

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract  
Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHINESE URBAN LIFE UNDER REFORM

*The Changing Social Contract*

One of the most dramatic changes in the lives of average, urban Chinese since the introduction of market reforms in the 1980s has been the erosion of the “iron rice bowl,” the social contract between the communist government and the Chinese people. The promises of socialism – job security, medical benefits, housing, education, and other elements of social welfare – have gradually given way to the promises of the market. In this book Wenfang Tang, a political scientist, and William Parish, a sociologist, team up to explore the social aspects of China’s economic transformation, the shrinking role of the Chinese government in social welfare, and the politics and difficulties of that transition.

Tang and Parish examine the trade-off – the loss of communal egalitarianism – for the market reforms that give freer reign to individual aspirations in China. Their study, based on a unique set of national social surveys completed over ten years, beginning in 1987, presents a rare glimpse into how the Chinese population is experiencing the shift from a planned to a market economy. The authors give voice to workers, civil servants, intellectuals, and women, who report their grievances and joys at home, work, and in the public sphere. This book offers fresh data on emerging patterns of economic inequality, labor–management relations, political participation, and gender inequality in China. Using comparative data from similar surveys in the more market-based Taiwan, the authors illuminate the future directions in which Chinese society may be headed.

Wenfang Tang is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh.

William L. Parish is Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago.

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract

Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE MODERN CHINA SERIES

*Other books in the series:*

Warren I. Cohen and Li Zhao, eds., *Hong Kong Under Chinese Rule:*

*The Economic and Political Implications of Reversion*

Tamara Jacka, *Women's Work in Rural China: Change and Continuity  
in an Era of Reform*

Shiping Zheng, *Party vs. State in Post-1949 China: The  
Institutional Dilemma*

Edward S. Steinfeld, *Forging Reform in China: The Fate of  
State-Owned Industry*

Michael Dutton, *Streetlife China*

Jing Huang, *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics*

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract

Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHINESE URBAN LIFE UNDER REFORM

*The Changing Social Contract*

WENFANG TANG

*University of Pittsburgh*

WILLIAM L. PARISH

*University of Chicago*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract  
 Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521770859](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521770859)

© Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish 2000

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Tang, Wenfang, 1955–  
 Chinese urban life under reform: the social contract/Wenfang  
 Tang, William L. Parish.  
 p. cm. – (Cambridge modern China series)  
 Includes bibliographical references and index.  
 ISBN 0-521-77085-8  
 1. City and town life – China. 2. China – Social life and  
 customs – 1976– I. Parish, William L. II. Title. III. Series.  
 DS779.23.T365 1999  
 951'.009732 – dc21-99-30393  
 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-77085-9 hardback  
 ISBN-10 0-521-77085-8 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-77865-7 paperback  
 ISBN-10 0-521-77865-4 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2006

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract  
Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page ix</i>
PART I. INTRODUCTION	
1 Socialist and Market Social Contracts	3
2 The Urban Social World	17
PART II. GROUP INTERESTS	
3 Life Chances: Education and Jobs	51
4 Economic Rewards	79
5 Popular Reactions to the Changing Social Contract	102
6 Labor–Management Relations	128
7 Civil Servants and Bureaucratic Behavior	163
8 Political Participation and Interest Articulation	184
PART III. GENDER	
9 Gender and Work by <i>William L. Parish and Sarah Busse</i>	209
10 Gender and Family by <i>William L. Parish and James Farrer</i>	232
PART IV. COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS	
11 Taiwan and China Compared	273
12 Conclusion	306
Appendix A. Supplementary Materials	317
Appendix B. Surveys, Sampling Biases, and Weighting	343
<i>References</i>	352
<i>Index</i>	381

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract  
Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgments*

The idea of writing a book about Chinese urban reform began in 1990 when Wenfang Tang had several conversations with the deputy director of the Economic System Reform Institute of China (ESRIC), Wang Xiaoqiang, about ongoing urban social surveys conducted by ESRIC. Subsequently, Wang Xiaoqiang helped us establish cooperative ties with the staff at ESRIC. A National Science Foundation grant (INT-9215268) allowed Wenfang Tang to secure all the ESRIC survey data since 1987, and supported the development of new surveys until 1992. During this process, Yang Guansan, director of the China Social Survey Network at ESRIC, provided extraordinary leadership skills and indispensable technical expertise even when ESRIC was going through a difficult time after the 1989 urban protests. Several years have gone by since the initial stage of this project. While expressing our sincere appreciation for their early help, we can only apologize for the slow pace of our computers in crunching the vast quantity of data they provided (Chapters 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11).

In time, we came to use data from several other sources, and we give thanks to people who helped with those additional data sets. Analysis of labor–management relations (Chapter 6) was made possible with the help of Feng Tongqing, Zhao Wei, and Li Ruirui at the Labor Institute of China. Elizabeth Li and her collaborators also provided a supplementary data set that helped enrich the analysis of labor–management relations. The data analysis of gender and family (Chapters 9 and 10) was achieved through a collaborative effort with the Universities Service Centre, Chinese University of Hong Kong, with William Parish serving as a Project Associate of the Centre during the period of analysis. We are grateful to the Director and Vice-Director of that Centre, Professor H. C. Kuan and Jean Hung, for assistance in this part of the project and for their skilled shepherding of a marvelous research collection on China. We are also grateful to the principal investigators in China for

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract

Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

making this data set available for scholarly use outside of China. The comparisons with Taiwan (Chapter 11) relied on the generous policy of providing public use data sets by the survey research group at Academia Sinica, led at the time by Professor Chiu Hei-yuan. We are grateful to Professor Chiu for setting a precedent in East Asia of providing public use data sets, and for his generous support of this and other projects. We are also grateful to the scholars who made the 1988 Chinese Household Income Project (CHIP) (Chapter 4) income data set available through public sources.

Several people have given generously of their time and energy in helping to write and edit the book. Though her name as coauthor heads only Chapter 9, “Gender and Work,” throughout the book Sarah Busse has labored mightily in helping us to think and write more clearly. A tough schoolmaster, Sarah has prodded and probed, even getting us to throw away or rewrite whole sections that weren’t “up to snuff.” As a Russian specialist, she provided considerable contextual material from the Soviet and East and Central European socialist experience. James Farrer, coauthor of Chapter 10, “Gender and Family,” gave generously of his time when he was busy completing his wonderfully rich ethnographic dissertation on romance and self-identity in Shanghai. A “right-brain” person more given to poetics than statistics, James is to be admired for enduring our linear ways of analysis and thinking. His rich insights from three years of living in Shanghai help provide some of the human interest in that chapter. Marsha Tsouris and Nancy Matrozza at the University of Pittsburgh also helped with editing several chapters.

At the University of Chicago, several other graduate students have given tremendous help with different parts of the analysis. These include Charles Chi-hsiang Chang, computer jockey and data analyst par excellence and an expert on the Taiwan portion of our data, and Fang Li, general pinch hitter who has written an excellent dissertation of his own on private entrepreneurs.

Because this book was a long time in gestation, many friends and colleagues had opportunities to comment on draft chapters and gave feedback on chapters during conferences and seminars at several universities. By now, we fear that we have forgotten some of the most astute commentators on early versions of chapters. Nevertheless, with the usual warning about how none of these people are responsible for the final

Cambridge University Press

0521778654 - Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract  
Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xi

product, we want to thank those we can remember. For gracious comments on one or more underdeveloped chapters, great thanks and bows of appreciation go to Yanjie Bian, Monte Broaded, Deborah Davis, Barbara Einhorn, Li Lulu, Nan Lin, Thomas Metzger, Ethan Michelson, Ellen Pimentel, Thomas Rawski, Bert Rockman, Irwin Schulman, Tianjian Shi, Donald Treiman, Tang Tsou, Andrew Walder, Wang Fenyu, Martin King Whyte, Dali Yang, Yu Xie, Ming Zhang, and Dingxin Zhao.

In addition to the National Science Foundation grant, Wenfang Tang received financial support from several other sources, including the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (1993), the China Study Endowment, and the Asian Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh (various years). The Department of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh provided research assistantship over the entire project period. A National Fellowship (1997–98) at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, enabled Dr. Tang to work continuously on the manuscript. During parts of the project, William Parish had support from the Luce Foundation, the National Science Foundation (SBR-9515173, SBR-9515143), the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, Academia Sinica in Taiwan, and the Social Science Collegiate Division at the University of Chicago.

William Parish benefited greatly from collaborative research, friendship, and insights from people at several Chinese institutions. At the Sociology Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, he has had the great pleasure of working closely with Shen Chonglin, Zhe Xiaoye, Chen Yingying, and Zhang Houyi. Listing some of these people as coauthors of several articles in our references only begins to indicate their contributions. Other friends in China have been wonderful sounding boards for evolving ideas, even when they had little hint of what use would be made of their observations.

We enjoyed working with Elizabeth Neal and Mary Child at Cambridge University Press. We are also grateful to William Kirby and the anonymous readers for their comments and suggestions. Our family members and friends supported us throughout the project. Finally, we dedicate this book to Chinese urban residents – the real subject of this book – including the tens of thousands who took the time to reply to the surveys analyzed in this book.