

Joel Andreas
Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles
April 1999
Draft. Comments are welcome: jandreas@ucla.edu
18,542 words

Political and Cultural Capital as Axes of Contention in Student Factional Conflict during the Chinese Cultural Revolution¹

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a new model to explain student factional conflict during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-68). The Cultural Revolution opened up possibilities to attack political and intellectual elites and undermined the legitimacy of their principal resources – political and cultural capital. I discuss four different types of political factions each shaped in part by variations in the volume and composition of political and cultural capital. By helping explain the social bases of conflict during this unique event, a factional confrontation involving millions of people at the height of Communist power, this paper contributes to understanding the conflicts immanent in the reordered class structures of socialist societies.

¹ I am grateful to Tang Shaojie, Song Yongyi, Michael Schoenhals, Richard Siao and Wang Youqin for the invaluable documents, introductions and perspectives they provided. Many people made helpful comments on drafts of this paper including Andrew Walder, Ivan Szelenyi, Michael Mann, Rebecca Emigh, Gi-wook Shin, Elizabeth Perry, Philip Huang, Suzanne Pepper, Yin Hongbiao, Han Dongping and participants in the Comparative Social Analysis Workshop and the China Dissertation Group at UCLA. Please direct comments to Joel Andreas: jandreas@ucla.edu.

INTRODUCTION

What happens to class structure when its principal foundation – private property – is eliminated? Such was the radical social experiment carried out by communist parties after they came to power in Russia, China and other countries. Contrary to the predicted eventual elimination of social inequality, reordered hierarchies of power and privilege emerged. These hierarchies were the focus of the discourse of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-8). Fledgling organizations of students, workers and peasants used Maoist rhetoric targeting “bourgeois intellectuals” and “power holders in the Party taking the capitalist road” to attack political and intellectual elites, including the Communist Party leadership at workplaces and schools. The ensuing factional struggle nearly led to civil war before it was suppressed in 1968. Scholars have only begun to tap the potential insights that this unique event – a factional confrontation involving millions of people at the height of communist power – might yield into the process of re-stratification that took place in socialist societies. In this paper I ask: How was factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution related to hierarchies of power and privilege in post-1949 China? Why did some people rise up in rebellion while others defended the status quo? What were “rebel” and “conservative” organizations fighting for and against?

I conducted comparative case studies of student factional conflict at Tsinghua University and its attached middle school in Beijing. On the macro-theoretical level, I was concerned with understanding how this conflict was related to political and cultural hierarchies of power and privilege.² Empirically, I conducted these studies to examine the claims of the prevailing explanation of student factional alignment during the Cultural Revolution.

² My aim has been to identify social structural bases for factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution. Other studies have shown how factional alignment was shaped by higher level factional conflicts as well as individual psychology and individuals’ previous experiences and decisions. See, for instance, Anita Chan (1985) and Perry and Li (1997).

One and Two Dimensional Models of Stratification in Socialist Societies

Investigation of conflict and change in socialist societies is often explicitly or implicitly informed by a one-dimensional conception of power and privilege, which focuses on a single hierarchy, *political capital*, or power based on position in the ruling party. Political capital is seen as the overriding mechanism of stratification and the foundation of a new bureaucratic ruling elite.³ An alternative two-dimensional conception recognizes a second hierarchy, *cultural capital*, or power based on possession of knowledge. In this conception, central planning ultimately makes knowledge a key mechanism of stratification. Those who subscribe to the one-dimensional conception offer a model of social alignment and conflict in socialist society that differs significantly from the general model offered by those who subscribe to the two-dimensional conception. The first model describes socialist societies as essentially divided into a political elite, on the one hand, and the rest of society, including both educated elites and the working classes, on the other. The intelligentsia is often described as champions of society against state domination. The second model describes the place of the intelligentsia very differently. While those who possess cultural capital (old and new educated elites) contend with those who possess political capital (top party officials), political and cultural capital eventually merge, creating a political technocracy. The fundamental cleavage in socialist societies is described as dividing this emerging political technocracy, composed of political and intellectual elites, and the working classes.⁴

The two dimensional model has been used to analyze conflicts between political and intellectual elites in a more sophisticated manner than the one-dimensional model allows.⁵ Such analysis of inter-elite conflict, however, cannot provide support for the two-dimensional model's

³ This one-dimensional political conception underlies the seminal works by Milovan Djilas (1957), Hannah Arendt (1958) and Ralf Dahrendorf (1959).

⁴ See Ivan Szelenyi and George Konrad (1979) and Alvin Gouldner (1979). Both Szelenyi and Gouldner predicted that cultural capital would eventually displace political capital as the key source of class power. Eric Olin Wright (1985) advanced a similar scenario.

claim that the fundamental dichotomy in socialist societies is between political and intellectual elites, on the one hand, and the working classes on the other. Studies of inter-elite conflict informed by a two-dimensional conception of power have described an intellectual elite striving to establish its power by diminishing the role of political capital and, thus, the power of the political elite. This scenario of intellectuals challenging an entrenched political elite does not necessarily contradict the one-dimensional model because it can be easily understood as part of a broader conflict between society and the political elite.

If cultural capital is, in fact, a central mechanism of stratification in socialist societies, then possession of cultural capital should also be a basis of *conservative* political action, that is, action to preserve the hierarchy of power and privilege based on cultural capital. If intellectual and political elites are, in fact, merging, then this should be a basis for a coalition to defend the status quo. In times of social upheaval, therefore, we should expect to find instances in which political and intellectual elites unite in a “party of order” to meet a challenge from below.⁶ Such a political alignment would provide evidence of the importance of the class dichotomy (between an emergent political technocracy and the working classes) that the two-dimensional model claims should become fundamental in socialist societies, and would demonstrate the limitations of the political elite vs. society dichotomy posited by the one-dimensional model.

In an effort to find whether or not these hypotheses were born out during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, this paper analyzes contending student factions in terms of their relationship to political and cultural capital. I have chosen to focus on the battle in the education arena because it presents in particularly sharp relief contending ideological and political claims involving these two hierarchies. Two elite schools were selected as sites for comparative case studies. Tsinghua University, located in Beijing, is China’s leading school of science and

⁵ See, for instance, in addition to Szelenyi, et al., (1979, 1986, 1998), Baylis (1974), Bauman (1964, 1987), Ludz (1972) and Parry (1966).

technology. Tsinghua Attached Middle School is located next to the university. Both schools became key battlefields in the Cultural Revolution. Factions at the two schools became models for student factions around the country and played leading roles in organizing other factions. Events at Tsinghua marked several of the major turning points in the countrywide conflict and Chinese scholars have described the factions at Tsinghua University as representative of student factions during the Cultural Revolution (Tang 1996a, p. 49; Song 1996, p. 365).

The Prevailing Explanation of Student Factional Conflict

I conducted these comparative case studies specifically to examine the empirical predictions of the prevailing explanation of student factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution, which I call the “competing elites model.” Based on a detailed study of the student movement in Guangzhou middle schools, Anita Chan, Stanley Rosen, and Jonathan Unger concluded that the “conservative” camp was led by children of veteran Party cadres, while the “rebel” camp was led by children of intellectuals. Children of workers and peasants divided between the two camps, but played a leading role in neither. In a separate study, Hong Yong Lee came to very similar conclusions about student factional alignment countrywide.⁷ Qualifications Chan, Rosen and Unger placed on generalizing from their model of conflict at elite middle schools are often overlooked.⁸ Their model, together with Lee’s broader model, has been widely

⁶ The two-dimensional model also anticipates potential alliances of the political elite and the working classes against the intellectual elite and of the intellectual elite and the working classes against the political elite.

⁷ The works of Lee (1975, 1978) and Chan, Rosen and Unger (Chan, et al., 1980; Chan, 1982, 1985; Rosen, 1979, 1982; Unger, 1982) are regarded as providing a “social basis” explanation for conflict among mass organizations during the Cultural Revolution, in contrast to analyses that only focus on ideological and political struggles among the Party leadership. I do not intend to challenge their efforts to identify social bases for the conflict, only to modify a central aspect of their specific explanations.

⁸ The carefully researched studies carried out by Chan, Rosen and Unger on factional conflict in Guangzhou middle schools focussed on the best schools, where they found that division along family origin lines was most pronounced. At ordinary and vocational middle schools, on the other hand, they found the most salient division was between those who had been active in the Communist Youth League and those who had not, with the former tending to be more conservative (Chan, et al., 1980, 436 - 9). Although universities were outside the scope of their investigation, Rosen noted that factional alignment at universities in Guangzhou tended to follow the pattern at non-elite middle schools (Rosen, 1982, 1-6).

interpreted by academics in the United States as a general explanation of student factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution.⁹

The competing elites model makes several specific claims about student factional conflict that can be empirically tested. First, it proposes that two elite groups of students set the political orientation and provided much of the social base of the contending factions. Using a term popular during the Cultural Revolution, we might say that in the competing elites model, children of intellectuals were the “backbone” of the rebel camp, while veteran cadres’ children were the backbone of the conservative camp. Second, it proposes that the central rift underlying student factional alignment was produced by affirmative action in university admissions policies, referred to as “class line,” that favored children of workers, peasants and veteran party officials and hurt children of the old educated elites. Beneficiaries of class line policies tended to support the status quo, while those harmed by these policies tended to oppose it. Third, it proposes that rebel factions were more aggressive in attacking Party authorities and less aggressive in attacking intellectuals, while conservative factions were more aggressive in attacking intellectuals and less aggressive in attacking Party authorities.

The competing elites model of student factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution fits into the familiar narrative of intellectuals leading popular resistance against a communist party elite. For those subscribing to the one-dimensional model of power in socialist societies, this account can easily be interpreted as reflecting the essential dichotomy between the people (led by intellectuals) and the political elite. Those who subscribe to a two-dimensional model, on the other hand, can also interpret this account as reflecting contention between political and intellectual elites in the upper echelons of a class-divided society. Either way, however, the competing elites account offers no support for the underlying class dichotomy predicted by the two-dimensional model.

Chan, Rosen and Unger, nevertheless, chose to analytically focus on the pattern of factional conflict at the elite middle schools, noting divergent patterns at other schools only in passing (Chan, et al., 1980, 406).

Translated into the conceptual framework of political and cultural capital used in the present study, the competing elites explanation proposes that rebels, led by intellectual elites, attacked political capital and defended cultural capital, while conservatives, led by political elites, attacked cultural capital and defended political capital (see Table 1).

Table 1: Student Political Tendencies Predicted by Competing Elites Model

Axis of Contention (Hierarchy of Power)		Political Capital	
		Attack	Defend
Cultural Capital	Attack		Conservatives Backbone: Children of Revolutionary cadres
	Defend	Rebels Backbone: Children of Intellectuals	

The Four Political Tendencies at Tsinghua University and Middle School

The present analysis of student factions at Tsinghua University and Tsinghua Middle School demonstrates both the validity and the limitations of the explanatory power of the competing elites model. The model describes well the early factional alignment at Tsinghua Middle School, an elite school like those at the center of Chan, Rosen, and Unger's studies, whose student body was made up almost exclusively of children of political and intellectual elites. The conflict pit political against cultural capital: one faction was organized by children of veteran Party cadres; the other was made up largely of children of intellectuals. The conflict at Tsinghua University, however, where recently recruited peasant and working class students made up a large part of the student body, followed a very different course. The "radical" coalition at

⁹ Chinese scholars, including Yin Hongbiao (1996) and Xu Youyu (1996), have contested this model.

the university was led by students from working class and peasant families. The radicals, moreover, attacked *both* cultural and political capital. The “moderate” faction that coalesced in opposition to the radicals, on the other hand, was supported by the political and intellectual establishment at the university, including many professors and students of intellectual origin. It defended *both* political and cultural capital.

I found that conflict over political and cultural capital at Tsinghua University and Middle School produced four different types of political tendencies, presented in Table 2. Two of the tendencies (upper right and lower left) are those described by the competing elites model. These were the main tendencies at the middle school, reflecting an inter-elite conflict that pit cultural against political capital. The other two tendencies (upper left and lower right) do not fit into the competing elites model. These were the main tendencies at the university, revealing underlying class contradictions that were emerging in socialist China.

Table 2: Student Political Tendencies at Tsinghua

Axis of Contention (Hierarchy of Power)		Political Capital	
		Attack	Defend
Cultural Capital	Attack	University Radicals Backbone: Children of Workers and peasants	Old Red Guard (Middle School and University) Backbone: Children of Revolutionary cadres
	Defend	Middle School Radicals Backbone: Children of Intellectuals	Moderates (University and Middle School) Backbone: Student cadres (various family origins)

The nature of the factional conflict at Tsinghua University demonstrates the limitations of the central claim of the competing elites model (that student factions were led by rival elite groups and reflected the conflict between them). It also shows the inadequacy of the political

elite vs. society dichotomy posited by the one-dimensional model of stratification in socialist societies. Instead, *the conflict between radical and moderate factions at the university revealed the underlying class dichotomy posited by the two-dimensional model: between an emerging political technocracy (combining political and intellectual elites) and the working classes.* Confronting a challenge, led by non-elites, to the hierarchies of political and cultural capital, a party of order defended both.

This investigation of the political tendencies at Tsinghua University and Middle School was based on close analysis of debates carried out in student publications as well as interviews with leaders and participants in the struggle. Both of the main factions at the university published newspapers as well as pamphlets that reprinted collections of big-character posters. These posters, hand-written by individuals and small groups and posted in public places, played a central role in the ideological and political debates of the Cultural Revolution. The pamphlets of one faction sometimes included posters written by both sides in a fashion designed to highlight polemical arguments. Although materials published directly by middle school factions were not available, I did have access to important articles and big-character posters written by members of these factions which were printed in other publications.

Interviews with twenty former students, including participants in all of the university and middle school factions, were the main sources used to reconstruct the composition of the leadership and social base of the factions, the significance of key events, and participants' understanding of the issues involved in the factional conflict (see Appendix). Memoirs of participants as well as secondary accounts were also important sources.

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL AS MECHANISMS OF STRATIFICATION IN CHINA

Access to advantageous positions in relationship to the means of production and distribution of wealth can be analyzed in terms of possession of three types of resources: economic, political and cultural capital. Economic capital refers to such access afforded by

private ownership of property. Political capital refers to such access derived from political association, the power Weber (1968) referred to in his discussion of parties. Cultural capital, following Bourdieu (1984), refers to such access obtained by possession of knowledge and cultural qualifications. The relative importance of each of these three forms of capital varies among social systems, as do their relationships to one another.¹⁰ Individuals and social classes can be distinguished, as suggested by Bourdieu, according to the *volume* and *composition* of the capital they possess.¹¹ One form of capital can be transformed into another under certain conditions (e.g., economic investment in education or the use of political influence to amass private wealth), and a variety of mechanisms are used to pass different forms of capital from one generation to the next.¹² In this framework, conflicts that involve class can be analyzed in terms of the overall volume of capital of the antagonists, as well as the relative weight of the different types of capital they possess.

Economic, political and cultural capital were integrally connected in traditional Chinese society. During the protracted periods when power was concentrated in an imperial bureaucracy, securing real wealth and power depended on obtaining political office. For over 1000 years, officials were recruited largely from among the landed gentry by means of highly competitive

¹⁰ The meaning of the term *capital* in this paper has been extended from the meaning employed by Marx. Marx, of course, used the term strictly to refer to property relations in a capitalist economy based on private property. Cultural and political capital refer to other forms of property relations *not* based on private property. Several colleagues have objected that this extension of the use of the term capital dilutes and muddies its meaning. This objection cannot, in principal, be controverted. The educational and political resources referred to by the terms cultural and political capital might more appropriately be called distinct forms of *property*, in the abstract sense that Marx used this term, that is as distinct forms of relations to the means of production. A more readily understood term might be *class resources*. I have chosen, nevertheless, to use the term *capital* for two reasons. First, cultural capital, as I use it, refers to the concept articulated by Bourdieu (1977) and Gouldner (1979) which is already familiar to sociologists. It would seem to be a redundant exercise in semantics to introduce new terminology for what is essentially the same concept. Second, using the term *capital* has the advantage of indicating that, whether the modifier economic, political or cultural is appended to it, I am in all cases referring to different aspects of *relations of production*.

¹¹ Bourdieu (1983) refers to three types of capital – economic, cultural and social. The concept of political capital used here can be understood as a form of a social capital (a capital of “connections and group membership”) which assumes particular importance in socialist societies.

¹² The mutual transformation of economic and cultural capital are discussed at length by Bourdieu, as are the mechanisms by which cultural capital is inherited through the family and how inherited cultural capital is amplified and given formal recognition through the education system (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1984).

civil service examinations. Wealth accumulated while in office was reinvested in land and the training of heirs to compete in the imperial exams. Because access to political office depended on cultural capital, knowledge became the most legitimate basis for power, more legitimate than wealth, force of arms or kinship. “Those who labor with their minds rule others,” wrote Mencius, “and those who labor with physical strength are ruled by others.” The Chinese scholar gentry cultivated a cultural distinction unrivaled in the world (Ho 1964; Fei 1953; Chang 1961; Elman 1991). The bureaucracy of scholar officials collapsed along with the Qing Dynasty in 1911, but its legacy of political power tied to cultural capital survived in Confucian tradition and a pronounced gap between a wealthy literate elite and the rest of society.

The 1949 Revolution led to the elimination of private economic capital, the principal foundation of the existing class structure. After the socialization of private enterprise in the mid-1950s, access to positions of power and higher remuneration in economic, political and cultural institutions depended on political and educational qualifications.¹³ Political capital, specifically membership and position in the Communist Party and the Communist Youth League, became the most important qualification and the basis of a new elite made up of core members of the Party, many of whom were peasant revolutionaries. The elimination of private economic capital, however, did not completely do away with the advantages enjoyed by the expropriated propertied

¹³ Market reforms and the subsequent reemergence of private economic capital have now, once again, fundamentally reordered mechanisms of stratification. This process is quite naturally the subject of substantial sociological attention and current interest in the transition *from* socialism has tended to eclipse interest in the previous transition *to* socialism. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons. First, historical distance is opening up new opportunities for investigation of the process of re-stratification without private economic capital that took place in socialist societies, offering an invaluable opportunity to study the operation of other fundamental mechanisms of stratification. Second, efforts to understand the current transitions are hampered by an inadequate understanding of the class structures of the existing socialist orders. This is evident, for instance, in the debate surrounding Victor Nee’s “market transition theory.” A central proposition of the theory is that as market transition proceeds, economic returns to educational (or cultural) capital will increase while returns to political capital will decline, the increasing equality caused by latter offsetting the increasing inequality caused by the former. Among the weaknesses of this theory is that it conceives of socialist society as essentially being stratified through the mechanism of political capital, underestimating the extent to which socialist stratification was based on cultural capital. In addition, it allows a curiously narrow theoretical space for role of reemerging private economic capital in generating inequality. Using this framework, it is difficult to explain falling returns to educational capital and rapidly growing inequality (See Nee, 1989, 1996).

classes. They were left in possession of cultural capital, which, especially in the form of educational qualifications, remained a central mechanism of stratification in the new social order. The new government required the expertise of former capitalists and intellectuals, many of whom retained important positions in economic, political and cultural institutions.

Recent analyses of the leadership of the Communist Party of China describe it as a technocracy, pointing out that a college degree is typically required for holding high office and that engineers and other technically-trained officials predominate among the top leadership. Scholars researching this technocratic transformation typically associate it with the period of reforms that followed Mao Zedong's death in 1976 (Lee 1991; Li 1992). Although it is clear that the consolidation of this political technocracy as a new dominant class has only taken place over the last two decades, its roots can be traced back to a merger of political and cultural capital that began in 1949. This merger involved the uneasy combination of old elites, whose principal resource was cultural capital, and a new elite, whose principal resource was political capital.¹⁴ Party officials took up positions of authority beside members of the old elites, while members of the old elites joined the Party in large numbers. This process, as it took place in Shanghai, was examined in detail by Lynn White (1972 1984), who described a troubled marriage between the old Shanghai bourgeoisie and the local Party leadership, forming a new "managerial class." More important, children of Party leaders began attending elite schools and becoming intellectuals,

¹⁴ The use of the terms *elite* and *class* in this paper is informed by the conceptualization proposed by Richard Lachmann, although my use differs somewhat from his. Analyzing early modern Europe, Lachmann identified rival royal, clerical and noble elites, each employing distinct mechanisms and organizations for extracting surplus product from the same populations of peasant producers (with some elites more directly involved in production than others). A *dominant class*, in Lachmann's terminology, is able to monopolize extraction from a subordinate class of producers. A dominant class may be divided into distinct *fractions*, based in different economic sectors, all of which rely on the same fundamental mechanism of surplus extraction (Lachmann, 1989, 1990). Political and intellectual elites in post-revolutionary China both derived their incomes through the same state organization. They were distinct in terms of the principle type of class resource (political or cultural capital) that provided them access to privileged positions in the same state institutions. Taken separately, neither top Party officials nor high intellectuals could be considered a dominant class in the first decades of communist power. Nor could the two groups be considered a single unified class. Only once political and cultural capital substantially merged, with the consolidation of a political technocracy, is it possible to talk about the emergence of a new *dominant class* in China.

while children of intellectuals at these same schools were being recruited into the Youth League and then the Party (Pepper 1996). In this protracted process of elite combination, political capital was always dominant and old educated elites were especially subject to attack during periodic political campaigns.

The new government established a graded hierarchy of cadres in all institutions, including both Party members and non-Party members, with each grade entitled to a specific range of salaries and perquisites. Cadres were appointed on the basis of political and educational credentials; these two types of qualifications were referred to respectively as “red” and “expert.” Some cadres were appointed due to their political credentials, despite limited expertise. Others were appointed due to their expertise, despite limited political credentials. The eventual goal, however, was to create a body of “red *and* expert” (*you hong, you zhuan*) cadres to lead the country, in other words, to merge political and cultural capital. To the extent that cadres could still be distinguished in terms of their capital structures (the relative weight of political and cultural capital), this was a basis for inter-elite conflict. The gradual merger of political and cultural capital (the convergence of the capital structures of political and intellectual elites), on the other hand, strengthened the basis of inter-elite unity.

The conflict inherent in the creation of a dominant class through the merger of these old and new elites was complicated by the programmatic commitment of the Communist Party to elevate the status of workers and peasants and eventually do away with class distinctions. The declared aim of eliminating the “three great differences,” those between mental and manual labor, peasant and worker and city and countryside, was the rationale behind “class line” policies, which were institutionalized in various ways including a system of preferences based on class origin.

Implementation of class line was based on the family origin (*chushen*) system. All families in post-revolutionary China were assigned a class designation based on the status of the family head between 1946 and 1949 (see Table 2). The system was not based on purely economic analysis; rather it was inspired by Mao Zedong’s question: “Who are our enemies and

who are our friends?” Several of the categories were not economic but political. The system was used to control the opportunities of those the Party considered to be enemies or potential enemies and give advantages to those it considered to be its main bases of support. The former were labeled as members of “bad” classes; the latter were assigned “good” class designations. These class designations were inherited patrilineally during the first three decades that followed the 1949 Revolution.¹⁵

Table 3: Family Origin Designations *Before* the Cultural Revolution¹⁶

Characterization	Status of Family Head, 1946-1949
Good	Revolutionary cadre, soldier or martyr Worker Poor and lower-middle peasant
Ordinary	Upper-middle peasant Peddler Office employee Intellectual Capitalist
Bad	Landlord Rich peasant Counter-revolutionary Bad element (criminal) Rightist (criticized during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement)

The family origin system originated as an instrument of revolutionary usurpation during land reform. As part of the investigation that preceded re-division of property in every village,

¹⁵ Classes, as defined by the family origin system operative after 1949, are key categories used in this paper. Because they reflect the political purposes for which they were created and fail to reflect the radical changes produced by the elimination of private property, the value of these categories in terms of structural class analysis is limited. Nevertheless, broad groups they refer to, however imperfectly, such as workers, peasants, and intellectuals, would be identified in any useful class analysis of post-1949 Chinese society. In any case, the use of these class categories, despite their analytical limitations, is unavoidable because they were the juridically reinforced categories that framed group identities and group conflict during the Cultural Revolution. For the sake of simplicity, I often use shorthand terms to refer to class designations: “revolutionary cadres” is used to refer to revolutionary cadres, soldiers and martyrs; “peasants” is used to refer to poor and lower-middle peasants; “intellectuals” is often used to refer to other educated ordinary groups, including office employees and, when appropriate, former capitalists, as well.

¹⁶ This table reflects the official characterization of family origin designations before the Cultural Revolution. Although the former capitalist category was not officially considered bad, the situation of former capitalists and their offspring was ambiguous and during the Cultural Revolution they were lumped together with former landlords and rich peasants as exploiting classes.

each family was assigned a class designation. The Party mobilized poor and middle peasants to struggle against landlords and rich peasants. The campaign was extraordinarily violent and reduced landlord and rich peasant families to social pariahs.¹⁷ The class structure in the cities, however, was more resistant to such radical leveling. Members of the old urban elites, capitalists and high intellectuals, often retained positions of power and privilege and they and their children did not suffer the “bad” class designations imposed on the families of rural landlords and rich peasants. Until the Cultural Revolution, they officially remained part of the “ordinary” group along with office employees, peddlers, etc. Moreover, the assignment of class labels was more haphazard in urban areas, depending largely on self-reporting (Shaoguang Wang 1995, pp. 25-33; White III 1984, pp. 143-4; White 1976, p. 2).¹⁸

Class line and the family origin system were ambiguous instruments of an unfinished social revolution. The family origin system turned the hierarchy of cultural capital on its head and class line was intended to counter advantages the old elites continued to derive from cultural capital. Class line policies gave workers and peasants as well as their offspring access to education and other opportunities from which they might otherwise have been excluded. They limited opportunities, sometimes severely, for those deemed to be members of bad classes. They served as an (often surmountable) obstacle to members of old urban elite groups and their children who had ordinary class labels. At the same time, they provided a haven for members of the new elite based on political capital. Revolutionary cadres, those who had joined the Party while it was still an insurrectionary organization, enjoyed special status, including good class designations. (Those who joined the Party later retained their original class designations.) Many

¹⁷ Land reform reduced landlords and rich peasants to the common level or even lower. In the name of preventing the previous elite from reestablishing their influence within the new social order, class labels were used in a particularly harsh fashion in the countryside (Unger, 1984). For detailed accounts of the popular process of dividing the village into classes during land reform see Hinton (1966), Crook and Crook (1959), and Friedman, et al. (1991).

¹⁸ Class designations in the city were often much more ambiguous than those in the countryside and, until just before the Cultural Revolution, had far less significance in the everyday life of most urban dwellers (Gordon White, 1976, 2).

high-level revolutionary cadres in the city were from educated families and thus possessed political and cultural capital, as well as good class labels. Their children, who inherited all three, were virtually guaranteed success.

Meritocracy vs. Class Line in Education Policy

The focal point of conflict over the prerogatives associated with cultural capital was the school system, which awarded the educational qualifications required to assume cadre positions.¹⁹ When the Communist Party took over the highly exclusive Chinese education system,²⁰ it had two related but potentially contradictory goals: first, to extend and popularize education and second, to produce educationally qualified administrative and technical personnel. While, modernization required the accomplishment of both, the two goals led to the coexistence of two distinct orientations. The first, which I call the meritocratic orientation, stressed building a core of schools with high academic standards and sought the most qualified students from whatever class background by means of standardized examinations; successful candidates were disproportionately from the old educated elite. The second orientation, class line, called for redistributing access to education to the great majority who had been excluded by extending basic education in rural and working class districts and giving preference to children of workers and peasants in admissions to higher education. While meritocracy and class line were, on the one hand, alternative development strategies, they were also competing policies of social closure, the practices by which a social group maximizes rewards for its own members by excluding others (Weber 1978, pp. 41-3). Meritocracy favored the educated elites, while class line favored those who had been excluded from education.

¹⁹ The military was the other key “ladder” to cadre positions. The military was generally a more important source of young cadres in the countryside, while high schools and universities were a more important source in cities. Both institutions offered privileged access to Youth League and then Party membership. In schools, therefore, students not only accumulated cultural capital but also political capital.

²⁰ In 1949, about 10% of adult males had completed high school and about 1% had completed college (Treiman and Deng, 1997). The proportions were far smaller for women.

Meritocracy had deep roots in the Confucian ethic of the scholar gentry. This meritocratic tradition, based on classical literary culture, was reshaped with the introduction this century of Western educational theory and practice, which emphasized technical knowledge. The introduction of Soviet educational practices in the 1950s reinforced meritocratic and technocratic traditions, imposing on them a new system of credentials and providing them with socialist ideological legitimacy (Pepper 1996).

Both meritocratic and class line policies were evident in the university admissions system after 1952, following the adoption of a national entrance exam. Following the meritocratic principle, universities established a cut-off score for successful applicants. Among applicants who surpassed this score, higher education authorities considered both family origin and political attitude (summed-up in reports prepared by middle school authorities). Applicants from working class, peasant and revolutionary cadre families were, following the class line principle, given preference, while those from the five bad classes faced discrimination (Shirk 1982, p. 43; Rosen 1979, pp. 20-6).

While educational policies in China institutionalized both meritocratic and class line principles, the competing orientations were associated with increasingly distinct factions within the Party leadership. Class line policies came to the fore during the education revolution promoted by Mao Zedong and his followers during the Great Leap Forward (1958 – 60) and would be seen in their purest form in the policies implemented as a result of the Cultural Revolution. Meritocratic principles, championed by most of the educational establishment with the support of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, held sway during the early 1960s and can be seen in their purest form in the period following Mao Zedong's death in 1976.²¹

²¹ Maoist educational policy during the “Cultural Revolution decade” (1966-76) led to the massive construction of middle schools in rural areas and the leveling of the academic hierarchy of middle schools in urban areas. Entrance examinations were eliminated at all levels. Middle school graduates were assigned to work units and could only later be admitted to university on the recommendation of their work unit. The first university cohorts were made up exclusively of “worker-peasant-soldier” students and were relatively small. Many advanced academic courses were eliminated and the curriculum was redesigned

THE STATUS QUO AT TSINGHUA: POLITICAL LOYALTY AND MERITOCRACY

Tsinghua University (TU) and Tsinghua Attached Middle School (TMS), elite schools producing the next generation of intellectual, technical and administrative leaders, were at the focal point of the uneasy merger of political and cultural capital taking place in post-1949 China. This merger was the basis of a coalition founded on the acceptance of two fundamental principles: loyalty to the Party leadership and meritocracy. Some of the educated elite only reluctantly accepted Party leadership while some veteran Party cadres only reluctantly supported meritocracy, but both were essential elements of President Liu Shaoqi's formula for modernizing the country. These two principles, political loyalty and meritocracy, were twin pillars of the status quo at Tsinghua and became the main targets of rebel attacks during the Cultural Revolution.

Political Loyalty

The dominant figure at Tsinghua until the Cultural Revolution was Party Secretary Jiang Nanxiang. Jiang, himself from an educated family, headed the communist-led student movement at TU that arose to resist Japanese invasion in 1937 (Liu 1995). When he returned to take over his alma mater in 1952, he worked for a cooperative relationship with the faculty and students, who were virtually all from the well-to-do educated elite. The terms of the relationship, however, were to be set by the Party. These terms were harshly demonstrated in the 1957 Anti-Rightist campaign during which 572 students and professors were criticized and punished as Rightists, often for expressing hostility to Party control in intellectual realms (Li 1992, pp. 180-8).

with a practical and technical orientation involving experimentation and productive labor. After Mao's death in 1976, entrance exams were re-instituted at all levels and class line admissions preferences and restrictions were eliminated. University enrollment was increased and advanced academic classes were re-established. Elite academic middle schools in urban areas were re-established and many other middle schools, deemed sub-standard, were shut down. With the dismantling of the collective agrarian structure,

Jiang intended, nevertheless, to build what he called a “professors’ Party” at Tsinghua. It was necessary, he said to recruit senior professors in order to “accelerate the process of convergence of two kinds of people,” referring to scholars and officials. By 1959, 83% of the faculty had joined the Party or the Youth League (Li 1992, p.191, p. 180). By 1966, half of professors had joined the Party (compared to 15% of university workers) (Tang 1998).²² Seven professors were selected to serve on the 15-member Standing Committee of the University Party Committee. The very top Party leadership at the university, however, was distinguished more by political rather than cultural qualifications. In addition to Jiang, it included three veteran revolutionaries of peasant origin and three leaders of the student communist underground at TU immediately prior to 1949. The “backbone” of the party organization, including the up-and-coming leadership in the departments, were members of a new generation of teachers and cadres. Typically post-1949 TU graduates of intellectual family origin, they accepted Jiang’s challenge to become “double-load cadre,” meaning that they were capable of exercising both academic and political leadership (Li 1992, pp. 170-92; Hinton 1972, pp. 28-37; Interviews No.1 and 11)

Students, regardless of the volume of political and cultural capital they had inherited at home, were accumulating these assets at TMS and TU. A required political asset for most careers to which they would aspire was membership in the Youth League, a stepping stone to Party membership. The systematic convergence of political and cultural capital is illustrated by the composition of League membership in the mid-1960s. While countrywide only 15% of eligible youth (15 to 24 years of age) were members, this proportion grew dramatically among more educated youth (Funnell 1970, 115; Rosen 1979, p. 128). TMS students estimated that by the time their classmates had graduated, fully half had joined the League (Interviews 15 and 16), while TU students estimated that by the time their classmates had graduated, virtually all had

large numbers of rural middle schools, which depended on collective financing, collapsed (Pepper, 1996; Shirk, 1982, Rosen, 1987, Unger, 1982; Han, 1998).

joined (Interviews No. 1, 2, 3, 7 and 10). The doors of the League were, in principle, open to all students, although those of less-than-good origin were subject to more stringent evaluation of their political commitment and loyalty. A few students, considered to be of very bad family origin or morally or politically unqualified, were excluded.²³

Election to League leadership brought higher political capital and, once again, students of all class origins were encouraged to strive for these positions. League leadership included many students from intellectual backgrounds and even a few from bad class backgrounds, although a preference was shown for children of workers, peasants and revolutionary cadres (Interviews No. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 15 and 16). The operation of a certain kind of meritocratic principle was evident in the fact that being born to a politically powerful family was not sufficient qualification for leadership (although it didn't hurt). Academic merit and political loyalty were the key criteria. "President Jiang handled this very carefully," said a TU student, referring to the selection of student leaders. "He has two standards – this guy has got to be very good in academics and also very devoted to him" (Interview No. 1). The Youth League was fully subordinate to the Party and both Party and Youth League cadres were expected, in accordance with Jiang's motto, to "be obedient and productive" ("*tinghua, chuhuo*") (Interviews No.1, 4; *JGS*, 1967-11-17).

The Party and Youth League organization at Tsinghua was a political coalition that defended the status quo and its twin pillars of political loyalty and meritocracy. They represented the merger of political and cultural capital and the interests of an emerging political technocracy.

Meritocracy

²² While senior professors continued to receive high salaries and played an important role academically, most, especially the large number who had been trained in the United States, were marginalized politically (Li, 1992, 172-5, 188-92).

²³ In one TU student's class, for instance, two students were excluded from the Youth League. One was the interviewee, whose father, a highly educated administrator, was politically suspect because of overseas family connections. The other was a student of poor peasant origin who was suspected of stealing from another student. Both sympathized with the radical Jinggangshan faction during the Cultural Revolution (Interview No. 1).

While all schools were compelled to implement class line policies emanating from the Mao Zedong and his colleagues at the center, under Jiang Nanxiang, the Tsinghua Administration was committed to meritocratic principles.²⁴ Indeed, Jiang, who concurrently served as Minister of Higher Education, became one of the foremost champions of meritocratic education policies.²⁵ While Jiang supported a strong and authoritative Party, his vision of Party leadership was technocratic. “Examination grades are not only the standard for measuring degree of academic accomplishment,” a 1962 Ministry of Education policy document formulated under his direction declared. “Through grades we can also discern the student’s political character” (Taylor 1981, p. 132). Jiang’s slogan, “Before grades, all are equal,” clearly expressed the principle he sought to implement. In the early 1960s, Jiang initiated a ‘teach students according to their aptitude’ program, which divided students into different levels by academic ability and provided students in the higher levels with better conditions. At the top levels, the percentage of workers’ and peasants’ children declined by half, while students of capitalist and landlord origin doubled (*JGS*, 1967-10-12).

Jiang opposed Mao’s efforts to stress class line policies, criticizing what he called the “theory of status” (Red Rock Fighting Company 1969, pp. 62-6). In his quest for excellence, Jiang had little patience for policies that diluted his student body with below-standard students from minority nationalities and more humble backgrounds. “Jiang didn’t like the stupid ones,” an academically successful student from an intellectual family reported, “but he had to allow them to get in, so he had a way to get rid of them” (Interview No. 1).

²⁴ If one were to search for a “bureaucratic” opposition to meritocracy at TU, one might be tempted to look first to the peasant revolutionaries who became TU officials. In fact, there is little indication that they opposed Jiang’s policies. During the Cultural Revolution era, the most senior of these officials, Party Vice-Secretary Liu Bing, criticized himself and his fellow university officials of peasant origin for joining the meritocratic consensus at Tsinghua (Hinton 1972, pp. 32-40). In 1975, Liu became the standard-bearer of opposition at Tsinghua to the radical class line policies instituted by Mao Zedong’s followers (Li 1992, pp. 209-10).

²⁵ Jiang Nanxiang was appointed Vice-Minister of Education in 1960 and Minister of Higher Education in 1965. He was removed from all positions in 1966. After Mao Zedong died and Deng Xiaoping came to power, Jiang was appointed Minister of Education, presiding over the reinstitution of meritocratic policies (Liu 1995; *Peking Review* No. 17, 1979-4-27: 8-9).

In 1960, Jiang re-organized TMS as a “key-point” school and quickly built it into one of the two best middle schools in Beijing. Key-point schools, promoted in the early 1960s as part of a high tide of meritocratic policies, recruited the most qualified students and were provided the best teachers and facilities. One student estimated that 80-90% of TMS graduates went on to attend university, an astonishing figure in 1960s China. In 1965, Jiang initiated an experimental program in which the brightest students were placed in special classes and took college-level courses. He planned to automatically admit these students to TU (*JGS*, 1967-11-17, Interviews No. 15, 16, 17, 19).

Composition of the Student Body at TU and TMS

The composition of the student bodies at TU and at TMS was markedly different, a distinction that became an important factor in determining the nature of the factional conflict at the two schools during the Cultural Revolution. By the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the combination of class line and meritocratic policies had produced a diverse student body at TU. While most students still came from elite urban middle schools, the expansion of education into rural and poor urban communities had created middle schools that by the 1960s were turning out large numbers of applicants of working class and peasant origin. In 1964 and 1965, strong class line policies demanded by Mao resulted in the admission of large numbers of students of peasant origin. Ten of the TU students interviewed provided estimates of the composition of their classes in terms of family origin. In these ten classes, according to the numbers they provided, 7% of students were children of revolutionary cadres, 37% were from working class and peasant families, 43% were of intellectual or office employee family origin, 9% were children of former capitalists, and 4% were either of bad family origin or their family status was unclear. These

estimates are corroborated by statistics published by a rebel faction during the Cultural Revolution (see Table 4).²⁶

The effects of intensified class line recruitment policies after 1963 was also evident in the composition of these ten students' classes. In the six classes that entered before 1964, workers' and peasants' children made up only 30% of the students, while in the three classes that entered in 1964, the proportion of students of working class and peasant origin had increased to 54%. Comparing the same two sets of classes, the proportion of students from intellectual, capitalist and bad (or unclear) class origin declined from 62% to 42%. Between 1949 and 1966, the number of students of working class and peasant origin had risen dramatically, but considering these classes made up about 90% of the population, they were still greatly under-represented (Shirk 1982, p. 25, p. 50). Conversely, children from bourgeois and intellectual backgrounds, while not enjoying the monopoly they once did, were still greatly over-represented.

Table 4: Composition of TU and TMS Student Bodies Before the Cultural Revolution²⁷

²⁶ Even though the task of assigning students to class categories is aided by the codification of these categories in China, the process inevitably involves ambiguities and gray areas. For instance, political problems (typically involving actual or suspected hostility to the Party on the part of students or family members) could jeopardize the status of students who would otherwise have good or ordinary class backgrounds. In cities, classification depended largely on self-reporting and the process of determining individual class labels was negotiated and contested. One informant recalled a classmate whose father had been an officer in the nationalist army, only switching to the communist side along with his commanding officer at the eleventh hour in 1949. His father was cashiered from the army soon after the war ended. During the Cultural Revolution, the son's claim that his father was a revolutionary soldier was laughed at by fellow students; he was widely considered to be of bad family origin (Interview No. 1). Another student was the son of a factory worker who had been promoted to a high managerial position before the 1949 Revolution. Despite the fact that his father was, therefore, properly identified as an "office employee" at his workplace, the son's credentials for leadership at the university were aided by the fact that everyone accepted his claim to be of working class origin (Interview No. 5). Because class line policies made it advantageous for both administrators and students to take a liberal attitude towards qualifications for membership in proletarian classes, it is likely that there were more than a few students of "fake" working class origin (*jia gongren*). Nevertheless, interviewees' accounts of their own or their classmates' humble family origins (as well as their continued financial hardships while studying) make it clear that there were a large number of students at TU, especially in the 1964 and 1965 cohorts, who were genuinely from poor working class and peasant families.

²⁷ Five former TMS and ten former TU students classified their classmates by family origin. Altogether there were just over 230 students in the classes described by TMS students and just over 300 students in the classes described by TU students. TMS was a boarding school and classes of 40 – 50 students typically lived and studied together for three years (the lower three grades or upper three grades of middle school). TU was also a boarding school and classes of students typically lived and studied together for six years. This allowed students to get to know their classmates well. Many students had clear recollections of the

Family Origin	Middle School (Students' estimates)	University	
		Students' Estimates	Rebel Statistics ²⁸
Revolutionary cadre	25%	7%	44%
Worker or peasant	6%	37%	
Intellectual, office employee	59%	43%	46%
Capitalist	4%	9%	10%
Five bad classes or unclear	6%	4%	

Unlike its parent university, TMS was able to mitigate class line pressures to recruit students of working class and peasant origin. It was able to select its students from among the applicants with the highest scores on citywide entrance exams. Parents of the vast majority of students at the middle school were members of two elite groups – intellectuals and revolutionary cadres. Five TMS students provided detailed accounts of the composition of their classes. The family origin of their classmates, according to their estimates, was distributed as follows: revolutionary cadre, 25%; working class or peasant, 6%; intellectual, 59%; capitalist, 4%; and bad or unclear origin, 6% (see Table 4).

family origin of their classmates because this became a particularly salient personal characteristic before and during the Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, after 30 years, the sharpness of former students' memories varied considerably. Two students were able to recall all of their classmates' names and provide many details about their family backgrounds and personal histories. Others were only able to provide rough counts of students in each class category. I did not include the estimates provided by several students because they were too vague or incomplete. Because of the kinds of ambiguities described in the previous footnote and the limitations of the power of memory, the estimates recorded here should only be regarded as very rough approximations. They, nevertheless, reveal the sharp difference in the composition of the student bodies at the two schools.

²⁸ The TU radical faction's newspaper *Jinggangshan* (1967-10-12) reported the following statistics for 1964: 44% of TU students were of working class and peasant origin and 10% were of "exploiting class" origin. The former figure, following common practice, presumably includes children of revolutionary cadres. The latter figure, following the Cultural Revolution view of classes, presumably includes students of bourgeois origin as well as those from the "five bad classes." The remaining 46% were presumably from intellectual, office worker and other ordinary categories.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION: MAO ZEDONG TARGETS POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

The Cultural Revolution launched by Mao Zedong in 1966 opened the way for attacks on the elites of the new socialist order. Mao's described his target as a "bureaucratic class" in the process of formation:

The bureaucratic class is sharply opposed to the working class and the poor and the lower-middle peasants. These people have become or are in the process of becoming bourgeois elements sucking the blood of the workers. ... These people are the targets of the struggle and the revolution (Mao 1969a [1965]).

Mao launched the Cultural Revolution as a frontal attack on meritocratic education policies. "In this great cultural revolution," the Party Central Committee declared at Mao's insistence, "the phenomenon of our schools being dominated by bourgeois intellectuals must be completely changed" (*Peking Review*, No. 33, 1966-8-12, p. 10). The principal object of his attack, however, was not intellectuals, but Party officials: "The main target of the present movement is those within the Party who are taking the capitalist road" (*Peking Review*, No. 33, 1966-8-12, p. 8). Thus, both intellectual and political elites were exposed to attack.

Frustrated by previous efforts to implement class line education reforms through the Party establishment, in the spring of 1966 Mao tried an unprecedented strategy: mobilizing students to act *outside* the Party structure. President Liu Shaoqi, intent on keeping the Cultural Revolution under the control of the Party organization, dispatched Party work teams to schools to guide the campaign. At the same time, a small coterie of radicals in the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group (CCRS), organized at Mao's behest to lead the movement, were using the press and more direct means to encourage students to defy work team control. In late July, Mao ordered the removal of the work teams, giving virtual free reign to fledgling student organizations (Yan and Gao 1996, pp. 43-4; Tang 1996, pp. 49-50; Eleven-member Group 1967, pp. 15-16).

While Mao established the general orientation of the Cultural Revolution, after the monopoly of the local Party machinery in interpreting and carrying out policy was broken in the

summer of 1966, the movement took on a life of its own. All of the actors were constrained by the direction and limits established by Mao, but these were often ambiguous and their meaning sharply contested. The formation of independent student organizations in the summer of 1966 turned students into factional leaders who put together coalitions based on distinct and contradictory interpretations of the goals of the Cultural Revolution. Factions both attacked and defended the hierarchies of power and privilege based on political and cultural capital. These axes of contention produced four types of political tendencies at Tsinghua, which will be analyzed in detail below.

First, I will analyze the two main factions at Tsinghua Attached Middle School, where the elite student body split into camps that pit political against cultural capital. These first two tendencies, one representing children of revolutionary cadres, the other representing children of intellectuals, are those highlighted in the competing elites model. Then, I will analyze the two main factions that emerged at Tsinghua University. These latter two tendencies, the product of the decisive role played by students of working class and peasant origin at the university, cannot be explained within the framework of the competing elites model. One attacked both political and cultural capital and the other defended both.

OLD RED GUARDS: ATTACKING CULTURAL CAPITAL, DEFENDING POLITICAL CAPITAL

TMS was the birthplace of the first Red Guard organization, formed by audacious teenage children of revolutionary cadres who popularized the slogan that became the motto of a generation of Cultural Revolution rebels: “To rebel is justified!” The semi-secret organization, founded in May 1966, was inspired by Mao’s call to attack the old educated elites and eliminate their power within the education system. Over the previous year or so, encouraged by a campaign initiated by Mao to instill class consciousness, these children of the political elite had already accused the principal of favoring children of intellectuals. He had allowed the latter to control the Youth League, they complained, by failing to implement class line policies in

admissions and leadership selection. Children of intellectuals fought back, at one point waging a wall poster campaign criticizing the principal for caving into parental pressure in failing to punish the son of a high cadre for fighting. (Zheng 1992a; Zhong 1996; Leung 1994, pp. 261-2; Interviews No. 15 and 16). Open fractures were appearing in the coalition of cultural and political capital that had been fostered by the administration and embodied by the Youth League.

In May 1966, the fledgling Red Guards began posting big character posters accusing the TMS principal of being a former landlord and of running the school like a “bourgeois academic authority.” Many children of intellectuals, led by student Youth League cadres, replied with wall posters defending the administration. The Red Guard denounced these students as “royalists” (*baohuang pai*). Under attack by the administration and its student defenders, the Red Guards retreated from the school on June 7. The next day, they returned, reinforced by scores of students from other elite Beijing middle schools, mostly children of revolutionary cadres. The principal locked the gate. That evening, a work team dispatched from the center arrived and the Red Guards entered the school victoriously (Zhong 1996; Interview No. 20).

During the remainder of June and July, the work team ran the school and Red Guard leaders presided over meetings to criticize the old school administration. Behind closed doors, conflicts broke out over the work team’s insistence that some leaders of the now defunct Youth League who had not supported the Red Guard be included in the leadership of the movement. The Red Guard, however, did not openly criticize the work team. In late June, when university students sharply challenged the work team at neighboring TU, middle school Red Guards kept their distance. When a lone member of the Red Guards posted a big-character poster at the middle school defending the anti-work team insurgents at the university, her comrades abandoned her to the retributions of the work team (Zhong 1996; Interviews No. 18 and 20). It was one thing to attack the principal of a middle school who was a former landlord and a “bourgeois academic authority.” It was quite another to attack members of a work team who had been

dispatched by the highest Party authorities and who personally had impeccable revolutionary credentials.

At the end of July, Mao demanded the removal of the work teams from schools and on August 1 he sent an open letter to the TMS Red Guards praising their rebellious spirit. While he cautioned against their exclusive interpretation of class line, he promoted the Red Guards as a new model for student organizations, outside of the Party and Youth League structure.²⁹ With Mao's encouragement, the Red Guard movement swept the country in August. The TMS Red Guards and fraternal organizations at other schools became the vanguard of a violent campaign against members of the old elites, including students, teachers and administrators in their own schools. They led the campaign against the "four olds" (old ideas, culture, customs and habits), searching the houses of the old bourgeoisie and wealthy intellectuals, destroying or confiscating symbols of traditional elite or Western culture (Wang 1996, pp. 17-34).

Bloodline Theory

The TMS Red Guards militantly championed class line, denouncing the prerogatives claimed by cultural capital. In a late July 1966 flier, they wrote:

For seventeen years our school has been ruled by the bourgeois class. We shall not tolerate this any longer! We shall overthrow it, seize power, organize the revolution of the class troops, forward the class line according to social status. ...Landlord and bourgeois class young gentlemen and ladies we know your feelings. ...You thought you could make use of the temporarily existing bourgeois education to climb higher up the ladder to become white experts, get into the university, join up with "professors, experts." ...And perhaps you could even build up a little political capital and get a little power. ...Truly you did not imagine that the class line that you hate would come and destroy these dreams. ...Workers and peasants and the children of workers, peasants and revolutionary

²⁹ In Mao's letter of endorsement to the TMS Guard he wrote: "Furthermore, as we support you, we also demand that you pay attention to uniting all people who can be united. ... Marx said: the proletariat must emancipate not only itself but all mankind. Without emancipating all mankind, the proletariat cannot achieve its own emancipation. You comrades are requested to pay attention to this truth" (Mao, 1969b). *Hong Qi* (*Red Flag*), an influential journal edited by leaders of the CRSG, later published three big character posters written by the TMS Red Guards that expressed their rebellious bravado against school authorities, but did not promote bloodline politics (*Hong Qi*, No. 11, 1966, reprinted in *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun...*, 63-5).

cadres, whom you despised, will fill the posts in culture science and technique; your monopolies are broken. (TMS Red Guard 1966).

These children of the political elite, however, developed their own peculiar interpretation of class line, known as “bloodline theory” (*xuetong lun*), which highlighted their own role as children of revolutionaries. The TMS Red Guards were convinced that, as children of “officials of the revolution,” they had a unique responsibility during the Cultural Revolution “to follow the footsteps of our revolutionary fathers” (TMS Red Guard 1966). The bloodline principle was expressed concisely by the famous couplet, created by children of revolutionary cadres at another elite Beijing middle school, that became the Red Guards’ motto in late July: “The father’s a revolutionary, the son’s a hero; the father’s a reactionary, the son’s a bastard” (*laozi geming, er haohan; laozi fandong, er hundan*). The bloodline principle was interpreted to exclude all those who were not from the “five red categories” (“*hongwulei*”), those with good family origins. “All those who are not children of workers, peasants or revolutionary cadres ... had better lower their heads before us!” the TMS Red Guard declared at the height of their power in August. “[They] had better treat us with a little respect, no malicious slander will be tolerated!” (Song 1996, p. 87) The rise of bloodline theory in the summer of 1966 forced out most of the few students of intellectual origin who had participated in the early Red Guard movement. TMS Red Guard activists estimated that by August, almost all revolutionary cadres’ children had joined the organization, while, with few exceptions, children of intellectuals were excluded and remained on the sidelines of the Cultural Revolution for the time being (Interviews No. 11 and 18). The rise of the Red Guards, thus, completely shattered the fractured coalition of political and cultural capital and led to the demise of its organizational embodiment, the Youth League.

Bloodline theory also implicitly excluded children of workers and peasants who, unlike revolutionary cadres’ children, were not children of revolutionaries. While the TMS Red Guards attacked children of the old elites in the name of workers’ and peasants’ children, their organization was actually composed almost exclusively of cadres’ children. There were, after all,

very few children from working class and peasant families at the middle school and most of them were rejected by or alienated from the Red Guards (Interviews No. 17 and 18; Zhong 1996).³⁰

The early Red Guard movement violently attacked the existing power and privileges associated with cultural capital and, in this sense, the Red Guards were, in deed, rebels. The conservative side of Red Guard politics, the defense of political capital, was already clearly expressed, however, in their bloodline motto. In deed, the essence of bloodline politics was to make inheritance of political capital the legitimate basis of power. But it was only after a different type of rebel movement, led by workers' and peasants' children, launched a concerted attack on political capital, that the conservative side of the Red Guard came to the fore. A critical turning point was marked on August 24, 1966. On that day, TMS Red Guards, angered by the appearance of big-character posters written by Tsinghua University rebels that attacked President Liu Shaoqi, mobilized middle school Red Guards from around the city to converge on the university. After declaring at a mass rally that they would never allow the new rebel tendency to "turnover the country" (*fan tian*), the Red Guards went on a rampage. Continuing their attack on the old educated elites and their symbols, they pulled down the famous university gate and beat up professors; but they also systematically tore down the offensive wall posters and attacked students who had targeted the political hierarchy (Interviews No. 12, 16 and 20; Youqin Wang 1996, pp. 20-1; Hinton 1972, pp. 75-6).

In the fall of 1966, Mao gave increasing support to the new rebel tendency that had emerged in opposition to the work teams at TU and elsewhere, encouraging them to attack the Party hierarchy. As the student movement polarized, the conservative aspect of the Red Guard program, defense of political capital, increasingly became their *raison d'être*. (To distinguish the original Red Guard movement from the new rebels, who also often called themselves Red

³⁰ Two or more competing Red Guard organizations emerged in many Beijing middle schools in August 1966, sometimes reflecting conflict between revolutionary cadres' children and children of workers and peasants (Rosen 1979, p. 186). At TMS, however, there was only one Red Guard organization, which

Guards, the former were typically referred to as “Old Red Guards.”) In December, TMS Red Guards joined their counterparts at other elite middle schools in convening a Capitol Red Guard United Action Committee. Representing themselves forthrightly as children of high-level cadres, they committed themselves to defending “the Party organizations at all levels and the outstanding, loyal leading cadres” (Song 1996, pp. 107-8).

By the end of December, after three months of sharp factional conflict between the Old Red Guards and their rebel opponents, bloodline theory had been de-legitimized and most of the Old Red Guard organizations had collapsed. Unlike their counterparts at other schools, however, the TMS Red Guards, proud founders of the movement, survived as an organization, although their numbers were greatly reduced (Interviews No. 15, 16, 18, 18 and 20).

MIDDLE SCHOOL RADICALS: ATTACKING POLITICAL CAPITAL, DEFENDING CULTURAL CAPITAL

In the late fall of 1966, children of intellectuals at TMS, emboldened by the success of the new rebel movement targeting political capital, and especially the Jinggangshan rebels at neighboring TU (see below), organized their own movement to challenge the domination of the middle school by the Old Red Guard. They took the name of the TU rebel organization, but they had little organizational connection with their university counterparts and their political orientation was somewhat different.³¹

Complying with the norms of the Cultural Revolution, the two main leaders of the TMS Jinggangshan rebels had unimpeachable class backgrounds. Both were children of revolutionary cadres; the key leader was the former Red Guard who had been abandoned by her erstwhile comrades after she supported the anti-work team rebels at TU (Zhong 1996, p. 1; Interviews No. 17 and 18). Nevertheless, the organization belonged to the children of intellectuals, who were

dominated the school until an opposition faction, composed mainly of children of intellectuals, emerged in late 1966 (see below).

represented on its leadership committee and made up virtually its entire social base.

Jinggangshan leaders claim they had the support of 80% of the students when they challenged the Old Red Guard in late 1966 (Interviews No. 15, 17 and 18).

Making use of the possibilities provided by Mao's attack on "capitalist roaders in the Party," the new middle school rebels hurled back epithets of privilege at the Old Red Guards. The revolutionary cadres' children had called intellectuals' children the scions of the old elite; now they called the revolutionary cadres' children the scions of a new elite. "These people ... are the successors of the privileged stratum," wrote the middle school rebels. "All the 'United Action Committee' does is defend the interests of the privileged stratum" (TMS Jinggangshan Regiment 1967). Styling themselves as the genuine rebels, Jinggangshan activists now also hurled the "royalist" charge back at their adversaries, accusing them of defending the Party hierarchy.

Leaders of Jinggangshan and most of its supporters had been the "royalists" just a few months earlier (Zhong 1996). "Before we supported the school leaders," said a rebel activist, recalling that several of the leaders of Jinggangshan had been particularly strong defenders of the principal against Red Guard attacks (Interview No. 17). Even after the school administration fell and was widely denounced for following a "revisionist education line," a Jinggangshan leader recalled, "we supported changes in education but we were not so violently opposed to the principal and the school leadership" (Interview No. 18). The rebellion of these new middle school rebels was directed against political, not cultural capital. They had, in general, benefited from and supported meritocratic policies before the Cultural Revolution. Despite the fact that the political environment of the Cultural Revolution, defined by Mao's radical class line politics, was extremely inhospitable to defense of meritocracy, the rebels of intellectual origin at TMS sympathized with efforts to do so.

³¹ Jinggangshan was the name of the mountain stronghold from which Mao launched his guerrilla strategy in 1927.

The most eloquent condemnation of class line policies was made by a Beijing middle school student named Yu Luoke. His well known article “Origin Theory” (“*Chushen Lun*”) was published in a Beijing middle school rebel newspaper in January 1967 at the height of the campaign to criticize bloodline theory. He joined the widespread condemnation of bloodline theory, but went beyond the mainstream rebel critique, which condemned the claims made by revolutionary cadres’ children regarding their “natural Redness.” Instead of differentiating between bloodline theory and class line, as most rebels were doing, he condemned the entire family origin system, which he likened to a caste system. While those of good class origin claimed to have been discriminated against before the Cultural Revolution, he wrote, they had actually received special treatment. The people who really faced discrimination were those of bad class origin, he wrote, providing a host of egregious examples.³² He condemned the entire system of class preferences: “We do not recognize any right that cannot be attained through individual effort” (Lin 1996, p. 260).

Over one million copies of “Origin Theory” were distributed around the country during the winter and spring of 1967 (Chan 1985, p. 233) and the article was debated intensively in the pages of Beijing middle school Red Guard newspapers (Lin 1996, pp. 255-60; Rosen 1979, pp. 196-204).³³ It was very popular among TMS rebels (Interviews No. 15, 16, 17 and 18). A leader of the rebel faction, who knew Yu Luoke personally, said that while they could not openly endorse the article for political reasons, “we thought everyone should read it” (Interview No. 18).

Thus, TMS split into the two camps predicted by the competing elites model. On one side, children of the political elite attacked cultural capital and defended political capital, while on the other side, children of the intellectual elite attacked political capital and defended cultural capital. This simple polarization was complicated, however, in the winter of 1967 with the

³² For an English translation see Gordon White (1976, pp. 71-93). The Chinese original is included in Song (1996, pp. 120-40). Song also reproduces several other articles by Yu Luoke.

³³ The CCRSG ignored the debate in the middle school student press about Yu Luoke’s article for several months. In April 1967, it denounced the article, stifling open debate (Rosen, 1979, 218).

emergence of a third, “moderate” faction that called itself the Mao Zedong Thought Red Guards. These students hadn’t joined the attack by the Old Red Guard on cultural capital in June of 1966 and they were reluctant to join the attack by the Jinggangshan rebels on political capital later that year. They preferred the status quo. The moderates were, in the words of a former Jinggangshan rebel, “fundamentally royalist” (Interview No. 17). While most were children of intellectuals, their ranks were swollen by children of revolutionary cadres who were abandoning the retreating Old Red Guards (Interview No.16 and 19). Thus, the moderate faction might be said to represent the reemergence of the coalition of political and cultural capital previously embodied in the Youth League. In deed, the moderate faction counted among its activists a good part of the former school-wide Youth League committee (Interview No. 17). The moderates, however, did not play an important role in the conflict at TMS. Despised as “wishy-washy” by the combatants of the rival Old Red Guards and Jinggangshan, they were not very active and their pleas for reconciliation fell on deaf ears (Interviews No. 15, 17 and 18).

UNIVERSITY RADICALS: ATTACKING BOTH CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CAPITAL

The nature of the factional conflict at Tsinghua University was very different than that at the neighboring middle school because of the large number of university students who came from working class and peasant families. Contrary to the prediction of the competing elites model, working class and peasant students did not simply join factions led by students of elite origin. Instead, they played the decisive role. The participation of students of non-elite origin led to the emergence of a “radical” faction (*jijin pai*) that attacked both political and cultural capital and, then, to the emergence of an opposing “moderate” faction (*wenhe pai*) that defended both.

Before arriving at this factional alignment in early 1967, however, the campus was divided along different lines. The first months of the Cultural Revolution were marked, first, by an offensive against cultural capital led by the Party work team and the Old Red Guards and,

then, by an offensive against political capital led by a new rebel movement under the direction of students of working class and peasant origin.

The work team that took over TU in June 1966 was led by none less than President Liu Shaoqi's wife, Wang Guangmei. Revolutionary cadres' children at the university mobilized early to denounce the university administration of Jiang Nanxiang and were poised to take the lead in the Cultural Revolution at TU, as their counterparts in the TMS Red Guard had.³⁴ They, however, never displayed the independent, rebellious spirit of the early middle school Red Guards. Their movement was, from the beginning, more a creature of the work team. Moreover, before they could establish their "rebel" credentials in the struggle against cultural capital, other students challenged the leadership of the work team over the movement, immediately making the political hierarchy the central issue.

Kuai Dafu, author of the first big character poster attacking the work team at TU, was the son of poor peasants who had entered TU with the first cohort of peasant students recruited in response to Mao's renewed emphasis on class line in 1963. He was rising rapidly in the political establishment when he chose to take the first fateful step on a path that would make him into an implacable enemy of this establishment.³⁵ Soon after the work team arrived in June 1966, Kuai wrote a series of wall posters accusing the work team of trying to control the student movement and protecting Jiang and other top university cadres by refusing to bring them before mass "criticism and struggle meetings." On June 24, the work team hauled the insubordinate Kuai before a mass criticism meeting, denouncing him as a "counterrevolutionary." Two students,

³⁴ Liu Shaoqi's daughter, Liu Tao put up one of the first posters denouncing Jiang Nanxiang, her father's erstwhile ally. According to the self-criticism she made under political duress in December 1966, in which she was not completely repentant, she wrote the poster at her father's suggestion (*JGS*, 1966-12-31).

³⁵ By 1966, Kuai had become a Youth League leader in his department as well as a director of the university radio station and he was well along in the lengthy process of applying for Party membership. Kuai's pre-Cultural Revolution activist career included sending a report to central Party authorities on conditions in the countryside (content unknown) and serving as the student representative on the Beijing committee in charge of organizing criticism of literary works in the earliest phase of the Cultural Revolution (Interview No. 8). The leadership of this campaign was criticized by Mao in May 1966 as conservative, leading to the removal of the official who had been in charge of it, Beijing Mayor Peng Zhen,

President Liu Shaoqi's daughter, Liu Tao, and Marshall He Long's son, He Pengfei, future leaders of the Red Guard organization at TU, were selected to preside over the meeting. An unrepentant Kuai denounced the work team, winning loud applause from perhaps half of the thousands of students crowded into the auditorium. From that point, the campus was split into two incipient factions, one supporting and one opposing the work team. The central issue became whether the work team, and by extension the Party hierarchy, should control the student movement (Interviews No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7; Hinton 1972, pp. 45-65). With the political agenda arranged in this fashion, Liu, He and other high cadres' children were immediately cast in the role of conservatives.

When the work team was removed at the end of July, at Mao's insistence, two contending factions quickly formed. On one side were the Red Guards, associated with the work team and led by children of high Party officials;³⁶ on the other side was a loose coalition of students opposed to the work team and the high cadres' children. The departing work team left the Red Guard organization in charge of the university.³⁷ While the TU Red Guard was universally regarded as the organization of high cadres' children, it appealed to a wider group of students on the basis of defending the Party's authority and attacking intellectual elites. Its radical class line attacks on cultural capital, however, alienated students of intellectual origin. At the same time, the Red Guards' success in rallying students of working class and peasant origin under the bloodline banner was limited because these students were already split over the work team issue and many were not inclined to follow the high cadres' children (Interviews No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 13).

and the beginning of the mass mobilization phase of the Cultural Revolution (Yan and Gao 1996, pp. 23-38).

³⁶ Top TU Red Guard leaders included, in addition to President Liu Shaoqi's daughter and Marshall He Long's son, Li Lifeng, son of Li Jingquan (First Secretary of the Southwestern Bureau of the Party Central Committee), Liu Qufen, son of Liu Ningyi (Secretary of the Central Committee's Secretariat) and Wang Xiahu, son of Wang Renzhong (Secretary of the South Central Bureau of the Central Committee) (Interviews No.1 and 13; Esmein 1973,p. 104).

³⁷ A Red Guard activist confirmed other students' perceptions that the TU Red Guard was mainly composed of revolutionary cadres' children and student cadres (Interview No. 10).

The opposition coalition, known as the August 8th faction after the day of its founding rally, united a broad range of students who were alienated by the high-handed practices of the work team and the Red Guard regime it left behind. Although this coalition would later split, in the autumn of 1966, an early opposition activist related, “We *all* didn’t like the high cadres’ children”(Interview No. 14). The coalition was led by students from lower-level revolutionary cadre families and working class and peasant families. At this point, the height of bloodline theory, it was difficult for children of intellectuals to even stand up and participate in meetings. Students of working class and peasant origin, however, had the class qualifications to challenge the pretensions of the high cadres’ children to leadership over the movement (Interviews No.1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14).

In September, Kuai Dafu and his associates established their own organization, Jinggangshan, which, with the support of radicals in the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, became the dominant organization in the opposition camp. On October 6, Jinggangshan, together with organizations that had emerged in opposition to the Old Red Guards at other Beijing Universities, organized a rally attended by some 100,000 people to combat the “bourgeois reactionary line” (Yan and Gao 1996, p. 95). This rally marked a fundamental shift in the direction of the Cultural Revolution.³⁸ The “bourgeois reactionary line” referred to repression of students by Party authorities, the work teams and the Old Red Guards. This new offensive was, thus, directed against the political hierarchy. Bloodline theory was denounced as a cover for defending political privilege. By mid-December 1966, the Old Red Guard had collapsed and Jinggangshan took control of the entire campus. Riding the tide of the movement against the “bourgeois reactionary line,” it had become the most prominent rebel organization in the country and was rapidly establishing “liaison stations” in most of China’s major cities, promoting rebellion and influencing local factional struggles (Tang 1996a, p. 53; Hinton 1972, pp. 96-7).

From the beginning, Kuai Dafu was a symbol of resistance to political authority and Jinggangshan's rise was associated with the offensive against political capital that began in October 1966. The Jinggangshan rebels at TU, however, unlike their counterparts at TMS, did not in any way defend cultural capital. While Jinggangshan's leaders denounced bloodline theory, they distinguished between it and class line. They specifically attacked bloodline theory for advocating the inheritance of power by children of the political elite, denouncing the "feudal" idea of being "born red" advanced by the "golden boys and jade girls" born to Party officials (*JGS*, 1967-1-23).³⁹ At the same time, they promoted radical class line attacks on the intellectual elite.⁴⁰ They attacked without reservation both of the pillars of the status quo at Tsinghua: political loyalty and meritocracy. Kuai Dafu enthusiastically took up the agenda set forth by Mao Zedong. The main tasks of the Cultural Revolution, he wrote, were "to discredit and overthrow the authorities taking the capitalist road, to discredit and overthrow the bourgeois academic authorities, and to thoroughly reform the educational system and teaching methods" (Kuai, [1967-8-6], 61).

Attacking Political Capital

The struggle at TU did not reflect factional conflicts within the university Party organization. This organization, monolithically loyal to Jiang Nanxiang before 1966, did not

³⁸ This shift resulted from Mao's effort to re-direct the movement against his principal target, the "capitalist roaders in the Party." Lin Biao's October 1, 1966 speech was a dramatic public signal of this new offensive, encouraging the rise of TU Jinggangshan and similar organizations (Yan and Gao 1996, p. 95).

³⁹ Kuai Dafu denounced bloodline theory in an open letter to Zhou Enlai on August 7, 1966 (Kuai no date, p. 59). A series of mass meetings were held at TU to debate the theory in the late summer and fall of 1966 (Zhong 1996, p. 14; Interview No. 8).

⁴⁰ The rebel tendency led by Kuai Dafu, thus, rejected only bloodline theory's defense of political capital, while enthusiastically supporting class line attacks on cultural capital. Stanley Rosen found this tendency to be common among early middle school rebel organizations that opposed the Old Red Guard and were led by students of working class and peasant origin. Because these non-elite rebels continued to uphold class line, Rosen considered that they had failed to break completely with bloodline theory and he, therefore, called them "moderates." The true rebels, in his account, were the organizations led by intellectual-origin students in elite middle schools who opposed class line (Rosen 1979, p. 186, p. 262, pp. 271-2). This failure to recognize class line attacks on cultural capital as rebellion against the existing order is the major conceptual weakness of his very solid investigation of middle school factional conflict.

split; there were no important cadres who supported Jinggangshan. For its part, Jinggangshan was implacably hostile to the Party hierarchy at TU, which it described as a thoroughly rotten organization that would have to be rebuilt from scratch (*JGS*, 1967-12-28). Nevertheless, Jinggangshan did not, in principal, oppose the idea of Party leadership. Moreover, Jinggangshan leaders owed their fledgling power to the support they received from the Cultural Revolution Small Group. Jinggangshan was a key node in the network of rebel mass organizations that had become the CRSG's organizational base of support.⁴¹ Although Jinggangshan depended on patrons at the center of the fractured Party, it was not part of the Party establishment. It arose in opposition to this establishment and was its unyielding adversary.

The “bourgeois reactionary line,” Jinggangshan maintained, had not started with the suppression of students by the work teams in the summer of 1966. Instead, it had characterized the administration of TU during the previous 17 years. The Jiang administration had established a “bourgeois dictatorship” in which bureaucratic leaders had monopolized power and suppressed the masses. The greatest gain of the Cultural Revolution, Jinggangshan leaders wrote, was the “destruction of the slave mentality” that had been encouraged by the “capitalist roaders in authority” (*JGS*, 1967-5-13). In the view of Jinggangshan leaders, the problems at TU were not isolated. “The capitalist roaders,” they wrote, “have captured part of the state machinery in China (and it’s become capitalist state machinery).” What was required, therefore, was “a great revolution in which one class overthrows another.” This was the task of the Cultural Revolution, “an explosion of the long-accumulated class conflict in China.” It was fundamentally the same kind of revolution as took place in 1949 (*JGS*, 1968-7-5; Tsinghua Jinggangshan Regiment, no date, p. 5). The goal of the revolution was to do away with the existing “system of hierarchy,

⁴¹ This network was loose and unruly and did not recognize a hierarchy of authority. Kuai Dafu and Jinggangshan were particularly feisty, even joining abortive campaigns against powerful patrons in the CRSG including Kang Sheng and Zhang Chunqiao (Tang 1996a, p. 52; Hunter 1969, p. 230; Interview No. 8).

cadre privileges, the slave mentality, the overlord style of work, the bloated bureaucracy, etc.”

(reprinted poster, Jinggangshan / 4-14 Cadre Office, 1967, v. 2, p. 35)

Jinggangshan leaders maintained an intransigent attitude towards university cadres in general. They contended almost all cadres had committed serious mistakes and had not yet fully broken with “the revisionist merchandise of the old Tsinghua.” Until they had, their self-criticisms could not be accepted and they certainly could not be restored to power (*JGS*, 1967-5-13).

Attacking Cultural Capital

Jinggangshan condemned the “revisionist education line” of the “old Tsinghua” en toto, advocating the adoption of radical class line policies. It criticized the Jiang administration for using meritocratic methods to exclude workers’ and peasants’ children. The national entrance exam, which they likened to the imperial civil service exam, and TU admissions policies, writers in the radical’s *Jinggangshan* newspaper claimed, recruited most students from China’s biggest cities, neglecting the countryside and backward and minority areas. Even in big cities, workers were at a disadvantage. Why, *Jinggangshan* asked, were twice as many students of bourgeois origin recruited from Shanghai than students of working class origin? They also denounced the practice of allowing children of high-level cadres in through the “back door” (*JGS*, 1967-11-17, 11-24).

Jinggangshan proposed a new university admissions policy under which children of worker and peasant origin would make up 65% of all students admitted (children of revolutionary cadres no longer were listed among those receiving class line preferences). No more than 5% of students would come from the former exploiting classes. Sixty percent of students would be selected through a process of recommendation by the masses and entrance exams would be thoroughly reformed and only re-introduced in a supplemental role. In addition to these social criteria, they called for political criteria that favored Cultural Revolution rebels. Groups they

believed should be barred from study included: children of counterrevolutionaries and capitalist roaders who had not broken with their families; students who had participated in reactionary organizations during the Cultural Revolution and had not reformed; and bookworms and others who had not participated in the Cultural Revolution and did not care (Tang 1996a, p. 55). The main purpose of universities was, in their view, to produce revolutionary successors.⁴²

The “old Tsinghua,” Jinggangshan leaders claimed, had been turned into a “breeding ground for capitalist successors.” By recruiting students from privileged families, encouraging the isolation of students and teachers from workers and peasants, denigrating productive labor and neglecting political education, they charged, the university was creating “spiritual aristocrats.” The rigidly stratified educational system promoted by Jiang would inevitably produce a class hierarchy. “The ‘superior’ would get more ‘superior’ and the ‘inferior’ would get more ‘inferior,’” wrote the radicals, leading to class differentiation in which the ‘superior’ would become an exploiting class standing on the heads of the ‘inferior’ working people (*JGS*, 1967-5-1, 5-8, 5-13, 11-17; Tang 1996a, p. 58.).

Jinggangshan had no sympathy for the “old bourgeois intellectuals,” the well-paid senior professors educated before 1949 who had been particular targets of the Old Red Guard. They, however, were more concerned about the emergence of a generation of “new bourgeois intellectuals.” The latter included post-1949 Tsinghua graduates who had been hired as teachers and administrators at the university. They were mainly from non-laboring families and many had developed a bourgeois worldview due to Tsinghua’s elitist policies. They were actually more dangerous than the “old bourgeois intellectuals,” Jinggangshan leaders maintained, because, unlike most of the former, many of them enjoyed the legitimacy and power associated with the Party.

⁴² This was consistent with Mao Zedong’s emphasis on political and ideological criteria for selecting leaders and his intention to use the Cultural Revolution to test Party members and forge a new generation of revolutionary leaders. In her insightful book *Competitive Comrades*, Susan Shirk discusses problems engendered by this type of “virtuocracy.”

Most of them have the outside appearance of being “red and expert,” some are also Party members and have cadre titles, so they are adept at misusing the Party’s name to carry out revisionist garbage; they have political capital and prestige and most things have to go through them to get done (*JGS*, 1967-10-19).

Thus, this new generation was of particular concern to Jinggangshan leaders because they *combined* cultural and political capital. They were the main social base of the Jiang administration, Jinggangshan leaders charged, and had become part of a “privileged stratum” at the university that also included top university officials and sections of the old bourgeois intellectuals (*JGS*, 1967-10-19). The TU Party Committee, they wrote, “was certainly not the vanguard of the proletariat, but rather the agent of the new bourgeois intellectuals”(*JGS*, 1967-12-28).

Radical Leadership and Social Base

Students of working class and peasant origin completely dominated Jinggangshan’s leadership. Table 5, based on accounts provided by activists familiar with the leadership of the organization, lists the members of Jinggangshan’s “Headquarters Committee” along with their family origins and whether or not they had joined the Party before the Cultural Revolution.⁴³ Kuai Dafu, head of the organization and by all accounts its dominant figure, as has already been noted, came from a poor peasant family. His chief lieutenant, Bao Changkang, came from a working class family. All but one of the Committee members was of working class or peasant origin. Chen Yuyan, the one member of revolutionary cadre origin, had been a leader of the August 8 faction, but, according to Jinggangshan activists, he enjoyed relatively little influence in Kuai’s organization. Han Yinshan, a low-level housing official who, unlike most university

⁴³ This is a list of members of the Jinggangshan Headquarters Committee when it was founded in late 1966, less one member, Sun Nutao, who left to help found the breakaway April 14th faction in 1967 (Tang 1996a, pp. 59-60). Five former students who were active in the contending factions and were acquainted with the main leaders, in several cases maintaining friendships to this day, provided fairly consistent accounts of key background characteristics of these leaders (Interview Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). In a few cases in which information provided by different informants was contradictory, I used that provided by the person(s) who

cadres, had little formal education, was one of the few cadres who supported Jinggangshan. He was placed on the committee to demonstrate Jinggangshan's willingness to rehabilitate cadres who broke with the "old Tsinghua," but his influence in the organization was also limited (Interviews No. 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Table 5: Leadership of the Radical Jinggangshan Faction at Tsinghua University

Leader	Family Origin	Party Member	Occupation
Kuai Dafu	Peasant	No	Student
Bao Changkang	Worker	No	Student
Ma Xiaozhuang	Peasant	Yes	Student
Liu Caitang	Peasant	No	Student
Chen Jifang	Worker	Yes	Student
Ren Chuanzhong	Peasant	?	Student
Chen Yuyan	Revolutionary Cadre	Yes	Student
Wang Liangsheng	Peasant?	?	Student
Han Yinshan	Worker	Yes	University Cadre

The composition of Jinggangshan's leadership was a product of Cultural Revolution norms that expected that students of good class origin would lead the movement. This norm, established in the period bloodline theory held sway, was reinforced by the fact that placing students of less-than-good family origin in prominent positions would subject not only the organization, but also the individual, to attack. "If you had a good background, it would help you stand up and be active," said one rebel who was an activist despite his bad background. "It was very dangerous to be against another group, you might get in trouble sooner or later, especially if your family background was not good, so many people did not want to be a leader" (Interview No. 9).

There were students of intellectual and capitalist origin, however, who played important roles in Jinggangshan behind the scenes. A student of bourgeois origin named Meng Jiaju was part of a tight-knit group of Kuai Dafu's classmates who supported him in opposing the work

seemed most acquainted with the individual or had the most detailed information. In one case in which I was not satisfied with making such judgements, I have left a question mark.

team (Bao Changkang and Liu Caitang were also members). Meng, in fact, had co-authored with Kuai the big character poster which first criticized the work team (Kuai, no date, 1-4). He remained Kuai's close confidant, at least during the first part of the conflict, and radical activists surmised that Meng might have become a formal leader had his family origin been better (Interviews No. 8 and 9). Another student whose family origin was less-than-good, Sun Yun, was in charge of Jinggangshan's investigations of its opponents (Interviews No. 7 and 8). Looking behind the scenes, however, one does not find an alternate leadership group. None of those interviewed doubted that Kuai and his colleagues of working class and peasant origin ran Jinggangshan.

The composition of the social base of the Jinggangshan faction is harder to determine than the leadership. Although the organization established formal family origin criteria for membership, welcoming specifically those of good origin and rejecting those of bad origin (Kuai, no date, p. 61), in practice, participation in the organization's activities was largely informal and it welcomed support regardless of family origin. Participants on both sides insisted that Jinggangshan, like its "moderate" rival, included students of all class backgrounds. From their accounts of factional alignment in their own classes, it was clear that students of working class and peasant origin were a key component of Jinggangshan's base of support. On the other hand, it was also evident that students of bad class origin, including students who suffered political exclusion because their families were politically suspect, were over-represented in Jinggangshan's ranks (Interviews No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 9, 10 and 11).

An activist in the moderate faction linked Jinggangshan's extreme political positions with the class backgrounds of its adherents. While the moderate faction had more students from the "ordinary" classes, he said, Jinggangshan "may have had more of the two extremes – very bad family background and extremely good." Among the "extremely good" group in the radical camp, he referred particularly to students of poor peasant origin, linking their radicalism to their families' economic and social conditions. Unlike many of the urban students who came from

relatively comfortable homes, many of the peasants who had arrived at Tsinghua over the last several years, he said sympathetically, came from very poor families. Many had no money except for the minimal stipend provided by the university and could not even afford to wear underwear (Interview No. 6).

Many students who had been excluded or persecuted on account of their family origin stayed on the sidelines of the Cultural Revolution, acutely aware of their vulnerability. Others, however, eagerly joined the struggle against the “bourgeois reactionary line” because it targeted the Party hierarchy. “I worked so hard,” said one student of bad family origin, “but they didn’t allow me to join the Communist Youth League.” He sympathized with Jinggangshan, he explained, because “I just didn’t like the cadres, I didn’t like the system” (Interview No. 1).

Nevertheless, the radical faction at TU did not provide a forum for expressing hostility to class line policies, as the radical faction at TMS did. While Yu Luoke’s article opposing the family origin system was widely read and supported among rebels at the middle school, for instance, few copies reached the university. Only one of the university students interviewed had seen it during the Cultural Revolution. The leadership of Jinggangshan strongly supported the radical class line orientation of the Cultural Revolution, preventing challenges to class line from gaining a foothold in the radical camp.⁴⁴ “That kind of idea could not survive in China then,” a radical activist recalled. “People still remembered the revolution against the landlords, so it just could not get much support” (Interview No. 9).

⁴⁴ The effort made by one student to oppose class line illustrates the limited hearing such views received at the university. Li Leiluo’s father had been an officer in the nationalist army and he was, therefore, of very bad class origin. An acquaintance described him as an ardent admirer of Mao, but an opponent of class line because he felt he had been treated unjustly because of his family origin. At a series of mass meetings held at TU in the autumn of 1966 to debate bloodline theory, Li stood up boldly and called for an end to the family origin system. At the middle school he might have been applauded, but at the university, where the orientation of the rebel movement was determined by students of working class and peasant origin, he was completely isolated. The rebel organizations all roundly rejected his views (Interview No. 7). Despite the fact that Jinggangshan insisted on radical class line policies, Li Leiluo became an active supporter of the organization. In the summer of 1967, Li Leiluo was killed in factional fighting in Hunan province and was buried as a martyr by TU Jinggangshan (Interview No. 5).

Many students from educated families, particularly those who had not been fully integrated into the political establishment, nevertheless joined Jinggangshan's attack on the political hierarchy. They did so, however, on terms set by the leadership of the organization. Despite the fact that the majority of Jinggangshan's supporters were most likely students from educated families (who made up the majority of the student body), these terms included a radical class line orientation. This orientation was assured by the political domination of the radical camp by students of working class and peasant origin, who not only controlled the leadership but also made up a substantial part of its ranks.⁴⁵

UNIVERSITY MODERATES: DEFENDING BOTH POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

The collapse of the old Red Guard at the end of 1966 opened the way for the emergence of a new coalition to defend the status quo with a broader social base than bloodline politics had allowed. The Old Red Guard had defended political capital, protecting the authority of the Party, the work team, and veteran cadres. They had not defended the TU Party organization, however, because they did not want to be tainted by association with Jiang Nanxiang's "black gang" of "bourgeois academic authorities." They had alienated many TU Party and Youth League members, particularly those of intellectual origin who made up the majority of both organizations. The moderate faction that emerged in 1967, in contrast, defended the embattled TU establishment. It represented an informal resurrection of the Party and Youth League organization at the school and the coalition of political and cultural capital that it embodied.

In December 1966, members of all of the fighting teams that made up the August 8th coalition merged with Jinggangshan, but many former August 8th leaders chafed under what they considered the domineering leadership and extremist policies of Kuai Dafu and his comrades. An August 8th leader said he and his friends decided to break with Jinggangshan after the

⁴⁵ Students reported that the radical faction in their classes included a contingent of working class and peasant students; the leading radical activist often was of non-elite origin (Interviews No. 1, 2, 3, 6).

organization kidnapped and publicly humiliated Liu Shaoqi's wife, Wang Guangmei, in January 1967 (Interview No. 5). On April 14, 1967, former leaders of the August 8 faction joined with former activists of the Old Red Guards to organize a meeting to demand that Jinggangshan rehabilitate university cadres. The meeting launched a new organization, popularly known as the April 14th faction,⁴⁶ which soon grew to rival Jinggangshan in size (Interview No. 5, Hinton 1972, pp. 105-18). Conflict between the "radical" Jinggangshan and the "moderate" April 14th camps gripped TU for the next fifteen months, growing increasingly violent and finally leading to a "hundred day war" in the spring and summer of 1968.⁴⁷

Defending Political and Cultural Capital

April 14th leaders did not believe that the leadership and policies of the "old Tsinghua" should be completely condemned. During the 17 years before the Cultural Revolution, they argued, mistakes may have been made, but the dominant line was always socialist, not capitalist (*JGSB*, 1967-12-1 [Tang, 1998]). "We thought the education line that Tsinghua had carried out was mostly good," said an April 14th activist (Interview No. 13). "We didn't dare say the old education system was good, but we thought part was good and you should reform the other part," said another activist. "You shouldn't just overthrow everything; the old intellectuals and cadres

⁴⁶ The moderate faction formally called itself Jinggangshan / 4-14.

⁴⁷ The April 14th meeting was inspired by an article in the central Party journal *Hong Qi (Red Flag)* (No. 5, April 7, 1966) that called for the rehabilitation of cadres. This article was part of a campaign initiated by central Party authorities in February 1967 to reestablish order in schools, workplaces and localities after rebel "power seizures" in January had disrupted or overthrown existing organs of leadership. Military delegations were sent to schools and workplaces to reconcile contending factions and establish "revolutionary committees" composed of representatives of the new mass organizations, old cadres and the military. While military delegations were able to reign in (or suppress) rebels in many institutions and establish committees under their leadership, the navy delegation sent to TU was unable to impose its will on the Jinggangshan organization, which enjoyed national stature and the support of the CCRSG. Jinggangshan steadfastly opposed the rehabilitation of old cadres and the two factions at TU could not be forced to cooperate (despite a formal coalition imposed between September and December 1967). A revolutionary committee was not established at TU until after the warring student factions had been suppressed in July 1968. This was accomplished by tens of thousands of local workers, led by army officers and authorized by Mao, who took control of the campus on July 27. This watershed event signaled the end of the period of mass factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution (Hinton 1972; Tang 1996a and 1996b).

have a role to play”(Interview No. 14). Many cadres may have made mistakes, April 14th leaders admitted, but most cadres were good. They not only should be released, but they should be allowed to join the movement and be restored to their previous positions. These cadres were more capable of running the university than radical students who only knew how to shout about tearing things down (Tang 1998; Song 1996, p. 367). An April 14th sympathizer recalled:

Jinggangshan was more radical. They supported the Cultural Revolution Small Group to oppose almost all the communist officials; they want to have a big change – down with this guy, down with that guy, down with as many as you want, including all the officials in Tsinghua University. And the ... April 14th people, many of them are more conservative, not so radical (Interview No. 5).

April 14th leaders urged students to “courageously protect, enthusiastically help, and boldly employ” cadres who had made mistakes (JGSB, 1967-7-5 [Tang 1998, p. 8]). “April 14th didn’t want to overthrow the previous cadres,” said an April 14th activist, “we protected the cadres, the teachers and the intellectuals” (Interview No. 14).

April 14th leaders opposed Jinggangshan’s contention that a new privileged stratum was emerging in China. In their view, class relations had remained stable since the 1949 Revolution. The danger of “capitalist restoration,” therefore, came from the old exploiting classes that had been overthrown, not some “new bourgeoisie” within the Party. In particular, they did not agree that intellectuals trained since 1949 could be considered “new bourgeois intellectuals.” The professors and administrators being denounced as “new bourgeois intellectuals,” said an April 14th activist, were, after all, “educated by the proletariat” (Interview No. 13). Jinggangshan’s “ultra-leftist” talk about a new “privileged stratum” and about “one class overthrowing another,” April 14th leaders charged, would only open up the back door for the old exploiting classes to come back to power (Tang 1998; JGSB, 1967-12-1).

Moderate Leadership and Social Base

The central figure in the moderate faction, Shen Ruhuai, was, like Kuai Dafu, the son of poor peasants and most of the top student leaders on the moderate side were also of working class

or peasant origin (see Table 6). Two key leaders were children of high Party officials. Although students from intellectual families were not in a position to occupy the most prominent posts, such students played important roles behind-the-scenes. The most capable April 14th theoretician, for instance, was Zhou Chuanying, a student of intellectual origin (Interviews No. 5 and 6).

Compared with Jinggangshan, more teachers and cadres were invited to join the April 14th Headquarters Committee; moreover, they were better educated and had occupied more prominent positions in the university than the lone cadre on the Jinggangshan committee. Tan Haoqiang, for instance, had been Vice-Secretary of the school-wide Youth League and was a highly respected scholar (Interviews No. 7).

April 14th was a student-led organization, but it benefited from the strong support it received from university cadres and faculty. While cadres were not part of the inner circle of leadership, an April 14th activist explained, they were the “backbone” of the organization (Interview No. 7). “Most lower and middle-level cadres either participated in April 14th or sympathized with us,” said an April 14th leader.⁴⁸ At one point, 150 university cadres who had formed their own “fighting organization” published an open letter supporting April 14th (Interview No. 12; Tang 1996a, p. 57). The moderate faction also was widely supported by teachers. “We definitely had more faculty on our side,” recalled another April 14th leader (Interview No. 6). Most teachers were Party members and it was from among this group that the April 14th faction reportedly received the most support (Interview No. 12).

Table 6: Leadership of the April 14th Moderate Faction at Tsinghua University⁴⁹

⁴⁸Upper-level cadres were marginalized politically and were unable to participate.

⁴⁹There were 54 members on the April 14th Headquarters Committee in the spring of 1967, but Tang Shaojie only listed 12 members (Tang 1996a, p. 61). A former member of the Headquarters Committee said the 12 listed members included the most important and longstanding members of the organization’s smaller Standing Committee (Interview No. 6). The background characteristics provided for these leaders are based on the recollections of former activists who were familiar with them. Several interviewees recalled that Jiang Nanfang and Sun Nutao were of humble origin, but did not know whether they were from urban or rural families. One informant said Sun Nutao was a Party member in 1966, while another said he did not join the Party until after the Cultural Revolution (Interviews No. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Leader	Family Origin	Party Member	Occupation
Shen Ruhuai	Peasant	Yes	Student
Sun Nutao	Peasant?	No	Student
Chen Chusan	Revolutionary cadre	Yes	Student
Liu Wanzhang	Worker	No	Student
Ji Peng	Revolutionary cadre	Yes	Student
Su Changzhong	Peasant	No	Student
Zhang Xuemei	Worker	No	Student
Jiang Nanfang	Worker?	No	Student
Ren Yanshen	Peasant	No	Student
Li Xiufu	Intellectual	?	Teacher
Fu Zhengtai	Bad	?	Teacher
Tan Haoqiang	Intellectual	Yes	University Cadre

Among students, support for the moderate coalition was based on its defense of political and cultural capital. All students, regardless of the position of their own families in the hierarchies of political and cultural capital, were accumulating these assets at the university. This was an important reason why the social base of the moderate faction was broad, including students of intellectual, working class, peasant and revolutionary cadre origin. Possession of political capital was, unquestionably, the most important basis for aligning with the faction of the status quo. “Ninety five percent of Party members, League cadres and class cadres supported us,” an April 14th leader proudly claimed (Interview No.12). This estimate may exaggerate the true proportion, but it echoed the view of most students interviewed: the most important base of support for the April 14th faction were former Youth League cadres (Interviews No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13). One student provided a detailed breakdown of the factional sympathies of the thirty students in his class. Eight out of eleven classmates who had either joined the Party or were Youth League leaders before 1966 supported the April 14th faction (Interview No. 1).

Cultural Capital as a Basis of Conservatism

While possession of political capital was the main basis of conservatism, the reasons students of intellectual origin gave for joining the moderate April 14th camp show that possession

of cultural capital was also a basis for defending the status quo. The experience of one student provides an anecdotal description of how the radical class line program of Jinggangshan drove intellectual-origin students into the April 14th camp. Li Weizhang, the son of a teacher, had won a leadership position in the Youth League before the Cultural Revolution because of his academic success.⁵⁰ He admired his professors and President Jiang Nanxiang and he was shocked when the work team removed Jiang. He was further alienated from the work team and the Red Guards because of their anti-democratic methods and their increasing stress on class background. There was little room for him and little support for meritocratic values in the bloodline camp. In the summer and fall of 1966, he even sympathized with Kuai and the radicals because they championed “big democracy.” Li, however, became increasingly alienated by Jinggangshan’s “extreme class line.” He gravitated to the April 14th faction because, unlike Jinggangshan, it was “not too extreme against the school officials.” He saw the moderate faction as the natural home for students from intellectual family backgrounds:

I think normally that people that used to feel comfortable [with Jiang Nanxiang] before the Cultural Revolution naturally tended to [the April 14th faction]... [By comfortable] I mean they used to get good academic achievement, or they used to be a member of the Youth League leadership, or they have a good relationship with the department leadership. [Jiang] said that “everyone is equal under grades,” so that’s why people with my background just feel comfortable for that emotionally (Interview No. 7).

Li here refers to political capital (leadership in the Youth League and a good relationship with the department leadership) as a basis of conservatism and, as a Youth League leader before the Cultural Revolution, he had accumulated a certain amount of political capital. He also refers to cultural capital, however, making clear that he and other students from intellectual backgrounds defended the “old Tsinghua” precisely because they appreciated Jiang’s meritocratic policies.

Wang Jiahong, another student of intellectual origin whose political credentials were much weaker than Li’s, confirmed this. His parents were both highly paid professors at a

⁵⁰ Names used in this paper with the exception of those of public figures (including the leaders of Tsinghua

prestigious university (and both endured harrowing criticism and punishment during the Cultural Revolution). His father's Harvard education cast a shadow over Wang's own future; he was the last student in his class to be admitted to the Youth League. In 1966, he was a more enthusiastic rebel than Li, relishing the chance to weaken the system of political control at the university. Nevertheless, like Li, he joined the moderate April 14th faction in 1967. The main difference between the two factions, Wang figured, was their attitude towards Jiang Nanxiang's policies. "Jinggangshan took a much more radical attitude towards everything Jiang Nanxiang had said prior to the Cultural Revolution," he recalled. "Their slogan was 'Smash to the ground everything of the old Tsinghua.'" In contrast, "April 14th would preserve more of Jiang Nanxiang's policies than the Jinggangshan side."

[Jiang's] class line was more moderate than the other. Because he had been dealing with educated people, intellectuals, and he knew in order to achieve something academically or in the economy or construction you need knowledge and a lot of the people at that time who possessed the knowledge ... were not from the correct background. So if you deny these people the opportunity to serve your regime then you lose the knowledge. ... In his policy, if you are academically outstanding and your family was not bad enough not to dare to admit you, then when he took you in he would give you the proper conditions for you to academically achieve something (Interview No. 10).

Wang resented Jiang's rigid political control and the discrimination he encountered in trying to enter the Youth league. His reason for joining the April 14th faction was certainly not to defend the political regime at the university. But he found Jiang's meritocratic policies more palatable than Jinggangshan's radical class line attacks on the "old Tsinghua."

Chen Xiaogang, a leader of the April 14th faction who was the son of a low-level revolutionary cadre, claimed that the majority of students from intellectual backgrounds supported the April 14th faction. "That very much has to do with the mild, moderate position of April 14th overall," he figured. Chen agreed with other April 14th activists that students from intellectual and other ordinary strata families were a key part of the social base of the moderate faction. These students were the largest group in the school, they came from relatively

University factions) are not real.

comfortable homes, did well academically and were integrated, to one extent or another, into the political hierarchy. It is not surprising that they would defend the meritocratic regime of the “old Tsinghua.”

In the factional alignment that developed at TU, to defend cultural capital was to defend political capital. Both had been pillars of the “old Tsinghua” and the moderate faction that emerged to defend the status quo quite naturally defended both.

CONCLUSION

This investigation demonstrates that a one-dimensional model of power and privilege in socialist societies, which focuses on political capital alone, provides an insufficient theoretical framework for analyzing factional conflict during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. While it is abundantly clear that political capital was the dominant hierarchy at TU and TMS and the most important basis for conservative political action during the Cultural Revolution, cultural capital was also a pillar of the status quo and an important basis for conservative political action. The complex and changing factional alignments at the two schools cannot be properly understood without comprehending the role of both hierarchies of power and privilege.

Political and intellectual elites in post-1949 China were distinguished by distinct capital structures, that is, the relative weight of political and cultural capital within the overall volume of capital that each possessed differed. This distinction, however, was growing less pronounced due to the gradual merger of political and cultural capital, i.e., the acquisition of cultural capital by political elites and the acquisition of political capital by intellectual elites. The Party and the Youth League facilitated this merger and embodied an uneasy coalition of political and cultural capital that defended both hierarchies. Because the capital structures of the two elites remained distinct, however, distinct interests could become a basis for inter-elite conflict.

Mao’s 1966 call to attack political and cultural hierarchies led to open splits in the elite coalition and the collapse of the Party and Youth League organizations that embodied it. The

rival elite camps produced by bloodline politics at TMS were a dramatic manifestation of this split. Children of the political elite battled children of the intellectual elite, pitting political against cultural capital. Each of the two opposing factions was part “rebel” and part “conservative.” They were each rebelling against certain aspects of the status quo, specifically, the hierarchy that supported the rival’s power, while defending the hierarchy that supported their own power.

At TU, attacks on these rival hierarchies produced coalitions between elites and non-elites. High cadres’ children called on children of workers and peasants (particularly those well integrated into the political establishment) to join them, under the banner of the “five Red classes,” in attacking cultural capital. At the same time, radicals of working class and peasant origin welcomed the support of children of the educated elite (particularly those who were *not* well integrated into the political establishment) in an offensive against the political hierarchy.

The demise of bloodline politics, which had split the elite coalition, opened the way for the restoration of an alliance of political and cultural capital. Facing the radical faction’s challenge to both hierarchies of power, political and intellectual elites found substantial grounds to unite in defense of the status quo. This basis for unity was rendered more solid by the extent to which political and cultural capital had merged, i.e., the extent to which the capital structures of the two elites had converged. This was amply demonstrated by the strength of the moderate coalition that defended both pillars of the status quo at TU, political and cultural capital.

The competing elites model of student factional alignment during the Cultural Revolution describes well the early conflict at TMS, where the student body was composed almost exclusively of children of political and intellectual elites. It fails, however, to explain the conflict at TU, where children of working class and peasant families played the decisive role, producing a very different factional alignment. On a macro-theoretical level, while the inter-elite conflict at the middle school can be plausibly explained within the political elite vs. society dichotomy highlighted by the one-dimensional model of power and privilege in socialist societies, the

conflict at the university cannot. The factional alignment at the university, which featured a moderate faction that defended both political and cultural capital against a radical faction that attacked both, reflected the underlying class dichotomy, posited by the two-dimensional model, between an emergent political technocracy and the working classes.

The factional conflict at TU was not a struggle *between* classes, in the sense that one class lined up against another, but it was a struggle *about* class. Many students at TU were in an ambiguous class position, as students often are. TU students from working class and peasant families, for instance, despite their humble origins, were on a ladder to elite positions, accumulating political and cultural capital. Nevertheless, family origin was not unimportant in the factional conflict, as the distinct nature of the struggles at university and the middle school makes clear. It was not accidental or inconsequential that the leadership of the Old Red Guards (at both schools) were children of revolutionary cadres, that students of working class and peasant origin led the university radicals, that the middle school radical faction was dominated by children of intellectuals and that the backbone of the moderate camp (at both schools) were student cadres.⁵¹

The four tendencies based on two axes of contention identified in this study may serve well as a general model to analyze student factional conflict in the wide variety of particular local circumstances that developed during the Cultural Revolution. I expect that the type of moderate coalition that defended political and cultural capital at TU was a common phenomenon,

⁵¹ This paper has not explored the ways competing ideologies helped shape subjective understandings of class interests and how this affected the process of political alignment. The Cultural Revolution was an ideologically charged movement and participants, in addition to or despite rational calculation of immediate personal interests, acted in the belief that they were helping to shape the future Chinese society. Rebel and conservative tendencies offered students alternative conceptions of class interests and class struggle. Would a TU student of peasant origin, for instance, find more affinity with the moderate ideology that called for her to defend the socialist order against rebels who wanted to overthrow everything (and, therefore, must be in the service of the old exploiting classes)? Or would she identify with rebel ideology that called on her to overthrow privileged intellectuals and bureaucrats who were turning into new capitalists sucking the blood of workers and peasants? Students of peasant origin on both sides, undoubtedly, were convinced they were defending their class interests. The choices faced by a student of intellectual origin were not any more clear-cut. Would he support the promise of socialist meritocracy held

especially in the period after the demise of bloodline politics. I also expect that the type of rebel tendency that attacked political capital and defended cultural capital at TMS was only possible in schools where elite social composition or other circumstances inhibited the development of a strong group of students of working class and peasant origin who could impose class line politics on the rebel camp.

Further comparative analysis of factional conflict during the Cultural Revolution, using the analytical framework of contention over political and cultural capital proposed in this study, would shed further light on this particularly enigmatic period of Chinese history. It would also enrich our understanding of the 20th century communist revolutions and the complex processes of re-stratification, conflict and social transformation that followed in their wake.

out by the old order at TU? Or would he follow the rebels' call to fight an autocratic and privileged Party bureaucracy?

APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

The twenty students interviewed are in no way a representative sample. The first students interviewed were located through acquaintances in the academic community and through TU alumni associations in the United States. Several interviewees referred me to other candidates. Seven interviews were conducted in person in Beijing, one interview was conducted in person in Los Angeles and the others were conducted by telephone with former students living in various cities in the United States or Canada. Interviews lasted from one to four hours and were conducted in English and /or Chinese at the interviewees' discretion.

Most of the students still had lucid memories of events thirty years past, in part due, no doubt, to the remarkable nature of the Cultural Revolution and the pivotal place it had in their lives. Their accounts reflected their particular vantage points at the time and were filtered by thirty years of history and new conceptual understandings. It was essential to have multiple accounts of the same events and to hear from participants in all of the different factions involved. Even (or especially) the accounts that remained the most partisan, helped me recreate the contending sides. I was able to corroborate and contextualize individual student's accounts, and adjudicate between conflicting accounts, by comparing them to one another, as well as to the textual accounts offered by the contemporary factional newspapers. The carefully researched histories of the factional conflict at TU produced by William Hinton (1972), based on interviews with students, teachers and administrators conducted in 1971, and Tang Shaojie (1996a, 1996b, 1998), based on a close analysis of the student press and other documentary sources, provided further verification and clarification.

Below the following information about the students interviewed is provided: school attended, year admitted, family origin, relationship to the Party and Youth League, and political sympathy, if any, during the Cultural Revolution.

1. Tsinghua University. 1960. Intellectual. Not CYL member. Jinggangshan sympathizer.
2. Tsinghua University. 1962. Intellectual. CYL member.
3. Tsinghua University. 1962. Less-than-good.
4. Tsinghua University. 1963. Intellectual. Not CYL member. Jinggangshan sympathizer.
5. Tsinghua University. 1962. Office employee. CYL member. April 14th activist.
6. Tsinghua University. 1964. Revolutionary cadre. CYL member. April 14th activist.
7. Tsinghua University. 1964. Intellectual. CYL leader. April 14th sympathizer.
8. Tsinghua University. 1961. Jinggangshan sympathizer.
9. Tsinghua University. 1963. Intellectual. CYL member. Jinggangshan activist.
10. Tsinghua University. 1964. Middle peasant. CYL leader. Old Red Guard sympathizer.
11. Tsinghua University. 1963. CYL member. Intellectual. April 14th sympathizer.
12. Tsinghua University. 1964. Poor peasant. Party member and CYL leader. April 14th activist.
13. Tsinghua University. 1962. Landlord. April 14th activist.
14. Tsinghua University. 1960. Middle peasant. CYL member and class leader. April 14th activist.
15. Tsinghua Attached Middle School. 1963 (Upper middle). Capitalist. CYL member. Jinggangshan activist.
16. Tsinghua Attached Middle School. 1963 (Upper middle). Revolutionary cadre. CYL leader. Old Red Guard activist.
17. Tsinghua Attached Middle School. 1963 (Upper middle). Bad. Not CYL member. Jinggangshan activist.
18. Tsinghua Attached Middle School. 1963 (Upper middle). Revolutionary cadre. CYL leader. Jinggangshan activist.
19. Tsinghua Attached Middle School. 1963 (Upper middle). Revolutionary cadre. Mao Zedong Thought Red Guard sympathizer.
20. Tsinghua Attached middle School. 1965 (Lower middle). Intellectual. Not CYL member. Old Red Guard activist.

REFERENCES

1. Periodicals

JGS – Jinggangshan, December 1966 – August 1968. Published by Tsinghua Jinggangshan Regiment. Reproduced in *A New Collection of Red Guard Publications, Part 1: Newspapers*. 1998. Oakton, VA: Center for Chinese Research Materials.

JGSB – Jinggangshan Bao, June 1967 – April 1968. Published by Tsinghua University Jinggangshan / April 14th. Reproduced in *A New Collection of Red Guard Publications, Part 1: Newspapers*. 1998. Oakton, VA: Center for Chinese Research Materials

2. Other Primary Sources

“Eleven-member Group” of Chingkang Mountain Regiment of Tsinghua University. 1967. “The Students Fight for Chairman Mao’s Revolutionary Line.” *China Reconstructs* (July): 14-19.

Jiang Nanxiang. 1967. *Jiaodai Cailiao (Gong Pipan)* (“*Confessions Materials (Self-criticism)*.”) Manuscript submitted to and distributed by Tsinghua University Jinggangshan / April 14th. Beijing.

Kuai, Dafu. No date. *Qinghua Daxue Dazibao. (Tsinghua University Big Character Posters)*. Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Jinggangshan Hongweibing Xuanchuandui. (Tsinghua University Jinggangshan Red Guard Propaganda Team.)

Liu, Bing. 1998. *Fengyu Suiyue: Qinghua Daxue “Wenhua Da Geming” Yishi (Stormy Years: Recollections of the “Cultural Revolution” at Tsinghua University)*. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press.

Mao, Zedong. 1969a (1965). “Comment of Comrade Ch’en Cheng-jen’s Report on Stay at a Selected Spot.” Translated in *Current Background* No. 891 (October 8): 49.

Mao, Zedong. 1969b (1966). “A Letter to the Red Guards of the Middle School Attached to Tsinghua University.” Translated in *Current Background* No. 891 (October 8): 63.

Qinghua Jinggangshan Lianhe Zongbu Yuan 4-14 Ganbu Bangongshi (Tsinghua Jinggangshan United General Headquarters 4-14 Cadre Office). 1967. *Dazibao Xuanbian (Selected Big Character Posters)* Vols. 1 and 2 (October). Beijing.

Qinghua Jinggangshan Bingtuan (Tsinghua Jinggangshan Regiment). No date. “Lishi De Panjue – Ping Fandong Liupai 4-14” (“History’s Judgement – Criticize the April 14th Reactionary Sect”). [Online]. Available: <http://www.pitt.edu/~wenge/ht8-4.html>. [1998, March 27].

Qinghua Fuzhong Jinggangshan Bingtuan (Tsinghua Attached Middle School Jinggangshan Regiment). 1967. “Tequan Jiecheng de Weidaoshi” (“Apologists for the Privileged Stratum”) in *Chun Lei (Spring Thunder)* (July). Reproduced in *Red Guard Publications* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Chinese Research Materials Association of Research Libraries). 1979, Vol. 4: 753

Red Rock Fighting Company, et al. 1969. "A Record of the Great Events in the Struggle Between the Two Lines in the Field of Higher Education." Translated in *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* Vol. 2, No. 1 and 2 (Fall-Winter 1969-70): 17-76.

Song, Yongyi and Dajin Sun. 1996. *Wenhua Da Geming He Ta De Yiduan Sichao (Heterodox Thoughts During the Cultural Revolution)*. Hong Kong: Tianyuan Shuwu (Tianyuan Bookhouse).

Tsinghua Attached Middle School Red Guard. 1966. "Hail Line of the Proletarian Class!" Translated in *China News Analysis* No. 636 (November 11): 2-5.

Tsinghua University Attached Middle School 80th Anniversary Celebration Committee. 1995. *Jinian Wenji (Collected Memoirs)*. Beijing

Zheng, Yi. 1992a. "Taowang Shengya Gouqile Yi Duan Huiyi" ("An Exile Career Evokes a Memory"). *Jiushi Niandai (The Nineties)* No. 6: 91-5.

Zheng, Yi. 1992b. "Shenme Shi Hongweibing? Shenme Shi Taizi Dang?" ("What is the Red Guard? What is the Crown Prince Faction?"). *Jiushi Niandai (The Nineties)* No. 7: 88-93.

Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun Guofang Daxue Dang Shi Dang Jian Zhenggong Jiaoyenshi (Chinese People's Liberation Army National Defense University Party History and Party Building Political Work Teaching and Research Section). 1988. '*Wenhua Da Geming' Yanjiu Ziliao (Cultural Revolution Research Material)*. Vol.1. Beijing.

Zhong, Weiguang. 1996. "Qinghua Fuzhong Hong Weibing Xiaozu Dansheng Shishi" ("Historical Facts About the Birth of the Tsinghua Attached Middle School Red Guard Organization"). *Beijing Zhi Chun (Beijing Spring)* No. 41 (October).

Zhou, Quanying. 1999. *Wo Xinzhong de Wenge (My View of the Cultural Revolution)*. Unpublished manuscript.

3. Secondary Sources

Arendt, Hannah. 1958 [1951]. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland: Meridian.

Baylis, Thomas. 1974. *The Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite: Legitimacy and Social Change in Mature Communism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1964. "Economic Growth, Social Structure, Elite Formation: the Case of Poland." *International Social Science Journal* Vol. 16, No. 2: 203-16.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1987. "Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change." *Eastern European Politics and Societies* Vol. 1: 335-50.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction." Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, eds., *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press: 487-511.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1983. "The Forms of Capital." John Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Publishing Group.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1977. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Chan, Anita. 1982. "Images of China's Social Structure: The Changing Perspectives of Canton Students." *World Politics* (April): 295-323.
- Chan, Anita. 1985. *Children of Mao: Personality Development and Political Activism in the Red Guard Generation*. London: Macmillan.
- Chan, Anita, Stanley Rosen and Jonathan Unger. 1980. "Students and Class Warfare: The Roots of the Red Guard Conflict in Guangzhou." *China Quarterly* No. 3 (September): 397-446.
- Chan, Anita, Stanley Rosen and Jonathan Unger, editors. 1985. *On Socialist Democracy and the Chinese Legal System: The Li Yizhe Debates*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Crook, Isabel and David. 1959. *Revolution in a Chinese Village: Ten Mile Inn*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf. 1959. *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Djilas, Milovan. 1957. *The New Class*. New York: Praeger.
- Djilas, Milovan. 1998. *The Fall of the New Class: A History of Communism's Self-Destruction*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Elman, Benjamin. 1991. "Political, Social and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China" *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 50, No. 1, February: 7-28.
- Eyal, Gil, Ivan Szelenyi and Eleanor Townsley. Forthcoming. *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists: Class Formation and Elite Struggles in Post-communist Central Europe*.
- Esmein, Jean. 1973. *The Chinese Cultural Revolution*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Fei, Hsiao-tung. 1953. *China's Gentry: Essays on Rural-Urban Relations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Friedman, Edward, Paul Pickowicz and Mark Selden. 1991. *Chinese Village, Socialist State*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Funnel, Victor. 1970. "The Chinese Communist Youth Movement, 1949-1966." *China Quarterly* (April-June): 105-30.
- Gouldner, Alvin. 1979. *The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Han, Dongping. 1998. *How the Cultural Revolution Transformed Rural China*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Politics, Brandeis University.

- Hinton, William. 1966. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. New York: Vintage Books
- Hinton, William. 1972. *Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Ho, Ping-ti. 1964. *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China*. New York: Science Editions
- Hunter, Neale. 1969. *Shanghai Journal: An Eyewitness Account of the Cultural Revolution*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kraus, Richard. 1981. *Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lachmann, Richard. 1989. "Elite Conflict and State Formation in 16th- and 17th-Century England and France." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 54 (April): 141-162.
- Lachmann, Richard. 1990. "Class Formation without Class Struggle: An Elite Conflict Theory of the Transition to Capitalism." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 55 (June): 398-414.
- Lee, Hong Yung. 1978. *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lee, Hong Yung. 1975. "The Radical Students in Kwangtung During the Cultural Revolution." *China Quarterly* (December): 645-683.
- Lee, Hong Yung. 1991. "From Revolutionary Cadres to Bureaucratic Technocrats." Brantley Womack, ed., *Contemporary Chinese Politics in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li, Cheng. 1992. *The Rise of Technocracy: Elite Transformation and Ideological Change in Post-Mao China*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Political Science, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
- Lin, Weiran. 1996. *An Abortive Chinese Enlightenment: The Cultural Revolution and Class Theory*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.
- Liu, Wenyuan. 1995. "Jiang Nanxiang (1913 – 1988)." *Qinghua Renwu Zhi (Annals of Tsinghua Personages)*. Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshi (Tsinghua University Press): 29-59.
- Ludz, Peter. 1972. *The Changing Party Elite in East Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Nee, Victor. 1989. "A Theory of Market Transition: From Redistribution to Markets in State Socialism." *American Sociological Review* 54: 663-81.
- Nee, Victor. 1996. "The Emergence of a Market Society: Changing Mechanisms of Stratification in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 101: 908-49.

- Parry, Albert. 1966. *The New Class Divided: Science and Technology Versus Communism*. New York: Macmillan.
- Pepper, Suzanne. 1996. *Radicalism and Education Reform in 20th Century China: The Search for an Ideal Development Model*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perry, Elizabeth and Li Xun. 1997. *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Rosen, Stanley. 1979. *The Origins and Development of the Red Guard Movement in China, 1960-1968*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Dept. of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, CA.
- Rosen, Stanley. 1982. *Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou (Canton)*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Shirk, Susan. 1982. *Competitive Comrades: Career Incentives and Student Strategies in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Szelenyi, Ivan and George Konrad. 1979. *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Szelenyi, Ivan. 1986. "The Prospects and Limits of the East European New Class Project: An Auto-critical Reflection on *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*." *Politics and Society* Vol. 15, No.2, 1986-87: 103-44.
- Tang, Shaojie. 1996a. "Qinghua Jinggangshan Bingtuan De Xingshuai" ("The Rise and Fall of Tsinghua Jinggangshan Regiment"). Liu Qingfeng, ed., *Wenhua Da Geming: Shishi Yu Yanjiu (Cultural Revolution: Facts and Analysis)*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press: 49-63.
- Tang, Shaojie. 1996b. "Hong Weibing Yundong de Sangzhong: Qinghua Daxue Bai Ri Da Wudou" ("Death Knell of the Red Guards: The Hundred Day War at Tsinghua University"). Liu Qingfeng, ed., *Wenhua Da Geming: Shishi Yu Yanjiu (Cultural Revolution: Facts and Analysis)*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press: 49-63.
- Tang, Shaojie. 1998. "Cong Qinghua Daxue Liang Pai Kan 'Wenhua Da Geming' Zhong Qunzhong Zuzhi De Duili He Fenqi." ("The Antagonisms and Differences Between 'Cultural Revolution' Mass Organizations from the Perspective of the Two Factions at Tsinghua University"). *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu (Chinese Communist Party History Research)*. No. 2: 69-74.
- Taylor, Robert. 1981. *China's Intellectual Dilemma: Politics and University Enrollment, 1949-1978*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Treiman, Don. and Zhong Deng. 1997. "The Impact of the Cultural Revolution on Trends in Educational Attainment in the People's Republic of China." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 103, No. 2 (September): 391-428.
- Unger, Jonathan. 1982. *Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960-1980*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Unger, Jonathan. 1984. "The Class System in Rural China: A Case Study." James Watson, ed., *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolution China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 121-141.
- Unger, Jonathan. 1991. "Whither China: Yang Xiguang, Red Capitalists, and the Social Turmoil of the Cultural Revolution." *Modern China* Vol. 17, No. 1 (January): 3-37.
- Wang, Shaoguang. 1995. *Failure of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wang, Youqin. 1996. "1966: Xuesheng Da Laoshi De Geming." Qingfeng Liu, ed., *Wenhua Da Geming: Shishi Yu Yanjiu (Cultural Revolution: Facts and Analysis)*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press. 17-38.
- Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- White, Gordon. 1976. "The Politics of Class and Class Origin: The Case of the Cultural Revolution." *Contemporary China Papers No. 9*. Canberra, Australia: Australian National University.
- White III, Lynn. 1972. "Leadership in Shanghai, 1955 – 1969." Robert Scalapino, ed., *Elites in the People's Republic of China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- White III, Lynn. 1984. "Bourgeois Radicalism in the 'New Class' of Shanghai." James Watson, ed., *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolution China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 142-174.
- Xu, Youyu. 1996. "Wenge Zhong Hongweibing De Paibie Douzheng" ("Cultural Revolution Red Guard Factional Struggle"). *China Studies* No. 2, (Autumn). Hong Kong.
- Yan, Jiaqi and Gao Gao. 1996. *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Yin, Hongbiao. 1996. "Ideological and Political Tendencies of Factions in the Red Guard Movement." *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 5, No. 13: 269-280.