

# Social Order in the Wake of Economic Crisis

Joseph Fewsmith

With the onset of the world economic crisis, China's export industries have been hard hit, with the result that millions of "peasant workers" have returned to their inland homes. Although these returnees present a potential social order problem, especially if the economy does not rebound in the latter half of 2009, most of the social order problems witnessed in recent months appear to be a continuation of the deterioration in local governance in various parts of the country in recent years. Thus, the return of migrant workers to the countryside is not so much a problem in and of itself as it is an additional burden on an already fragile political economy.

At the March meeting of the National People's Congress, Premier Wen Jiabao, delivering the government work report, told delegates that 2009 would be "the most difficult year for our country's economic development since the turn of the new century." The challenges of "reform, development, and stability" would be "arduous."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, even if the global economic crisis had not hit, the task of managing social stability would have been difficult this year. Not only is 2009 a year of anniversaries—the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the PRC, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tibetan revolt, and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown—but there were also many indications of just how arduous maintaining social stability would be this year. As is well known, the number of "mass incidents" in China rose from 8,700 in 1993 to 87,000 in 2005, when the government stopped releasing systematic data.<sup>2</sup> According to *Liaowang*, there were 90,000 cases of "mass incidents" in 2006, and the trend was rising.<sup>3</sup> The annual *Blue Book* for 2009 reports that there were "more than" 80,000 mass incidents in 2007.<sup>4</sup> It does not give figures for 2008, but stated simply and bluntly, "the prospects are not good." In 2008, there were major mass incidents, involving thousands of people, in Weng'an (Guizhou), Fuyu (Shaanxi), Huizhou (Guangdong), and Menglian (Yunnan), among others.<sup>5</sup> Visits to the letters and visits offices at local levels also increased. In the first quarter of 2008, there were 140,000 visits, followed by 314,000 in the second quarter, and 446,000 in the third. The 900,000 visits in the first three quarters of the year exceeded the total of 810,000 visits for the whole of 2007.<sup>6</sup>

Data from the *Report on China's Social Harmony and Stability*, based on extensive survey research and published in August 2008, and in the 2009 edition of *Society of China: Analysis and Forecast*, better known as the *Blue Book*, which includes data from the first 10 months of 2008, suggest that social stability in 2008 continued to deteriorate, even before the impact of the financial crisis hit.<sup>7</sup>

For instance, the labor situation was tense. The Labor Contract Law was

implemented in early 2008 and the number of labor disputes quickly rose—by some 30 to 50 percent in the first half of the year in some locations.<sup>8</sup> The employment situation was also worrying. According to the *Blue Book*, some 67,000 small and medium-sized enterprises went out of business in the first half of 2008 because of rising costs and difficulties in raising capital. Whereas the number of small and medium-sized enterprises had increased by 10.7 percent in 2007, there were only 2 percent more such enterprises in the first three quarters of 2008. This was troubling because small and medium-sized enterprises are the main channel for absorbing labor.<sup>9</sup> The unemployment rate, as reflected in survey research, reached 9.4 percent, about double the officially reported number.<sup>10</sup> The situation was worse in the central and western regions of the country, with unemployment reaching 10.4 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively.<sup>11</sup>

There was also a notable increase in financial fraud of various types. In the first 10 months of 2008, cases of illegal absorption of savings (非法吸收公众存款案件) and fraudulent solicitation of funds (集资诈骗犯罪案件) increased 189.8 percent and 312.5 percent in Zhejiang Province. Such fraudulent activities target the middle classes, and thus pose a particular risk to social stability at a time when the stock and real estate markets are down.<sup>12</sup> According to *China Daily*, some 21,000 people were arrested in 2008 in 15,000 gun-related cases.<sup>13</sup>

## Public Attitudes

Although Li Peilin and his colleagues in the Sociology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) state that 75 percent of survey respondents say either that Chinese society is “very harmonious” (8.2 percent) or “relatively harmonious” (66.7 percent), the data they present in their *Report on China’s Social Harmony and Stability* suggest many underlying tensions.<sup>14</sup> For instance, consistent with similar surveys in the past, different groups of people rank either cadres or stage and screen actors as the chief beneficiaries of reform (see table 1, next page). There seems little likelihood that people will take to the streets over the high income actors make, but the benefits seen as accruing to cadres is an underlying source of tension.

Li and his colleagues, writing in the *Blue Book*, found that people felt that some areas of social life, such as mandatory education, the college exam, public health, and, perhaps surprisingly, the enjoyment of political rights, were relatively fair. Conversely, they also found that people believed that other areas, such as the promotion of cadres, employment, regional differences, and income disparities, were unfair. The sense that income disparities were unfair was particularly worrying in that the figures had fallen 11 percentage points in two years (see table 2, p. 4).

*(text continues on p. 7)*

**Table 1**  
*Rankings of Groups Seen as Benefiting from Reforms in Past 10 Years*

<i>Ranking group</i>	<i>Group seen as benefiting (ranked 1 through 8)</i>							
	State cadres	Private entrepreneurs	Actors	Specialized & technical personnel	Managers of state, collective enterprises	Workers	Peasants	Migrant workers
Peasants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Workers	1	4	2	5	3	7	6	8
Cadres	2	3	1	5	4	8	6	7
Specialized & technical personnel	2	4	1	5	3	8	6	7
Individual entrepreneurs	1	5	2	4	3	7	6	8
Private entrepreneurs & managers of non-state enterprises	2	3	1	5	4	8	6	7
Students	2	5	1	3	4	8	6	7
Unemployed	1	3	2	5	4	7	6	8
Other	1	4	2	5	3	7	6	8

Source: Li Peilin et al., *Zhongguo shehui hexie wending baogao*, p. 64.

**Table 2**

*Masses' Sense of Fairness about Different Social Realms (showing percentage of respondents believing fairness exists in realm)*

<i>Realm of Social Fairness</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2006</i>
Mandatory education	85.77	76.73
College exam	74.44	71.44
Public health	66.77	49.86
Enjoyment of political rights	65.43	61.95
Courts and Law	52.85	55.12
Old age and other social security	50.19	37.51
Promotion of Party cadres	47.22	34.44
Work and employment opportunities	41.05	44.45
Urban-rural compensation	40.37	28.97
Development among regions	37.70	33.60
Compensation among trades	35.24	33.60
Income disparities	28.58	40.21
Overall social fairness	68.35	62.27
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>7,139</b>	<b>7,161</b>

Source: Ru Xin et al., *2009 nian Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce*, p. 29.

Not unexpectedly, given these perceptions that some groups are benefiting more than others and that there are important areas in life that are perceived as unfair, there is a perception of conflict and potential conflict in Chinese life. Perceptions of conflict vary by occupation, social position, and personal experience. Perhaps surprisingly, cadres perceive more conflict between cadres and masses than do either peasants or workers, and private entrepreneurs perceive more conflict between bosses and employees than do workers (though the margin is narrow). The unemployed perceive more conflict between cadres and masses than any other group except the cadres themselves (see table 3, p. 5).

It turns out that one's perception of conflict is closely related to one's personal experience. In other words, those who have had personal experience with conflict are more likely to perceive conflict in the society and to perceive its likelihood of intensifying (see table 4, p. 6).

The other factor that influences perception of social conflict is life changes; in other words, those whose incomes have fallen not only perceive more conflict in society but also a greater likelihood that it will sharpen in the future (see table 5, p. 6).

*(text continues on p. 7)*

**Table 3***Distribution of Views about Which Social Groups Are Most Likely to Have Conflict of Interest*

	<i>Cadres/masses</i>	<i>Rich/poor</i>	<i>Managers/managed</i>	<i>Bosses/employees</i>	<i>Urban/rural</i>	<i>Higher/lower education</i>	<i>Physical/mental workers</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total Sample	24.0%	28.3%	5.0%	12.0%	13.4%	2.3%	2.1%	12.9%	100.0%
West	23.7%	25.6%	4.6%	9.2%	16.1%	3.6%	3.4%	13.7%	100.0%
Middle	23.8%	31.3%	5.3%	9.9%	12.5%	2.0%	2.2%	13.0%	100.0%
East	24.5%	26.6%	5.1%	16.0%	12.7%	1.7%	1.3%	12.2%	100.0%
Rural	22.2%	29.5%	6.4%	9.9%	10.5%	2.7%	2.5%	16.3%	100.0%
Urban	26.8%	26.4%	3.0%	15.1%	17.6%	1.6%	1.6%	8.0%	100.0%
Peasants	23.5%	30.0%	6.8%	7.7%	9.6%	2.6%	2.5%	17.0%	100.0%
Workers	21.9%	24.9%	4.0%	17.4%	18.1%	1.7%	1.8%	10.1%	100.0%
Cadres	33.5%	24.7%	2.0%	15.3%	14.8%	1.1%	1.4%	7.1%	100.0%
Specialized & Technical Personnel	26.8%	27.1%	1.9%	16.2%	18.4%	1.6%	1.9%	6.2%	100.0%
Individual Entrepreneurs	23.6%	31.8%	4.7%	11.6%	12.9%	2.4%	1.7%	11.2%	100.0%
Private Entrepreneurs	18.6%	28.3%	4.8%	20.7%	13.8%	3.4%	2.1%	8.3%	100.0%
Students	23.6%	24.3%	2.1%	18.1%	22.9%	4.9%	0.7%	3.5%	100.0%
Unemployed	29.7%	25.5%	2.9%	13.4%	16.8%	1.6%	2.1%	8.1%	100.0%
Other	22.8%	26.6%	3.0%	14.8%	15.4%	3.0%	2.7%	11.8%	100.0%

Source: Li Peilin et al., *Zhongguo shehui hexie wending baogao*, p. 87

**Table 4**  
*Comparative Analysis of Different Experiences on Perception of Interest Conflict*

<i>Experience of social conflict</i>	<i>Perception of real conflict between social groups</i>			<i>Judgment of future conflict between social groups</i>		
	Large conflict	Small conflict	Uncertain	Might sharpen	Will not sharpen	Uncertain
Personal experience	33.23%	54.59%	12.18%	50.59%	31.15%	18.26%
Heard people discuss it	28.74%	58.36%	12.91%	44.65%	36.56%	18.79%
Experienced through media	24.97%	63.49%	11.54%	41.61%	41.09%	17.30%
No contact	16.04%	62.46%	21.50%	30.44%	40.44%	29.12%
Average	22.99%	61.18%	15.82%	38.61%	39.03%	22.36%

Source: Li Peilin et al., *Zhongguo shehui hexie wending baogao*, p. 317.

**Table 5**  
*Interaction between Life Changes and Consciousness of Interest Conflict*

<i>Life changes over past 5 years</i>	<i>Perception of actual conflict among social groups</i>				<i>Judgment of interest conflict among social groups</i>			
	Much conflict	Little conflict	Uncertain	Sample size	Possibly sharpen	Will not sharpen	Uncertain	Sample size
Gone up a lot	25.14%	60.23%	14.63%	683	38.88%	40.78%	20.33%	682
Gone up a little	20.89%	63.77%	15.33%	3,793	37.06%	40.22%	22.72%	3,793
No change	22.73%	59.48%	17.79%	1,561	36.96%	38.77%	24.27%	1,561
Gone down a little	29.20%	57.12%	13.67%	636	46.63%	35.39%	17.99%	635
Gone down a lot	31.93%	53.45%	14.61%	350	48.59%	32.71%	18.70%	349
Hard to say	18.77%	30.61%	50.62%	40	30.54%	19.21%	50.25%	40
Overall	22.99%	61.18%	15.82%	7,063	38.61%	39.03%	22.36%	7,060

Source: Li Peilin et al., *Zhongguo shehui hexie wending baogao*, p. 317.

## Employment and the Financial Crisis

As the international financial crisis deepened in the fall, the Chinese government began taking steps to mitigate the impact. In early November the government announced a 4 trillion yuan (\$570 billion) stimulus package, including 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion) of new spending for the fourth quarter of 2008. At first, economists and officials seemed optimistic. In late October, economist Li Yining said that the impact of the crisis on China “will not be that big.”<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Guangdong vice governor Xiao Zhiheng declared that the employment situation in the province was stable.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, the rapidly falling demand for exports soon led to large-scale layoffs. By the end of the year it was said that some 10 million “peasant workers” (*nongmingong*, 农民工) had returned to their homes; by early February, Chen Xiwen, deputy head of the Central Finance and Economics Leadership Small Group Office, stated that some 20 million had been laid off.<sup>17</sup> At the time, *Caijing* magazine estimated that despite the numbers involved, there would not be large-scale social disorder; after all, over 50 million workers had been laid off in the 1996–2000 period, and migrant workers generally accepted unemployment better than their SOE (State-Owned Enterprise) counterparts.<sup>18</sup>

In late March 2009, the National Statistics Bureau issued a report giving a detailed look at the employment situation among these peasant workers. According to this report, there are 225 million migrant workers in China, 140 million (62.3 percent) of whom work outside their native townships. Of these 140 million peasant workers, some 99 million (71 percent) work in Eastern China.<sup>19</sup> Before or during the Chinese New Year, about half of these workers returned home; about one-quarter of these 70 million peasant workers (that is, about 17.5 million) returned from Guangdong while another 12 million returned from the Yangtze Delta area. Following the Spring Festival, about 80 percent (about 56 million) returned to cities to take up their old jobs or find new ones. Of those returning to urban areas, about 11 million remained unemployed at the time of the report. If one adds those who did not return to the cities and those who did but have not yet found jobs, there are about 25 million who have lost urban jobs, mitigated only by the fact that about 20 percent of those who remained home (about 2.8 million) have either found jobs or started businesses, presumably at lower wages than they had previously been making in the cities.<sup>20</sup> In short, the employment situation is quite serious and it puts into perspective the increasingly severe expressions of concern Chinese leaders have made.<sup>21</sup>

*Caijing* magazine adds some detail to this picture, noting that in highly agricultural Henan, home province of 10 percent of China’s migrant workers, about 9.5 million had returned home prior to the Spring Festival and only 4 million had returned to their jobs afterward—meaning that an additional 5.5 million were seeking jobs in their native areas.<sup>22</sup> A later article said that over 5 percent of migrant workers returning home (about 1 million people) do not have contract land to take up. It reported that the survey of 165 villages undertaken by the National Bureau of Statistics had found 20 villages in which there had been a total of 45 disputes over land involving migrant workers returning

home, an increase of 125 percent from the year before.<sup>23</sup> Such figures do not lead one to conclude that widespread social disorder is about to break out, but they do suggest the fragility of China's social situation.

## Official Expressions of Concern

Even as the vice governor of Guangdong was reassuring the media that employment in the province was stable, Yin Weimin, the minister of Human Resources and Social Security, was calling the employment situation "grim." Yin told a press conference that he expected the situation would worsen through the first quarter of 2009 and that labor unrest was his "top concern." Reflecting this fear of social disorder, Yin said that the ministry would ensure payment was made when layoffs could not be avoided. He also said that companies would be required to handle labor relations according to law.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, Zhou Yongkang, the Politburo member in charge of Politics and Law, told the plenary session of the Central Commission on the Comprehensive Management of Social Order, which he also heads, that it was necessary to "more fully take into account the risks and difficulties that might affect social stability."<sup>25</sup> Zhou then went to Fengqiao township in Zhejiang Province, where Mao Zedong had praised the "Fengqiao experience" in 1963 for its management of social problems locally. Echoing the Chairman, Zhou told local leaders to "grasp matters at their origin and grasp them at their roots," so that local contradictions were handled locally and not passed on to higher levels. "Party committees and governments at different levels must truly fulfill their primary task of maintaining stability," Zhou said.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, Beijing began expressing serious concern that mishandling of the stimulus package would lead to corruption and social tension. On 21 November, He Guoqiang, head of the Central Discipline and Inspection Commission CDIC, announced that a new leading group had been set up to supervise the projects that the central government was investing in and to ensure the implementation of economic policies. The group was to be headed by the CDIC and Ministry of Supervision, and would also include the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance, and National Audit Administration as members of the leading group. He announced that 24 inspection teams would fan out to the various provinces to ensure the handling of investment was appropriate. CDIC involvement in the implementation of economic policies is highly unusual and suggests a very high degree of concern on Beijing's part. These concerns were on display in January when Hu Jintao gave a talk to the Third Plenary Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> CDIC, calling on that body to supervise the implementation of the Party's policies and ensure that plans for expanding domestic demand were "properly carried out."<sup>27</sup>

In early 2009 the Chinese government issued "Document no. 3," which stressed the "three guarantees": ensuring economic growth, the people's livelihood, and social stability.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the government set up the "6521 Group," which derives its name from the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the PRC, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tibetan uprising, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tiananmen, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the



crackdown on the Falungong.<sup>29</sup> This group seems to be headed by heir apparent Xi Jinping, with Zhou Yongkang, the Politburo member in charge of Politics and Law, and Meng Jianzhu, the Politburo member in charge of Public Security, serving as deputies.<sup>30</sup>

## Protests

Both Chinese and foreign media have reported numerous protests in recent months, though, perhaps surprisingly, relatively few related to the economic slowdown. There were protests in Dongguan in October over a factory closing without paying wages,<sup>31</sup> in Shenzhen in mid-November over unpaid salaries,<sup>32</sup> in Shaoguang (Guangdong) in early December over management's refusal to renew labor contracts,<sup>33</sup> in Shanghai, also in early December, as migrant workers demanded an extension of their contracts and/or more compensation,<sup>34</sup> and again in Shenzhen in February as the collapse of DeCoro, a producer of leather upholstery, left wages unpaid.<sup>35</sup>

But if there have been fewer labor disputes than one might have expected, there have been many sizeable protests over other issues. In September hundreds protested the default of investments in a real estate firm in Jishou, Hunan;<sup>36</sup> in October thousands protested in Jiangxi Province after two peasants were allegedly beaten to death by employees of a lumber company;<sup>37</sup> and in November over 2,000 protested in Jiangsu Province when their employer disappeared without paying wages.<sup>38</sup> Although it is impossible to compare with past years, there have been many incidents in which anger has been directed at official targets. For instance, in November government offices in Longnan, Gansu, were stormed over failure to pay adequate compensation following last year's earthquake.<sup>39</sup> In January, retired military personnel protested their poor benefits in Shanxi Province,<sup>40</sup> and there has been an outcry on the Internet over the death of a person detained by police who was allegedly playing "hide and seek."<sup>41</sup> Police brutality has obviously become a concern, not only for outraged citizens but also for the government, which worries that poorly trained police will ignite major protests. *Liaowang Eastern* reported on five instances of "abnormal" deaths in police custody in Henan Province just in the last three months of 2008.<sup>42</sup>

One of the largest protests occurred in Chongqing, when cab drivers refused to drive on 3 November. This protest, however, was not related to the economic crisis, and particularly not to the laying off of migrant laborers, but rather to increased operating costs, the shortage of natural gas, high fines, and illegal cabs. Chongqing Party secretary Bo Xilai, heeding central instructions for local leaders to deal with protests quickly and in person, quickly met with protesting drivers.<sup>43</sup> In seemingly copycat fashion, cabbies in Sanya (Hainan), Shantou (Guangdong), Shanghai, and elsewhere went on strike (referred to in Chinese as *bayun* 罢运, "halting transport," or *tingyun* 停运, "stopping transport," rather than the illegal term, *bagong* 罢工, "strike").<sup>44</sup>

## Charter 08

The atmosphere in China was thus tense when "Charter 08," a manifesto modeled on Czechoslovakia's Charter 77, was signed by 303 writers, journalists, lawyers, and

academics and released on 10 December to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>45</sup> The Charter calls for ensuring such principles as human rights, democracy, and constitutionalism by amending the constitution to abolish all principles that “contradict the principle that sovereignty resides with the people” and by fully implementing a “comprehensive system of democratic elections” according to the principle of “one person, one vote.” Only six months after the Chinese state tried to take back the symbols of nationalism in the elaborate opening ceremonies of the Olympic games, Charter 08 declares that China “stand[s] today as the only country among the major nations that remains mired in authoritarian politics.”<sup>46</sup>

The text of the charter stayed up on China’s Internet long enough for some 7,000 people to put their names to it, despite the obvious risk of doing so. Even before the charter was released to the public, the authorities had detained outspoken literary critic Liu Xiaobo, one of the chief writers of the manifesto. Taken away on 8 December, Liu has not yet been released, nor has his arrest been explained. Another organizer, Zhang Zuhua, was also detained on that day, though he was later released.<sup>47</sup> Many, if not all, of the other original signers of the charter have been called into police departments for a “chat,” a not too subtle warning against further activism. Despite these reactions, the government has not launched an all-out campaign, as it did against Falungong, to arrest all those involved. This may be due to Hu Jintao’s apparent belief that the government should only arrest the leaders; others allegedly take a harder line.<sup>48</sup>

In the event, the suppression of Charter 08 and its main leaders has not stopped intellectuals from protesting. In early January, 22 intellectuals signed an open letter calling for a boycott of China’s official television station, CCTV, arguing that its news coverage amounted to “brainwashing.”<sup>49</sup> Then in February 16 liberal-minded Party elders signed an open letter on the eve of Secretary of State Clinton’s visit urging the government to undertake long-delayed political reform.<sup>50</sup>

## Implications

At the National People’s Congress, the government proposed a 32 percent increase in public security for 2009.<sup>51</sup> Such a large increase no doubt reflects government unease with the social situation, but it also seems to indicate a belated understanding of the need to expand and professionalize police forces. In 2007 there were only 1.8 million police, an increase of only 1 percent from 2005.<sup>52</sup> Clearly that is inadequate, even under better circumstances. Too often local security forces have been augmented by part-time, ill-trained police with little regard to their quality. Such poorly trained police have often been the perpetrators of “abnormal deaths” and other abuses, and are one reason that mass resentments accumulate over time only to explode in the face of a seemingly minor incident. Perhaps overwhelmed police departments explain, at least to a certain extent, why local officials have resorted to committing petitioners to mental hospitals.<sup>53</sup>

Unemployment, police abuse, and poor local governance, particularly in poor inland areas, are not likely to threaten CCP control, but they may erode what little

progress has been made toward better local governance. Because Beijing's revenues have increased rapidly in recent years, there is likely to be a tendency to funnel funds to trouble spots. And that tendency will increase the control of higher-level officials over lower-level officials, making the latter yet less responsive to popular concerns. Perhaps the strengthening of hierarchical controls will only be temporary; as tensions recede there may well be renewed pressures to respond to local opinion. But that will not be the main theme for 2009.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Wen Jiabao, "Report on the Work of the Government," Xinhua (English), 14 March 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Bergsten et al., *China: The Balance Sheet* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Institute for International Economics, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> "'Dianxing quntixing shijian' de jinghao" [Alarm of a 'typical mass incident'], *Liaowang*, no. 36 (8 September 2008).

<sup>4</sup> One should not take numbers of mass incidents too literally, much less conclude that such incidents in 2007 were fewer than in 2006 just because they were reported to be "more than 80,000," which is fewer than the 90,000 reported for 2006. Without better data, the most we can say is that mass incidents have risen throughout the past decade or more and remain high and, perhaps, rising.

<sup>5</sup> Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan, 'shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuci' ketizu' ['Social situation analysis and forecast' group, China Academy of Social Sciences], "*Liwan kuanglan: Zhongguo shehui fazhan yingjie xin tiaozhan*" [Making vigorous efforts to turn the tide], in Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Li Peilin, eds., *2009 nian Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuci* [Society of China: Analysis and Forecast (2009)], p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Li Peilin, Chen Guangjin, Zhang Yi, and Li Wei, eds., *Zhongguo shehui hexie wending baogao* [Report on China's social harmony and stability] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2008); and Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Li Peilin, eds., *2009 nian Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuci*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Li Weimin, the minister of Human Resources and Social Security, said that the unemployment rate through the first 10 months of 2008 was 4 percent, but this figure does not include migrant workers. See Xinhua, 20 November 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan, 'shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuci' ketizu, "*2008 nian Zhongguo minsheng wenti diaocha baogao*" [Survey report on people's livelihood, 2008], in Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Li Peilin, eds., *2009 nian Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuci* [Society of China: Analysis and Forecast (2009)], p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Song Erdong and Yan Congbing, "*2008 nian shehui zhian xingshi*," in Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Li Peilin, eds., *2009 nian Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuci* [Society of China: Analysis and Forecast (2009)], pp. 198–204.

<sup>13</sup> Ma Chenguang, "Crime May Go Up, Official Says," *China Daily*, 13 January, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that when survey-takers ask questions about social harmony, a frequently invoked political trope, there is likely to be a bias toward the "politically correct" answer. In this regard, the very large gap (over 58 percentage points) between those who answered "very harmonious" and those who said "relatively harmonious" likely reflects both a tendency to answer affirmatively and to signal less than complete agreement with the question.

<sup>15</sup> "*Quanguo zhengxie changwei Li Yining: Yao zai qidong neixi douzuo wenzhang*" [Member of the CPPCC Standing Committee, Li Yining: Efforts should be made to boost domestic demand], *21 shiji jingji baodao*, 19 November 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Fiona Tam, "Top Official Rejects Reports of Huge Layoffs in Guangdong," *South China Morning Post*, 19 November 2008.

<sup>17</sup> "*Chen Xiwen: Yue 2000 wan nongmingong shiye, xu zhimian xiangguan shehui wenti*" [Chen Xiwen: Approximately 20 million peasant workers are unemployed; we must directly face the related social

problems], *Caijing*, 2 February 2009, retrieved from <http://www.caijing.com.cn/2009-02-02/110051988.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Ju Hongbin, “*Shiyelǚ shangsheng buhui yinfa daguimo shehui bu anding*” [Rising unemployment will not bring on large-scale social disorder], *Caijing*, 9 February 2009, retrieved from <http://www.caijing.com.cn/2009-02-09/110054101.html>.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Zheng Fengling, “*Nongmingong shiye chao’ jie hou nongmingong jiuye maodun tuchu*” [‘Migrant worker unemployment tide’: After spring festival the contradiction between peasant workers and jobs will be prominent], *Caijing*, 10 February 2009, retrieved from <http://www.caijing.com.cn/2009-02-10/110054802.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Chang Hongxiao, “*Nongmingong shiye jiaju nongdi jiu fen*” [Unemployment of peasant workers exacerbating land disputes], *Caijing*, 3 March 2009, retrieved from <http://www.caijing.com.cn/2009-03-03/110111348.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Xinhua (English), 20 November 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Zhang Jingyong, “*Zhou Yongkang zai zhongyang shehui zhi’an zonghe zhili weiyuanhui quanti huiyi shang qiangdiao shenru xuexi shijian kexue fazhanguan quanmian tuijin shihui zhi’an zonghe zhili gongzuo*” [At the plenum of the central commission on comprehensive management of social order, Zhou Yongkang stresses: Profoundly study and put into practice the scientific development concept, push forward the work of comprehensive management of social order in an all-round way], Xinhua, 20 November 2008.

<sup>26</sup> “*Zhou Yongkang zai jinian Maozedong tongzhipishi ‘Fengqiao jingyan’ sishiwu zhounian dahui shang qiangdiao jianchi bing fazhan ‘Fengqiao jingyan’*” [Zhou Yongkang at the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting commemorating Mao Zedong’s instruction on the “Fengqiao experience” emphasizes upholding and developing the “Fengqiao experience”], retrieved from [http://www.chinapeace.org.cn/ldhd/2008-11/24/content\\_59774.htm](http://www.chinapeace.org.cn/ldhd/2008-11/24/content_59774.htm). According to a 1999 article, Fengqiao town has not had a petition go to a higher level, a case of murder, or a dispute intensified from improper mediation or handling. See Yuan Yaping, “Fengqiao Experience,” *People’s Daily Online*, retrieved from <http://english.people.com.cn/english/199912/01/eng19991201A104.html>.

<sup>27</sup> “He Guoqiang zai Zhongyang gouda neixu cujin jingji zengzhang zhengce luoshi jiandu jianchagongzuo dongyuan huiyi” (He Guoqiang at mobilization meeting for inspection work on implementing work on expanding domestic demand and promoting growth policies), Xinhua, 21 November 2008; “Hu Jintao zai Zhongguo gongchandang di shiqi jie zhongyang jilu jiancha weiyuanhui disanci quanti huiyi shang fabiao zhongyao jianghua (Hu Jintao gives an important speech at the third plenary session of the 17th Central Discipline Inspection Commission) Xinhua, 13 January 2009.

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