 3

Party members must fulfill the following duties:

- 6. To earnestly practice criticism and self-criticism, to be bold in exposing and correcting shortcomings and mistakes in work, and to steadfastly fight against negative and corrupt phenomena.
- 7. To maintain close ties with the masses, to propagate the Party’s views among them, to consult with them when problems arise, to keep the Party informed of their views and demands in good time, to help them raise their political consciousness, and to defend their legitimate rights and interests.
- 8. To promote new socialist practices and communist morality, as required by the defense of the interests of the state and of the people, to step forward and fight bravely in times of difficulty and danger, defying death.

#### Article 4

Party members enjoy the following rights:

- 1. To attend pertinent Party meetings and read pertinent Party documents, and to benefit from the Party’s education and training.
- 2. To participate in the discussion, at Party meetings and in Party newspapers and journals, of questions concerning the Party’s policies.
- 3. To make suggestions and proposals regarding the work of the Party.
4. To make well-grounded criticism of any Party organization or member at Party meetings; to present information or charges against any Party organization or member concerning violations of discipline and of the law to the Party in a responsible way, and to demand disciplinary measures against such a member, or to demand the dismissal or replacement of any cadre who is incompetent.

5. To vote, elect and stand for election.

6. To attend, with the right of self-defense, discussions held by Party organizations to decide on disciplinary measures to be taken against themselves or to appraise their work and behavior, while other Party members may also bear witness or argue on their behalf.

7. In case of disagreement with a Party decision or policy, to make reservations and present their views to Party organizations at higher levels up to and including the Central Committee, provided that they resolutely carry out the decision or policy while it is in force.

8. To put forward any request, appeal or complaint to higher Party organizations up to and including the Central Committee and ask the organizations concerned for a responsible reply.

No Party organization, up to and including the Central Committee, has the right to deprive any Party member of the above-mentioned rights.

(Source: Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party, revised September 18, 1997. Earlier versions since September 6, 1982 have included similar articles.)

3.9 Expectation of Participatory Activities

These behavioral standards are very important factors in local Party organizations’ decision on recruitment. A recent People’s Daily article, written by the vice-secretary of a Party committee in a provincial Party organ, summarizes this point quite straightforwardly as follows (East China News, 2001 August 21: 3).

The qualification for a Party member should also include the specific behavioral standards as provided by the Party Constitution. One who only has accomplishments in reforms and construction but won’t earnestly exercise the rights and duties provided by the Party Constitution can not be counted as a qualified Party member.

During my field research, I was interested to know how the expectation of participation enters local Party organizations’ decision making on recruitment. Quite consistently across different localities, party workers at the organization departments at various levels used various words, such as “functional”, “effective”, “useful”, or “to deliver” to describe what the Party expects from a member. The following explanation is an example, from the commissioner of organization in a township Party committee.

In recruiting new Party members, an important principle is “Party members should play an effective role”. There are two main criteria for that “effective role”. One is the criterion of productive forces, that is, the capability to lead the masses to get rich. The other is political quality, which includes the exercise of the rights and duties specified in the Party Constitution. Party members are the representatives of the masses. For example, they should play an effective role in monitoring the democratic policy making at the basic level, such as in making village affairs public and in democratic management of village finance. These rights and duties are very important qualifications for a Party member.

The organization departments have to take many factors into consideration when they decide whether to recruit a citizen, as those party workers told me, and those factors are mostly personal characteristics that the Party organizations already observe in everyday work, study, or life. As I shall discuss below, from the Party’s perspective, citizens with these desirable personal characteristics have the potential to “deliver” or to become useful Party members. However, before a citizen is actually recruited by the Party organizations, the Party doesn’t know for sure whether s/he will be useful or not as a Party member, because that really depends on the political behavior of that citizen in the future.
3.10 Unqualified Party Members

From the Party’s point of view, a Party member who is simply alienated from politics can hardly be considered as “effective” or “functional”, even though s/he might have some features that the Party regards as valuable. In fact, quite a few Party cadres I interviewed complained about some Party members who “never come to the organization” and “only care about themselves” (or rather, about money). The secretary of a city street Party committee told me that he regards these phenomena as “faults in the organization department’s work”. An official at the organization department of a county Party committee talked about the “unqualified Party members” during my interview:

We have been holding democratic evaluations of Party members at the basic level Party organizations since 1989. Those who were evaluated as unqualified Party members have been taken disciplinary actions against. Some of them don’t participate in the Party’s organizational life for a long time without legitimate reasons. Some have gradually lost political enthusiasm and don’t care about the Party’s cause any more. There are also other manifestations of unqualified Party members, but the overwhelming majority of Party members are good. From the perspective of the Party’s organization work, these various problems of unqualified Party members often have something to do with the link in the Party’s work of recruiting new Party members. Some basic level Party organizations had a lopsided understanding of the criteria of recruitment and caused some problems.

My impression from the field research has been that a most important behavioral criterion of a Party member’s usefulness is whether s/he actively participates in politics. A Party member should keep in close touch with the Party organization (i.e., the local policy-maker), should maintain close ties with the masses, should be sensitive about “new tendencies” among the masses, and should be active in public affairs. By providing the duties and rights in the Party Constitution, the power elite in the Party certainly doesn’t intend its policy making to be swayed by ordinary Party members. However, in the political environment of Mainland China, these activities in fact span most of the limited repertoire of “officially acceptable” political participation for ordinary citizens, who constantly exploit these legitimate ways and make them “work” (Burns 1999, 594).

Besides these “soft” expectations, a Party member is also required to attend “organizational life” meetings or “democratic life” meetings, and will be automatically expelled from the Party if s/he fails to attend these for six months without legitimate reasons (Article 8, Chapter 1 in the Party Constitution). In practice, as I learned from my field interviews, these meetings are regularly held in many locations, but undoubtedly there is wide variation across regions. For many local leaders, these meetings are indeed about the only occasions where they “collect opinions and experience from the masses”. For some Party members, these meetings offer opportunities to air their grievances or suggestions to local leaders. Others, however, go to these meetings only to eat sunflower seeds or to knit sweaters, as I learned from my interviews of Party members.

In summary, when the Party makes the decision whether to mobilize a citizen, it not only takes into consideration personal features associated with that citizen, but also bases its decision on its expectation of the citizen’s participatory activities. The Party reasons strategically, because when it makes the decision of mobilization it doesn’t have a definite foreknowledge of the citizen’s actions in the future.

3.11 “Officially Unwelcome” Participatory Activities

In the above discussion of expected participation, one important category of participatory activities is apparently left out, that is, those “officially unwelcome” activities. For the Party, these unwelcome activities include work slowdowns, organized resistance, harassing the leaders, administrative litigations (which seems to be slowly moving from the “unwelcome” to the “reluctantly acceptable” category (Pei 1997)), demonstrations, sit-ins, or refusal to pay tax or apportionment. When officially authorized channels don’t produce satisfactory outcomes, citizens might turn to these activities to pursue their interest.

The Party certainly knows that, however small the probability, a recruited citizen may participate in politics in an unwelcome way. This fact is taken into consideration in the Party’s strategic reasoning when it
makes the decision of recruitment, and its utilities over different outcomes are affected. Interestingly, however, the consideration of "officially unwelcome" activities doesn’t seem prominent in the Party’s decision-making on recruitment of new Party members. When I asked Party cadres about the possibility that Party members might engage in those activities, most of them seemed to regard that as a small problem. For example, a Party committee member gave me the following answer:

Party members are not like the non-Party masses. Some Party members fail to express their resentments to the Party and government even when they should do so. The masses are not like that. They are unconstrained in many aspects and are bolder in saying and doing things. Even when they shouldn’t be making trouble for the Party and government, they just want to vent their discontent. Party members won’t do that.

It appears a little surprising that local Party officials don’t worry too much about Party members participating in "officially unwelcome" activities. At least such activities show that there have been some problems in the work of the local Party and government leadership. It doesn’t seem to be because those activities are too rare in these places, as none of the twelve localities where I did my field interviews is actually known to be immune from such troubles. I think a probable explanation is that in fact at least the Party workers believe that recruitment by the Party has the effect of decreasing the already small probability that a citizen would be engaging in those unwelcome activities. That is the impression I had from my interviews of Party cadres, which however does not seem to be mostly confirmed by the analysis of the national survey data (see Table 4.1).

First, the Communist Party is a Leninist political party, with strict disciplines and well-established negative and positive incentives to ensure members’ obedience. Carrying out those “officially unwelcome” activities can have more negative consequences for a Party member than for a non-Party member. Therefore the former will have to overcome a higher hurdle to make the choice to participate in an unauthorized way. This, however, doesn’t necessarily mean that it is less likely for a Party member to participate at all than it is for a non-Party member. The constraints only affect the ways s/he participates.

Second, as far as “officially unwelcome” forms of political participation are concerned, the real meaning of Party recruitment is that multiple channels and opportunities of “officially acceptable” forms to express views to the Party and government leaders are thus opened to a citizen. At the same time, multiple sources of political information are thus available to a citizen as well. All these should make it more likely that a recruited citizen will participate in an “officially acceptable” way.

3.12 The Party’s Preferences

3.12.1 Hypothesis 1: Difficulty to Recruit ($C_1$)

For any political party, if it mobilizes a citizen it has to pay the cost of mobilization (henceforth denoted as $C_1$, a non-negative value), which depends on the necessary investment of time and efforts to mobilize the citizen. The cost of mobilization is an important factor in a political party’s decision whether to mobilize a citizen or not, and this is true both in Western liberal democracies and in an authoritarian system. Indeed Schier (2000, 30) explains the rise of “activation” (equivalent to the “targeted mobilization” discussed earlier in this dissertation) with the lower cost of mobilization brought about by technological innovation as one of the most important reasons.

For the Chinese Communist Party, the cost of mobilization used to be exorbitantly high during the Maoist mass campaigns. To achieve sweeping participation of the population in voting, meetings, or demonstrations, the party-state usually had to call up all the political activists as “mobilized mobilizers”, or to make use of its resources to offer positive and negative incentives. Under the Party’s new agenda of economic development since the late 1970s, however, this type of mobilization is simply not sustainable, if only because its cost would be unacceptably high in terms of lost productivity.

As above mentioned, in the reform era the mode of political mobilization has been shifted to the recruitment of Party members, but recruitment is still a very lengthy and careful decision making process. From the above description of the recruitment procedure, the cost of mobilizing a citizen is apparently not negligible for the Chinese Communist Party. With everything else held constant, the Party certainly prefers to pay less cost in recruiting a citizen. Thus,
Hypothesis 1  All else being equal, the more difficult it is to recruit a citizen, the less preferable for the party to recruit that citizen.

3.12.2 Hypothesis 2: Supportiveness ($B_1$)

But then whether the party can reap the contributions or sustain the damages from this citizen depends on whether the citizen participates or not. One thing common to both democratic and authoritarian party systems is that in “most cases the long-term purpose ...is for the party to take over control of the state, either on its own or in conjunction with other parties” (Ware 1996, 2). So a citizen’s participation can have benefit (henceforth denoted as $B_1$, a non-negative value) for a party whether the party mobilizes the citizen or not, except that when the party doesn’t mobilize, it doesn’t pay the cost of mobilization ($C_1$).

This part of the benefit that doesn’t depend on the party’s prior mobilization can come from multiple sources, although the most important one is a citizen’s supportiveness to the party. If a citizen participates in politics, the party would prefer that the citizen support it.

In the case of contemporary Mainland China, on one hand the Party has sanctioned multiple channels of political participation and has even started to rationalize policy making by incorporating more “outsider” views or suggestions. Moreover, in the late 1990’s, when stability was regarded as the top priority, the Party showed surprisingly high degree of tolerance toward mass urban protests or sit-ins caused by unemployment, corruption, stock market frauds, etc (Chen 2000, 61). While definitely not innocuous, these protests are not so harmful to the Party as they seem to be either, as long as the participants still have high degrees of supportiveness to the party-state.

On the other hand, though, the Party has been consistently taking all necessary actions to crush participation attempts by political dissidents or by those social forces that present alternative mechanisms of interest aggregation, even when these participatory activities are carried out in legitimate ways. Indeed, as early as in 1984, the Party Center and the State Council issued a “Notice on Strict Control of Founding of National Organizations” under the justification that such organizations “pass fish off as dragons”.

These seemingly contradictory phenomena are the extreme cases, of course. However, they show from one perspective that the Party’s utility over political participation is profoundly affected by the supportiveness of the citizens who take part in. As one Party member whom I interviewed understands:

In principle the Party welcomes criticism and suggestions, because they benefit our work. However, some people take advantage of that to find fault with the Party and the government, and that shouldn’t be allowed.

To summarize,

Hypothesis 2  All else being equal, the more supportive of the Party a citizen is, the more rewards the party gets from his or her participation.

3.12.3 Hypothesis 3: Contribution to Legitimacy ($B'_1$)

Besides that, however, contributions or damages to a party are defined quite differently in Western liberal democracies and in a Communist party-state like Mainland China, because these political parties have fundamentally different goals and preferences as far as political participation is concerned. In a democratic and competitive party system, except for some small ideological parties, normally the party’s goal is to defeat the competition parties in elections with as little cost as possible. Accordingly a citizen’s contribution or damage to a political party depends on whether his or her participation helps to get out votes for the party itself or for competition parties.

In an authoritarian party system like that of Mainland China, the ruling party sternly forbids any form of party competition. It intends to buttress its own legitimate rule through recruited participation, to the end of staying in power. So contribution or damage to the party are determined with reference to its basis of legitimacy, which is defined differently by the party itself at different periods. Nowadays in Mainland China, as MacFarquhar (1997, 3) points out, the Party “increasingly depended on economic performance to justify its right to rule”. The Party itself, however, single-handedly determines what is beneficial or detrimental to economic growth and individual prosperity.
On the beneficial side, to promote economic prosperity, the Party allowed or even encouraged economic, and to a much lesser degree, social plurality. Also it’s vitally important for the Party to recruit talented people from all social classes or occupations in its “pursuit of a technocratic economic growth policy” (Almond, Powell & Mundt 1996, 184). These people “are now brought into the Party because they have the skills desired by party leaders to accomplish their new policy agenda” (Dickson 2000, 519). In Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin’s words,

Our Party . . . has always represented the development requirements of China’s advanced social productive forces, the progressive course of China’s advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the majority of the Chinese people.

Judging from my field interviews, Party cadres at different localities seem to have the same understanding. The vice-secretary of a Party committee gave an exemplary explanation: “the Party is the leader of our country’s economic construction, and first of all it needs excellent people from all professions”.

Since recruitment by the Party carries the expectation of active involvement in politics, by recruiting those “outstanding elements” who contribute to the Party’s basis of legitimacy, the Party signals that their participation in politics is expected and should be beneficial. The Party derives different benefits from participation by recruited and unrecruited citizens (henceforth denoted as $B_1'$ and $B_1$, respectively, and $B_1' > B_1 \geq 0$). Thus,

**Hypothesis 3** All else being equal, if a citizen is recruited by the Party, the more contributions s/he can make to the party’s basis of legitimacy, the more rewards the party gets if the citizen participates.

3.12.4 Hypothesis 4: Trouble-Making ($K_1$)

On the detrimental side, for the Party a prominent basis for judgement is social order and political stability. This is not only because social disorder and political instability are regarded by the Party “as antithetical to the new priority of economic growth” (Manion 1999, 50), but also because they pose apparent and direct threat to the Party’s rule at different levels. Indeed, for at least three times (at the end of the 70’s, the end of the 80’s, and the end of the 90’s) since the reforms were launched, the Party has regarded political stability as its single most important goal. This has prompted three waves of combating dissent and opposition, and three waves of anti-corruption campaigns, among others.

In a sense, the various activities of political participation are “trouble” for the Party, compared with the more routine (and probably meaningless) forms of political involvement such as voting in non-competitive elections, attending meetings or political study sessions, reading the newspaper, et cetera. What is more, there is a small but existing possibility that a citizen, whether mobilized or not, may engage in disruptive activities such as organized resistance, demonstration or sit-in. These “troubles” are henceforth denoted as $K_1$ in the Party’s utility function, which depends on a citizen’s trouble-making potential. The Party apparently prefers not to see a citizen who is capable of causing trouble in social order and stability participating in politics. Thus,

**Hypothesis 4** All else being equal, the more trouble a citizen can make for social order and stability, the lower the Party’s returns from a citizen’s participation.

3.13 Case Study 1: College Students

This and the following two chapters of the dissertation mainly focus on constructing a theoretical framework of the interdependent decisions of Party recruitment and political participation. However, to establish the crucial link between theoretical abstraction and factual basis, throughout this dissertation I shall turn to studying in much detail some specific aspects or cases of recruitment and participation in Mainland China. Some of these cases are from newspaper reports or official documents that I collected during my field research, while some are directly from my interviews of Party cadres, Party members, and non-Party masses. Given China’s vast territory, these cases are probably analogous to no more than some fish that happen to be caught in the middle of the ocean. However, some in-depth study of them helps to illustrate and to flesh out various aspects of the theoretical framework of this dissertation. The first case study concerns the college students in Mainland China.
3.13.1 Importance of College Students to Party

Dramatic Growth in Enrollment

When the Party took power in 1949, there were 117,000 students in the fewer than 200 universities and colleges. Total enrollment steadily rose to 962,000 by 1960, but dropped dramatically in the peak years of the Cultural Revolution (48,000 in 1970). When the reforms started at the end of 1978, there were only 856,000 college students in the 598 universities and colleges on the Mainland. In the Party’s new grand strategy of economic development, college students have occupied an increasingly important position. College enrollment more than doubled from 1979 to 1989, and then more than doubled again from 1989 to 1999. In 2001, 2.68 million students entered college and the total enrollment became 7.19 million. (Data source: State Statistical Bureau web file at http://www.stats.gov.cn/ztxw/2001gb). The demand for higher education has certainly been on the rise, but this dramatic growth in college enrollment mostly reflects changes on the supply side. Higher education is still largely under state control, even for those 1200 colleges outside of the state plan (with a total enrollment of 1.5 million in 2000).

Contribution to Legitimacy

According to the above discussion of the Party’s preferences based on contribution to its legitimacy ($B'_1$) and on difficulty to recruit ($C_1$), it is not difficult to see why college students are important to the Party. In terms of difficulty to recruit, college students make excellent targets. They are well organized, easy to contact, and eager to learn. On the other hand, they have the knowledge and skills required for economic development, and they are young, and thus can contribute to the Party’s cause for a long time. That is, however, dependent on whether they will be active in politics. The Party, while eager to recruit youth and talents, does not want just to include the politically dormant in its ranks. The Party expects its student members to maintain the crucial link between the Party and the student body and to provide constant feedback of students’ grievances or concerns. All these can only be achieved through active Party members, who engage in various forms of political participation.

Supportiveness and Trouble-Making

In light of the massive student demonstrations and sit-ins in 1989, the task of Party building in colleges and universities has gained new momentum. The students in that movement did not really have anti-system demands, but the event did lead to somewhat more attention to supportiveness and trouble-making in the recruitment of college students. Since 1990, the Party has convened the National Conference on Party Building in Higher Education every year. Li Lanqing, a Politburo member and vice-premier, pointed out at the 1995 Conference (People’s Daily July 14, 1995: 4):

To train and to bring up millions of builders of and successors to the socialist cause is a major issue that concerns the whole Party. The people of ability trained by institutions of higher education have a direct bearing on the look of China in the 21st century. ...The leadership by the Party committees of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities of institutions of higher education and of the work of Party building in institutions of higher education can only be strengthened and must not be weakened. The task of Party building should be an important criterion in the evaluation of the academic quality and level of institutions of higher education.

3.13.2 Party’s Work Among Students

Increase the Pool of Applicants

The Party’s work among college students is largely composed of three tasks. First is to enlarge the pool of applicants. Indeed, Party organizations at all levels regard the increase in applications as achievement in the Party’s work. The Party committee at Dalian University of Foreign Languages boasts in a document that “under the education and guidance by Party organizations at all levels and by instructors and driven by student Party members, the mass of young students submitted many applications”.

To attract more applications, many universities and colleges start with the freshmen. The organization department of the Party committee at Beijing Institute of Technology stipulates in a document that “a Party
class attended by all the students should be the first class in freshmen orientation”. The Party committee at Xi’an University of Electronics Technology established a department of freshmen work in 1988 specifically for training and education of the freshmen class. The School of Social Administration at Guangxi University organizes all students to study the Party Constitution. Almost every student at the school has a copy of the Party Constitution, and in 2000, 342, or 72 percent of the students have submitted applications. Nationally, nearly a third of all enrolled college students in 2000 have applied to join the Party (East China News, July 1, 2001: 3). For colleges and universities in Henan Province that proportion was 40% in 1997 (People’s Daily, June 26: 5).

5-Year Recruitment Plans

The number of new Party members recruited from the student body each year is set down by Party committees at various levels in their 5-year plans. In 1991, the Party committee at Liaoning University made the 8th 5-year plan, which set the number (between 650 and 700) and composition (ratio of teachers to students) of new recruits from 1991 to 1995. In 1996, they made the 9th 5-year plan to recruit between 440 and 460 each year. The Party committee at Xi’an University of Electronics Technology set in their 9th 5-year plan (1996 – 2000) and 10th 5-year plan (2001 – 2005) that the proportion of Party members among students be 12 percent by 2000 and 15 percent by 2005, respectively. At the end of 2001, Guangdong Province made the 10th 5-year plan that 10 percent of college students and 30 percent of graduate students be Party members (China Education Daily, December 26, 2001: 1).

Student Party Members

Given the consistent and diligent efforts by Party committees at all levels, it’s no wonder the proportion of college students who are Party members has grown significantly, especially since 1989. In 1990, 16 thousand, or 0.8 percent of all undergraduate students were Party members, and in 2000, 209 thousand, or 3.83 percent of all undergraduate students and 76 thousand, or 28.2 percent of all graduate students were Party members. In many universities, the proportion is much higher. The following Table 3.5 shows data from Dalian University of Foreign Languages:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>% applied</th>
<th>New recruits</th>
<th>Undergrad. % CCP members</th>
<th>Graduate % CCP members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2309</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Data source: A newsletter of Dalian University of Foreign Languages.

The significant increase in the ratio of Party members to non-Party masses among college students is certainly beneficial to the Party. The political participatory patterns of the Party members (or the active applicants) are quite different from those of the non-Party mass students. Recruitment means being selected by the Party for involvement in politics by definition. A student Party member maintains constant connections with Party branches and committees at various levels in the university, and thus has more official contacts and channels to bring problems and concerns into Party organizations’ attention. The regular meetings, study sessions, and the mass work or other tasks assigned by Party organization help to advance the student Party members’ political knowledge, especially at the school level.

In 1996, the Party promulgated the *Chinese Communist Party Regulations on Basic Level Organization Work in Ordinary Higher Education Schools* [Zhongguo Gongchandang Putong Gaodeng Xuejiao Jiceng Zuzhi Gongzuo Tiaoli]. The Article 14 explicitly lists “to regularly listen to opinions and suggestions from Party members and masses, to understand and analyze the ideological conditions, and to carry out good targeted ideological and political work” as one duty of the Party branches in universities and colleges. In
a sense Party recruitment is only one side of the story. The Party does not just want to swell its ranks by recruiting all those college students. It also expects them to be the effective connection between the Party-state and the non-Party students (or non-Party masses after they graduate), and to participate actively in politics through various means. The next chapter will look at citizens’ political participation on Mainland China.