

From statism to corporatism-Evolution of the relations between the state and professional groups during the period of market transformation in China

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Abstract: Professional groups have become a key component of China's civil society. Referring to a survey conducted by the Civil Society Organisation Research Centre at Peking University, the authors observe that, because of state interventions, professional groups have not yet claimed their full independence. They enjoy a monopolistic status as a result of a social group monitoring system. Most of these groups have sprung up after powers were handed down to them by the government, the so-called 'organisation by state organs'. Although the state no longer provides financial support to these professional groups, the professional leading units¹ can, by appointing their directors, always scrutinise their activities. In order to maintain their monopolistic status, professional groups do not, in most cases, seek to strengthen their independent status. This corporatist relationship² between the state and the professional groups, a statist legacy, does not have a transitional existence, as many might believe. Attention should be paid to the following issue: within an institutional framework of such a magnitude, can a fresh concept and new model of mutual empowerment between the state and society be formed? Will it also push China's civic space towards social corporatism?

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[End]

¹ To register under current rules, these organisations are required to find an organizational sponsor, which is usually a government agency carrying out work in a similar subject area. In the language of the law, this organizational sponsor is called the "professional leading unit" (*yewu zhuguan danwei*). (source: <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/sandt/ptr/ngos-prt.htm>)

² Where the state, through the process of [licensing](#) and regulating officially-[incorporated](#) organizations, effectively co-opts their leadership or circumscribes their ability to challenge state authority by establishing the state as the source of their [legitimacy](#), as well as sometimes running them, either directly or indirectly through shell corporations. (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporatism>)

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