Introduction

DURING the early part of the twentieth century, the city of Shanghai harbored a wide variety of voluntary associations. They ranged from native-place associations, trade guilds, chambers of commerce, professional associations, Christian congregations, secret societies, the criminal underworld, labor unions, and political party organizations, to a host of educational, vocational, academic, athletic, artistic, theatrical, and literary societies, altogether numbering in the several hundreds. Designed for various economic, social, political, intellectual, and cultural purposes, the voluntary associations operated as legitimate or illegitimate, overt or covert, or public or private entities. The associations, and the diverse social groups they represented, created a vibrant urban society with complex social dynamics evident in the city and beyond, and provided much of the drama in Shanghai's political, social, and cultural history at the time. This book examines one important but under-studied type of those social groups and associations, namely, Chinese professionals and their associations.

Scholars of modern Chinese history have used the term "professional association" to refer to chambers of commerce, bankers' associations, educational societies, and lawyers' groups. This book deals with such professionals as lawyers, doctors, and journalists (touching upon accountants) who were collectively identified in Republican China as *ziyou zhiye zhe* (free professionals). The term's origins are obscure. The term is probably a translation of the German word *freiberufler* or *freier beruf*, though it remains to be discovered who first used or translated the term in China.[1] The history of the concept "profession" in China was quite

1. I am grateful to Haken Friberg of Stockholm University who suggested to me the possibility of the German words being translated into the Chinese term.

similar to that in Germany. For a long time in China there was no word or term to differentiate "professions" from "occupations" – both were called *zhiye*.[2] Not until 1929 was the term *ziyou zhiye zhe* used by the Guomindang (GMD) official documents to identify professional groups, including doctors, lawyers, accountants, journalists, engineers, and professors, and the term *ziyou zhiye tuanti* to refer to their organizations. Thereafter, those groups all called themselves *ziyou zhiye zhe*.[3]

They were not, however, the same. Doctors and lawyers (and accountants) were self-employed or independent professionals, whereas journalists (along with professors and engineers) were professional employees or salaried professionals. The fact that they were identified as one particular social category by 1929 is significant. First of all, it reflected the GMD's scheme to categorize social groups for the purpose of exercising social control with a vision of having a corporatist state. Furthermore, the notion of free professionals that included all these groups indicated its Western origin because the occupations had been recognized as professions in the West.[4] On the other hand, those diverse groups came to be identified as one category because they did share something in common and they were conscious of their commonality. The professional groups had become a recognizable and recognized social type. At the same time, the development of those professional groups may be taken as a measure of China's modern transformation or modernization.[5]

2. For the German case, see Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900–1950* (Oxford, 1990), pp.4–5; "The German Professions in History and Theory," in Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *German Professions, 1800–1950* (Oxford, 1990), pp.10–11; Charles E. McClelland, *The German Experience of Professionalization* (Cambridge, 1991), p.15.
3. GMD documents did not include associations of professors in the category of *ziyou zhiye tuanti*, but when the election of delegates to the Citizens' Congress took place in 1931, professors were allowed to participate in the election as part of the circle of free professionals.
4. The literature on professionalization in the West shows that the process was a continuous one: more and more occupations required specialized training and thus claimed expertise and demanded the recognition as professions. For experiences of professionalization in several Western societies, see Samuel Haber, *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750–1900* (Chicago, 1991); Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *German Professions, 1800–1950*; Charles E. McLelland, *The German Experience of Professionalization*; Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions*; Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London, 1989); Roy Lewis and Angus Maude, *Professional People* (London, 1952); W. J. Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York, 1966).
5. Magali Sarfatti Larson points out that for professions, the most significant aspects of

The preceding observations bring us to the objectives of this book. Through examining the development of such professional groups as lawyers, doctors, and journalists, and the political and sociocultural milieu within which they emerged and functioned, this study aims to illuminate three issues that bear on our understanding of urban society in Republican China. First, by analyzing professionals' economic conditions, life-style, cultural functions, social identity, and political orientation, this study will show that the appearance of Chinese professionals as a new social category reflected a new kind of class formation in Republican Shanghai in the course of modernization. Second, with critical use of the concept "professionalization" informed by recent scholarship on the subject, this study will demonstrate that professional associations differed from other urban associations in a number of ways. The most important difference stemmed from the professional associations' professional concerns and their efforts at professionalization. That difference further indicates the increasing heterogeneity of urban society and complexity of urban politics at that time. Third and most important, through explicating the role of the Republican state in Chinese professionalization and examining the relationship of professional associations with the state and other urban organizations, this study will propose the notion of a symbiotic dynamics that characterized the Chinese state–society relationship in the Republican era. With a synthesis of urban society in Republican Shanghai and its relationship with the state, this study provides a point of reference for observing the similar and continuing transformation of state and society in contemporary China.

PROFESSIONALS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS IN REPUBLICAN CHINA

Although voluntary associations of different sorts had long existed in rural and urban China, professional associations did not appear in Shanghai and elsewhere until after the founding of the Republic in 1912. In several important respects, the rise of Chinese professionals and their associations was a new social phenomenon. Many of the traditional organizations and their twentieth-century incarnations – such as private

modernization are the advance of science and cognitive rationality and the related rationalization and growing differentiation in the division of labor. See Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley, 1977), p.xvi.

academies, lineage, secret societies, criminal gangs, trade guilds, urban gentry-merchant organizations, and native-place associations – have been studied by scholars.[6] In contrast to those organizations, professional organizations were unambiguously urban and modern in their origins and functions. The emergence of professionals as a social type was predicated upon modern education, modern economy and technology, modern mass media, new concepts of the intellectual's role in society, new patterns of career development, and Western influence in general – all elements particular to a combination of urban environment and the modernization process.

The professional was a new breed of educated Chinese. Traditionally, educated Chinese (literati) were Confucian generalists who possessed expertise in the knowledge and presentation of Confucian classics, history, and literature – areas of knowledge that were closely related and technically undifferentiated. By abolishing the civil service examination, establishing Western-style schools, and promoting industry, commerce, and judicial reform, among other things, the New Policy reform (1901–1911) of the late Qing formally triggered a transformation of

6. For private academies, see Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA, 1990). For lineages, see Mary B. Rankin and Joseph W. Esherick, eds., *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance* (Berkeley, 1990). For secret societies, see Jean Chesneaux, ed., *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China, 1840–1950* (Stanford, 1972); Frederic Wakeman Jr., *Policing Shanghai, 1927–1937* (Berkeley, 1995); Bryan G. Martin, *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime, 1919–1937* (Berkeley, 1996). For merchant organizations, see Susan Mann Jones, "The Ninpo *Pang* and Financial Power at Shanghai," Edward J. M. Rhoads, "Merchant Associations in Canton, 1895–1911," David D. Buck, "Educational Modernization in Tsinan, 1899–1937," Shirley S. Garrett, "The Chambers of Commerce and the YMCA," in Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner, eds., *The Chinese City between Two Worlds* (Stanford, 1974); Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Politics in Shanghai, 1890–1930* (Honolulu, 1985); Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911–1937* (Cambridge, 1989); Marie-Claire Bergère, "The Shanghai Bankers' Association, 1915–1927: Modernization and the Institutionalization of Local Solidarities," in Frederic Wakeman and Wen-hsin Yeh, eds., *Shanghai Sojourners* (Berkeley, 1992); William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford, 1985); William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796–1895* (Stanford, 1989); David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley, 1989); Xu Dingxin and Qian Xiaoming, *Shanghai Zong Shanghui Shi, 1902–1929* (A history of the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce) (Shanghai, 1991); Ma Min and Zhu Ying, *Chuantong Yu Jindai De Erchong Bianzhou: Wanqing Suzhou Shanghui Ge'an Yanjiu* (Dual variations of tradition and modernity: A case study of the Suzhou Chamber of Commerce in late Qing) (Chengdu, 1993). For native-place associations, see Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley, 1995).

knowledge structure and its sociocultural meanings. The late Qing already saw the appearance of new perceptions about the educated as enlighteners of the people and arbiters of public affairs by way of writing for popular consumption – a role different from the traditional type of scholar-officials or literati.[7] The first few decades of the twentieth century further witnessed new career paths opened to and new sociocultural roles created for the educated, including working and living as professionals.

Professional associations too represented a departure from the past in some respects. Earlier studies have shown that in traditional or transitional urban organizations (such as the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce, the Shanghai Bankers' Association, trade guilds, and native-place associations), native-place and familial ties served as important and defining organizational and functional mechanisms.[8] Similarly, native origins were one of the lines along which the working class in Shanghai was divided and its politics defined.[9] In contrast, while individual professionals could and did participate in activities based on native-place ties, such ties were manifestly unimportant to professional associations – providing a new perspective of urban associations and urban politics.[10]

Shanghai professionals were prompted to form their own organizations primarily because of their professional interests or group interests. At the same time, they had wider concerns about national affairs and

7. Leo Ou-fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Ch'ing and Beyond," in David Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski, eds., *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 1985), pp.360–95; Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford, 1996). For the late Qing reform, see Meribeth E. Cameron, *The Reform Movement in China, 1898–1912* (Stanford, 1931); Douglas R. Reynolds, *China, 1898–1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge, MA, 1993). For the educational reform in particular, see Marianne Bastid, *Educational Reform in Early-Twentieth-Century China* (Ann Arbor, 1988); Sally Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China* (Stanford, 1983).
8. For the intricate native-place relationships in the Shanghai business world during the prewar period, see Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age*, Chapter 3; Marie-Claire Bergère, "The Shanghai Bankers' Association"; Susan Mann Jones, "Ninpo Pang."
9. Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford, 1993).
10. The available membership directories of these professional associations show that their members came from different parts of the country. The Shanghai Bar Association, for example, had members from sixteen provinces and from different counties within a province. Its leaders also hailed from different native places. See *Shanghai Lushi Gonghui Huiyuanlu* (The membership directory of the Shanghai Bar Association), 1934.

embraced the idea of national salvation through science, education, industry, and the rule of law (*kexue jiuguo, jiaoyu jiuguo, shiye jiuguo, fazhi jiuguo*). Those public-sounding goals also served the professionals' self-interests. To be sure, the traditional or transitional urban elite of industrial, commercial, and banking interests in the city shared some of the nationalistic sentiment and purpose, and their associations had adopted similar democratic organizational principles by the Republican era.[11] But still there was a difference between professional associations that were based on professional interests and other types of urban organizations that were formed on other grounds.

To grasp the differences and connections between professionals and other social groups, one may regard Chinese professionals as an emerging social class – both as an urban middle class and as a professional class – reflecting a new kind of social class formation. In the fields of political science and sociology, there has been no agreement on what constitutes a class or on how to define class, and "middle class" is notoriously elusive to define. Yet the literature on middle class in Western and non-Western societies in the late nineteenth and twentieth century generally includes professionals in the category of middle class, along with civil servants and traditional petty bourgeoisie.[12] In the scholarship on modern China, mention has been made of the appearance in early-twentieth-century China of an urban middle class, an intelligentsia, professional groups, and new urban classes, but none of them is fully analyzed and well understood.[13] An analysis of Chinese professionals as a professional class–cum–urban middle class will provide a concrete case of social class formation in the Republican era.

11. Marie-Claire Bergère, "The Shanghai Bankers' Association."
12. For a useful overview of different approaches to class definition, see Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure: A Critical Perspective* (New York, 1983), pp.602–45. For discussions of professionals as middle class in Western and non-Western societies, see Pamela M. Pilbeam, *The Middle Class in Europe, 1789–1914: France, Germany, Italy, and Russia* (Chicago, 1990), especially Chapter 4; Jurgen Kocka and Allan Mitchell, eds., *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1993); George Lavau, Gerard Grunberg, and Nonna Mayer, eds., *L'Univers Politique des Classes Moyennes* (Paris, 1983); Bhagwan Prasad, *Socioeconomic Study of Urban Middle Classes* (Delhi, 1971); B. B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes* (Oxford, 1961); National Institute of Social and Economic Research, *Growth of Middle Class in Pakistan* (Karachi, 1971).
13. Joseph Fewsmith, for instance, used the term "middle class" to "describe a wide range of merchants, from those who were at least fairly substantial on down to the thousands of shopkeepers who participated in the national goods movements and the associated boycotts." Obviously, this was only one segment of the urban middle class. See *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China*, pp.9–10.

For analyzing where Chinese professionals were socially situated in Republican Shanghai, an eclectic approach to class definition will suffice. Obviously, professionals may be considered middle class due to their position in the productive structure of society (neither capitalists nor workers) à la Marxist theory of class analysis. At the same time, informed by various approaches to class definition, one may point to professionals' income level and life-style, their position in technical division of labor (mental versus manual), and their perception and self-perception in society. Encompassing all the preceding was the professionals' commitment to professionalism as a new value particular to them and to professionalization as an institutional and material process beneficial to them. Indeed, Chinese professionals' efforts at professionalization made perfect sense when professionalization is viewed also as a process of social class formation integrating individuals into one profession and various professions into a professional community or a professional class occupying a middling position or strata in Chinese urban society and between state and society at large.

As might be expected, however, even as a new social class, Chinese professionals as a whole did not form a monolithic entity any more than other social groups and classes in Republican Shanghai.[14] Although professionals constituted a considerable segment of the population in Shanghai and, to some extent, shared a sense of a professional community, they were by no means a homogeneous group, and were differentiated in economic circumstances, social prestige, political attitudes, group identities, and cultural functions. Nor were professionals a self-contained group separate from other social elements in Shanghai. Quite the contrary, they had all kinds of social, cultural, economic, and political connections with other social groups and organizations in the city and beyond. Indeed, the emergence of professionals as a new social class was part of a larger process of social configuration and political formation in Republican China that at once differentiated and connected various social categories.

14. The recent scholarship on modern Shanghai has convincingly demonstrated that both the working class and bourgeois class in Shanghai were horizontally stratified along the economic line and vertically separated along the lines of native-place origins, cultural practices, political orientations (or political connections for the bourgeois class), and local circumstances. See Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919–1949* (Stanford, 1986); Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*; Alain Roux, *Le Shanghai Ouvrier des Années Trente: Coolies, Gangsters et Syndicalistes* (Paris, 1993); Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age*; Christian Henriot, *Shanghai, 1927–1937: Municipal Power, Locality, and Modernization* (Berkeley, 1993).

To capture the dynamics and relationships in that changing urban society, this study places emphasis on the associational activities of lawyers, doctors, and journalists. Associational activism did not necessarily mean political activism. Professional associations started out for strictly professional purposes, which set them apart functionally from other urban organizations. They only gradually became caught up in the tides of political movements, which further linked them socially and politically with other social groups and organizations. Both aspects of associational activism of professionals were important, as they contributed to the complex dynamics of urban politics and state–society relationship at that time.

Over the period of 1912 to 1937, a general pattern of collective action among professionals emerged. Journalists were slow to organize themselves into formal professional associations and engage in regular associational activities. Their professional maturity came with political activism at the time of national crisis in the 1930s. By contrast, Shanghai lawyers were best organized and their bar association functioned most effectively in both professional and political terms. Western-style doctors and native physicians were equally effective in pursuing group interests through their organizations, although they were much less vocal on purely political issues. One of the concerns of this study is to explain the differences in associational behavior of those professional groups.

This study focuses on the professional community in Shanghai for a reason – in that treaty port, Chinese professionals clustered in the largest number and every factor conducive to the rise of professions was most pronounced. Marie-Claire Bergère once forcefully argued that despite Shanghai's foreign concessions, "Shanghai very obviously was Chinese." Representing a modernist, democratic, and international tradition, Shanghai was a China of minority and marginality, "but just as authentic as the rural China."[15] As this study will show, while foreign presence and dominance in Shanghai did affect the behavior of Chinese professionals in Shanghai in some aspects, one may not assume that the general characteristics of Chinese professionals in Shanghai were radically different from their counterparts in the rest of the country. On occasions of national issues and crises, there were close communications between, and concerted actions taken by, professional organizations in

15. Marie-Claire Bergère, "'The Other China': Shanghai from 1919 to 1949," in Christopher Howe, ed., *Shanghai: Revolution and Development in an Asian Metropolis* (Cambridge, 1981), pp.13–34.

Shanghai and those in other parts of the country, with the former playing a leading role. If the role of Chinese professionals and their organizations in urban society and their relationship with the state can be delineated in the context of Republican Shanghai, the analysis should be relevant to an understanding of professional groups in other Chinese cities as well.

PROFESSIONALIZATION IN REPUBLICAN CHINA

To illuminate and examine in a comparative perspective the professionals' social identity in Republican Shanghai and their interaction with the state, this study employs the concept of professionalization. Shanghai professionals can be identified as a distinct social type in Chinese urban society largely because of their professional concerns. Their associational activities aiming at professionalization most clearly distinguished them from other social groups amidst the seemingly similar institutional features and collective actions of various urban associations.

In describing and conceptualizing the rise of professions and professionalism in the West, sociologists have used two general approaches or models: (1) the "attribute model" and (2) the "process model" (also known as functionalist approach and power-analysis approach). The attribute model applies several attributes as essential to defining a profession. The three most cited attributes are (1) an expertise based on theory and knowledge acquired through higher education, (2) a professed ethics of servicing the public regardless of monetary reward, and (3) an autonomy in and monopoly of the service through self-regulating and controlling the standards for entry into the profession, usually with a professional association. Some scholars identified more attributes, but Ernest Greenwood argued that the preceding three were the essential ones and others were derivative.[16]

The process model was developed as a response to and criticism of the attribute model. It contends that the attribute model accepts at face value certain occupational groups' claims to professional status as defining attributes. The process model says what needs to be done instead is to analyze how the groups made their claims in order to gain legitimacy.

16. Ernest Greenwood, "Attributes of a Profession: Revisited," in Sheo K. Lal, et al., eds., *Readings in the Sociology of the Professions* (Delhi: Gain Publishing House, 1988), pp.12–14; Ronald M. Pavalko, *Sociology of Occupations and Professions* (Itasca, IL, 1988), pp.19–29.

It further says that the attribute model is flawed for presenting too rigid a picture of professions, while in fact occupational groups could be located along a continuum from nonprofession to profession. Some studies using the process model have proposed patterns of professionalization that indicate the temporal stages at which certain defining attributes would appear, though scholars differ on the specific sequence of those particular stages.[17] As the advocates of the process model have noted, the attribute model is insensitive to how the process by which occupational groups claim professional status is shaped by the nature of class structure and ignores important variables such as the role of the state in professionalization.[18] In short, the process model stresses an analysis of professionalization as a historical process mediated by class structure, the role of the state, and the acquisition and use of power by professions.

While the process model (power-analysis approach) considerably advanced the study of professions, biased by the Anglo-American experience, scholars of that approach also discounted the experience of professional groups in continental European countries. Magali Sarfatti Larson once considered the French and German cases as being closer to a model of civil service than to that of profession and chose to study the "purer" features of professionalization in Anglo-American societies.[19] Similarly, Eliot Freidson argued that "as an institutional concept, the term 'profession' is intrinsically bound up with a particular period of history and with only a limited number of nations in that period of history."[20]

Recent scholarship on professionalization has been correcting that bias. It has been pointed out that using the Anglo-American experience as the standards limited a full understanding of professionalization in continental European countries. Regarding the relationship between professional groups and the state, the old assumptions about the freedom of professional groups from government intervention in Anglo-American societies need to be modified because professional

17. Ronald M. Pavalko, *Sociology*, pp.34–35.
18. Ibid., pp.29–38; Terence J. Johnson, *Professions and Power* (Hong Kong, 1972), pp.21–38.
19. Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism*, pp.xvii–xviii.
20. Eliot Freidson, "The Theory of Professions: State of the Art," in Robert Dingwall and Philip Lewis, eds., *The Sociology of the Professions: Lawyers, Doctors, and Others* (London, 1983), p.26; also see Eliot Freidson, *Professional Powers* (Chicago, 1986), pp.30–38.