Disenfranchised

Joel Andreas

Disenfranchised recounts the tumultuous events that have shaped and reshaped factory politics in China since the 1949 Revolution. The book develops a theoretical framework consisting of two dimensions—industrial citizenship and autonomy—to explain changing authority relations in workplaces and uses interviews with workers and managers to provide a shop-floor perspective. Under the work unit system, in place from the 1950s to the 1980s, lifetime job tenure and participatory institutions gave workers a strong form of industrial citizenship, but constraints on autonomous collective action made the system more paternalistic than democratic. Called “masters of the factory,” workers were pressed to participate actively in self-managing teams and employee congresses but only under the all-encompassing control of the factory party committee. Concerned that party cadres were becoming a “bureaucratic class,” Mao experimented with means to mobilize criticism from below, even inciting—during the Cultural Revolution—a worker insurgency that overthrew factory party committees. Unwilling to allow workers to establish permanent autonomous organizations, however, Mao never came up with institutionalized means of making factory leaders accountable to their subordinates. The final chapters recount the process of industrial restructuring, which has transformed work units into profit-oriented enterprises, eliminating industrial citizenship and reducing workers to hired hands dependent on precarious employment and subject to highly coercive discipline. The book closes with an overview of parallel developments around the globe, chronicling the rise and fall of an era of industrial citizenship.
Chapter 5 recounts the initial upheavals of the Cultural Revolution, when Mao called on workers to form “rebel” organizations to challenge the authority of the party leadership in their factories. Mao called this unbridled political participation “Big Democracy,” which he contrasted to more civil and institutionalized forms. By fomenting a movement independent of the party organization and loyal to no one but himself, Mao was able to introduce greater autonomy into mass supervision, with lasting consequences for cadre behavior. Local party cadres were criticized for abusing their power, seeking privileges, suppressing criticism from below, isolating themselves from the masses, and governing in a bureaucratic fashion. Virtually all were thrown out of office, and rebel groups were invited to help decide who among them were fit to be rehabilitated. After the party organization was paralyzed, however, factories polarized into rebel and conservative camps and the country descended into increasingly violent factional contention.

Eurocentrism, ‘civilization’ and the ‘barbarians’
Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla

In the course of nineteenth century countries were distinguished into ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ (‘barbarians’) with Europe the basis of comparison, within the construction known as ‘standard of civilization’. The views of major publicists of the time are discussed regarding admission to the ‘family of nations’, divided into five groups, ranging from permanent exclusion to criticism of the ‘standard’. Until the last decades of the century non-European states and not of European extraction were not part of the ‘family of nations’, with the exception of the Ottoman Empire (whose formal 1856 admission was in fact partial) and Japan in the mid-1890s. Brief reference is made to the contrasting
reaction of China and Japan to their treatment by the West. The case of the Ottoman Empire as the negative European ‘Other’ is examined in detail. In practical terms no less than five options were then entertained: (1) upholding Ottoman territorial integrity; (2) dismemberment and division of the spoils; (3) expulsion from Europe; (4) Russian conquest of part of the Empire; and (5) major reforms that would make the Ottoman state like the other modern ‘civilized’ European states. This chapter concluded with the Ottoman reaction.

International approaches to rape
Nicole Westmarland and Geetanjali Gangoli (eds)

Following on from International Approaches to Prostitution (The Policy Press, 2006), this book provides an overview of rape law and policy in ten countries, including England, Australia, Canada, India, and China. By introducing readers to national perspectives of issues relating to rape, the book presents a comparative approach that highlights the similarities and differences between countries, contexts, laws, key issues, policies, and interventions.

East Asian welfare regimes in transition
Alan Walker and Chack-kie Wong (eds)

Eastern welfare systems have largely been neglected by Western social policy. There is very little information in the West about their operation and the differences between them. Yet, as China and South-East Asia emerge as a major regional economic block, it is vital to understand the social models that are in operation there and how they are developing. This book puts the spotlight on the Chinese and South-East Asian welfare systems, providing an up-to-date assessment of their character and development. In particular, it examines the underlying assumptions of these systems and how the processes of globalisation are impacting on them. As well as specific country case studies, there is a valuable comparative analysis of Eastern and Western welfare states. The book provides a unique insight into the main South-East Asian welfare systems and chapters have been written by experts living and working within them. It focuses on ‘Confucianism’ and globalisation to provide an
account of tradition and change within the South-East Asian cultural context.

Introduction: East Asian welfare regimes
Alan Walker and Chack-kie Wong

This book aims to provide an up-to-date, accessible and critical account of the welfare regimes of the main East Asian states and China. It puts the spotlight on the Chinese and East Asian welfare regimes — the so-called ‘Confucian Welfare States’ — in order to provide an assessment of their nature and development, their current dilemmas and their future prospects. This chapter describes the scope of the book, noting the western construction of the welfare state, welfare state regime theory and East Asian welfare systems, Confucian welfare states and globalisation.

Is welfare unAsian?
Ruby C.M. Chau and Wai Kam Yu

This chapter tackles a question that lies at the heart of the debate about welfare in East Asian countries: is social welfare un-Asian? With reference to both the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the rest of China, the discussion shows the connection between anti-welfarism and market ideologies. It demolishes the three core assumptions that underpin the claim that welfare is un-Asian: social welfare is underdeveloped in Asia, this underdevelopment is a key factor in the economic success of Asian countries and ‘Asian’ values are antithetical to social welfare. It also shows how the commitment to capitalism of both the Hong Kong SAR and Chinese government is reinforced by globalisation and the Asian economic crisis.
Hong Kong: from familistic to Confucian welfare
Sammy Chiu and Victor Wong

in East Asian welfare regimes in transition: From Confucianism to globalisation

This chapter focuses on the ways in which the new Hong Kong SAR government has been appealing to traditional Confucian values to emphasise nationhood and reinforce and legitimize the maintenance of a residual form of social welfare provision. It shows how the Chinese government of the SAR is actually building on the twin pillars of the colonial legacy in social policy: positive non-intervention and familistic residualism. It uses policies towards younger and older people to illustrate the heavy political emphasis on Confucian values in the new Hong Kong.

Enfranchised
Joel Andreas

in Disenfranchised: The Rise and Fall of Industrial Citizenship in China

Chapter 2 recounts how the Chinese Communist Party reorganized industrial enterprises after taking power in 1949. Small numbers of party cadres, typically peasant veterans of the rural insurgency, were dispatched to factories to mobilize workers to attack capitalists and incumbent managers. Through a series of aggressive mass campaigns, the party established its control, recruiting workers to serve as factory leaders and creating party-led institutions of participation. After nationalization was completed in 1956, Mao—concerned that Communist cadres were becoming autocratic and arrogant—initiated a Party Rectification campaign, in which he encouraged unusually freewheeling criticism of “bureaucratism” among party officials. This opening unleashed a torrent of criticism by intellectuals as well as strikes by workers and inspired union leaders to push for greater independence from the party. The campaign, however, was quickly aborted and during the subsequent Anti-Rightist movement those who had spoken out were harshly punished, squelching prospects for autonomous activity.
Chapter 3 describes the institutional foundations of the Chinese work unit system and the practices of worker participation in the early 1960s, after the system was fully established and before the onset of the Cultural Revolution. Participatory institutions included self-managing teams on the shop floor, technical innovation groups, factory elections, representative congresses, and other mechanisms designed to solicit suggestions from below, learn about and defuse employees’ grievances and concerns, and mobilize workers to monitor and criticize factory leaders. Despite high levels of participation, predicated on lifetime job tenure and relatively egalitarian distribution, industrial governance was democratic only in a very limited sense. The party insisted on maintaining a political monopoly and harshly suppressed any hint of independent political activity. Not only was the scope of workers’ influence restricted largely to the shop floor, but they also had little autonomy. Although participation was extensive, the system was more paternalistic than democratic.

Chapter 4 examines the Four Cleans movement (1962–1966), the largest and most protracted campaign carried out to that point to mobilize “supervision from below” of party cadres. Supervision from below had been hindered by the Communist Party’s inclination to tightly control all aspects of participation as it was impossible for workers to effectively play their role if they did not have a degree of autonomy from the factory cadres they were expected to supervise. Mao attempted to mitigate this problem by sending in teams of outside party cadres to organize workers to criticize factory party leaders. The Four Cleans campaign was effective in combating corruption but less effective in dealing with Mao’s main concern—the transformation of the party officialdom into
a privileged “bureaucratic class” unaccountable to their subordinates. Dissatisfaction with the results led Mao to launch a much more radical attempt to introduce autonomy into mass supervision.

Chapter 6 recounts what happened after Mao, unwilling to allow the establishment of permanent autonomous organizations, called for factories to be governed by new “revolutionary committees,” that included veteran cadres and rebel leaders, as well as military officers assigned to oversee this volatile combination. Rebel leaders were supposed to serve as “mass representatives,” but after their organizations were disbanded, they lost the political base that had given them autonomous power and were no longer accountable to their constituencies. With the masses sidelined, the subsequent factional contention between “new” and “old” cadres hardly served as effective mass supervision. Moreover, this institutionalized form of contention was entirely dependent on Mao’s personal authority and was dismantled with the purge of the radical faction that followed his death in 1976. For all their destructive power, the political experiments of this period failed to do much to make leaders more accountable to those below them.

Chapter 7 looks at the impact on factory governance of the initial reforms carried out during the first decade and a half after Mao’s death in 1976. These reforms left the fundamental features of the work unit system—public ownership and permanent job tenure—in place, and institutional forms of participation, including staff and workers congresses, were revived and enhanced. During the “long 1980s” workers enjoyed substantial influence, especially with regard to the distribution of wages.
and bonuses, housing, and other welfare entitlements. Although the Chinese Communist Party had by then renounced its original class-leveling mission, workers effectively resisted new distribution policies that violated the egalitarian ethos that had long prevailed under the work unit system. The latter years of this period, however, also marked the beginning of the erosion of industrial citizenship as temporary employment was expanded and the power of the factory director was reinforced in the second half of the decade.

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Chapter 8 examines the consequences of industrial restructuring, which began in the early 1990s and continues to the present day. The great majority of state-run and collective enterprises have been privatized, and all firms—including those in which the state has retained a stake—have been turned into shareholding companies. Tens of millions of workers have lost their jobs, and permanent job tenure has been replaced by much more precarious employment relations. As work unit communities have been transformed into profit-oriented enterprises, workers have been reduced to hired labor, losing their status as legitimate stakeholders and eroding the foundations for workplace participation. Shop-floor self-management has been replaced by harsh disciplinary regimes enforced by bonuses, fines, and the threat of dismissal, and staff and workers congresses have been sidelined. Workers, whose influence is now explicitly seen as compromising efforts to maximize profits, have been disenfranchised.

Lessons and Prospects
Joel Andreas

in Disenfranchised: The Rise and Fall of Industrial Citizenship in China

Chapter 9 looks back over China’s history since 1949 and considers prospects for the future. Chinese workers are beginning to reorganize,
this time largely outside the confines of party-controlled institutions, and their strikes and protests have won important victories. Until they are able to regain some form of workplace citizenship rights, however, their gains will be limited and precarious. The chapter closes with an overview of parallel developments around the globe. It first examines three waves of labor unrest during the twentieth century that gave rise to the participatory institutions that characterized the era of industrial citizenship, before describing the subsequent demise of these institutions.