



**Managing Transitions:  
The Chinese Communist Party's United  
Front Work, Minor Parties and Groups,  
Hegemony and Corporatism**

By

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## Abstract

### **Managing Transitions: The Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work, Minor parties and Groups, Hegemony and Corporatism**

This dissertation examines the history and roles of China's minor parties and groups (MPGs) in the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) united front between the 1930s and 1990s using Antonio Gramsci's principles for the winning and maintaining of hegemony. Gramsci advocated a "war of position," the building of political alliances to isolate existing state powers and win consent for revolutionary rule and transform society. Intellectuals were particularly valuable allies and the MPGs were parties of intellectuals. Between 1935 and 1949, the CCP used the MPGs and their ideological influence to help isolate the Nationalists politically.

After 1949, the united front worked for China's socialist transformation of the means of production and ideology. To overcome recurrent crises caused by its methods, the CCP instituted concessionary "passive revolution" measures including united front and MPG work to win back the support of intellectuals. Yet the re-stating of some MPG third road political positions contributed to the anti-Rightist campaign of 1957. The failure of the subsequent Great Leap Forward forced the CCP to adopt passive revolutionary methods again and the MPGs were revived during the Second Hundred Flowers period. They officially dissolved in 1966.

The post-Mao, post-Cultural Revolution revival of the MPGs as part of a new united front was again part of a passive revolutionary strategy to rebuild CCP hegemony. The MPGs were needed initially for their connections to old society intellectuals with technical, managerial and other skills. The MPGs also acted to re-legitimise these groups and to represent them politically. The corporatist forms of the MPGs, have, however led repeatedly to internal problems and dysfunctions inherent in corporatist structures. The CCP has used these problems as a means of control. Economic reform is now creating new socio-economic groups and the CCP is adjusting the united front and the MPGs to co-opt their representatives and deliberately forestall the evolution of an autonomous civil society and middle class which could challenge CCP rule. This has resulted in a new and expanding role for the united front, the MPGs and organisations representing the new interest groups.

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Glossaries: *Pinyin* - *Chinese Character Namelist*

Commonly Used Acronyms

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