

Emergence of Middle Classes in Today's Urban China: Will They Contribute to Democratization in China?+

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Abstract

A lot of academic as well as journalistic discussions refer to the possibility that urban middle classes, which are the by-products of rapid economic growth, will change Chinese society. These discussions, however, have not produced common understanding of Chinese middle classes. On the contrary, a lot of confusion has been taking place on the definition and the characterization of urban middle classes in China. This paper will illustrate whether or how urban middle classes will bring out political change, or democratization, in Chinese society by using two different datasets, that is, AsiaBarometer 2006 which contains a lot of relevant questions on political orientations and attitudes and Four-city Survey in 1998 and 2006 which tells us chronological changes of urban middle classes during these eight years. These empirical data suggest that urban middle classes in China are very ambivalent in terms of their political orientations and behaviours. They are more interested in securing space for their free speech or economic activities, but their political attitudes are very conservative in the sense that they 1) support technocracy, 2) trust central government, and 3) allow depression of freedom of speech for the sake of maintenance of social stability. Such ambivalence can be fully explained by the fact that urban middle classes are “winners” of market economy. Two scenarios, one optimistic and the other pessimistic, for the future politics in China will be discussed.

Keywords: *urban new middle classes, democratization, AsiaBarometer, ambivalence*

1. Introduction

China has been catching a lot of attention globally not only as “factory of the world” but as “market of the world”. A lot of academic as well as journalistic discussions refer to the possibility that urban middle classes, which are the by-products of rapid economic growth, will change Chinese society.

Chinese sociologists have been talking about the necessity to enlarge urban middle classes to attain sociopolitical stability. Wang Chunguang, for example, point out three “social functions” of middle classes, one of which is “buffering function” of social conflict caused by bipolarization of the poor and the rich (Wang, 2004: 271).

Many journalists as well as social scientists out of China, on the other hand, look at the emergence of urban middle classes as political reforms and democratization. Nicholas Kristof, a famous columnist in the US, stated that “Western investment in China would bring a desire for ‘bourgeois’ democratic freedom in China” (Mann, 2007: 49).

These discussions, however, have not produced common understanding of Chinese middle classes. On the contrary, a lot of confusion has been taking place on the definition and the characterization of urban middle classes in China.

According to Li Chunling, percentage of the middle classes in China is 15.9 per cent by occupational definition, 24.6 per cent by the definition of income, 35.0 per cent by the definition of consumption level, and 46.8 per cent by respondent’s identification (Li, 2005: 512). Only 4.1 per cent of total population in China will fulfill the four conditions above but the number goes up to 8.7 per cent if focused on urban district, she says (Li, 2004: 62).

On the other hand, Zhou Xiaohong claims that 11.9 per cent of urban residents in Beijing 北京, Shanghai 上海, Nanjing 南京, Guangzhou 广州 and Wuhan 武汉 belong to middle classes defined by three measurements, that is, occupation, educational background, and income (Zhou, 2005: 45). These differences come from lack of common definition of middle classes and trustworthy dataset assessable by all researchers in contemporary China.

In order to overcome such hardships for foreign researchers, it is necessary to collect data, preferably chronological one, in collaboration with local researchers after defining working definition of urban middle classes.

This paper will illustrate whether or how urban middle classes will bring out political change, or democratization, in Chinese society by using different two datasets, that is, AsiaBarometer 2006 which contains a lot of relevant questions on political orientations and attitudes and Four-city Survey in 1998 and 2006 which tells us chronological changes of urban middle classes during these eight years.

2. Data and Definition

2.1. Explanation of the Dataset

AsiaBarometer is an Asia-wide survey which started from 2003 and now covers 28 countries or regions. AsiaBarometer 2006 targeted “Confucian Asia”,

namely Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Singapore. Sample size is 1,000 for each except China which has 2,000 cases.

In conducting research in China in 2006, multi-stage stratified quota systematic sampling method was used. Concretely, 100 spots were selected from five-stratified spots by population size in Eastern, Central, and Western part of China, and two residential (villagers') committees were chosen from one spot. In each residential (villagers') committee, ten samples were systematically chosen. In this paper, we will use only urban data which has 1,000 cases.

Four-city Survey was conducted twice, the first time in 1997-99, the second time in 2005-06. It was originally planned as a part of large-scale project, "Structural Change of Contemporary China" sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Japan, but the second survey was financially supported by Japan Society for Promotion of Science. This survey covers Tianjin 天津, Chongqing 重庆, Shanghai 上海 and Guangzhou 广州 to represent large cities in northern, western, eastern, and southern part of China respectively.

In conducting the survey, 1,000 cases were divided by the number of districts, and we selected two *jiedao* 街道 (local branch of sub-district office), and three residential committees from each *jiedao*. Allocated number of samples was selected from each residential committee by using systematic sampling method. Survey in Tianjin and Chongqing were conducted in 1997, Shanghai in 1998, and Guangzhou in 1999 respectively due to the budget constraints. In this paper, year of the research will be expressed as 1998 for convenience.

In the second round survey, we tried to use the same sampling method and same research spots so that we can see chronological change in these cities. In fact, we collected 1,000 cases from the same cities except Guangzhou where we collected 1,010 cases with the same sampling methods. Due to the change of administrative division in the cities, we did minor change in selecting research spots. Only research in Tianjin was conducted in 2005, so the year 2006 will be used for the second round research for convenience.

2.2. Definition of Classes

As AsiaBarometer was mainly designed by political scientists, it contains a lot of questions on political behaviors or political orientations of the informants but few sociologically important questions including informant's occupational status, individual income, and parental occupational status. Only job category is available to identify respondent's class in AsiaBarometer.

Thus we make operational definition of "old middle class" as those who are 1) Business owner in mining or manufacturing industry of an organization with up to 30 employees, 2) Business owner of a retail organization with up

Table 1 Class Distribution: AsiaBarometer 2006, Urban Data

	Number of Cases	%
Old Middle	42	4.2
New Middle	368	36.8
Working	171	17.1
Others	419	41.9
Total	1,000	100.0

Note: "Others" means those who do not belong to middle classes or working class.

to 30 employees, and 3) Business owner or manager of an organization with over 30 employees. "New middle class", on the other hand, are those who are 1) senior manager (company director, no lower in rank than a manager of a company section in a company with 300 or more employees, or a manager of a department in a company with less than 300 employees), 2) employed professional or specialist (hospital doctors, employed lawyers, engineers, etc.), 3) clerical work, and 4) sales work¹. As to the definition of "working class", we included 1) manual workers (including skilled and semi-skilled), 2) drivers, and 3) other workers as components of "working class" (see Table 1).

Operational definition in the Four-city Survey is troublesome because we changed the format of job category and occupational status between 1998 and 2006.

In 1998 we used very rough job category which was used frequently by local sociologists at that time. One weakness of 1998 data is that it lacks in information of informant's occupational status, which makes it difficult to identify who are employers in private sectors. Thus as second best choice, we defined "old middle class" as those who are working in a company whose ownership type is "individual" or "private" as a manager and "new middle class" as those who are working in a company whose ownership is "individual" or "private" as a specialist, clerk worker, sales worker, or those who are working in a company of all types of ownership except "individual" and "private" as a manager. "Working class" is defined as those who are production workers or workers in transportation section or others in 1998.

In 2006, those who are employers are categorized as "old middle class" and those who are managers in all job categories or employed specialists are categorized as "new middle class". Definition of working class is same as 1998. (See Table 2)

Table 2 Class Distribution: Four-city Survey

	1998		2006	
	Number of Cases	%	Number of Cases	%
Old Middle	189	4.4	193	4.8
New Middle	2,147	50.2	1,878	46.8
Working	974	22.8	459	11.4
Others	971	22.7	1,480	36.9
Total	4,281	100.0	4,010	100.0

Note: "Others" means those who do not belong to middle classes or working class.

In spite of these inconveniences, however, we can have a rough grasp of political orientations and attitudes of urban new middle classes by using two datasets.

3. Political Orientations of Urban Middle Classes

3.1. Strong Distrust with Mass Media

By reviewing all the research results, we can summarize three distinctive features of urban middle classes' political orientations or attitudes from them.

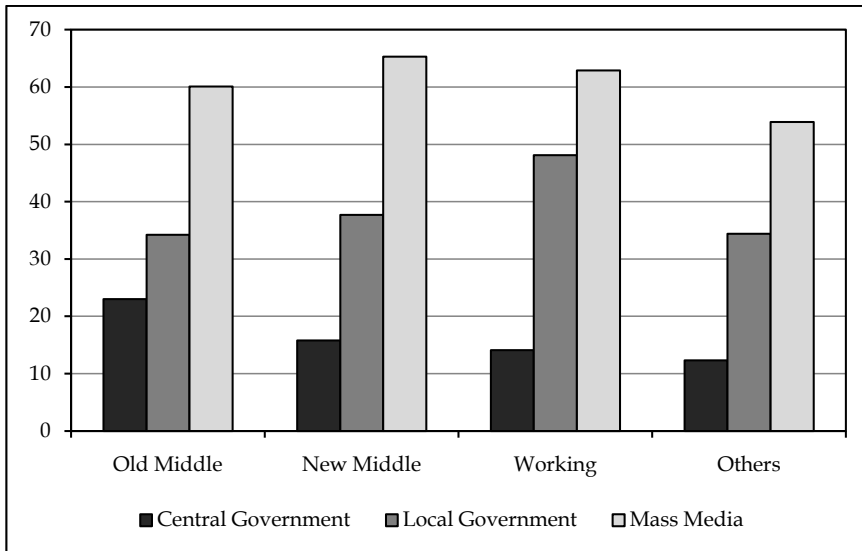
One is that they, especially new middle class, are very critical toward the role of formal mass media and show more interest in right to criticize the government.

In AsiaBarometer 2006 we picked up 19 organizations or institutions from 1) Central Government to 19) International Monetary Fund and asked each informant whether he thinks these organizations or institutions are trustworthy to operate in the best interests of society by choosing from "trust a lot" to "don't trust at all".²

Figure 1 shows the percentage of those who answered "don't really trust" or "don't trust at all" to three domestic organizations or institutions which are directly or indirectly related to political change or democratization, namely, central government, local government, and mass media. As many as 70 per cent of those who belong to urban middle classes answered that they "don't really trust mass media" or "don't trust mass media at all".³

As is often pointed out, Chinese Communist Party treats mass media as "a spokesman of the party", still controlling and checking the contents

Figure 1 Distrust with Organizations/Institutions by Class (%)



Note: Figure shows total percentage of those who answered “not really trust” and “not trust at all.”

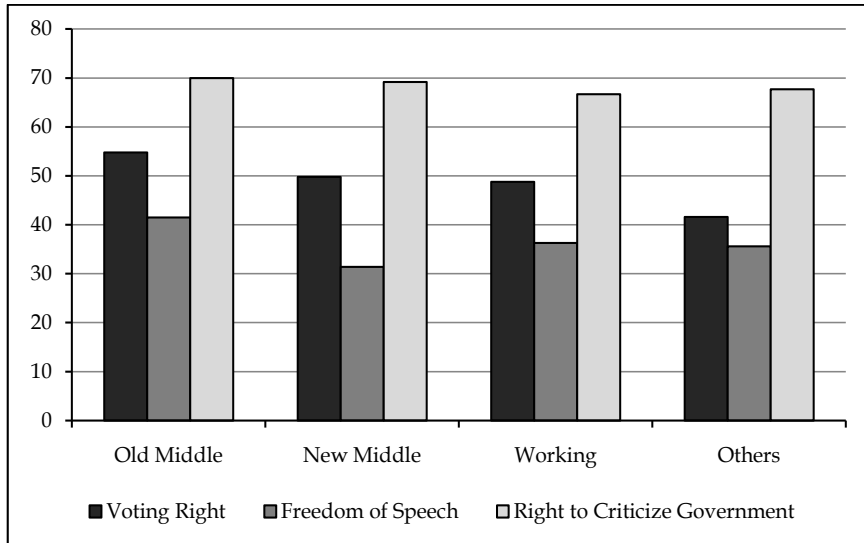
Source: AsiaBarometer 2006.

of the old media and new media (Takai, 2008: 468). Urban middle class is critically looking at these mass media controlled by the Party because new middle class has capacity to collect information through the Internet and get access to a lot of information abroad. It is evident that Chinese new middle class collects information on politics and economies through the Internet more than other Asian counterparts, which has to do with its strong distrust with official mass media.

Mass media is used not only for collecting information but as a tool to speak out to the public. Chinese authority has been carefully supervising the spread of “quasi public sphere” in Cyberspace and strengthening cyber patrol, but it is because Chinese authority has been worried about the sudden spread of anti-governmental discourse. In fact, at the time of anti-Japanese demonstrations in 2005, many urban citizens used the function of short message of the mobile phone to send their message “Come and join the demonstration” to their intimates in spite of the strong warning by the local governments.

As these events suggest, urban middle class has come to question whether it can really enjoy freedom of speech or enough right to criticize the governments. Figure 2 shows the percentage of those who answered

Figure 2 Dissatisfaction with Political Rights by Class (%)



Note: Figure shows total percentage of those who answered “somewhat dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”.

Source: AsiaBarometer 2006.

“somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with their voting right, freedom of speech, and the right to criticize government. In spite of statistical insignificance among classes again, it is safe to say that roughly 70 per cent of the urban middle classes are dissatisfied with their right to criticize government and more than 50 per cent of them are dissatisfied with their voting right which might challenge the legitimacy of governance by CCP.⁴

3.2. Political Participation through Personal Channel?

While urban new middle class, especially those young and highly educated, seems to be strongly interested in securing space for free speech (Sonoda, 2007: 234), old middle class seems to be more interested in securing space for their free economic activities and pursuing their economic interests (Lang and Han, 2008: 58). It is understandable that old middle class has been more strongly demanding economic freedom than other class for these nine years (see Table 3). In fact, data of AsiaBarometer 2006 suggests that old middle class in urban China is more politically active than other classes.

Figure 3 shows the degree of political participation by class. We prepared three actions, “Signing a petition to improve condition”, “Joining in boycotts”,

Table 3 “Government should abolish regulations and secure as much free economic activities as possible” (%)

Year 1998

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Hard to Say	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Old Middle	40.1	23.5	26.7	7.5	2.1	100.0
New Middle	30.7	28.0	26.4	12.8	2.1	100.0
Working	35.1	24.2	25.7	12.3	13.3	100.0
Others	29.4	26.1	27.9	13.3	3.4	100.0

Pearson chi-square significance = .017

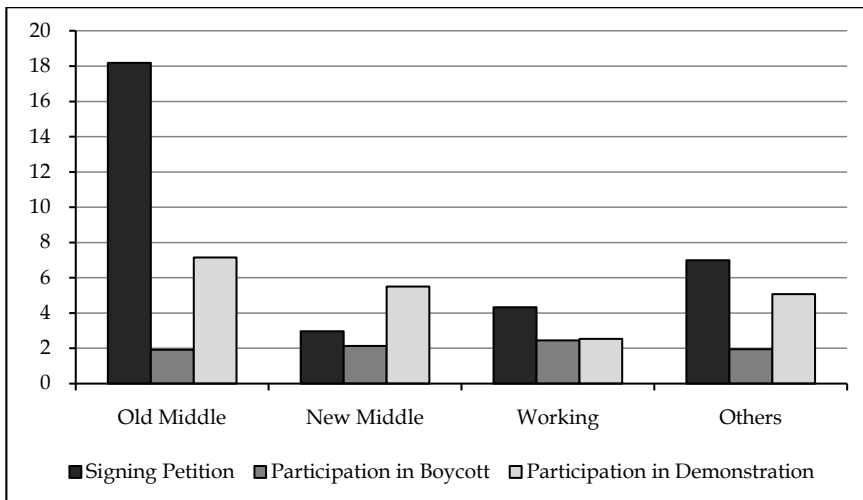
Year 2006

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Hard to Say	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Old Middle	27.3	34.2	25.1	10.7	2.7	100.0
New Middle	19.9	34.1	30.1	13.0	3.0	100.0
Working	15.5	34.6	32.6	15.1	2.2	100.0
Others	18.5	31.5	34.7	13.1	2.2	100.0

Pearson chi-square significance = .015

Source: Four-city Survey.

Figure 3 Political Participation by Class (%)



Source: AsiaBarometer 2006.

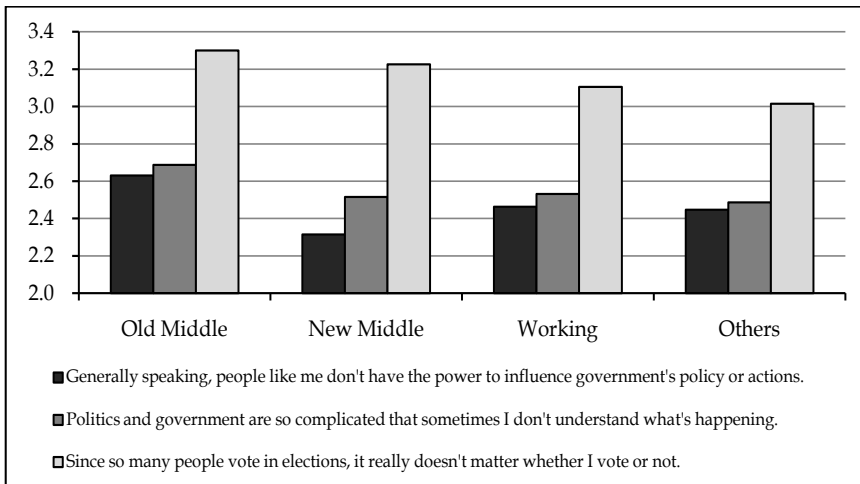
and “Attending lawful demonstrations” in the questionnaire of AsiaBarometer 2006 to ask whether informants “have done”, “might do”, or “would never do” these actions. It is surprising that as many as 18.1 per cent of old middle class citizens had an experience to sign a petition. It is frequently pointed out more and more emerging entrepreneurs have come to be people’s representatives or committee members of political consultative conference at local level (Li, 2008: 108-110), which coincides with our findings.

Urban old middle class’s political activeness partially explains why it shows relatively strong sense of political effectiveness, which constitutes the second distinctive feature of urban middle class’s political orientations and behaviors in contemporary China.

Figure 4 shows respondent’s answers by his class to three questions relevant to the sense of political effectiveness, namely whether he agrees with the idea that “Generally speaking, people like me don’t have the power to influence government’s policy or actions”, “Politics and government are so complicated that sometimes I don’t understand what’s happening”, and “Since so many people vote in elections, it really doesn’t matter whether I vote or not”. It is evident from this figure that old middle class has stronger sense of political effectiveness than any other class in urban China.

Nevertheless, we cannot deny the fact that the percentage who attended lawful demonstrations by middle classes, especially among those who are

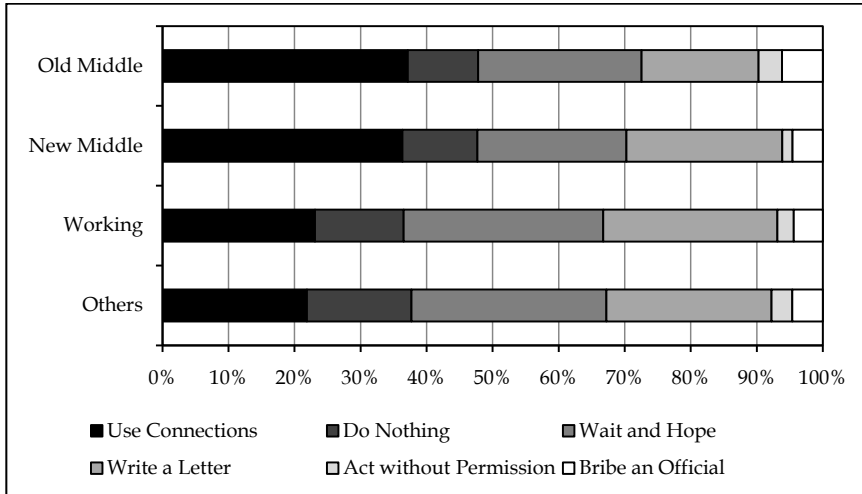
Figure 4 Sense of Political Effectiveness by Class (Points)



Note: Figure shows the average score ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The larger the score is, the more strongly disagree with the statements the informant is.

Source: AsiaBarometer 2006.

Figure 5 “What should a person who needs a government permit do if the response of the official handing the application is: ‘just be patient and wait?’”



Source: AsiaBarometer 2006.

in 20s, is relatively low among East Asian middle classes. The figure of 6 per cent is much lower than Korean or Hong Kongese counterparts in AsiaBarometer 2006 (Sonoda, 2007: 232). This low percentage suggests that urban middle classes regard attendance of lawful demonstration is still politically risky or at least not beneficial for their political gains.

Then, through what channels are urban middle classes using to attain their political purposes? Figure 5 gives us the hints.

Figure 5 tells us informant's answer to the question “What should a person who needs a government permit do if the response of the official handing the application is: ‘just be patient and wait?’” What makes difference between middle classes and other classes is that they are apt to rely on personal connections. 37.2 per cent of old middle class and 36.3 per cent of new middle class answered that they are going to “use connections”, but only a few answered that they will “do nothing” or just “wait and hope”.⁵ It is evident from these figures that urban middle classes in China are trying to attain their political goals by using their personal relations under such severe political environment as is controlled by the governments and CCP (Dickson, 2003).

Some social scientists have come to doubt that severe political control by the governments is preventing “sound” political participation by middle classes. Chen Yinfang points out that tight political control by the governments

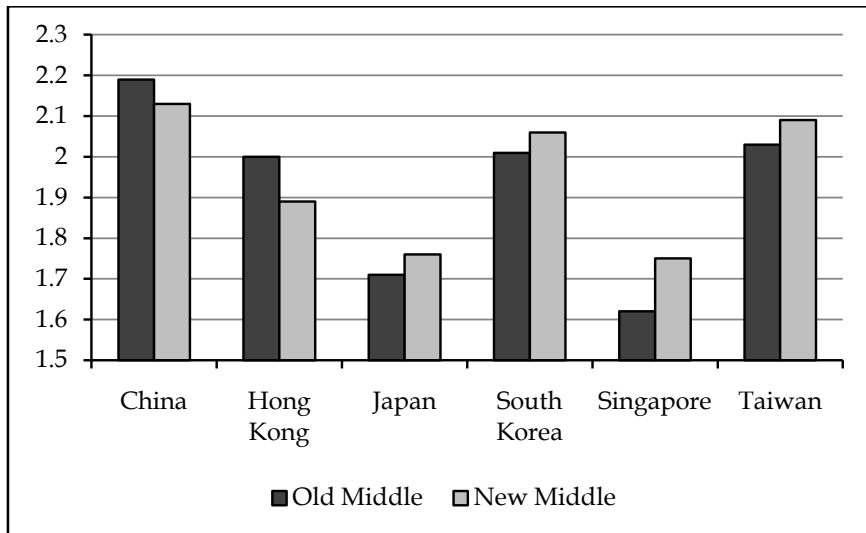
causes low participation in lawful demonstrations or social movements by new middle class which prevents institutionalization of political claims (Chen, 2006). Such discussion might be a majority if emerging new middle class will keep on seeking for more open space for free speech.

3.3. *Strong Quest for Status Quo*

The third distinctive, and most remarkable, feature of urban middle classes' political orientations is that they are conservative in the sense that they do not hope any drastic political change which might cause political turmoil. Its concrete expressions are threefold: 1) strong support for technocracy, 2) strong trust with central government, and 3) allowance of depression of freedom of speech for the sake of maintenance of social stability. Let us have a look at the first point.

Figure 6 illustrates preference for technocracy by class in six Confucian societies.⁶ Middle classes in China shows highest score (2.19 for old middle class and 2.13 for new middle class), higher than that of South Korea and Taiwan. Technocrats in China are dominated by elite members of CCP, therefore strong support for technocracy substantially means strong support for CCP politics by middle classes in urban China.⁷

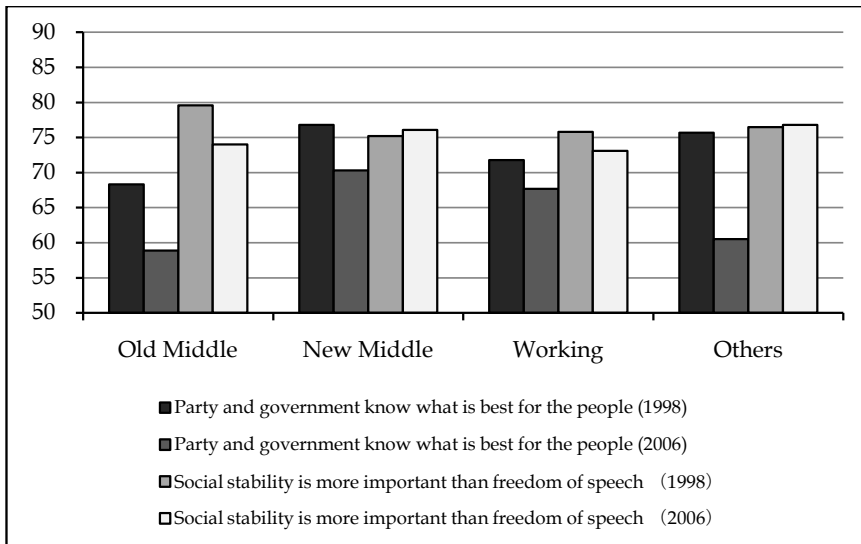
Figure 6 Preference for Technocracy by Class (Points)



Note: Score ranges from 1 (Bad) to 3 (Very good). 2 means "Fairly good", therefore higher score than 2 means that people regard technocracy positively.

Source: AsiaBarometer 2006.

Figure 7 Chronological Change of Political Consciousness, 1998-2006 (Points)



Note: Figures show the gap between positive answers (“Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) and negative answers (“Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”). The larger the figure is, the more positive answers informants have.

Source: Four-city Survey.

As to the second point, Figure 1 shows middle classes’ strong trust with the central government. Opposite to their critical evaluations to mass media or local government, urban middle classes have more positive view to central government.

We can get the same finding from the Four-city Survey.

Figure 7 illustrates different responses to the statement “Party and government know what is best for the people” through which we can see that urban new middle class, though most critical to official mass media, has most positive response to this statement. Moreover, such trend has not changed for these eight years.

A lot of problems, such as coercive condemnation of land, illegal taxation, bureaucratic corruption, passive attitude toward environmental protection due to its priority to economic development, and guarantee for food safety, are taking place, which makes urban middle classes more critical to the government. Such criticalness, interestingly, does not go directly to central government which is supposed to solve all the problems but goes to local government.

Figure 7 confirms the third point, that is, urban middle class’s, especially new middle class’s, allowance of depression of freedom of speech for the sake of maintenance of social stability.

In AsiaBarometer 2006, we prepared four options, namely, “maintaining order in nation”, “giving more say in more important government decisions”, “fighting rising prices”, and “protecting freedom of speech”, and asked each respondent which is most important. Those who chose “maintaining order in nation” is 61.3 per cent among Chinese new middle class and 59.9 per cent among Chinese old middle class whose scores are much higher than those of East Asian democratic societies as South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.⁸

3.4. Urban Middle Classes as Winner of Market Economy

Urban middle classes in China thus show very ambivalent political orientations and behaviours. They are more interested in securing space for their free speech or economic activities, but their political attitudes are very conservative in the sense that they 1) support technocracy, 2) trust central government, and 3) allow depression of freedom of speech for the sake of maintenance of social stability. Such ambivalence can be fully explained by the fact that urban middle classes are “winners” of market economy.

Table 4 shows respondent’s characteristics including percentage of party membership, percentage of university graduates, living area per capita, living area per capita,

Table 4 Respondent’s Characteristics by Class

Year 1998

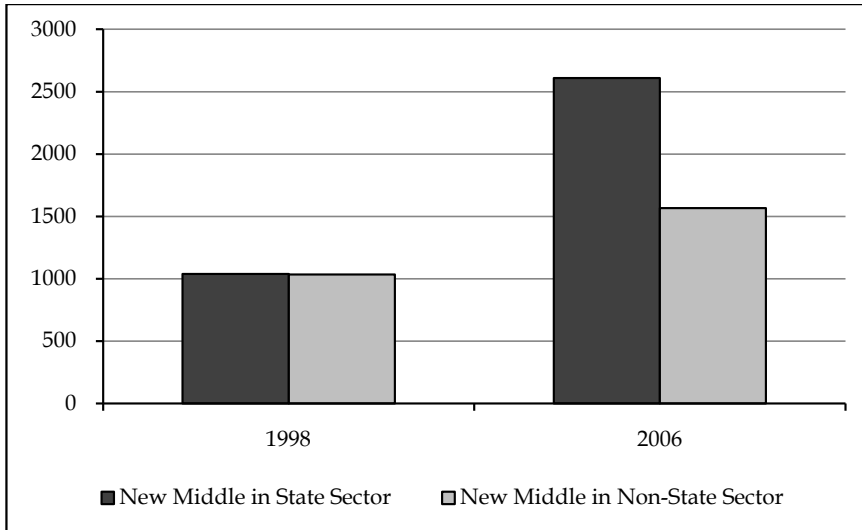
	Party Membership (%)	University Graduate (%)	Living Area m ²	Individual Income (Yuan/Month)	Household Income (Yuan/Month)
Old Middle	2.2	5.4	45.1	774.1	1904.9
New Middle	33.5	13.2	47.2	831.5	1860.4
Working	8.5	0.7	37.6	526.3	1100.9
Others	26.3	5.3	39.6	499.7	960.7

Year 2006

	Party Membership (%)	University Graduate (%)	Living Area m ²	Individual Income (Yuan/Month)	Household Income (Yuan/Month)
Old Middle	11.9	7.0	70.1	2191.2	3885.4
New Middle	36.1	15.4	83.6	2117.6	3781.6
Working	16.9	2.2	44.7	925.3	2183.8
Others	29.4	4.4	48.7	1030.8	2963.9

Source: Four-city Survey.

Figure 8 Chronological Change of New Middle Class's Average Monthly Income by Sector, 1998-2006 (Yuan)



Note: "State Sector" means state-owned company, national institution, and state organization.

Source: Four-city Survey.

individual monthly income, and household monthly income. As is clearly seen from this table, old and new middle class are much richer than other classes. They, especially new middle class, have more party members, living in more large accommodation. It is evident that emerging new middle class are those who "came first who were served".

More importantly, those new middle class who work for state sector have come to enjoy more prosperous life during these eight years. Figure 8 shows chronological change of new middle class's average monthly income by sector, which tells us that income gap between those who work for state sector and those who don't has enlarged drastically due to introduction of meritocratic system to state sector and privatization of poor state-owned enterprises.

It is often pointed out that risk-taking small entrepreneurs and employees working for non-governmental sector, especially in foreign companies, were the first groups who could enjoy the first benefit from reform and open-door from 1980s to 1990s, but it seems that most privileged group who have "political capital", "economic capital" and "cultural capital" have come to be seen in the core members of CCP (Sonoda, 2008: 171-172).

Table 5 “It is OK if income discrepancy continues to enlarge” (%)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Hard to Say	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Old Middle	13.6	40.3	20.4	15.2	10.5	100.0
New Middle	13.7	27.6	20.6	22.6	15.5	100.0
Working	11.8	28.1	16.7	22.1	21.2	100.0
Others	14.6	27.6	22.2	18.1	17.4	100.0

Pearson chi-square significance = .000

Source: Four-city Survey, 2006.

Only if we take into consideration such changing characteristics of social stratification in urban China can we understand why urban middle classes are more ardent in supporting the idea of *hexie shehui jianshe* 和谐社会建设 (construction of harmonious society).

Table 5 shows different attitudes toward the statement “It is OK if income discrepancy continues to enlarge” by class, but paradoxically old and new middle class have more pros to this statement, which is a core composition of the construction of harmonious society, than other class in urban China.

4. Concluding Remarks

“The middle classes as a whole are supportive of the idea of political reform and democracy, but they do not go out of their way to fight for it if the circumstances are not particularly favorable.” Michael Hsiao (2006: 7) summarizes East Asian middle classes’ political characteristics by referring to their contribution to democracy as a conclusion of EAMC and SEAMC projects in this way, but his observation can be applied to middle classes in urban China.

Historically, private entrepreneurs have been severely attacked under socialist rule, especially during Cultural Revolution, which produced “psychological anxiety” among old middle class in urban China (Pan, 2001: 38-40). Strongly hesitation to identify themselves as *bailing* 白领 (white-collars) is also a reflection of Chinese urban history where “foreign-like” bourgeois way of life had been restricted for a long time (Lui, 2001: 66).

It is only recently, roughly one decade ago, that people have come to look at urban middle classes positively though CCP still sticks to the idea that they will attain communism. Such political circumstances give us a clue to understand some paradoxes this paper referred to; why new middle class trusts central government though it is dissatisfied with their right to criticize

it, why old middle class is more supportive of non-liberal policies though it maintains more economic freedom, and so on.

CCP, under the rule of “democratic centralism”, still denies “class politics” in which every member will claim his class interest when class interests have come to be diversified.⁹ Under such circumstances, it will be politically risky for old middle class to claim its class interests manifestly (Wang, 2008). On the other hand, urban new middle class that has most members of CCP will find it difficult to change the whole political system because they know that they get benefits from this CCP’s rule.

Contradiction of marketization manipulated by CCP has been producing very complicated political orientations and behaviors of Chinese urban middle classes. Therefore it might be safe to say that there are two scenarios for the future politics in China.

One is optimistic scenario for Chinese democracy; that is, increasing dissatisfaction with official organizations or institutions and restriction of freedom of speech by the government will be a breakthrough for the future political change. The other pessimistic scenario is that such political change will not happen due to middle classes’ strong quest for status quo on one hand and governments’ efforts of “self purification” and “self-betterment” on the other (Sonoda, 2007: 236).

In order to judge their persuasiveness, however, we need more time to observe what will happen to urban middle classes. That is why our research team started to conduct annual survey in Tianjin since 2007.¹⁰

Notes

+ This paper is a modified and revised version of Chapter 5 of the author’s book on changing social stratification in contemporary China (Sonoda, 2008: 140-172). The author is very much grateful for useful comments from the chair and the audience who attended the International Conference “China in Transition: Economic Reform and Social Change”, hosted by Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, 21st-22nd July 2010.

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1. There might be an argument that clerical workers and sales workers should not be included in new middle class. In fact, Li Chunling uses the concept of “marginal middle class” when she talks about clerical workers and sales workers as components of middle class in China (Li, 2009: 121).
2. In AsiaBarometer 2003, we tried to put the same questions in the questionnaire, but we could not help giving up this idea due to their political sensitiveness. It was possible to put these questions in 2006 survey, which suggests that political atmosphere for social research became better during these three years.
3. Zhang Yi points out that new middle class is more critical toward government and politics than old middle class or other classes (Zhang, 2008: 128). Our data could not find statistically significant difference between old middle class and new middle class in terms of their critical evaluation toward governments, but we cannot deny the fact that urban residents are more critical than rural residents.
4. Such tendency is more evident among younger generation. Interestingly, China and Singapore have exceptionally high percentage of those who are dissatisfied with the right to criticize their government among middle class though they are basically satisfied with the domestic freedom of speech. See Sonoda (2007: 234).
5. Chinese and Singaporean middle class share many commonalities including their strong dissatisfaction with their right to criticize the government and low rate of participation in lawful demonstration, but there is a great difference on the channels they use to attain their political goals. In Singapore where bureaucratic corruption is strictly prohibited, only 8.2 per cent of urban middle classes answered that they will use connections. Instead, 62.3 per cent of them answered that they will “write a letter” to the government.
6. In the questionnaire of AsiaBarometer 2006, technocracy was described as “a system whereby decisions affecting the country are made by experts (such as bureaucrats with expertise in a particular field) according to what they think is best for the country)” so that informants could easily understand and answer the question.
7. Another data of AsiaBarometer 2006 tells us that Chinese urban middle classes show stronger anti-military government mentality than non-middle classes, and this trend is more evident in urban areas. From this we can say that urban middle classes are more ardent supporter of civilian control.
8. In our survey on urban residents’ perceptions on community management conducted in Tianjin and Shenyang in 2000 and 2001, we put a question, “If a conflict should happen between upper leader’s ideas and these of local residents, which side do you think residential community should listen to?”. Interestingly 36.2 per cent of middle classes and 31.7 per cent of working class answered that “residential community should respect upper leader’s ideas and try to listen to local residents’ ideas” while 51.2 per cent of middle classes and 53.8 per cent answered that “residential community should respect local residents’ ideas and try to listen to local residents’ ideas”. It is evident from this finding that urban middle classes, though more sensitive to their political rights, are more obedient to the authority than working class (Sonoda, 2008: 162-163).

9. Some political scientists and sociologists have come to maintain that diversification of class interests will be a challenge for politics in the future. See Sun (2007: 241-243).
10. We started annual survey in Tianjin where they started 1,000-household- survey since 1983 so that we could see chronological changes of urban residents' daily lives as a project of Waseda Institute of Contemporary China Studies. For the details of its research findings, see Sonoda (2009).

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