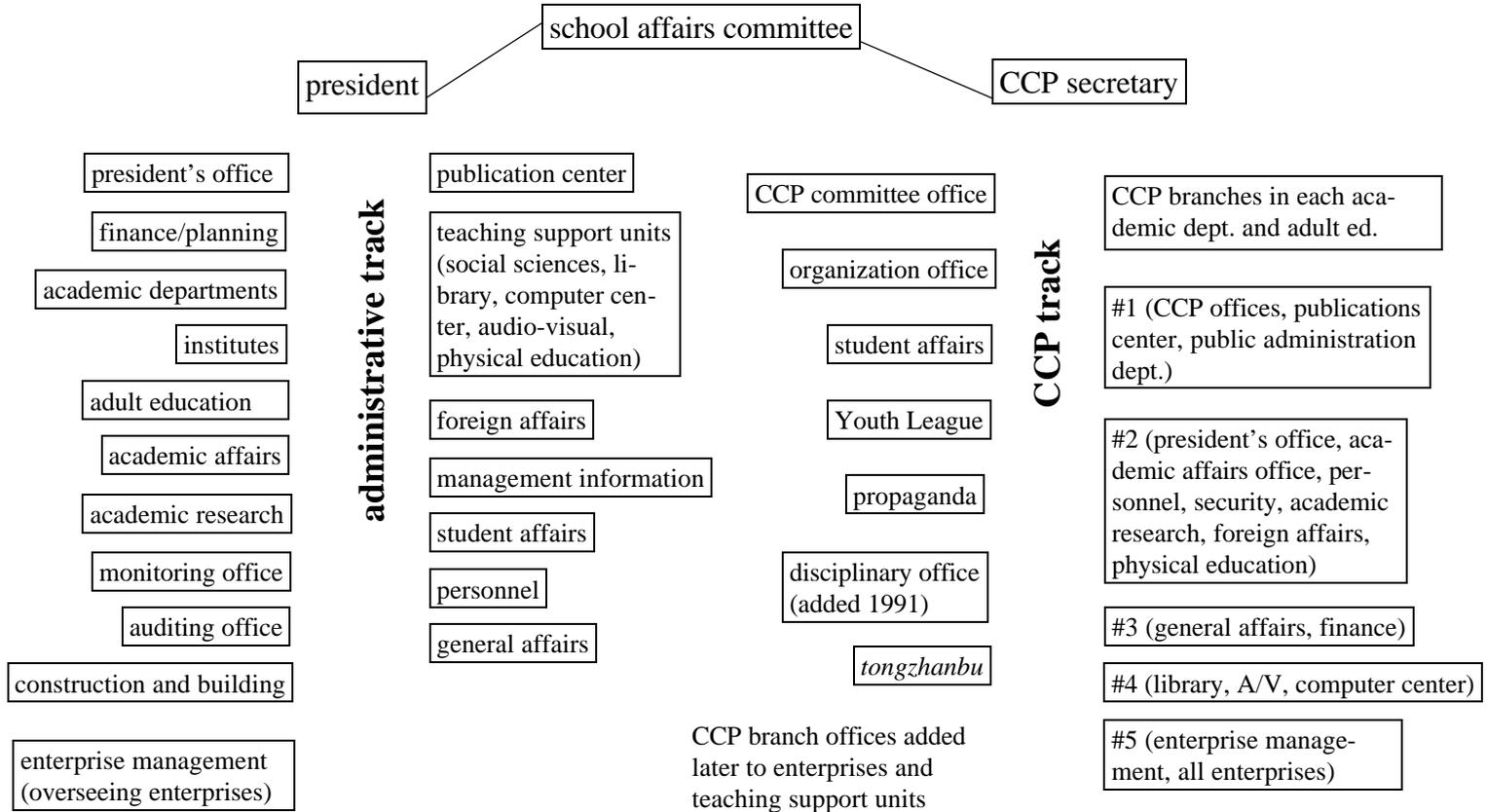


7. GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Who governed Shenzhen University? The simple answer is, of course, the *lingdao*, or leaders, a term which at the top strata included the president and Party secretary and their immediate subordinates, the vice-presidents and vice-Party secretary. The term subordinate, however, proves quite misleading. SZU presidents or Party secretaries did not initiate the appointments of their so-called subordinates. Underlings were generally inherited. Vice-presidents Ying Qirui and Zheng Tianlun were Luo holdovers and were far too well connected at the municipal or provincial levels to be ousted by Wei or Cai (both unsuccessfully attempted to have the vice-presidents replaced). Each vice-president lasted in his position for ten years until forced to retire upon reaching age 60. Party boss Wu inherited his deputy, Yu Zhongwen, who was removed from the position only after he was afforded the chance to study in Japan. As Party secretary, Cai was given deputy Wang Songrong, his rival, to ensure that the former did not become an autocrat after he assumed the concurrent positions of president and Party secretary.

The fact that the university's top officials could not bring in people they trusted as their immediate deputies, thereby creating their own management team, forced on SZU a political system characterized by constant negotiations, leaders withholding information from one another, turf wars and an overall high level of disagreements and animosity between *ting* and *vice-ting* leaders. It also forced the leaders, or patrons, to make appointments of their own supporters where they could. SZU's changes in upper level leaders (in 1989 and 1992) resulted in wholesale appointments—about half new, half reappointments—at the lower (*chu*) level as the new *lingdao* positioned their supporters throughout the system. These included department heads as well as Party branch secretaries. These sub-level leaders did not have control over their own subordinates, either. The president appointed deputy department heads on the advice of the department leader, but in some cases this advice was ignored and the president selected people who were in political struggle with the very leaders they were supposed to serve. In several cases, deputy heads were appointed to balance factions within departments. A similar situation occurred in Party branches, where in a few departments the vice-Party branches helped balance power among the players. When the system worked well (e.g., Architecture, Chinese after 1991), the collective leadership followed a united vision which had disparate views.

Figure 7.1: Dual-track organization after rectification



More often, however, the collective broke down into never-ending skirmishes (notably Foreign Language, Chinese before 1991). This is what often happened during the Wei-Wu administration, as observed earlier, when factionalism replaced the type of power-sharing that the dual-track management system (see Figure 7.1) was supposed to promote, one in which the Party and administration were to peacefully co-exist.

Given the constant in-fighting that occurred within many departments, a new decision-making system replaced that of rational administrative hierarchy. The new system was based on *guanxi*. To settle issues within departments, heads and deputy heads would often resort to using relationships with upper level leaders in order to force the latter to intervene in their favor. In such a way, departments could even get the *ting* and vice-*ting* level leaders to countermand regulations issued by administrative departments, such as Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, General Affairs or Finance. Also, issues that should have been worked out within departments were often raised to a higher level when sub-leaders—department heads and Party secretaries and deputy heads and deputy Party secretaries—each sought the backing of their patrons at the *ting* level. In one department, a divisive issue concerned whether the department should favor *zhuanke* over *benke* programs, in terms of resource allocation. Academic Affairs had made a ruling, but the department faction which opposed the decision went to the upper level and had it countermanded. The issue was discussed in various committees, but it was the behind-the-scenes negotiations between patrons and clients that sealed its fate. By 1992/1993 it became apparent that many decisions at SZU were made not on merit per se but on the strength of relationships. Good decisions, of course, could be made, but they were not made primarily because they had merit. Relationships became more valuable than persuasive, logical arguments. Thus, many ordinary teachers who lacked sufficient *guanxi* stopped fighting for causes they believed in, for they realized that they could have no effect in final outcomes. Those holding minority views were, in fact, likely to antagonize those who held power. By the mid-1990s almost all school issues were settled between leaders; the opinions of ordinary teachers were not given, for teachers by then had resigned themselves to the reality that their views were not deemed important. This contributed to the ordinary teacher's general disengagement from school affairs. Also, constant changes in administration took their toll on education as the university became a loose confederation of academic departments. Teaching units were left to their own devices, given the impotence of the Academic Affairs and Finance offices, and even the Party's own Disciplinary Inspection Commission.

This chapter explores governance and participation at SZU, by starting off with a brief discussion of some reform precedents in administration and management that occurred in Chinese universities in the early part of the century as well as those that took place over the period for which SZU has been examined. It then looks conceptually at *guanxi*, to try to understand why relationships became so important at SZU. Then, it examines innovations in democratic management that SZU experienced during the pre-1989 era. Finally, some comments are offered on what the SZU case says about democracy and civil society in China.

Administrative reform in Chinese higher education

Two important historical figures—American educator John Dewey and Cai Yuanpei, the Republic of China's first Minister of Education and president of Beijing University—were among a group of moderate and radical educational reformers in China around 1920, arguably the period which permitted the most open discussion and intellectual debate in Twentieth Century China.¹ In terms of university governance in China, however, their influence had no lasting effect, despite widespread assumptions to the contrary.

At the invitation of his former Columbia University students who had returned to their native China, John Dewey, America's most famous educational theorist and author of the now classic *Democracy and Education*, visited Republican China on what amounted to a two-year lecture tour. He arrived just a few days before the May 4th (1919) Movement, in which intellectuals protested China's powerlessness in the world community. Dewey gave talks on a variety of subjects, but it must be noted that the interface between democracy and education was mentioned only occasionally.² As translated by Hu Shi, a leading reformer, and other intellectuals, the Chinese version of Deweyism put greater emphasis on social needs over individual development³ and his interpreters "seem to have been more willing to compromise with democracy than Dewey was."⁴ In other words, Dewey's philosophy was made to fit the Chinese context. Regardless of this and despite the fact that his speeches generated an enthusiastic reception and produced much discussion as well as a few educational experiments, his overall educational philosophy—as articulated back in the U.S.—has had little lasting influence on Chinese universities.⁵

Any of Dewey's ideas that survived his departure from China were obliterated during the construction of the People's Republic.⁶ The area that fared the worst was Dewey's concept of moral education, with democracy at its core, which did not differentiate according to class.⁷ Ironically, some of

Dewey's ideas even resembled aspects of the educational philosophy of Mao Zedong.⁸ In the period after Mao, Dewey's influence has grown, and radical educators have occasionally called for rehabilitating Dewey, praising his "child-centered, experience-centered, and society-centered education" as worth considering as a substitute for China's "curriculum-centered, teacher-centered, and classroom-centered education."⁹ In general, however, the substitution has not been made, and Dewey's influence on modern Chinese education has mostly been limited to establishing a "communication of mind between American and Chinese educators."¹⁰

Cai Yuanpei was the president of Beijing University from 1917-1923, during which time he "transformed a conservative diploma mill for would-be officials into a center of Chinese intellectual life."¹¹ His administrative reforms were aimed at having scholars oversee the administration of the university while minimizing the power of the president and the school's administrative officers.¹² This plan included establishing a dean of administration and a dean of faculties (provost), as well as separating the business and academic affairs of the university.¹³ The provost, a job held by Hu Shi, served a one-year term and was elected by department heads. The appointment of deans gave way to election by faculty.¹⁴ Equally important:¹⁵

The Academic Council, members of which were elected by the professors with the deans as *ex officio* members, was the highest legislative body, empowered to pass on university regulations, grant degrees, and enforce discipline among the students. Various executive committees were set up to perform administrative functions. The university was put on a basis of faculty control. Academic freedom, faculty control, and a fearless spirit of searching for truth were the guiding principles in administration. Student self-government was encouraged as a step to democracy.

These reforms might seem a radical step toward faculty governance even by the standards of many of today's North American universities where presidents usually appoint deans, rather than their being elected by the academic staff they supervise. By Chinese standards Cai was even more radical. He advocated that education should be separated from politics and should be "independent of one man's whims..."¹⁶ Taken together these university reforms might suggest that Cai was advocating participatory democracy, both inside and outside the campus. He promoted participation in the form of educational expansion through night school and adult programs, but he did *not* advocate expanding participation in decision-making among the masses and held to a paternalistic and élite view of leadership.¹⁷ Within the university, lower academic staff had little say in policy, and students were permit-

ted their say only in the running of student affairs. (Cai was well known for his view that students should spend more time on their studies and less on politics.¹⁸) Cai's lasting effect was his principle that teachers should manage teaching. A 1980 article in the *Beijing University Journal* which served as Cai's official rehabilitation in the post Cultural Revolution era focused on Cai's administrative reforms and the importance of scholars' running their institutions (it generally ignored pedagogical reforms).¹⁹ This dovetails, however coincidentally, with the pattern of emphasis of higher education reforms in China which have stressed administration over pedagogy.

Much of the Post-Mao reform aimed at university administration and governance has related to external administration, such as decentralization and restraint of oversight authority.²⁰ Internal administrative strategies tend to implement the president-in-authority system.²¹ Experiments in democracy occurred in the early 1980s;²² mechanisms were created that permitted participation by staff at Beijing University where its Congress of Faculty/Staff "respects and supports the President in executing his responsibilities."²³ This body could "make proposals," "review regulations," "discuss policies," and "supervise...administrators" but had no role in the selection/removal of the school's leadership.²⁴ In some institutions the autonomy of academic departments expanded. Reforms at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, for example, gave more authority in curriculum development to the department chair, who was responsible to the school president.²⁵ Whether faculty had power depended on the discretion of the leader, in the HUST case, the department chair. Both of these schools had what might be called "leader-dependent" democracy.

The importance of the leader over the collective was played out at SZU. In giving Guangdong Province and Shenzhen Municipality joint custody over SZU, the SEdC was (perhaps unconsciously) ensuring that the university would have a degree of local control. The SEdC was apparently not greatly concerned with the mechanisms for internal management. In terms of external management, the division of supervision was unclear: Guangdong was in charge of academic matters, such as student recruitment, staff promotions, major settings and degree requirements. The Shenzhen government oversaw finances, personnel and housing. But these divisions were blurry. Teacher promotions, for example, were reviewed by the provincial Higher Education Bureau, but salary increases came from the local government. In the late 1980s, the province was promoting individual faculty, but SZU was not receiving increased personnel quotas from the city's Personnel Bureau. At that time SZU was forced to provide subsidies from its own revenue sources in order to pay the promoted teachers their entitled salary—funds that should

have been part of the city's allocation. The settings for majors was another example of a policy area that straddled jurisdictional boundaries. The municipal government preferred *zhuanke* over *benke* programs because the former turned out *rencai* quicker and cheaper than the latter. In the annual funding cycle, the city allocated funds according to a recruitment plan that had to be approved by provincial authorities, who in general were less than eager to see a proliferation of specialized programs. On curriculum matters, therefore, SZU leaders sought backing from municipal officials. In the case of an international exchange program, SZU tried to bypass Guangdong approval altogether, initiating the program with the blessings of city officials. When provincial authorities eventually learned about the proposed exchange, they canceled it. Sometimes, the lack of clarity in lines of responsibility allowed SZU leaders to pick and chose upper levels instrumentally, in other words on an issue-by-issue basis. Just as children can play one parent against the other, SZU's leaders at particular times manipulated the upper levels as best suited for their immediate purposes.

Luo Zhengqi was a master of going to one authority for support of a policy when he knew that the other authority (which he avoided) would oppose his idea. His immediate successors—Wei and Wu—did not execute this strategy to any great extent for several reasons. Unlike Luo they were not consummate politicians and were over their heads politically in dealing with upper-level politicians. Also, the two major leaders were locked in an ongoing battle and were rarely united on issues. Cai Delin, in contrast, was an experienced politician. He merged the Party and administrative rails and was in a good position to continue the type of political maneuvering at which Luo excelled. Yet one fact hindered him: Cai was not greatly trusted by either city or province. Initially, he had been recommended for the job by the SEdC and, like Luo, was in neither the city or provincial camp. Quickly, however, once Cai cultivated a patron, Lin Zuji who was the Party official in charge of Shenzhen education, Cai became immediately suspect by Provincial authorities. Luo, in contrast, was never viewed with suspicion by the upper levels (although he had well placed opponents). Cai, nevertheless, played the role of wheeler and dealer, but in the process he greatly alienated many upper-level officials, including those in Beijing, by his rather crass methods of relationship building. He was viewed by first the province and later by the city (after Wu Jiesi replaced Lin Zuji as Shenzhen vice-mayor) more as a crony than an intellectual. Officials at all levels grew annoyed with Cai's management of the university, an administration viewed as obsessed with money-making and plagued by corruption.

Guanxi and mianzi

Why were relationships so important in managing SZU? Why were they such a major characteristic of SZU governance at certain periods and not at others?

From the etic perspective, Chinese *guanxi* is a fascinating topic and has been the subject of several Ph.D. dissertations.²⁶ The literature suggests that *guanxi* is very much dependent on context: what occurs in a village is different from what happens in a city; relationships are used differently in and out of work-units. In China, because of a historic scarcity of resources, *guanxi* takes on added importance. Resource shortages are due in part to pressures exerted by population size and density and also because of the state's management of the political economy. *Guanxi*, by permitting individuals to "jump the queue" in procuring scarce commodities, has run throughout China's history. These national economic conditions help distinguish *guanxi* in China from interpersonal relationships in other cultures.

Relationships occur in all societies. In the U.S. and other countries, making connections is called networking, a loose term that covers the developing of acquaintances which may prove beneficial to both parties. The English-language term suggests a deliberate action, which may or may not have an instrumental goal. Social relationships and networking represent a type of general social relations that lie outside the immediate family. This happens across societies. Also involved are concepts such as trust and face, which will be discussed below. This overall concept—whether called social relationships, networking, or connections—in Chinese is called *guanxi*. It might be considered the extension of a family-based relational network.

Sun Longji, an observer and noted endogenous critic of Chinese culture, argues that a Chinese person does not exist in the absence of relationships and that this concept of "networked person" forms the deep structure of Chinese culture. He writes:²⁷

A Chinese fulfills himself within the network of inter-personal relationships. A Chinese is the totality of his social roles. Strip him of his relationships, and there is nothing left. He is not an independent unit. His existence has to be defined by his acquaintance.

A not dissimilar view is generally accepted by many Western culturalists, as illustrated by Michael Bond,²⁸ who sees Chinese society as high-context culture,²⁹ one in which context is more important than content, relationships more important than truth. It is argued that Chinese culture has a narrow group orientation, with a person having fewer but more intense relations.

Some have voiced concern over such cultural stereotyping;³⁰ others have questioned China's cultural uniqueness, citing the absence of empirical, comparative studies to back up such assertions of China's dissimilarity from the rest of the global community.³¹ Social networks in the Chinese context bring together five important elements of culture: *guanxi* (relations), *ganqing* (sense of attachment), *renqing* (human sentiment), *bao* (reciprocity), and *mianzi* (face).³² Together, these form the fabric of Chinese society.

Guanxi concerns power. In Chinese culture *mianzi* (face) helps define power as it combines a sense of moral imperative, social honor and self-respect.³³ It is a key to understanding Chinese society.³⁴ The notions of reciprocity and obligation by themselves cannot completely enlighten us about *guanxi*. Those with much face give gifts for which there is little possibility that the receiver can ever adequately repay. As one observer notes, "A singular feature of *guanxi* is that the exchanges tend to favor the weaker member. *Guanxi* links two persons, often of unequal ranks, in such a way that the weaker partner can call for special favors for which he does not have to equally reciprocate."³⁵ The receiver, therefore, is not left in a state of permanent obligation. Exchanges do not require such precise calculations. The act of giving enhances the donor's face; it might have more to do with building (or maintaining) one's reputation than with relating to the individual parties involved. Favors that seem to make little sense in an analysis that is primarily concerned with instrumentality are better explained by the concept of face, itself quite individualized. Face is part of the complicated way people deal with one another. Observers report it has "not diminished at all" with China's recent drive toward modernization.³⁶

Each society has a complex cultural management system for interpersonal relationships. China's encompasses *guanxi*, face, loyalty and other highly-deemed values. These concepts influence other social norms. Take face and honesty, for example. Weighing "saving face" against "telling an untruth" might result in more consideration given to face. A Chinese proverb equates losing face with a tree losing its bark: "...Chinese try to avoid any public embarrassment and criticism by minimizing or covering up big mistakes and ignoring small ones."³⁷ Face is very much part of a process in which superiors and subordinates deal with one another. This is the case in the classroom,³⁸ but no less true for the workplace where relationships tend to be close and long-lasting.³⁹ The superior/subordinate relationship often forms a tight bond:⁴⁰

As good relationships develop among superiors and subordinates, subordinates tend to perceive the superior as more than a mentor. The former may expect the latter to help friends and relatives as well. There is an old Chinese

saying, 'If a man becomes an official, even his dogs and chickens will ascend to heaven.'

Thus, loyalty and trust join the concept of face at the core of *guanxi*, incorporating the notion that face can be equated to one's reliability.⁴¹ Chinese society itself is constructed with an emphasis on social bonds, not individuals.⁴² Chinese workers are less loyal to an enterprise and more loyal to a specific individual.⁴³ Businesses are often identified with single individuals.⁴⁴ Connecting face with trust/loyalty is one thing. To add complication, loyalty conflates with obligation and the notion of reciprocity. From this vantage, exchange is important. The Chinese manager/worker relationships may be viewed in terms of overpayment and credit-building,⁴⁵ but ledgers are not so easily kept. One of the expatriate teachers at SZU told me: "It's hard to know who owes whom what. Am I a creditor or a debtor in a relationship? At times, I think my friends and I don't use the same accounting system." Reciprocity is not unique to Chinese culture. Indeed, "the *norm* of reciprocity is a concrete and special mechanism involved in the maintenance of any stable social system."⁴⁶ In modern China the complex relationships between trust/loyalty, obligation and reciprocity all exist.

Guanxi at SZU

At SZU's beginning, Luo and his predecessor Zhang Wei made administrative decisions in a transparent manner, with different opinions voiced openly. Whereas Luo was as skilled at developing *guanxi* as the next person, his managerial and policy decisions were not founded primarily on relationships. He had a close set of advisors (together, they were known on campus as the "four horsemen"), but he listened to virtually all opinions voiced by sub-leaders as well as ordinary staff and students. A diversity of views is seen in the pages of early issues of the *Shenda Tongxun* and the 1986, 1987 and 1988 yearbooks. Luo, himself, was the first to admit that members of the university community differed with him over policy. In long essays he countered his opponents with logic and facts. In the end, however, as the university's principal, decisions were Luo's to make. Those who disagreed with Luo did not face reprisals. By the time Cai became president, however, the management style had changed to one of non-transparency and one in which opposition to leadership doomed individuals who held views different from the *lingdao*. This occurred at both the school leadership level and within departments and is part of the reason so many staff quit SZU in favor of working in Shenzhen or emigrating abroad. Even mild dissent was not

tolerated by either Wei-Wu or Cai, or by their clients whom they placed in academic offices and administrative departments.

In part, the differences in governance styles between Luo and Cai can be attributed to their personalities or individualized management methods. Luo felt secure in his job and, having lived through the vicissitudes of Chinese politics (e.g., hard labor during the Cultural Revolution), he took a somewhat fatalistic view on life. Cai, who had experienced relatively little hardship as the result of political struggles, attached much more importance to *guanxi*. Unlike Zhang Wei, Cai did not have a scholarly reputation to fall back on; his academic field—Mao Zedong thought—was mostly ridiculed (at least privately) by intellectuals. His administrative pedigree was not as impressive as Luo's. Luo had been a rising star in Beijing; Cai had been but one of several vice-presidents with low prestige at Anhui University. He secured the SZU presidency because of *guanxi* with a SEDC official and because more suitable candidates would not agree to take the job. Cai's way of getting respect at SZU was to build relationships, pass out favors and collect debts. As SZU president, Cai became personally involved in hiring staff of high rank so that each new appointee realized that Cai was owed a debt. A number of Cai's appointments came from his hometown region, Chaozhou in Guangdong, and this gave his administration the appearance of cronyism.⁴⁷ As vice-president, Cai spent an entire year cultivating friendships. As president, he spent much of his working day *la guanxi* (pulling in relationships). Cai was not a "policy wonk" as Luo had been; in fact, Cai was never engrossed in the details of policy, leaving those tasks to subordinates. While Luo could make policy decisions weighing pro and con arguments because he himself had a full grasp of policy, Cai was forced to make many decisions according to the individual who was personally making the recommendation; in this sense, relationships overshadowed content. People and relationships became of paramount importance, in the absence of a grasp of policy. In contrast, both Wei and Wu did their homework, studying and understanding SZU's initiatives; neither could afford to be unfamiliar with Luo's policies that they opposed. Cai simply brought back Luo's policies—perceived on campus as a politically correct maneuver—but he did not greatly understand them. He merely undid what was perceived to be damage caused by Wei-Wu; policies that were flawed were resurrected, flaws intact.

The historical context also determined the extent to which *guanxi* permeated SZU. When SZU was established, few of the staff knew one another, but the university itself was certainly not devoid of personal relationships. Zhang Wei, especially, had appointed several of the key professors at the fledgling university. But, during much of the year, Zhang Wei was not at

SZU, and administration fell on Luo's shoulders. Luo was so busy with running a new school, creating an integrated Party structure and building a new campus that he did not make *la guanxi* a high priority. He did not have the luxury that Cai Delin experienced: a full year to develop *guanxi*. Calculations by Luo on whether individual issues caused individuals to lose *mianzi* did not predominate SZU's policy-making process (They prevailed in Cai's administration and were a major determinant for whether one person's policy was adopted over that of another). Luo thought it more efficient, and in the long run it would be more effective, for SZU to operate a transparent, rational planning process. This is not to say that Luo ignored relationships or face; they just did not dominate policy formulation, as they did under Cai Delin. During Cai's term, the SZU community witnessed an extraordinary amount of gift-giving and banqueting, which on a smaller and more ceremonial basis are major features of *guanxi*. Gifts given by Cai to those in his *guanxiwang* (*guanxi* network) included promotions and opportunities to travel in overseas delegations. He received numerous gifts in return, including a new automobile given him by the head of the Architecture Department. It may have been that Cai had little choice but to resort to relationships. When he arrived at SZU, the university was already eight years old. Not only were *guanxi* networks well established but the Wei-Wu years had intensified their importance through factional and patron-client politics. Cai, as the heir-apparent, had considerable power from the day he stepped on campus. He chose to depoliticize the campus, and he had the option of putting less stress on *guanxi*. He chose not to. It might be argued, though, that SZU had developed its policies to such an extent that by 1991 lessening *guanxi* would not have been possible. In any case Cai decided not to attempt to remodel the system.

While most faculty members disengaged from research and scholarship (as indicated by SZU's decreased research output), nevertheless some of them joined voluntary associations for academics. The Returned Students Group was a municipal-sponsored association for scholars who had returned from study abroad. It had annual gatherings for members. A Society of Ph.D.s included anyone who had been awarded a doctorate, domestic or foreign. Most disciplines had a local entity, such as the Shenzhen Foreign Languages Society. These types of organizations provided occasions for socializing and sometimes academic exchange. They were not generally involved in politics or governance; they were managed by one or two *lingdao* who sometimes were elected by the general membership. None had the type of internal democratic procedures that characterized their counterparts in liberal democracies.

Participation under Luo Zhengqi

Teachers and staff

Formally, SZU in its early years was run by the leadership through several committees: School Affairs (renamed Teaching Reform), Student Counseling, Finance, Professors (Academic Council), Academic, Evaluation/Promotion, Examination, and Sports/Physical Education. These committees functionally overlapped one another, and it was not always clear what organizations actually existed. For example, the Sports, Academic and Evaluation committees were each mentioned in the *1988 Yearbook*, but they did not appear on the published 1988 organization chart (see Figure 7.2).⁴⁸ This suggests that policies regarding academics were given less importance than other aspects of the university. The general lack of attention paid to academics is further indicated by the absence of a vice-president in charge of educational work. In most Chinese universities this position is held by the *jiaowuzhang*, or academic vice-president/provost. Li Tianqing, an early rival of Luo, was SZU's first vice-president in charge of academics; Li proved an ineffective leader and the Academics Committee basically ceased to function. When Zheng Tianlun became vice-president, he was assigned academics as one of several duties, and the Academic Committee was abandoned altogether.

The most important of the committees was School Affairs, which Luo chaired. Luo gave his highest priority to student work. In fact, student management was the area of Luo's policy that attracted the most attention in the media. As noted in previous chapters, students were allowed a degree of flexibility in curriculum matters (credit system, early/late graduation, double majors and degrees); they were encouraged to gain practical experience in the second classroom of part-time jobs; they had to find their own jobs in the absence of job allocation; their emotional needs could be addressed in the Psychological Counseling Center. Luo also chaired the Student Counseling Committee (*xuesheng gongzuo zhidao weiyuanhui*). This board oversaw the three student centers: Psychological-Behavioral Guidance (*xinli xingwei zhidao zhongxin*), Work-Study guidance (*qingong jianxue zhidao zhongxin*), and Student Employment/Career-Planning and Placement Guidance (*xuesheng jiuye zhidao zhongxin*). These centers had few permanent staff; interested teachers participated on a part-time basis. During the mid-1980s, the work of these centers went beyond their apparent purposes: counseling students, placing them in part-time campus jobs or helping them find jobs.

An unstated purpose of these units was to provide interested staff a way to include their ideas in the construction of SZU's theory of personhood, which involved conceptions of beauty and demeanor as its primary attribute.⁵⁰ The Psychological-Behavioral Guidance Center, for example, "provided students with a model of sanctioned modes of being and self-understanding that they were expected to adopt as their own."⁵¹ The Employment Guidance Center published a bi-weekly newsletter (*jiuye zhidao*), widely distributed freely to students in the canteens. It gave pointers on how to handle job interviews but also included articles such as "Revelations of Military Training" which were aimed at furnishing student readers with models for making sense of their own experiences at bootcamp.⁵²

Committees at SZU were advisory in nature. The committees themselves did not have the final say in decisions, a right which was reserved for the leadership. The School Affairs Committee (*xiaowu weiyuanhui*) consisted of 22 members, with no functioning subcommittees. Its role was "to assist the president...set direction for the entire school," and the committee itself was assisted by a Consultation Center (*zixun guwen zhongxin*). The Finance Committee was under the tight control of its chair, vice-president Ying. The management of funds from Shenzhen and tuition was monitored by the Finance Office, but items in the President's Fund, SZU's third budget, were not transparent. The Examinations Committee, which included a total of 13 members, dealt primarily with procedural or technical matters (setting of exams, development of uniform tests, computerized test management, etc.) and never explored the philosophical or educational issues concerning exam-directed study. The committee could draw support from the examination center (*kaoshi zhongxin*), which had the on-going task of monitoring the effectiveness and appropriateness of teachers' exams, providing guidelines for designing better exams, and serving as a test bank. The degree to which the members of any of these committees had impact on policy depended on the extent to which the committee chairs, who were SZU *ting*-level leaders, wanted to accept their input. These committees were set up for discussion, *not* for decision-making. Decisions were the reserve of leaders.

The nature of the Professor's Committee, also known as the Academic Council, in form at least reflected back to the Beijing University of Cai Yuanpei. Teachers at the associate professor level or above were automatic members of this SZU committee, the stated purpose of which was⁵³

to guarantee proper research directions and teaching; to stimulate professors and teaching faculty; to improve teaching quality and research achievement...to be in charge of awarding degrees and evaluating academic levels of graduates; to evaluate research achievements and organize academic activities

on campus; to improve communication between departments, especially between social science and natural science.

The committee's chair and vice-chair were appointed by the president and confirmed by the members; they had to be under 60 years old. The committee was somewhat of an administrative afterthought, as it was founded 4 October 1986, after SZU was already three years old. By 1988 it had 210 members and functioned in a rather unwieldy fashion. Several senior teachers who were interviewed ten years later could not even recall the committee's existence, which suggests it was not an influential element in SZU governance. SZU's Academic Council lacked the formal powers of its namesake at Beijing University 60 years earlier. The latter functioned through committees, but its overall effectiveness is difficult to evaluate given the insufficient amount of information now available on scholarship during the Cai Yuanpei era at Beida.

Students

In contrast with faculty, students in SZU's early years participated fairly extensively in university affairs. They held seats on various university committees, including the Scholarship Evaluation Committee (1987), which determined policy on stipends and awards. Students were to sit on the scholarship committees of each academic department. Two main avenues allowed students to become stake-holders in university affairs. They worked in student-run service enterprises—the second classroom—and were involved in campus organizations—the third classroom.

Student businesses

The principle service enterprises run by students were the Shiyuan (Experimental) Bank, Shiyuan Post Office and a group of businesses that were placed under an umbrella organization called the Educational Service Center.⁵⁴ These business ventures included the Yue Haimen Education Service Co., Shenda Laundry Co., Experimental Shop, a café, bookstore, Yue Haimen Report editing department and three hostels. Total assets in 1986 were reported at ¥1.6 million (US \$430,000). The laundry alone was invested with HK and PRC funds of HK \$1.2 million (US \$150,000) and worked closely with more than 10 hotels in Shenzhen. From October 1986 the umbrella center was run by a student group, with students recruited by public advertisement serving as general managers. The Center had legal standing separate from SZU.

The Shiyuan Bank was under the regulatory control of the People's Bank of China, Shenzhen branch; in 1986 its assets stood at ¥5 (US \$1.3) million. From 1984-1985 the bank's net profit was ¥100,000 (US \$35,000). It took deposits from work-units and individuals and made loans to work-units, teachers and students. It also accepted deposits from outsiders and foreigners, and was authorized to make inter-account transfers and settlement. It handled SZU remittances, student scholarships, staff salaries, investments and securities. A 1987 study by municipal banking regulators ranked the Shiyuan Bank fourth of 13 in terms of organization and efficiency.

The Shiyuan Printing Factory was another unit run independently by students. Its fixed assets in 1986 were nearly ¥100,000 (US \$27,000). Taking clients from both inside and outside campus, it printed teaching materials, periodicals, business forms and name cards.

The Shiyuan Post Office was started by students from Economics and Management in winter 1985. Not restricted to mail sending and delivery, it was empowered to handle remittances, wire funds domestically, send telegrams, and take campus subscriptions for newspapers and periodicals. In practice, staff took on only the latter function, sending customers with other requests to the Nantou Post Office (20-minutes away by bike).

Students in the second classroom were evaluated and ranked according to either management ability or technical ability qualification guidelines.⁵⁵ The evaluations as well as certificates acknowledging promotions went into the students permanent file (*dangan*) and were to be used by the Job Guidance Center for showing to the graduating students' potential employers. The highest rank in managerial qualification was accorded to students who were factory heads or managers of independent enterprises. The next level went to student heads of enterprises under the SZU Enterprise Office. To retain ranks, students were not allowed to fail courses or have "work accidents."

Until 1990, many full-time SZU students at sometime during their stay at SZU took a job in student-run enterprises. Other students took part-time jobs in the library, administrative offices, or as janitors for classrooms/dormitories. By 1993 few of these jobs existed; most were filled by either permanent staff or night school students.

During the 1980s almost every student at SZU belonged to at least one of the university's dozen academic organizations, such as the English Club, Management Association, Poetry Society, and various literary groups.⁵⁶ Several dozen campus periodicals were published by student organizations, often with the help of volunteering teaching staff. In addition, there were over a dozen sports and recreation clubs.

Student self-management organizations

The most pronounced elements of democracy at SZU were found in student government. The contrast here is sharpest with other universities in China, where student management organizations have almost always been under the control of the CCP. Official student organizations, as illustrated by the Beijing University Student Association, were characterized by “an elitist approach to political participation, an indirect and closed system of elections, hierarchical and paternalistic patterns of authority, and operational methods which are based largely upon patron-client relations.”⁵⁷ In general, political organizations on Chinese campuses have little legitimacy among the students who are not active participants; most students are unaware of and not interested in official organizations, and thus students have become “increasingly alienated from the university authorities.”⁵⁸

The Shenzhen municipal government authorized three major SZU student organizations: (1) the Student Council, more formally known as the Standing Committee of Student Representatives Conference (*xuesheng daibiao dahui changwu weiyuan hui*); (2) Student Union (*xuesheng hui*); and (3) Student Self-disciplinary Committee (*xuesheng zilu weiyuan hui*). The organizations were known on campus by their abbreviations—*xue sheng hui*, *xue dai hui*, and *lu wei hui*, respectively—and referred to by the administration as the Three *Hui*. All three were fully functioning within four years of the school’s founding, and their constitutions and detailed election regulations became effective in spring 1989.⁵⁹ The university provided only macro-guidance (*hongquan zhidao*) by according loose supervision through the Student Affairs Office (although this unit was inadvertently omitted from the SZU 1988 organization chart.) There were also other campus-wide units. Because of the 1986 student demonstrations, SZU set up a student-run Student Affairs Consultant Center (*xuesheng shiwu zixun zhongxin*) which served as a “bridge between school leaders and students by collecting student opinion for the SZU leadership.”⁶⁰ These students served as the “eyes and ears of the president and the mouth and tongue of the students.”⁶¹ In the same year a Consumers’ Committee (*xiaofeizhe weiyuan hui*) existed. Its purpose was to “protect students so they can study without money problems.”⁶² The committee’s activities included stopping vendors located outside campus from cheating students, setting up regulations for these outside vendors and spot checking canteen’s prices and portions of food. It took care of student and teacher complaints about irrational prices in the school’s service departments; it examined these units’ hygienic conditions, and submitted reports on

environmental management of the students' dorm area and published the periodical *Voice of Consumers*.

The students' political organization was the Youth League Representatives Committee (*tuan dai hui*), not to be confused with the SZU Youth League Committee (*tuan wei*), which was selected by Youth League members at SZU. The students' Youth League was run entirely by students. In 1986, 36 students took part in the election for Youth League secretary.⁶³

The Student Council (SC) comprised two students chosen from each homeroom class.⁶⁴ A democratic election process⁶⁵ resulted in over a hundred students being elected for one-year terms to the SC, whose first job was to select a 20-member executive committee which usually contained at least one student from each SZU academic department (although universal representation was not guaranteed by the rules). The rest of the SC just withered away leaving the Executive Committee as the sole supervisor of student organizations and resolver of inter-organizational disputes. Although the SC was usually active only during its annual election, it functioned during crisis periods, such as the time it removed the Student Council president for his poor organization of the school's art festival.

The Student Union (SU) provided the official voice of the students and acted on their behalf in discussions with the administration. Students individually had other channels of communication, directly with President Luo during his "open door" afternoon, or through department heads and teachers. But the SU had more clout as an organization than did individual students, and Luo included the head of the SU in the weekly meetings of the School Affairs Committee. The SU was the most important organization not only because of the traditional status it customarily received in China but also because it received two-thirds (¥80,000, equaling about US \$25,000) of the funds the school gave to student associations.⁶⁶ The SU's main responsibility was to supervise the student-run interest groups, which numbered about ten,⁶⁷ monitor their disbursement of funds, arbitrate disputes and, most importantly, appoint their leaders. Although the interest groups did not formally elect their own leaders, the SU informally took into account the interests of members when it appointed leaders.

In the 1980s electing the SU's leadership was a notable campus event. At the beginning of the spring term, potential candidates in teams of two students (running for SU chair and vice-chair) submitted their nomination petitions (signed by at least 10 students) to the Student Council. Students who were in good academic standing (top half of their class) were registered. During the one-month campaign period, electioneering included big character posters, formal debates, and informal campaign visits to the dormitories.

The SC gave each candidate team ¥1,000 (US \$270), most of which would be used in printing. Since this was only sufficient to cover a quarter of campaign costs, candidates found other sources of revenue and put in their own funds. In the election, which had a 30-40% turnout, each student had one vote; the candidate pair receiving the most votes won. Once in office, the pair would appoint a “cabinet” that usually consisted of about 15 loyal campaign workers, each given a portfolio.⁶⁸

The third student organization was the Students’ Self-Disciplinary Committee (SSDC), through which SZU students disciplined themselves. Originally set up by students in Law and called the Student’s Court, it quickly evolved into a university-wide tribunal that investigated student misconduct and meted out punishments for infractions. Its wider mandate included publicizing legal developments and mediating student disputes. The committee chair was appointed by the Student Council. Two teachers, one from the Law Department and the other from SZU’s Disciplinary Inspection Commission, served as consultants. Punishments it decreed could be listed in the student’s permanent record, the *dangan* file that accompanied graduates to their future workplaces. SZU leaders frequently praised the work of the SSDC as an example of student independence and maturity. The seven committee members, one of whom served as chair, were chosen by the Student Council from interested persons who submitted applications. The SSDC tended to be fairly busy. Over a six month period in the mid-1980s, for example, it investigated 110 cases, including 14 involving cheating, 11 violations of dorm regulations, and 22 situations in which students watched pornographic videos.⁶⁹ Most cases were handled in full by the committee; in 1987 only about a dozen were reported to school authorities.

Participation after 1989 rectification

Student elections were suspended altogether in 1990 although, ironically, the sitting SU president was allowed to keep attending President Wei’s weekly *chu*-level meetings which included about fifty mid-level cadres. In one of its first regulatory acts, the Wei-Wu administration put the Student Union, as well as the staff work union and the Youth League, directly under the control of the SZU Party committee and Party branches in academic departments.⁷⁰ Students who wished to run for office in 1991 were vetted by the local Party branches. As a result, student office-holders were seen as representing the views of the department head rather than those of the students. This change was done under the rationale that SZU needed to more effectively stress student training and avoid the “capitalist freedom-ization” that had existed prior

to mid-1989.⁷¹ Consequently, student enthusiasm dropped, and few students voted except when voting was made mandatory. The new deputy Party secretary, Wang Songrong, was dubbed by students as “the enforcer” and was despised by the upperclassmen who had been at SZU during the Luo years. Attendance at Wang’s speeches was compulsory. Students reported that Wang’s speaking style and content was “enough to put an insomniac to sleep.” Wang required that students elected to the Student Council “take the lead to learn Marxism and Mao thought and become exemplary models for all students.”⁷² Students especially disliked what they perceived to be a patronizing and condescending attitude by SZU leaders. SZU leaders instructed students who had been selected by their department heads to run for Student Council seats to adopt a new constitution for student organizations, the drafting of which had excluded student input. Most students in the early 1990s held SZU’s new leadership in utter contempt; no students joined the CCP in 1989-1991, and not a single student who had been a probate on 4 June 1989 pursued Party membership. A beefed-up Youth League, along with political tutors, ran student affairs, mandating students to participate, awarding those who did, and punishing those who did not. As a new generation of students entered SZU, participation started to resemble what students had experienced in secondary school activities, with teachers making most decisions for students. The new system was seen as a success. On 15 June 1995, Guangdong Province designated the SZU Student Union as an advanced unit at the provincial level.

Campus organizations became self-perpetuating, as the officers in place in 1989 appointed their successors. The head of each academic unit assigned a young staff member to liaise with students and to serve as their political handler.⁷³ Their major responsibility was to select student cadres (*xuesheng ganbu*) to ensure student participation in campus activities. Some of these students became the department’s representatives to the Student Union and others were sent to the Youth League. A top-to-bottom chain of command was established. When the school leaders wanted something accomplished (e.g., the sports meeting, the arts festival, tree planting afternoons), it passed on the assignment to departments. In turn, the student liaison handed the assignments to the student cadres. Also, after 1989 the campus-wide election for the Student Union was never reestablished, and students chosen for cadre status were not especially popular among their classmates, who called them “political opportunists.”

While changing the character of the student government, Wei-Wu never actually terminated the organizations, which mutated radically in both function and appearance. None transmogrified more than the Student Self-

Disciplinary Committee. From 1989 until it ceased to exist around 1994, the Committee became the least respected student organization. Despite the earlier official praise and the level of democracy involved in establishing it, it had become an organization held in contempt by most students. Here are some typical student comments:

The SSDC serve only themselves, not ordinary students. During vacations, they find couples living together [cohabiting] and force them to pay a “fine” to avoid being reported to school authorities.

The only students on the SSDC are those who are mischievous ones who don’t want others to discipline them.

Indeed, this irony was mentioned in a local newspaper article that pointed out that among the 13 conspirators involved in the Cuckoo’s Hill 1993 murder, one was a leader of the SSDC.⁷⁴ The major complaints against the SSDC related to supervision and transparency. According to one former student leader, the SSDC was given such loose reins by Wei-Wu that no other students oversaw its operation. The group held its hearings in secret. The same students who did the investigating determined the punishments. Students had the right to appeal decisions to the Student Affairs Office, but the SAO automatically ratified decisions made by the SSDC. When early regulations were in force students had the right of further appeal to the president, but post-1989 administrations refused to hear student appeals and were content to let students take care of their own matters. There were no checks and balances which, added to the absence of openness and accountability, created a campus-wide disrespect for the organization.

Wei-Wu attempted to give “real meaning” to part-time jobs and the second classroom. From 1991 “no student was permitted to run projects under contract or to be bosses.” Quickly, students lost their incentive to take part-time jobs. Participation in student-run enterprises fell off dramatically, so that by 1992 no more than a handful of undergraduates worked in the businesses that a few years before had been managed entirely by students. Most of the businesses were snapped up by teachers. For example, the printing house, which earned its four student-managers each about ¥1,000 (US \$270) per month, was taken over by teachers. In fact, in fall 1990, when new regulations became effective, teachers began scouring the campus for student businesses that could be acquired at fire-sale prices. Businesses with the highest potential profit went to teachers who had the requisite *guanxi* with the new leadership. By 1991 the only students employed on campus tended to be adults in the part-time *zhuanke* program. They were required to work

at office jobs that paid ¥1.50 (US 40¢) per hour, as a condition of their enrollment.

Finally, the activities of all student clubs and associations were carefully scrutinized by the Wei-Wu team. Publications were examined “to guarantee that nobody can take advantage of the socialist platform to advocate capitalist freedom-ization ideas.”⁷⁵ As a result, all of the about two dozen campus publications ceased publication. By 1993 only a few had resumed, and each issue was reviewed in advance by the CCP Propaganda Office before it was permitted to be printed.

Whereas student organizations in the period before 1989 had been characterized by a high degree of autonomy and self-management, the few that existed after rectification dispensed with all trappings of democracy. Participating students used student government and clubs as ways of making money, in fact substituting for the student-run enterprises that had existed under Luo Zhengqi.

Concluding thoughts

The role of the individual as both a leader and a member of the campus community was crucial to the development of participation at SZU. The case of SZU points out that neither the university’s *lingdao* nor the community members at large was much involved in the types of practices that characterize liberal democracy outside China. The major exception was student government from 1986-1989, when it resembled what is known as civil society, that is, the non-government organs of society that are run as voluntary associations. Luo Zhengqi encouraged students to manage themselves. After Luo’s fall, students and teachers continued to sit back and accept whatever participation in school affairs they were given, which after 1989 was minimal. This experience fits comfortably with the prediction that political change in China “is likely to take the form of an *apertura*—a political opening controlled by the reform élite, with democratizing reforms carried out from the top down.”⁷⁶ In this regard SZU’s case does not bode well for China. Effective democratic systems and institutions were not created at the school; any democracy that blossomed failed to survive the demise of an “enlightened” leader. This brings home Fang Lizhi’s concern that democracy must come from below and must be based on the rights of the individual.⁷⁷ An absence of individualism in China casts further doubt whether the democracy-through-individualism route which is common in the West will ever exist in China. One of Chinese culture’s most severe critics has argued that collectivism leads to “disorganization of the self” and provides for a “deep

structure” that results in dependency and indulgence on the part of the individual.⁷⁸ The individual must struggle for democracy, according to Fang Lizhi;⁷⁹ democracy cannot just be presented as a *fait accompli*. There was no such struggle at SZU. Students and faculty were granted the mechanisms for participation by one leader. These mechanisms were removed by the next *lingdao*.

Participation by faculty and students at SZU came largely at the discretion of top management and was not something earned through struggle. The extent to which participation was tolerated or even encouraged depended on the attitude of the *lingdao*. Rules that required democratic procedures for student elections were rewritten by the post-Tiananmen administration. The new leaders were well within their rights to do so. The SZU case suggests that if democracy is to work over time, it must be institutionalized in rules and regulations which are made part of the school’s operating systems. Individuals in the administration at SZU were more important than systems, something consistent with China’s rule of relationships overpowering the rule of law.⁸⁰

The SZU case also says something about civil society. Much has been written about the need for a civil society in China in order to let democracy blossom.⁸¹ Many advocates of democracy for China put their faith not in reform from within the Leninist regime but in construction of a civil society.⁸² There is some historical evidence that such a civil society has existed in China’s past and can exist in its future.⁸³ But there is little empirical support that even the seeds of civil society exist today. The presence of civil society in contemporary China is mere wishful thinking by academics.⁸⁴ Their belief is predicated on several assumptions. First, in the West private (non-state controlled) groups play a buffer-like role between the state and the individual. As such, they can often take a confrontational position in an attempt to limit the power of the state.⁸⁵ But, historically, such confrontation has not led to increased democracy in China. Aware of this, sinologists suggest a new model for China, where civil society is not oppositional, but one in which the state is an active partner.⁸⁶ This transmutation negates the very independence of civil society that makes it a valuable component of Western democracy. Second, it is assumed that organizations provide classrooms of democracy. Citizens learn the needs for check and balances, how elections work, about fairness to those who hold non-mainstream views, etc. Yet, when organizations are not run democratically, they do not serve this purpose.⁸⁷ The Shenzhen-based independent organizations for returned students, Ph.D. holders and Foreign Language scholars were run along the despotic lines of traditional state-based organs. Any democracy in their operations

would necessarily be *lingdao*-dependent. The student organizations at SZU in the post-1989 era also did not serve as models for democracy. Rather, they illustrated cronyism, where the rule was not of law but of relationships.

A third assumption is implied by those who expect democracy to be an outgrowth of civil society. Western experience suggests that the organizations that make up civil society should undertake a political role. But for most of China's long history, organizations that enter politics do so at the risk of their members' lives. At present the only truly independent organizations that would be tolerated are those that have no political role, such as the Ph.D. holders club. Again, Chinese civil society has transformed into something that does not resemble its Western namesake.

Fourth, the groups that make up Western civil society are generally not leader-dependent, and those that survive over time are not focused on specific issues but rather have broader agendas. This contrasts with the historic reality in China, where political changes have been forged by movements, not by institutions. These movements involved protests against individuals, not systems.⁸⁸ In sum, civil society with Chinese characteristics is not civil society in the Western sense: it has little internal democratic governance; it is permitted so long as it poses no threat to the government; it is not independent from the state; nor does it have a broad agenda.

Post-modern educational theorists point out the inability of Western liberal democracy to achieve what they believe should be its goals of equity.⁸⁹ For them democracy as practiced is often just a "...set of inherited principles and institutional arrangements that teach students how to adapt to rather than question the basic precepts of society."⁹⁰ In post-modernists' brand of radical democracy, "educators must allow students to comprehend democracy as a way of life that consistently has to be fought for, has to be struggled over, and has to be rewritten as part of an oppositional politics."⁹¹ "The goal [of Post Modern Theory] is a view of democracy and learning in which multiplicity, plurality, and struggle become the *raison d'être* of democratic public life."⁹² These discussions seem far removed from a discussion of China, where the government contends it operates under "democratic centralism"—a contention dismissed by foreign observers as a word game.⁹³ The differences between political systems and cultures necessitate further research into the meanings of democracy in the Chinese context.

Arguably, China's speed of economic development during the last decade has been unmatched in history. Will democracy follow? Scholars have debated the importance of economic growth for democracy,⁹⁴ the relationships between capitalism, socialism and democracy,⁹⁵ and the role of economic reform in democratization.⁹⁶ Very few dare to draw conclusions at this time.

Given the *appropriate* environment, economic growth and reform *may* foster democracy at the national level and even in Chinese villages.⁹⁷ But given the importance of patron-clientelism, democracy will be harder to achieve within the workplace.⁹⁸ A de-emphasis on individualism and a disregard for the rule of law are part of the despotic tradition that will likely continue to make difficult even the most modest of democratic initiatives in China.⁹⁹ The SZU case suggests that, at least for this one particular educational work-unit, certain conditions unfavorable to democracy existed. These major hindrances included the *nomenklatura* selection process of politically-correct leaders, a political authoritarian management style,¹⁰⁰ the absence of civil society (e.g., meaningful faculty senate, autonomous student union) within the university, the rule of relationships over the rule of law, and the existence of academic departments as independent kingdoms (*duli wangguo*). Without a change in these conditions, faculty and student disengagement is likely to continue. In so far as disengagement reflects dissatisfaction, democratic management would probably increase faculty satisfaction and decrease disengagement.¹⁰¹ Without participation, education, which John Dewey argued can benefit from democracy,¹⁰² is likely to suffer.

Defining what constitutes democracy in China is a cross-cultural challenge. The very term *democracy* (*demos* for people, *kratein* for rule) comes from ancient Greece, the cradle of western civilization where it meant “direct democracy” for the entitled (women, slaves and foreigners were excluded). Over many historical periods theorists (Rousseau, Locke and Marx to cite only a few) have continually tried to define what constitutes (or should constitute) democracy. Today, the popular notion in the West¹⁰³ is that participatory democracy has become “a system in which decisions are taken, and policies made, as a result of the widest possible free and open discussion.”¹⁰⁴ What has become known as liberal democracy¹⁰⁵ argues that the power of the state, even a democratic state, should be limited. This is done by the participation of groups in civil society, or associational democracy¹⁰⁶ as groups pursue their particular, especially economic, interests.¹⁰⁷ The presence of strong and independent social groups in civil society is considered among the enabling factors for democracy.¹⁰⁸ Individualism is a key characteristic—although a “cultural particularity”¹⁰⁹—of Western liberal democratic theory as it abets individual liberty and optimizes opportunities for individuals self-discovery.¹¹⁰

Is China culturally suited for democracy? It has been argued that China indeed has a national identity compatible with democracy¹¹¹ and that the Chinese have recently opened their minds and now have a “national yearning” for democracy.¹¹² Political scientist Andrew Nathan has noted that “Chinese

democracy involves participation without influence.”¹¹³ He is referring to participation in the formal sense, where participatory bodies act as rubber stamps and individuals as window-dressing in the political process. One of Nathan’s students, Shi Tianjian, explored what constituted real participation in the Chinese context, defining it in a broad way. In such a manner participation included “activities by private citizens aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or actual results of governmental policy.”¹¹⁴ Shi noted that “while people in liberal democracies change policy during the policy making stage, people in communist regimes change the impact of government policy at the policy implementation stage.”¹¹⁵ Shi identified forms of informal participation that included the contacting of leaders of work-units, often using the latent threat “if you don’t satisfy my request, I might choose to make trouble for you.”¹¹⁶ Whipping up public opinion against leaders (in other words spreading rumors) was also defined by Shi as a form of participation, one which involved about five percent of his survey respondents.¹¹⁷

Making a contrast with Western-style liberal democracy, one scholar has identified five major features of Asian-style democracy.¹¹⁸ These Asian elements include: (1) patron-client communitarianism, or the superior-subordinate relationship identified as the principal pattern of exchange interaction. It is “characterized by personal, reciprocal ties between persons or groups of persons who command unequal resources by mutually beneficial transactions.”¹¹⁹ (2) Personalism, “with emphasis on leaders rather than on laws” where leaders rule through “the sheer force of their personality...[P]ersonalist bonds become the primary intermediaries and the most important organizational unit for policy making.”¹²⁰ (3) Respect for authority and hierarchy so that “[c]riticism of rulers is tantamount to criticism of the state itself.”¹²¹ (4) A dominant political party without the “Western ‘liberal’ elements...[of] open competition, maximum participation by the citizenry, and the setting of limits to governance over society and over the individual.”¹²² (5) Finally, a strong interventionist state has been “nonpluralist in the sense that the state has co-opted organizations so that there is considerable interdependence between the state and the society’s various interest organizations.”¹²³ Developing relationships (*guanxi*) with those in power is seen by many observers as an important aspect of participation, along with the giving of gifts in exchange for help; this along with patron-clientelism is a major element in the Chinese work place.¹²⁴ Thus, it seems that democracy should be defined in a special way for China, as it should for any country. It appears that social relationships will have a key role in that definition.

Whatever form participation takes in the Chinese *danwei*, the SZU case suggests that it is unlikely to resemble what occurs in Western liberal democracies. Along with the role relationships play, an obvious difference lies in the role of leadership. The term *lingdao* refers to the person(s) formally *put in charge* of an organization. The individual is not selected by those served but rather is placed in power by higher-level *lingdao*. This allows for strong leaders and of course both fuels and feeds upon patron-clientelism. Academic debate among reformers in pre-Tiananmen China focused on the desirability of “neo-authoritarian”¹²⁵ rule as a necessary step toward democracy, a slightly modified continuation of China’s despotic tradition.¹²⁶ In the work-place neo-authoritarianism appears in the form of top-down management styles and the absence of advisory committees. Thus, one would not expect to find much faculty governance in a Chinese university. Any input that is permitted to exist would be at the discretion of the *lingdao*. This is exactly what happened at SZU. The ideas of John Dewey and Cai Yuanpei were nowhere to be seen.

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1. For a description of this period see Lubot, *Liberalism in an Illiberal Age*, 1982. During this period, intellectuals freely criticized the government. Moderate criticism was tolerated in other relatively open periods such as the post-Mao reforms (e.g., the early 1980’s Democracy Wall era and the end of the decade leading to 4 June 1989). Criticism was tolerated during the brief 100 Flowers Period in 1957, but intellectuals who reproved the government were soon branded rightists and persecuted.
 2. The published re-translations of Dewey’s speeches (as recorded in Chinese) produce three occurrences, according to Clopton & Ou, *John Dewey*, 1973:

Education is basic to democracy, because democracy, by definition, is based on the conviction that most people have the capacity to be educated, and that they are capable of learning. In fact, democracy means education; it is, itself, a process of continuing education of all the people. A democratic society provides schooling, but it also calls for those who have had the privilege of schooling to dedicate themselves to public service, and at the same time, to continue learning as they did while in school. Each person is called upon to make his contribution to his own society, and ultimately to the whole of humanity (p. 180).

In both the democracy of the school and in the larger democracy outside, each person must be both a leader and a follower. The greatest handicap under which democracy operates is that there are a few leaders who cannot be followers, and a vast majority of followers who cannot be leaders. The idea of democracy is that one is a leader when he has the ability to lead and when the occasion demands it, and a follower when it is appropriate for him to be one (p. 300).

Democratic education requires attention to each person's strengths, weaknesses, unique qualities; aiming at the fullest development of individual potentials. Criterion of success is students' ability to make sound judgments, to think imaginatively and independently, to adjust creatively to associated living. Artificial boundaries between school subjects must be breached. The effective teacher must continually learn (p. 313).

3. Dockser, *John Dewey and the May Fourth Movement*, 1983, p. 69.
4. Sizer, "John Dewey's ideas in China," 1966, p. 397.
5. Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment in China*, 1977; Sizer, "John Dewey's ideas in China," pp. 401-2. According to the latter, Chinese intellectuals, who "...were treating Dewey's work as dogma in many ways, dared not call it dogma, dared not organize under its banner, dared not change it into a systematic ideology which could be a political force. But it has usually required a highly organized orthodoxy to create change within Chinese philosophy...it was the separation of idea from action, of knowledge from behavior, and of thought from power, which, ironically, was finally responsible for the failure of Deweyism in China."
6. For three decades, until the 1980s, Dewey was criticized as a bourgeois swindler. See Wang, *John Dewey's Influence on Chinese*, 1993, pp. 38-45.
7. Xu, *A Comparison of the Educational Ideas and Practices of John Dewey and Mao Zedong in China*, 1992, p. 126.
8. "The schools of Dewey and Mao resemble each other in that they all guarantee learners an active role in learning and take their interests into consideration; that they favor inductive methods, group discussions, and activities; and they focus on fostering imagination, originality, creativity, and students' own capabilities of thinking and problem solving. However, it is important to point out that Mao's insistence that proletarian ideology was the only correct outlook as well as the only correct methodology, ironically cut away all the freedom and originality he advocated in education, and eventually and sadly, reduced his methodology to exactly what he set out to fight against — traditional cramming." Xu, *A Comparison of the Educational Ideas and Practices of John Dewey and Mao Zedong in China*, 1992, p. 108.
9. Yang, "Set up an educational program that is democratic," 1990, p. 8-14. The article originally appeared in the *World Economic Herald* (Shanghai), which was closed down by the government for being politically incorrect.
10. Su, "A critical evaluation of John Dewey's influence," 1995, p. 319.
11. Lubot, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, 1977, p. 3; see also Lubot, "Peking University fifty-five years ago," 1973, pp. 44-57.
12. Ts'ai, *The Educational Philosophy of Ts'ai, Yuan-P'ei*, 1988, pp. 195-7
13. Chiang, *Tides from the West*, 1947, p. 123; Liang, "Cai Yuanpei and Beijing University," 1980, pp. 9-16.
14. Liang, "Cai Yuanpei and Beijing University," 1980.

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15. Chiang, *Tides from the West*, 1947, pp. 123-4; see also Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, 1977, p. 54.
 16. Lubot, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, 1977, p. 112.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
 18. Cai's lack of sympathy for student protests of May 1919 probably led to his resignation of the Beida presidency, the first of two resignations. This is one of several interpretations of his ambiguously worded resignation letter. See Lubot, *Ts'ai Yuan-Pei*, 1977, pp. 94-7; also Lubot, "Peking University fifty-five years ago," 1973, pp. 55-7. Administrative reforms were aimed at minimizing the power of students, according to Ts'ai, *The Educational Philosophy of Ts'ai, Yuan-P'ei*, 1988, p. 196.
 19. Liang, "Cai Yuanpei and Beijing University," 1980.
 20. Zhou, *Higher Education Reforms*, 1989, chap. 7.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
 22. Pepper, "New experiments in socialist democracy," 1982.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
 26. Kipnis, *Producing Guanxi*, 1997; Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets* 1994; Wilson, *About Face*, 1994; Yan, *The Flow of Gifts*, 1996; Agelasto, *Social Relationships and Job Procurement*, 1998.
 27. Sun, "The deep structure of Chinese culture," 1989, p. 163.
 28. Bond, *Beyond the Chinese Face*, 1991.
 29. See Hall & Hall, *Understanding Cultural Differences*, 1990.
 30. See, e.g., Evans, "Shrinking the Chinese mind," 1992.
 31. Nathan, "Is Chinese culture distinctive?," 1993.
 32. Wilson, "Banquet buddies," 1994, p. 14.
 33. Yang, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets*, 1994, pp. 140-1.
 34. Ho, "On the concept of face," 1976, 867-84; Hwang, "Face and favor," 1987, pp. 944-74.
 35. Alston, "*Wa, guanxi, and inhwa*," 1989, pp. 26-31.
 36. Chu & Ju, *The Great Wall in Ruins*, 1993, p. 189.
 37. Yao, "Cultivating guan-xi," 1987, p. 64.
 38. Schoenhals, *The Paradox of Power*, 1993.
 39. Yao, "Cultivating guan-xi," 1987, p. 64.
 40. Hamilton, Zeile & Kim, "The network structures of east Asian economies," 1990.
 41. Yang, *The Art of Social Relationships*, 1994, p. 87.
 42. Wong, "Chinese entrepreneurs and business trust," 1991, p. 26.
 43. For the contrast between the Japanese and Chinese models, see Tam, "Centrifugal versus centripetal growth processes," 1990, p. 168.
 44. Tricker, "Corporate governance," 1990, pp. 187-214.

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45. Wall, "Managers in the People's Republic of China," 1990, p. 24.
 46. Gouldner, "The norm of reciprocity," 1960, 174 [emphasis in original].
 47. Bei, "SZU under the governance of Cai Delin," 1996.
 48. *Special Issue for the Third Anniversary of SZU*, 1988.
 49. *Ibid.*
 50. This is explored in depth in Pollack, *Civilizing Chinese*, 1997.
 51. *Ibid.*, pp. 198ff.
 52. Cited in Pollack, *Civilizing Chinese*, 1997, p. 228, 235.
 53. *1986 Yearbook*, p. 9.
 54. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 55. "Part-time job management regulations, 25 December 1987," *1987 Yearbook*, pp. 145-6.
 56. Discussed in *1986 Yearbook*, p. 27.
 57. Francis, "The institutional roots of student political culture," 1991, p. 396.
 58. Rai, *Resistance and Reaction*, 1991, p. 181, 187. The study concerned Hangzhou University.
 59. "Constitutions of student organizations, 30 November 1988," *1988 Yearbook*, pp. 201-4; "Regulations on student elections, 30 November 1988," *1988 Yearbook*, pp. 196-201.
 60. *1986 Yearbook*, p. 26.
 61. Wu, "Student 'intelligence group' for president," 1987.
 62. *1986 Yearbook*, p. 25.
 63. *1986 Yearbook*, p. 26.
 64. Entering freshmen for each of the over 20 majors are divided into homeroom classes of about 20 students each. They will take most of their classes together as a group and remain in this configuration until the completion of their study. For further explanation see Pepper, "New experiments in socialist democracy," 1982, p. 171.
 65. In the homeroom phase of the election each student was given a piece of paper and asked to write down two names in secret. There was no formal campaigning at this stage. The process was monitored by students, not by teachers. Later when the Student Council selected its executive committee, electioneering occurred, mostly on a one-to-one basis.
 66. The Student Council received about 8% and the Student Self-Disciplinary Committee about 25% of money allocated students.
 67. The number changed each year but clubs usually involved the following interests: English language; philately; sports—basketball, football, volleyball—guitar, dance, business management, martial arts. The school's band and chorus belonged to the school and were not considered student organizations.
 68. Assignments included: refreshments and entertainment; public relations and communications; supervision of interest groups; academics; sports; finance; coordinating functional groups (the secretary of state portfolio); propaganda

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- and advertising; monitoring dorms; sanitation; cleaning classrooms.
69. Tang, *Shenzhen University's Reform Path*, 1988, p. 302.
 70. "SZU party branch work regulations, 16 November 1989," *1989-90 Yearbook*.
 71. "Report on Party construction: striving two years to achieve three changes, 29 November 1991," *1991 Yearbook*, p. 59.
 72. Wang Songrong, "Speech at the seventh student representative congress, 30 October 1991," *1991 Yearbook*, p. 197.
 73. The duties of this cadre are described in Francis, "The institutional roots of student political culture," 1991; White, "Party and professionals," 1981; see also Rosen, "Political education and student response," 1991, pp. 416-48.
 74. Tang, Li & Zhu, "Will SZU be as shining as before?," 1993.
 75. "Report on Party construction: striving two years to achieve three changes, 29 November 1991," *1991 Yearbook*, p. 59.
 76. Nathan, "China's path from communism," 1993, p. 37; Nathan, *China's Crisis*, 1990.
 77. Fang, "Peering over the great wall," 1990.
 78. Sun, "The deep structure of Chinese culture," 1989, pp. 30-5.
 79. Fang Lizhi, cited in Manning, "Social and cultural prerequisites of democratization," p. 238.
 80. See Jones, "Capitalism, globalization and rule of law," 1994, pp. 195-221.
 81. See "Symposium: 'Public Sphere,' 'Civil Society' in China?," 1993; He, "The ideas of civil society in Mainland China and Taiwan," 1995; Manning, "Social and cultural prerequisites of democratization," 1994; Gold, "The resurgence of civil society in China," 1990, pp. 18-31; Perry and Fuller, "China's long march to democracy," 1991; Strand, "Protest in Beijing," 1990; Rowe, "The public sphere in modern China," 1990.
 82. E.g., Manning, "Social and cultural prerequisites of democratization," 1994: "Because Leninist hypocrisy discredits politics as such, because the purportedly public sphere is actually a private monopoly of illegitimate dictators, the discourse of freedom and fulfillment tends to focus on society and the private sphere." Also, Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist*, 1995, p. 169.
 83. Strand, "Protest in Beijing," 1990; Rowe, "The public sphere," 1990.
 84. See e.g., Gold, "The resurgence of civil society in China," 1990. Perry and Fuller, "China's long march to democracy," 1991, hold hope for the "fledgling forces of nonstate entrepreneurship" and the intellectuals.
 85. Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, 1992, p. 299.
 86. Huang, "'Public sphere' 'civil society' in China?," 1993; Chamberlain, "On the search for civil society in China," 1993.
 87. The importance of participation within lower organizational levels is discussed in Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, *Capitalist Development and*

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- Democracy*, 1992, p. 299.
88. Perry and Fuller, "China's long march to democracy," 1991; Strand, "Protest in Beijing," 1990.
 89. Aronowitz & Giroux, *Postmodern Education*, 1991; Shapiro, *Between Capitalism and Democracy*, 1990; Giroux, *Border Crossings*, 1992.
 90. Aronowitz & Giroux, *Postmodern Education*, 1991, p. 187.
 91. *Ibid.*, 1991, p. 125. Radical educators speak of economic democracy as a way to liberate education and to promote personal development and equality. They see an important role for education in transforming society into a more democratic and economically just entity. See Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in a Capitalist America*, 1976. A critical discussion of this Marxist analysis of education appears in Blackledge & Hunt, *Sociological Interpretations of Education*, 1985, pp. 134-78.
 92. Aronowitz & Giroux, *Postmodern Education*, 1991, p. 189.
 93. Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy 2nd ed.*, 1993, pp. 151ff.
 94. For a general summary of the literature see So, *Social Change and Development*, 1990, pp. 48-52, 78-85; Barro, "Democracy," 1994; Barro, "Pushing democracy is no key to prosperity," 1993.
 95. Diamond & Plattner, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy Revisited*, 1993.
 96. Halpern, "Economic reform and democratization," 1989.
 97. Lawrence, "Democracy, Chinese style," 1994.
 98. McCormick, "Leninist implementation," 1987.
 99. Zheng, *A Comparison between Western and Chinese Political Ideas*, 1995.
 100. This type of leadership style is among those discussed in Ball, *The Micro-Politics of the School*, 1987.
 101. Research in the U.S. workplace has shown that member satisfaction is positively related to a democratic style of supervision. See Stogdill, *Handbook of Leadership*, 1974, p. 370.
 102. Recent empirical evidence in the U.K. and U.S. suggests democracy benefits education. See e.g., respectively, Gordon, *Democracy in One School?*, 1986; Heckman, Confer & Peacock, "Democracy in a multicultural school and community," 1995.
 103. This article adopts the general usage in which *West* and *western* refer to economically developed countries that may include countries in the East (e.g., Japan) and South (e.g., Australia).
 104. Arblaster, *Democracy*, 1994.
 105. Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy 2nd ed.*, 1993.
 106. Paul Hirst, "Associational democracy," 1993, pp. 112-35.
 107. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
 108. Hall, "Consolidations of democracy," 1993, pp. 271-90; Perry & Fuller, "China's long march to democracy," 1991. See also Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, 1992, p. 297:

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- “The more the balance of class power favors subordinate class interests and the more a dense civil society aids in giving organizational expression to those interests and at the same time constitutes a countervailing force against unrestrained and autonomous state power, the greater the chances not only of installing democratic institutions, and making them stable but also of increasing the real weight of democratic decision-making.”
109. See Parekh, “The cultural particularity of liberal democracy,” 1993, pp. 156-75.
 110. This latter doctrine falls under the rubric of development democracy. See Norton, *Democracy and Moral Development*, 1991.
 111. Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects*, 1995, pp. 339-40, argues this point and contends that the various defeats of democracy in China should be viewed mainly as political defeats. For a fuller discussion of the cultural factor in Chinese democracy see Manning, “Social and cultural prerequisites of democratization,” 1994, pp. 232-48. See also Fukuyama, “Confucianism and democracy,” 1995.
 112. Lin, *The Opening of the Chinese Mind*, 1994, p. 119.
 113. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy*, 1985, p. 227.
 114. Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing: A Survey Study*, 1992, p. 58.
 115. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
 116. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
 117. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
 118. Neher, “Asian style democracy,” 1994.
 119. *Ibid.*, p. 950. See also, Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism*, 1986; Oi, “Market Reforms and Corruption in Rural China,” 1989.
 120. Neher, “Asian style democracy,” 1994, pp. 951-2.
 121. *Ibid.*, p. 953.
 122. *Ibid.*, p. 955 [footnote omitted].
 123. *Ibid.*, p. 957.
 124. See Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism*, 1986; Yang, *Gifts, Favors and Banquets*, 1994.
 125. Petracca & Xiong, “The concept of Chinese neo-authoritarianism,” 1990, pp. 1099-1117; Gamer, “Helping history find its way,” 1991.
 126. Zheng, *A Comparison between Western and Chinese Political Ideas*, 1995.