

Organizing for Crisis: Shanghai Civic Association and Formalization of Elite Voluntary Organizations, 1932-1936

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Abstract

Facing Japanese military invasion in Shanghai in 1932, local elites spontaneously organized to perform war relief activities in the absence of an effective government. The Shanghai Civic Association (SCA) stepped onto the political stage during the short period of anarchy and acted as one of leading civic organizations that kept the shattered city in order. The association took leadership to coordinate city-wide rescue work, maintain local order, and mobilize financial and materials resources to support frontline soldiers. After the military crisis, the association transformed from an informal network of “societal elites” into a formal bureaucracy, actively engaging in public administration alongside the municipal authority. Examining the history of SCA from 1932 to 1937, this article traces the process of formalization of urban elite civic participation. It analyzes how the formal organizational elements including organizational structures, tools, and practices facilitated the association’s development and operation as a parallel governing unit attending to public affairs.

Introduction

Voluntary associations were an indispensable part of Chinese society throughout history and they have always interested scholars working to theorize state-society relationships in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Fewsmith 1985; Strand 1989, 1990; Schoppa 1982; Rankin 1986, 2000; Goodman 1995; Martin 1996; Dillon & Oi 2008; Chen 2011). During this period, “modern” professional associations, educational associations, and chambers of commerce had emerged and thrived alongside “traditional” organizations such as guilds, trade gangs, native-place associations, charities, and religious groups. Since the late Qing dynasty variegated

voluntary organizations, mostly initiated by urban elites, have woven a vibrant culture of civic participation (Wakeman 1995; Brook 1997; Schoppa 1998; Rankin 2000; Shao 2004).

The central debate in studies of Chinese voluntary associations focuses primarily on the degree of independence of these associational activities from state control. This dominant strand of thought, as we call the “relational perspective,” analyzes associations in relation to individuals, society, and state. It discusses how associations cultivate beliefs, attitudes, and political strategies for individuals, how groupness serves as the foundation for economic and political actions, and how associations interact and negotiate with the state. Scholars generally agree that elite voluntary groups at the turn of the twentieth century exerted huge influence in local governance and public administration, especially in urban areas, despite the fact that these organizations failed to mature into a viable civil society vis-à-vis the Chinese state.

Less attention is paid to the Weberian processes of organizational formalization that occurred in parallel to state building during this period. As a key characteristic of modern society, formal organizations provided interactional spaces for individuals and realized collective participatory goals (Perrow 1991). When voluntary associations mediated relationships between individual citizens and the state, they produced “government ready” subjects and promoted the organizational capacity of not only civil society but also of state apparatus (Clemens 2017:36). It is common for a state-in-formation to appropriate organizational resources outside formal political institutions to supplement its infrastructural power (Clemens 2017:42). In China, the burgeoning of associations always occurred in tandem with an increase in the state’s role in organizing civic activities (Wakeman 1991, 1993). When civic organizations became “expansive vehicles for local participation” that pulled together urban elites with shared goals of modernity and national development (Rankin 2000:18), they could also evolve into alternative governing

structures and provide fertile ground for innovative and spontaneous ways of organizing to emerge.

Inspired by the two-dimensional framework of intermediary space, the current study examines both the relational and the formal organizational aspects of an elite voluntary association during an emergency situation. It intends to illustrate why and how the association took leadership to create an order of coordination in war relief when local government was dysfunctional. In addition to the state-association relationships that existing studies tend to focus on, I explain how formal organizational structure, composition, recruitment strategies, routinized practices, and decision-making procedures facilitated the focal association's daily operation and increased its organizational capacity serving as a de facto governing unit in managing local affairs.

Established in 1932, the Shanghai Civic Association (SCA)¹ was an emergent response to an anarchic crisis created by Japanese military invasion and internal strife in Chinese authority. In the absence of an effective government, the association coordinated citywide relief efforts, including facilitating and managing various social groups for war relief, raising and allocating financial and material resources for the Chinese defense forces, and mitigating social conflicts and maintaining local order. After the ceasefire, the association transformed from a temporary crisis response group to a more permanent establishment, attending to a broad range of local affairs and gradually evolving into a structure equivalent to local government. For most of its history, SCA was not immune to state sanction, yet, it was a powerful organization that had emerged from spontaneous organizing by members of society.

In what follows, this article first revisits existing studies regarding urban voluntary associations in China and illustrates the two-dimensional framework in understanding current

debates over an emerging intermediate space at the turn of the twentieth century. Based on archival research, I then present in detail the rise and development of the SCA during the state of emergency in 1932 and its organizational transformations over the course of the next five years.

The Organizational Dimension of the Intermediate Space

Voluntary associations are the focal point in studies of the historical transformation of civil society in countries around the globe. Classical social theories figure the explosion of such associations in nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe as a key feature of the development of civil society (Habermas 1991; Tocqueville 2003). While the bottom-up view suggests these associations emerged without state intervention (Putnam 1976; Skocpol 1997), leftist thinking understands them as a manifestation of infrastructurally strong states (Mann 1992:9-11), the “organic complement” to an expansive state (Gramsci 1971:268). Building on Gramsci’s theory, Riley and Fernandez (2014) propose a two-dimensional framework to capture the varying developmental trajectories of civil society: organizational strength and political autonomy or heteronomy. Organizational strength is usually measured by the capacity, tools, and resources of organizational entities, the number and kinds of voluntary organizations, and the number of people who participate in such organizations. Political autonomy or heteronomy is determined by “a set of qualitative relationships between the state and nonstate organizations, and among nonstate organizations themselves” (Riley and Fernandez 2014:440).

Most studies of the historical development of civil society in China highlight the importance of the relational aspect: the relationship between the state, society, and their interactions (Fewsmith 1983; Bergere 1997; Rankin 2000). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the in-between space in which these interactions take place, a space Huang

(1993; 2019) theorized as “the third realm”, had emerged and expanded in parallel to state-making. Debates center around the autonomy of such space where individuals could associate to ensure the completion of collective tasks outside formal state apparatuses (Wakeman 1993; Rowe 1993). In other words, the extent to which this space is autonomous from the state (and from society) is at the core of previous scholarship.

The formal organizational dimension, in comparison, receives relatively less emphasis. This dimension concerns the *strength* of intermediate space and the *capacities* of self-administering organizational entities. In a Weberian sense, organizations are the primary vehicles by which society is systematically rationalized – “planned, articulated, scientized, made more efficient and orderly, and managed by experts” (Scott 2003). To serve as “vehicles” that carry out collective projects, organizations vary in their structure and composition, networks and resources, tools and techniques. It is this formal organizational aspect in voluntary association that I aim to highlight in this paper.

Central components of formal organization include personnel, functioning, and structure (Scott and Davis 2003:22). An organization’s capacity is displayed in its composition of participants, the ways in which they do their work, the patterns of internal and external relationships, strategies of resource acquisition and allocation, and many other organizational features. Scholars generally agree that voluntary associations in the European context influenced public policy through “establishing criteria for membership, internal patterns of authority, and group decision-making processes that ran counter to orthodox sociopolitical hierarchies” (Chartier 1991: 163-64 quoted in Rowe 1993: 146-47). In his discussion of the third realm, Huang (1993) also observed that there was a revolution over the course of the nineteenth century in which civil organizations such as merchant associations became “capable of undertaking

large-scale public activities” such as service provision, relief work maintenance, and dispute mediation (227-229). He accordingly calls for more studies of the third realm’s power relations, operational mode and organizational forms. In the same volume, Rankin (1993) emphasizes the importance of organizational aspects in understanding the interactional space in Chinese history, arguing that management of local affairs in the late Qing Dynasty brewed a formal organizational dimension to elite resources (177). Thirty years after the “public sphere” debate, more work still needs to be done to comprehend the power of formal organizational tools that made an emerging intermediary space possible.

Despite its primary focus on state-society relations, the wide literature on Chinese voluntary associations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century provides some hints as to the structural formalization of organizations at both local and national levels. The transformation of community management organizations is one example of formalization at the local level (Culp 1994). Developed on the basis of lineage corporate bodies that traditionally managed local affairs, elite educational associations structurally formalized and became organizational tools for local elites to interact with the state. These organizations gradually merged into the “sphere of state-affiliated institutions,” and as a result increasingly resembled government organs (Culp 1994: 459-63). At the national level, industrial association with sponsorship of the government represented a new form of organizations “institutionalizing the informal state-private networks” (Zanasi 2010: 103). The centralized corporatist organizations were structured with a standing decision-making committee and “a network of cooperative societies organized producers involved in all stages of the industry and ensured the implementation of reforms” (105). Its pyramidal structure served as an extension of bureaucracy for state control and resource extraction. Both cases show the significant role of government in

shaping the organizational structure of voluntary associations, a structure that resembled government bureaucracy. This structural resemblance facilitated voluntary association to communicate, supplement, or even replace official administration in times of crisis.

A handful of studies of voluntary associations in the early republican era contain sporadic evidence of concrete organizational practices. In his study of professional associations in Shanghai, Xu analyzes the simultaneous processes of burgeoning urban voluntary organizations and their formalization through state regulations (Xu 2003). He points out that the formalized organizational practices of modern professional associations showed a clear departure from traditional elite associations and brought remarkable capacity to the organizations in negotiating an autonomous space for urban professionals. Chen's (2011) study of the Lower Yangzi chambers of commerce also reflects this essential role of associational formalization. He demonstrates that the formal membership, leadership, organizational hierarchy, and other inter-organizational connections institutionalized individual relationships and tied them to a formal organizational framework and more importantly to a larger associational network (77). In addition, Kohama Masako (2003) argues that the formalized self-governance associations in the 1900s built the foundations of elite participation in Shanghai's public administration in the early days of the republican regime. Formalized institutions, organizational constitution, standardized election procedures, and publicly accessible financial reports made civic participation successful (Kohama 2003: 174).

These works on the formal organizational dimension of an intermediate space pave the way for the current study. This article goes beyond its predecessors by examining, in addition to leadership, membership composition, and organizational policies, how an organization carried out policies, reached decisions, recruited and maintained membership, and developed and

expanded other concrete organizational techniques. Thus, it aims at providing a more comprehensive picture of the formal aspects of the voluntary organization itself.

The formal organizational features became extra salient during emergency and crisis situation. Emergencies and disasters relief were traditionally managed by local elites through temporary task-oriented cooperatives or social welfare associations based on native-place origins or occupations in urban areas (Zhou 2008: 49-51). In the early twentieth century, natural disasters and local warfare became so pervasive and much broader in scope, creating a massive refugee population that migrated from rural to urban centers. To meet the increasing demand for public welfare and disaster relief, urban administrations relied heavily on existing voluntary organizations such as charity halls, native-place associations, trade or occupational groups, and modern civic organizations. Government struggled to coordinate and to exert control over an active and decentralized response network, especially when many of voluntary groups were limited to locality, sub-ethnic identity, or occupation (Strand 1989:151-154).

In her studies of the Chinese welfare state during the republican era, Dillon (2008; 2011) discusses the critical role of non-state actors in collaboration with the state in the provision of disaster relief. She astutely points out the decentralized and spontaneous nature of relief initiatives organizing from below in 1930s Shanghai. However, she attributes the success of these coordinated relief efforts to critical individuals, “local civic leaders, elite philanthropists, and Chinese government officials [who] came together on the first day of the battle to forge a public and private partnership” (Dillon 2008: 29). She does not discuss the mechanisms that prompted them to come together and what methods and forms of organizations emerged from the resulting partnership.

Case and Materials: Shanghai Civic Association, 1932-1936

The case of SCA during the military crisis in 1932 provides an opportunity to investigate the role of formal organizational features in maintaining social order, mobilizing financial and material resources, and coordinating civic participation, in the absence of adequate state provision.

Primary materials on SCA were collected during a one-year archival research in the Shanghai Municipal Archives (SMA). Major documents consulted for this study include plenary meeting minutes, correspondence between the association's leaders and other organizations, membership lists, propaganda pamphlets, publications, and yearbooks. The documents dated from 1927 to 1937 are well-preserved in folders labeled "Shanghai Civic Association" or with its leaders' names, including Shi Liangcai, Du Yuesheng, and Wang Xiaolai. The materials from 1938 to 1944, the period of the Japanese occupation, were missing.

Japan invaded Shanghai on January 28, 1932. While rumors of war never had ceased in the city since the Japanese occupation of Manchuria the prior September, the military invasion was sufficiently unexpected to create citywide panic. Most historical research has labeled this invasion an "incident," focusing on the role of Nineteenth Route Army, but except Jordan's (2001) monograph details the entire course of the Shanghai War. He argues that it had "long-term consequences in both Chinese internal politics and interactional relations" not least in the form of the integration of "most circles in Chinese society, from Shanghai industrialists and Boy Scouts to Green Gang gunmen" (Jordan 2001: 241-242).

In the colonial context, Shanghai consisted of multiple jurisdictions, and a variety of political stakeholders had power in the city on the eve of the military crisis in 1932: the Chinese national government, which administered one portion of the city; the International Settlement run by an autonomous Shanghai Municipal Council; and the French Concession controlled by the

French colonial government (Horesh 2010). The French Concession colluded in the Japanese aggression, believing it would curb the anti-imperialist movements that had gained steam in 1931 in Shanghai (Jordon 2001:16). The Municipal Council did not honor its commitment to neutrality and allowed the Japanese to use the International Settlement to make this preemptive strike against Chinese sovereignty (ibid.:41). Factional struggles and financial bankruptcy had nearly disabled the Chinese national government at that time. The Chiang-Wang coalition government was struggling to consolidate central leadership to deal with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. From the latter effort it deployed only the Canton faction supported Nineteenth Route Army to defend Shanghai. Further hampering the municipal government were party infighting and enduring conflicts between party apparatus and local administration (Henriot 1993: 38-39). After Chiang's protege Zhang Qun had resigned from the mayoralty, and a consensus candidate, Wu Tiecheng, had been appointed to replace him, but he had taken office just days before the military invasion. Wu had taken an appeasement approach to the Japanese military threat, which infuriated patriotic students and workers (Jordon 2001:21). His administration would struggle to gain support from the public generally both during the military conflict and in the subsequent relief work and reconstruction. In short, the Chinese authority at both the national and local level was weak and divided. The municipal government was dysfunctional and inadequate in responding to the crisis. The city was in a near-anarchic state when the Japanese troops bombarded Northern Shanghai.

Fighting between the Japanese and the Chinese forces lasted about two months. Although the French Concession and the International Settlement remained largely intact, the battle devastated the city's social order with heavy civilian casualties, which were concentrated in the Chinese-controlled area (Jordon 2001:68). Refugees of war from neighboring areas flooded into

the city, severely challenging the local administration. The authorities of the International Settlement closed all entry into their zone to avoid being overwhelmed with refugees, trapping a majority of residents in northern Shanghai in the combat zones (Henriot 1993: 89).

In the midst of this devastation, influential voluntary organizations such as the chambers of commerce, trade associations, native-place associations, secular and religious charities, and various humanitarian organizations spontaneously mobilized to serve their targeted communities. At this time, there were more than four hundred registered social organizations in Shanghai that among them claimed to serve a total of more than a million people in a city of 2.7 million.² The published statistics did not include hundreds of active voluntary associations involved in rescue that had not registered under the official categories of social organizations. However, prolific voluntary groups and public eagerness in relief work did not easily translate into effective emergency responses. Such a large number of active organizations with diverse goals and compositions required enormous coordinated efforts citywide. Without centralized coordination, uninformed volunteers sent by individual organizations to serve in the midst of chaos had caused serious issues at the beginning of the emergency (Henriot 2012:125).

SCA, as I will show, stepped onto the political stage during the short period of anarchy and acted as one of leading civic organizations that kept the shattered city in order. According to Martin (2006), SCA played a critical role during the crisis by providing material support, ensuring local order, maintaining essential economic activities in the city, and countering financial panic in the crisis (Guo Xiaoxian 1933, 481-82 cited in Martin 2006: 151-52). The organization assimilated leaders from all fields of society with a stated goal to “maintain social stability and local order.”³ □As the center of management and distribution of resources, SCA successfully coordinated diverse voluntary groups involved in rescue, launched various public

relief projects and helped the government to raise an enormous fund for military supplies at the front line. It had also become an exemplar of local self-governance that other places were eager to learn from after the ceasefire.

Despite its historical significance, however, SCA has not attracted significant scholarly attention. In both English- and Chinese-language literature, the SCA is mentioned in narratives of the Shanghai War of 1932 as one of the many patriotic organizations that mobilized the public to provide material and financial support to the Chinese defense army (Bai 2002, 2007; Henriot 1993, 2012; Jordan 2001). Those that explore SCA's roles in public affairs generally focus on individual leaders such as Du Yuesheng and Shi Liangcai, rather than on organizational-level analysis.⁴ Addressing this gap, the following sections will explore the following questions, based on documentation from 1932 to 1937: How did the SCA form and take leadership to create an order of coordination? What made it effective in mobilizing and coordinating relief work? How did it transform from a temporary work group to a permanent civic organization?

Overview of SCA's War Relief Efforts and Social Welfare Provision

From the time of its establishment, SCA played a central role in local war relief activities. These included financial and material supply for direct rescue work, logistics support for frontline troops and voluntary organizations, collective action coordination, conflict mediation, and other urgent tasks. Through these activities, SCA became known as a formal and independent organizational entity that represented public interest beyond its elite members, coordinated citywide relief efforts, took loans from businesses and government, and even subcontracted service delivery to other social organizations. The association exhibited strong organizational capacity as the central hub of civic participation in war relief in 1932.

At the onset of the invasion, SCA members used their personal and professional connections to start fundraising campaigns for the defense army and the rescue work. Through local and national newspapers, the organization mobilized the public to donate to the “National Salvation Fund” (*jiuguo juan*) which all social organizations in need were to share.⁵ Within a year, SCA’s fundraising initiatives collected in total 931,618.56 yuan.⁶ Welfare associations such as native-place organizations, charity halls, and religious groups regularly reported their needs to SCA, seeking connections to available resources.⁷ As of May 31, 1932, SCA was financially supporting and managing several field hospitals and refugee camps providing rescue services. The next year, it raised another 100,000 yuan locally to build orphanages for children of soldiers who died during the war. But public fundraising was too slow and too limited to meet the military emergency. More immediate funding came directly from members’ own large donations and membership fees.⁸ These, too, were highly inadequate to the huge demand in the whole city.

Facing a shortfall of funds due to panic runs, SCA persuaded the Bankers Association, whose leader was a senior member of SCA, to borrow money from the Ministry of Finance on behalf of SCA in the name of “Shanghai citizens.”⁹ The ministry owed a substantial debt to Shanghai bankers which had loaned it money for military expansion.¹⁰ When the ministry replied in an ambiguous way to the Bankers Association’s application, SCA pushed the Bankers Association to take out a loan of 100,000 yuan directly from the three largest national banks, saying the latter could assure the banks that the Ministry of Finance would pay them back soon because of the ministry’s debt.¹¹ The ministry refused at first,¹² but a month later capitulated. The finance minister T.V. Song explained that the SCA had convinced him that the defense army needed the money. The ministry apologized for not loaning the money initially and promised the banks that it would repay the loans, but as the SCA had promised.¹³ What interpersonal

interactions or backroom dealing may have affected these negotiations is unknown. In any case, the incident indicated that SCA was a critical intermediary among local elites and the government.

In addition to managing financial and material supplies, SCA facilitated the collaboration of voluntary organizations of all sorts to participate in war relief activities. Many active social organizations on the ground were willing to allow SCA to control relief programs they had started for better citywide coordination. For instance, four homeless shelters originally managed by the Shanghai Citizens Association were transferred to SCA.¹⁴ Leaders of various national salvation organizations often attended SCA plenary meetings and discussed social crises that required immediate attention such as the ongoing violence, refugees and unemployment, and foreign countries' attitudes towards Japan's aggression.¹⁵ The Chinese Red Cross invited SCA to send their representatives to join the organizing committee and help to manage the wounded soldier hospitals citywide.¹⁶ Allying with the Chamber of Commerce and the Bankers' Association, SCA organized a shopkeepers' strike and mobilized a boycott of Japanese products to undermine the invaders.¹⁷

Conflicts inevitably emerged in collaborations among civic groups and other actors with vastly different interests. On these occasions, SCA served as a critical mediator. For instance, mobilized by the SCA, several local businesses voluntarily lent their trucks to support military logistics. After the battle, however, the military refused to return the vehicles or to compensate the businesses for damage to the vehicles.¹⁸ In this case SCA established special teams to negotiate a compensation agreement. The organization had also contracted with professional associations including the Accountant Association and the Lawyers Association to investigate and to keep records of the economic loss of various entities sustained during the fighting.¹⁹ These

efforts became crucial for SCA's work in leading other social organizations in reconstruction work in the coming years.

Organizational Composition and Targeted Recruitment

When SCA reorganized to a permanent establishment after the ceasefire, it engaged in all kinds of activities for the benefit of Shanghai residents. These included refugee relief, welfare support, food distribution, education (adult education and study-abroad programs), statistical surveys, unemployment training, economic stability, labor dispute resolution, and international aids. In this section, I analyze the organizational foundations of SCA that enabled these activities. I focus particularly on the formal organizational aspects including composition and recruitment, structural transformation, formal organizational tools, and decision-making procedures.

The association consisted of members (*huiyuan*), staff (*zhiyuan*) and volunteers.²⁰ Major decisions were made through members' plenary meetings and carried out by staff and volunteers. The organization's 1936 list distinguished special members (*zhuanmen huiyuan*) who had professional expertise and correspondence members (*tongxun huiyuan*) who were representatives of larger organizations from members without these distinctions.²¹ In the association's early days, members came from all areas, but generally shared identity as "societal elites" (*shehui xianda*): They shared a belief that as elites they possessed the greatest talents and the most virtue and the position to reach the broadest audience, and therefore were irrefutably responsible for the general welfare of their city's residents (Wakeman et al 2000: 19).

Unlike other elite associations at the time such as native-place associations, professional or industrial associations, SCA's membership was not based on place of residence or occupation.

In 1932 it had ninety-two members. The official list categorized them by their field(s) of influence: thirty people had leading positions in financial institutions; eighteen were entrepreneurs who managed multiple businesses and industries; six were famous educators; five were from major press and news agencies; four were gang leaders; four were former military strongmen; three, all related to each other, were compradors of foreign trading companies who belonged to the same family; and the rest were in newly emerged professional fields such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants. Almost all of them were born between the 1870s and 90s, and thus in their 40s or 50s in 1932 – the peak of their careers.

The first president of SCA, Shi Liangcai, was the owner of several prominent newspapers in Shanghai including the two most widely circulated, *Shenbao* and *Xinwenbao*. Shi was also well-connected in the leftist intelligentsia, and he had significant sway over public opinion such that the public largely endorsed the SCA's support for the Chinese resistance forces against the Japanese invasion, regardless of the nationalist government's decision. Chiang had him assassinated in 1934 because of his vocal criticism of Nanjing government policies (Martin 2006:173). Du Yuesheng, the prominent boss of the Shanghai Green Gang, succeeded the presidency of SCA, bringing with him as vice president Wang Xiaolai (Martin 2006:158). The impact on the overall structure and composition of the organization remained largely unchanged. Du and his Green Gang served as mediators between several power holders, and tied the lower stratum to societal leaders (Martin 1996). Wang had close connections with the International Settlement and the GMD leaders and was later a representative of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce.

One source regarding the origination of SCA indicates that Shi Liangcai called the first meeting, in January 1932, for the purpose of protesting the Sun Ke administration's

embezzlement of government bonds to support the military (Bai 2007). Shi invited seven notables, who later became the standing committee of SCA, representing the Shanghai elites to negotiate with the central government. Another source suggests that the association was a continuation of a group of sixty-six Shanghai delegates who boycotted the National Emergency Conference (*guonan huiyi*) in 1931, calling for local elites' participation in government policy makings (Martin 2006:153). In fact, SCA's membership lists collected in the Shanghai Municipal Archives dated back to 1927, when the Nationalist Revolutionary Army led by Chiang Kai-shek marched north, aiming to overturn the corrupt Beijing government and put an end to the devastating warfare among warlords. While the 1932 meeting just days before the Japanese invasion may have represented the seeds of SCA's later organizational structure, it seems that SCA was built on a long-established network of urban elites who were eager to exert influence on local affairs and government policies.

Within five months of its establishment, the membership of SCA increased to 140.²² This was not a dramatic expansion considering the heated patriotism among Shanghai residents to participate in war relief. The initial recruitment of members was based on a system of internal referral, which was a common practice among membership-based social organizations at the time. Figure 1 shows the network of SCA members based on referral information in plenary meetings minutes from Jan 13, 1932 to May 27, 1932. The direction of the arrows shows who sponsored whom.

[Figure 1 here]

SCA's rules for joining stated: “[R]esidents of our city with an occupation can voluntarily join the association with at least two references from existing members, and subject to unanimous approval of the plenary meeting.”²³ The plenary chair would announce the new

applicants and their referents in meetings. This public announcement ensured that referees were held responsible for the work of members they referred and the patronage within the organization was manifested. From January to June 1932, plenary meetings were held almost every day and the announcements of new members were recorded in the meeting minutes.

The figure shows that referents and sponsorship clustered around several founding members of the organization: Wang Xiaolai, Shi Liangcai, Huang Yanpei, Zhang Xiaolin, and Hu Junqiu, who served as recommenders at least four times. Membership decisions were made within a small core of founding elites, who invited experts of a specific field to join a specific workgroup based on the organization's immediate needs that emerged from day-to-day relief work. In February 1932, recruitment was temporarily halted when demands for relief experts were filled, suggesting that the organization prioritized expertise rather than spontaneous expansion.²⁴ Later institutionalized in the 1935 SCA Regulation, this targeted recruiting strategy was a key mechanism for maintaining the exclusiveness of the organization as a leading elite association.

Organizational Structure and Bureaucratic Expansion

SCA started to serve as the coordinator of citywide relief work and attended to a wide variety of public emergencies in place of the dysfunctional municipal government. The bureaucracy to coordinate this work was established rapidly. Seventeen days after the first plenary meeting on January 13, 1932, four teams were assembled to respond to the most urgent needs of the city²⁵: Led by the president of the Bank of China, Li Fusun, and the president of the Native Bankers' Association, Qin Runqing, the Finance Team had united influential banks in Shanghai to collaborate to stop the panicked bank withdrawals of the public. The Defense Supply Team

signed lending contracts in the name of SCA with private companies, mostly owned by members, to loan automobiles to the defense troops to fulfill their transportation needs. They also made thousands of Shanghai city maps to distribute to the defense army, much of which came from other parts of China. In addition to material support, SCA was also helping the military to identify skilled personnel including electricians, drivers, and technical coordinators. The International Relations Team, assembled by vice president of Shanghai Commercial Bank Zou Bingwen, had translated and disseminated materials to major western media urging that western governments provide aid. The Public Relief Team, assembled by the Chinese delegate of the Belgian Bank Hu Junqiu, served as the command center that facilitated the work of various philanthropic organizations in the city, allocating resources to homeless shelters and refugee camps and managing public hygiene of these establishments. Each team worked autonomously and reported their progress in the plenary meetings.

After the ceasefire was negotiated between the Japanese and the Chinese troops, SCA was undergoing structural adjustments and expansion in order to meet the rapidly increasing demands of post-battle reconstruction. It reduced direct relief work and focused more on the role of a command center that allocated tasks to different social groups through grant-making. Figure 2 shows the organizational structure of SCA in December 1932, eight months after the establishment of the four task teams.²⁶

[Figure 2 here]

At this point the six teams each had several subordinate workgroups. Each workgroup consisted of from five to twenty standing members and temporarily hired clerks, runners, surveyors, and other task-specific personnel. Some members took leading positions in multiple workgroups. The Team of Public Relief was the largest, with a total of 159 members, including

25 medical professionals, and unknown number of staff for general affairs (names were not recorded in the documents). The smaller workgroups, with two to three members, were in charge of daily operation and execution. The organization did not have a permanent office location for all its members and staff. Generally, the leaders of a team paid for rentals or lent their own spaces, even their residences, as offices or meeting spots for the workgroups.²⁷ The majority of the staff were temporarily transferred from members' enterprises or ventures during the active battle. Foreign residents in Shanghai including a war relief expert from Europe also volunteered for SCA as consultants, although their names were not recorded in the membership lists.²⁸

When the association first started, there was no strict hierarchy among the workgroups. Members who worked as the director in one group might be led by another member in a different group. Temporary committees were also established frequently to manage specific issues such as donation management and remaining army support, depending on expertise and availability of members. At the earlier stage of the organization, the president stated that the 84 members were expected to have the same workload.²⁹ This flat and flexible structure was possible probably because members were all respected leaders in their own fields, and thus saw themselves as equals when working together.

The structural change of the organization was driven by the shifting needs of coordination with a variety of actors that emerged in its early relief work. The rearranged departments could now directly respond to social organizations of a particular field on specialized initiatives. For instance, the Team of Economic Affairs had collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce, the Bankers Association, and the Native-Banks Association to restore market order³⁰; the Team of Public Relief collaborated with the National Calamity Relief Association on refugee settlements; the public health workgroup was managing eight field

hospitals established during the war; the research department collaborated with Association of International Research and Chinese Professional Education Association to publish *Guo Xun* magazine (National Salvation),³¹ and the new team of communications helped to mediate the conflicts between the stationed army and local businesses who had loaned their vehicles, as mentioned earlier.³² The organizational restructuring allowed SCA to expand its areas of influence and to collaborate with a diverse range of social organizations, not limited to relief work and public service provision.

SCA's new arrangement overall mirrored the structures of the Bureau of Social Affairs in Shanghai Municipal Government, functionally overlapping with the bureau in a wide range of public services of post-battle reconstruction.³³ The bureau was out of funds and it is not clear how much it was functioning.³⁴ The Team of Economic Affairs and Team of Public Relief were dealing with the high unemployment rate and labor conflicts, which were the responsibility of the bureau's Department of Labor Mediation before the war; SCA's research groups took over the tasks of bureau's the Investigation Department, and SCA's Team of Goodwill and the Relief Team had assumed the work of the Department of Philanthropic Affairs. Such parallel functionality is common among civic associations, whose organizational structure mirrors state bureaucracy in order to facilitate inter-organizational communication with corresponding offices (Skocpol 1997). As in other times and places, parallel structure facilitated the SCA's collaboration with the corresponding governmental departments in providing services, to the extent that it was providing any.³⁵

Organizational Routines and Decision-Making Processes

In the course of emergency responses, SCA experienced not only a bureaucratic expansion, but also a process of formalization. Highly routinized practices and formalization are key features of modern formal organizations (March and Simon 1958). Organizational capacities are embedded in those patterned activities or organizational routines (Baum and Singh 1994:99). In SCA, the formalizing process was reflected in its evolving meeting procedures.

When it transformed from a temporary crisis response unit to an enduring civic organization, SCA had established a formal procedure for discussion and major decision-making through three types of meetings: plenary meetings, workgroup meetings, and special symposiums. Major issues were discussed and voted on at regular plenary meetings. Since the outbreak of the war, the association held seventy-one plenary meetings in the first six months, each of which had been attended by more than half of its total members.³⁶ Plenary meetings were held every day at 6:00 pm from February 1 to April 17, 1932, until the schedule was changed to meeting twice a week. There were detailed meeting minutes for every plenary meeting starting from January 1932 to December 1936. Throughout this period, the plenary meetings followed a standardized schedule. It started with announcing changes regarding personnel, including welcoming new members, membership withdrawals, and changes in members' appointments. Then work groups presented their current activities, followed by proposals for voting approval, including monthly budget, office relocation, and other issues regarding the whole association.³⁷ Afterwards, the floor was open to discussions of new proposals and assignment of people in charge of specific tasks. The meeting often ended with an invited speaker in business, politics, or education who gave speeches on a current matter. Government officials were sometimes invited to attend, but they did not participate in voting or decision-making. When issues arose that required immediate action, any member could call an emergency plenary meeting with approval

from the president. In addition, SCA often held joint-plenary meetings with other important social organizations such as the Bankers Association and the Chambers of Commerce. These meeting procedures were largely consistent throughout its five-year history.

Workgroup meetings and special symposiums were more informal. Members assigned to a specific task held small gatherings in their own residences and offices to discuss operations on the ground. They later assembled formal work reports to be presented in the plenary meetings. Special symposiums often happened when pressing social or political issues emerged, which were more relaxed and conversational in format. Participants chatted about the association's agendas and potential endeavors. For instance, several leading members decided over a special symposium that the association should put more effort into serving the immediate needs of "lower social strata" (*xiaceng minzhong*) in a cost-efficient manner. They later proposed a formal vote in a plenary meeting on the provision of free legal and medical consultation, relying on members of the organization to volunteer their time.³⁸ In addition to meetings for the association's constituents, SCA occasionally hosted private banquets for "important business people, missionaries, journalists, prominent persons from the United States, and leaders of all fields," especially in 1932 when members believed these people to be their channel of communication with western governments, who would pressure the Japanese military to halt local aggression.³⁹

While SCA's workgroups and members did not have a strict hierarchy, there was a status order. Starting at the twenty-third plenary meeting on February 21, 1932, SCA implemented a fixed seating arrangement for its 84 members, shown in Figure 3.⁴⁰ Four special seats at the front were reserved for "distinguished guests," usually government officials or local leaders from other provinces who were invited to give speeches. The president and two vice-presidents were

at the center of a large roundtable. Members took their seats according to the order of their names on the membership list, which was not arranged by members' seniority as native-place associations would do.

[Figure 3 here]

The above formal procedures and systems for decision-making were recorded meticulously in standardized meeting minutes, weekly work reports, and annual organizational reports, which were open to the public from December 1932 until the association dissolved due to the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Two professional accounting offices, whose leaders were SCA members, were hired by the association to audit and make financial statements twice a year. Standardized routines allowed organizations to maintain a certain level of consistency in a rapidly changing environment and therefore to better persist through difficult times. At the same time, formalization was a signal of organizational stability. Through regular procedures and patterned activities, SCA showcased its capacity as an alternative authority to the public, when government bureaus could not provide adequate responses. Several other social service organizations in Shanghai and elsewhere followed SCA's lead to formalize their operation.

The SCA's pursuit of formalization was probably the result of its deep connection to the development of Shanghai Municipal Government. Several SCA members, including Wang Xiaolai and Huang Hanzhi, had worked closely with the Municipal Bureau of Social Affairs since 1927 and were involved in drafting the initial government policies for centralized control of social and philanthropic organizations (Kohama 2003:104). More importantly, the formal organizational elements, including meetings, records keeping, speech making and voting, were incorporated into political movements and subsequent state-building (Strand 2011). We now turn

to the details of SCA's shifting relationships with the state from the perspective of inter-organizational relations.

SCA's Changing Organizational Relationship with Government

SCA's relationship with the nationalist government had two phases, before the assassination of founding President Shi Liangcai in 1934, and after it. While the structure, operation, and activities of the organization remained largely the same, the leadership change enormously influenced the organization's disposition towards the municipal government. The state-association relationship is too complex to fully describe here, but the first phase, under Shi Liangcai, was parallel governance. In this period SCA and the municipal government had a tacit division of labor in local administration, although SCA sometimes publicly criticized the central government's stance towards Japan. In the second phase under Du Yuesheng, the association became completely an addendum to the municipal government, supplementing and expanding its administrative reach in local society.

One of the Nationalist Party's primary goals after it came to power in 1927 was to rapidly build and project a centralized and powerful bureaucracy (Strauss 1997). In line with this agenda, the establishment of the Shanghai Municipal Government was accompanied by a process of regulating and consolidating local social organizations, including social service organizations, philanthropic organizations and other non-political civic groups, under party control. In addition to "purging" communist elements in labor unions and student organizations, administrative efforts were directed mostly towards the reorganization of local business and industrial associations, which the central government believed to be the most powerful (Fewsmith 1985). Lacking resources and personnel, the government did not entirely meet its goal in controlling

social service organizations, philanthropic organizations and other non-political civic groups. As Kohama (2003) noted, these organizations owned significant real estate in the city and did not want to subject the management to the municipal government, which was financially unstable and on which they did not feel they could rely for social services (111-12).

The tacit division of labor between the municipal government and social organizations at the beginning of the 1930s in regards to public administration was the result. The former put its scant resources in public security and infrastructural development, while the latter continued to play a major role in social welfare provision (Kohama 2003:102). Leaders of these social organizations, many of whom joined SCA, had negotiated with the government for this mutually beneficial arrangement. They agreed to implement formalized management and regularly report to the authority in return for less daily surveillance and control (Kohama 2003:127). These reporting requirements included the tools later adopted by SCA such as bi-monthly activity reports and standardized financial statements. In fact, prominent social organizations such as SCA had developed in parallel with the municipal government in the 1920s and 30s, pursuing an ideal model of public administration exemplified by the United States that emphasized organizational efficiency, delegating responsibilities and adaptable workgroups (Bian 2005). When SCA initially assembled to meet the urgent needs of local war relief, leaders had a reservoir of administrative tools readily available from collaboration and negotiation with governments in earlier periods.

The outstanding performance in crisis management made SCA a role model for civic organizations. Shanghai was the financial and business center of republican China, and its crisis had nationwide and international repercussions. In addition to integrating resources of the city, SCA endeavored to build up a national support network beyond official administration. From

1932 to 1934 under the leadership of Shi Liangcai, who had been a firm advocate for anti-Japanese movements since the 1920s, the SCA worked vigorously to promote public pro-war sentiment and criticized the central government for its reluctance to act against Japanese aggression. In January, SCA had assimilated some anti-Japanese activist groups after Mayor Wu banned them under pressure from the Japanese military. The association sent delegates to other major Chinese cities such as Wuhan and Chongqing to get acquainted with local notables, initiating fundraising events in those places, and seeking to consolidate public opinion against Japan throughout the country.⁴¹ Its political stance had attracted leftist intellectuals who were hostile to Nanjing to join the association, facilitating the participation of “an ever-widening circle of civilian Chinese society in defending Shanghai and China as a whole” (Jordan 2001:132).

Most of the time, the association worked in parallel to the municipal government. Due to severe financial hardship affecting the government generally and the Social Affairs Bureau in particular, it was unable to meet the demand for citywide emergency responses (Henriot 1993: 59-74). Mayor Wu Tiecheng’s administration focused mainly on diplomatic negotiations with Japan and left the coordination of rescue work to SCA and other prominent social organizations. As Henriot shows in his detailed history of Shanghai’s municipal government, for the actual social services and relief work on the ground, the government could only provide support for SCA in two aspects: first, the legitimacy to act as the *de facto* local leader, and second, certain managerial personnel who were familiar with rescue work. Wu even briefly entrusted the association with the authority to command local police to maintain order and stability (Henriot 1993: 60). In fact, the SCA documents showed that the contributions of official delegates were minimal. Important government officials including the mayor himself, many of whom lived in the International Settlement closer to the battle zone, were present in plenary meetings in the

early days of the crisis.⁴² Most of the time, despite attending meetings or giving speeches about current government status, they did not manage relief activities on the ground or participate in the association's decision-making. This absence facilitated the SCA's mirroring of state bureaucracy.

Through managing and coordinating relief work, SCA leaders accumulated administrative expertise, which the government would seek for state building projects after the immediate military crisis had been resolved. For instance, Mayor Wu established a provisional municipal council to invite local elites participating in public decision-making in October 1932 (Henriot 1993: 63-64). The majority of the council members were SCA leaders. Henriot called them "a power behind the scene for municipal administration."⁴³

By the end of 1932, many local elites from other places who visited Shanghai had been special guests at the organization's plenary meeting where they would share their visions for "rescuing the nation." These individuals often compared SCA with official administrations and expressed their frustration with the inefficient and corrupt local governments.⁴⁴ However, when elite associations such as SCA were transplanted to other places such as in Suzhou, the local government soon coopted them, making them "official-civil associations" (*guan min zuzhi*).⁴⁵ In his speech on industrial development in Sichuan province, famous industrialist Lu Zuofu eagerly advocated that SCA should expand its organization into a nationwide civic organization. Lu's proposal reflected his disillusion with the Sichuan politics, where military cliques divided the province and the central government had weak control over local military strongmen. His idea of "saving the nation," representing many business leaders of his time, consisted of two parts: to advance science and technology and to build up self-governing organizations that could benefit both the local and the national welfare. Lu said,

“China has been subject to unceasing invasion and robbery by foreign countries because they have well-developed social organizations and advanced knowledge in chemical engineering and machine building. . . . Foreign countries are capable of handling myriad activities, all because they have a powerful society. In contrast, we can barely achieve anything exactly because our society is weak.”⁴⁶

Lu described a “rescue” plan that relied on strengthening society’s “central organization” (*zhongxin zuzhi*) through organizations created on the SCA model, which he imagined would carry out “economic and cultural development.” For Lu, the efficiency of social organizations served as an indicator of the power of society, and the first step towards better social organization is to acquire an accurate picture of social reality and to design a plan accordingly for deep social transformation. In Lu’s proposal, government would introduce the idea of social investigation to the public, but leave the actual work completely to civic groups. He believed that the government, individual, and civic organizations should support each other in initiating public welfare undertakings.

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of outsiders such as Lu, SCA was cautious about its stance in relation to local authority, despite possessing the organizational capacity and individual expertise to take the place of municipal governance. Other than its firm anti-Japanese attitude, SCA did not challenge the government’s leadership or suggest at any time that the organization intended to replace official authority in managing local affairs. In fact, the association articulated the boundaries of its activities in clear terms. For instance, when the central government asked the League of Nations to investigate Japan’s invasion and to curb its further aggression, SCA was hesitant about whether the organization should take over the reception duty, concerned that the association would overstep if it engaged in official diplomacy. In the 36th plenary meeting, the committee concurred that the association would “certainly not participate in any reception of the deputation of the League of Nations. We shall leave it to the groups that are appointed by the

government.” Two weeks later, however, when the delegation arrived in Shanghai, SCA elected nine representatives among its members to receive the delegation.⁴⁷ In May, SCA again sent member Chen Liting to accompany the League of Nations delegation in their investigation of the Northern occupied areas.⁴⁸ At such times, SCA always claimed that they represented the “Shanghai citizens” rather than any official stance.

During the post-war reconstruction, SCA took initiative in two tasks that it considered important “local affairs.” These two tasks remained essential activities of the organization throughout its course, undeterred by the drastic leadership transition. The first one was conducting “social investigation” as Lu mentioned above. In October 1932, the organization decided to gather contemporary social research on Shanghai society and published the results in a compilation called the *Statistics of Shanghai* in both Chinese and English language.⁴⁹ The Introduction section explains SCA’s intention in publishing the work:

For the general welfare of our citizens, the association devotes to improve all aspects of local affairs. To achieve our goal, we need to gain firsthand knowledge about the history and the current situation of our city. ... We decide to use “microscope” to scrutinize Shanghai and to exhibit the findings to the public, unlike all other predecessors who used “telescope” only to observe the exterior of our city.⁵⁰

The initial investigation lasted seven months and results were renewed every year from 1932 to 1936. The content was divided into sixteen sections comprising every aspect of municipal governance.⁵¹ Most of the materials were gathered from sources that were provided either by official organizations such as the Bureau of Land and the Shanghai Municipal Council, or by members who owned businesses in a specific field or had connections to it.⁵² The Agriculture section was obtained from field investigation of Shanghai’s neighboring villages conducted by the association itself.⁵³ Lacking reliable social research on rural society at the time, SCA believed that the neighboring villages were an indispensable part of Shanghai’s long-term

development and therefore deserved the most effort. The association recruited investigators from local villages to conduct surveys in eight hundred rural households.⁵⁴ The statistical investigation was originally part of the state-building projects of the central government in 1927, hoping to consolidate its power in the unified areas through more rationalized and standardized administration. Due to constant political infighting and financial distress, the government initiative was never carried through.

The second task was the compilation of a Shanghai elite biographical collection. While investigating for the *Statistics of Shanghai*, SCA had gathered detailed biographical information of individual elites from the organizations with which they had collaborated. SCA president Du Yuesheng reported in 1934 that the association had assembled information about more than two thousand experts and had cataloged them by their surnames for easy search.⁵⁵ In a letter to the manager of the Bank of Shanghai, the General Secretary of SCA Huang Yanpei explained the association's initiative of gathering information of the "societal notables" (*shehui mingren*). Huang stated that Shanghai, as a world-renowned metropolis, attracted talented persons of all fields and their information should be compiled as part of the city's statistics. He inquired if he could get a list of the bankers working for the Bank of Shanghai and promised to send a published volume on Shanghai elites.⁵⁶ Although the range of the directory and the selection procedure were unclear, professionals such as bankers, engineers, lawyers, and doctors were the primary groups of SCA's headhunting. Beyond networking and resource mobilization, the work of collecting and circulating elite information among different organizations constructed a new elite identity based on associational membership. This identity was defined by SCA and went beyond family, native-place, and occupation.

When Du Yuesheng replaced Shi Liangcai to be SCA's president in 1934, the association had already transformed from a temporary war relief apparatus to a permanent establishment. Du made it more explicit that the association would not be a competitor against the authority of the local government, but as an indispensable supplement to it. Two decades after its establishment, Du described the founding of the organization thus:

“Facing such an unexpected situation, we gathered initially to facilitate the government in areas where it has not yet attended to, such as maintaining local order, securing the market, and mobilizing resources for frontier soldiers. ... The organization was launched as an anti-Japanese support group. It was temporary and should have been dispersed right after the ceasefire was negotiated.”⁵⁷

He later justified SCA's legitimacy as a long-term establishment after the war threat had been temporarily lifted. He stated:

“SCA was established in response to the state emergency...but the truth is our time is tumultuous – we have to be prepared for war when it looks peaceful, and we have to live as if it is peaceful during wartime. Thus, our association should be a permanent organization that is ready to cope with any emergency and to mobilize the population.”⁵⁸

In sum, SCA as an elite civic organization evolved into a structure that resembled official administration and replaced many functions of the government during war. After the crisis, it continued to work in parallel to the government for public provision. Its formalized structures and procedures contributed to its organizational efficiency. At the same time, despite its criticism against the official stance in Sino-Japan conflicts, SCA deliberately drew its boundary of activities in relation to government authority.

Conclusion and Discussion

SCA started as an informal network of “societal elites” and the 1932 crisis brought them to the forefront. During the Japanese invasion it was constituted as a formal organization for crisis response. In the brief period of anarchy, the association proved its power and efficiency as an

alternative entity of governing. It rapidly established an effective bureaucracy with formal organizational tools to recruit experts and to coordinate city-wide rescue work, and later transformed from a temporary relief workgroup to a permanent civic organization for post-war reconstruction. Working independent of the government, SCA imitated the organizational structure of official bureaucracy, adopted formalized and standardized organizational procedures, replacing and supplementing public administrative efforts when governmental provision was insufficient.

During the devastating 1935 financial crisis in Shanghai and when the all-out war broke out between China and Japan in 1937, SCA had accumulated ample experience in and resources for crisis management and handled local emergencies proficiently.⁵⁹ During the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), the name of SCA was unfortunately exploited by the Japanese military to recruit local elites, in the hope of consolidating the power of the Japanese colonial government in Shanghai. When the association resumed its activities in May 1947 after the war ended, it had expanded to 564 members, with only a few overlaps with its membership list from before the war.⁶⁰

SCA was distinct from traditional elite organizations of public administration in several key aspects. First of all, its exclusive membership was not based on locality, occupation, or political ideology, but on an evolving and expanding elite network through public participation. Members were recruited and maintained based on personal connections, professional expertise, and an identity as “societal elites” who were willing to contribute to public affairs. In this sense, SCA was exemplary organization of what Rankin called “the managerial public sphere” (Rankin 1993:177).

Second, SCA's organizational structure reflected a process of rationalization and bureaucratization in the Weberian sense. Because of its deep roots in family and locality, the traditional gentry-elite organization was a mirror image of the lineage household, organizing local community and buffering abusive power of state centralization by acting as a paternalistic protector against the bureaucratized state. The influence and scale of the organization depended solely on the power and ability of its central leaders. In contrast, SCA's organizational structure was adaptable and responsive to immediate social needs. Compared to the multilayered, hierarchical chambers of commerce, for example, SCA consisted of horizontal, parallel workgroups. This co-op style, decentralized structure granted the organization flexibility for emergency responses. After the crisis, it transformed to a mirror image of the municipal government, becoming an effective vehicle for collective governance. Regular and frequent meetings, speech making, and decision-making within a small circle were routinized and incorporated into members' ability to respond to the fast-changing environment with available organizational tools.

In Martin (1996)'s description, SCA was "the key body that articulated the political interests of the Shanghai bourgeoisie elite as a whole" and a political vehicle for them to involve in the regime's decision-making process (155-161). However, SCA's documentation reveals that it was, foremost, an entity for service provision, rather than for political advocacy. In most of its work, the association supplemented or even replaced official administration in many areas of public management and gradually evolved into a parallel governing unit. Despite its organizational independence, the association cautiously negotiated its boundaries with the state. In this sense, the association had no potential to challenge the existing way of governing. Like the self-government movement of the late Qing, SCA created a strong sense of elite

participation, but not a sense of autonomy and defining rights against the state (Rankin 2000: 15-20). The association was never revolutionary, nor did it represent the common interests of Shanghai citizens as leaders claimed. SCA's priority was always the maintenance of local order and stabilization of the market among various other war relief tasks, aligning with state interests. For instance, their solution to the skyrocketing unemployment rate was to "dismiss and deport," sending ten thousand refugees and unemployed workers a day to the places they had fled, in collaboration with various native-place associations.⁶¹ Although SCA sometimes criticized local government as inefficient, it had no intention of challenging official authority or replacing it, regardless of its organizational capacity and expertise. The goal of maintaining social stability resonated with the general attitude of the Chinese urban elites facing incessant political turmoil: their choice to side with economic modernization, national unity, and constitutional democracy was not the outcome of an ideological commitment to the revolutionary party, either to the Chinese Communist Party or to the Nationalist Party, but a true belief in stability above all.

Notes:

¹ SCA changed its name from Shanghai Citizens Maintenance Association to Shanghai Civic Association in 1932. For clarity and consistency, I use SCA to refer to the organization throughout its history.

² From *Shanghai Yearbook by the Ministry of the Interior (1935)*. The official statistics include labor unions, native-place associations, gangs/societies, charities, religious groups, philanthropy organizations, and women's leagues.

³ SMA Y4-1-234, 1947 May, "Du Yuesheng's Speech at the Restoration Ceremony"

⁴ For instance, Martin (2006) treats SCA as a means for Du to strengthen his "organizational links" with Shanghai elites and a tool for Nanjing government to gain urban elites' support for government policies (154-161).

⁵ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes Feb 7, 1932"

⁶ SMA Y3-1-255 "Work Report of Shanghai Civic Association" (1932 December)

⁷ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes Apr 9, 1932"; "Apr 11, 1932"; "Apr 13, 1932"

⁸ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes Feb 14, 1932"; "Feb 19, 1932". The vice-president Du Yuesheng donated five thousand yuan. The membership fee was 100 yuan per person.

⁹ SMA S173-1-271 "Correspondences between the Bankers Association and the Ministry of Finance"

¹⁰ SMA S173-1-271 "Correspondence between the Bankers Association and Shanghai Civic Association" (Feb 22, 1932)

¹¹ SMA S173-1-271 "Correspondence between the Bankers Association and Shanghai Civic Association" (Feb 22, 1932)

¹² SMA S173-1-271 "Correspondence between the Bankers Association and Shanghai Civic Association" (Feb 19, 1932)

¹³ SMA S173-1-271 "Correspondence between the Bankers Association and Shanghai Civic Association" (March 19, 1932)

¹⁴ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes April 7, 1932"

¹⁵ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes Feb 4, 1932"; "meeting minutes Feb 6, 1932"

¹⁶ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes March 1, 1932"

¹⁷ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes Feb 9, 1932"

¹⁸ SMA Y3-1-255 "1932 January Work Teams Reports"

¹⁹ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes Feb 9, 1932"

²⁰ SMA Y4-1-203, "Membership List of Shanghai Citizens Maintenance Association (1927)"

²¹ SMA Y2-1-91 "Shanghai Civic Association Annual Report (1936)"

²² SMA Y4-1-234 "meeting minutes"

²³ SMA Q264-1-1271 "Regulations of the Shanghai Civic Association (revision finalized at the plenary meeting on June 25, 1935)"

²⁴ SMA Y3-1-255 "Shanghai Civic Association Work Report"

²⁵ SMA Y3-1-225-19 "meeting minutes"; SMA Y3-1-225 "Work Reports"

²⁶ The organizational chart was made based on "work reports of each team"; "work reports of the relief team" (May 31, 1932); SMA Y3-1-255 "Work reports of Shanghai Civic Association (December 1932)

²⁷ SMA Y3-1-255 "Team of Goodwill Work Reports" (May 21, 1932)

²⁸ SMA Y3-1-255 "Team of Relief Work Report" (1932 December). It shows that there were some two hundred volunteer staff working for SCA during the early days.

²⁹ SMA Y3-1-225 "meeting minutes" (Feb 22, 1932)

³⁰ SMA Y3-1-255-3 "Work Report" (1932 December)

³¹ SMA Y4-1-234 President Speech "Our Association Before the War"

³² SMA Y3-1-255 "relief team work report" (May 31, 1932). After the ceasefire, the stationed troops refused to return the vehicles or pay for damages to the businesses. Some of these conflicts even turned brutal.

³³ The Bureau of Social Affairs included the following departments: General Affairs; Labor Mediation; Agriculture, Engineering, Industrial and Commercial Investigation; Philanthropic Affairs. See *Shenbao* (Feb 24, 1932), "Director of the Bureau of Social Affairs Pan Gongzan introduces the public administration of the municipal government."

³⁴ Less than five percent of the municipal government budget went to the Bureau of Social Affairs beginning in 1931. In 1933, the municipal government's cumulative deficit was 3.42 million yuan. See *Shenbao* (Sep 1, 1934) "Budget of the Municipal Government in 1934."

³⁵ US civic associations show a similar phenomenon in that they usually adopted a three-tiered structure of federalism to facilitate interactions with the state and national government (Skocpol 1997)

³⁶ SMA Y3-1-255 "Shanghai Civic Association Work Report"

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- ³⁷ SMA Y3-1-255 “meeting minutes” (December 16, 1935)
- ³⁸ SMA Y3-1-255 “Shanghai Civic Association Annual Report” (January 7, 1936: 134)
- ³⁹ SMA Y3-1-255 “Workgroup Reports” (December 1932)
- ⁴⁰ Image made based on SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (February 21, 1932)
- ⁴¹ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (March 26, 1932)
- ⁴² Other such officials included Kong Xiangxi and Secretary General Yu Hongjun. SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (February 1932).
- ⁴³ See Henriot (1993), pp.101-102. The Provisional Municipal Council consisted of bankers Chen Guangfu, Li Ming, Qian Yongming, Qin Runqin, Zhang Gongquan, Du Yuesheng; entrepreneurs and merchants: Chen Bingqian, Guo Shun, Wang Zhen, Yu Qiaqing, Wang Xiaolai; chartered accountant Xu Zongzuo; intellectuals Liu Zhanen, Wu Jingxiong, Wu Yugan, Shi Liangcai; union leader Lu Jingshi; and GMD representative Tao Baichuan, Wang Yansong.
- ⁴⁴ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (April 24, 1932). For instance, when talking about the serious bandit problem in many Chinese provinces, Governor of Jiangxi described government corruption as a major cause for the lack of proper treatment of disbanded soldiers who became bandits. He stated that local administrators should all learn from SCA’s mode of organizing.
- ⁴⁵ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (March 8, 1933)
- ⁴⁶ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (May 13, 1932)
- ⁴⁷ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (March 20, 1932). The team of reception included four people representing the financial industry, four representing entrepreneurs, and a military strongman from the northern Japanese-occupied areas.
- ⁴⁸ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (May 14, 1932).
- ⁴⁹ SMA Y2-1-89 *Statistics of Shanghai* (1933), compiled by Shanghai Civic Association. The volume was later revised and supplemented several times. Updated editions appeared in 1934 and in 1936.
- ⁵⁰ SMA Y2-1-89 “Introduction to the 1933 Statistics of Shanghai”.
- ⁵¹ The sections include Land, Population, Administration, Judicial Administration, Finance, Money Market, Commerce, Industry, Labor, Agriculture, Communication, Public Utilities, Cultural Activities, Education, Social Affairs and Public Health.
- ⁵² SMA Y2-1-89 “Table of Organizations and Persons Who Have Helped to Make Our Work Possible”.
- ⁵³ SMA Y2-1-89 “Preface to the English version”.
- ⁵⁴ SMA Y2-1-89 “Introduction”.
- ⁵⁵ SMA Y4-1-234 “Work Report”.
- ⁵⁶ SMA Q61-1-36 “Letter from Huang Yanpei to Zhu Jianzhou” (January 20, 1933).
- ⁵⁷ SMA Y4-1-234 “Report on the Work of Shanghai Civic Association” (1947 May).
- ⁵⁸ SMA Y4-1-234 “Introducing Shanghai Civic Association to Old and New members by Du Yuesheng” (Feb 14, 1947).
- ⁵⁹ SMA Q173-1-92 “meeting minutes from the Joint Conference of Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, Shanghai Civic Association, Bankers and Native Bankers Association” (February 23, 1935).
- ⁶⁰ SMA Y4-1-234 “membership list” (May 1947).
- ⁶¹ SMA Y3-1-225 “meeting minutes” (March 3, 1932).

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Figure 2: SCA Organizational Chart (1932)

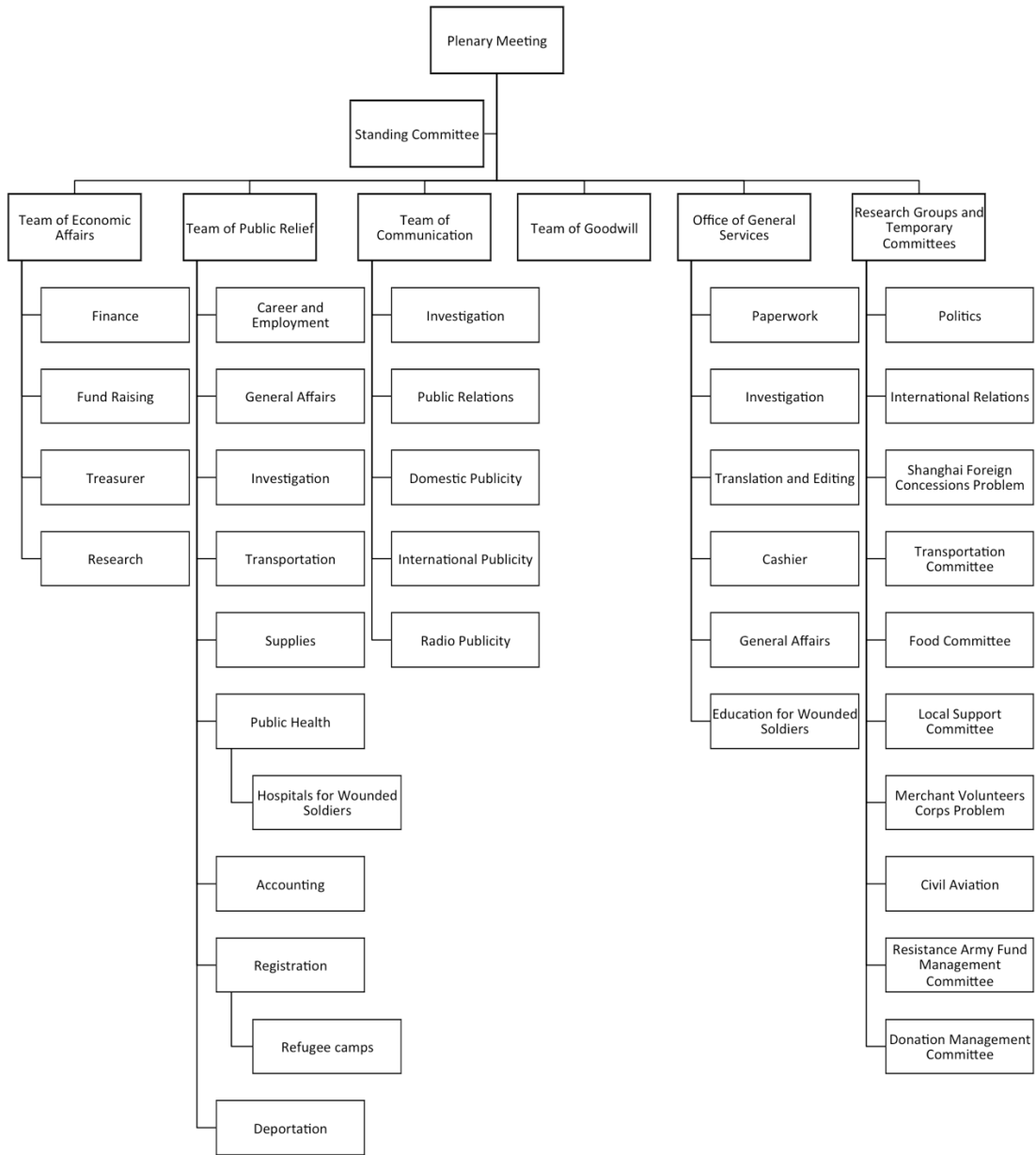


Figure 3: SCA plenary meeting seating arrangement

