State-Led Urbanization and Its Potential Effects on China’s Workers

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Changing Power Relations

- Demographic Change ➔ Market Power
- Social Change ➔ Identity Power
- Political Change ➔ Legal Power (often rhetorical...)
Employment Protection Indicators, OECD 2013

The graph illustrates the employment protection indicators for various countries, comparing collective dismissals (brown) and individual dismissals (blue). The countries are listed along the x-axis, with each bar representing a country's dismissal rates. The y-axis measures the dismissal rates on a scale from 0 to 35. The data shows a trend where countries with higher employment protection indicators have fewer collective dismissals and more individual dismissals compared to those with lower indicators.
After 2008 formal disputes level off
2008年后通过仲裁的案例比例稳定
The effect of dispute experience on evaluation of effectiveness

Which method is most effective?

- Nondisputants:
  - None is effective: 2.79%
  - Litigation: 49.27%
  - Arbitration: 19.13%
  - Administrative: 9.01%
  - Mediation: 19.81%

- Disputants:
  - None is effective: 15.87%
  - Litigation: 28.57%
  - Arbitration: 31.75%
  - Administrative: 9.52%
  - Mediation: 14.29%
After 2008, rapid increase in informal settlement as the state redirected people away from formal institutions and to Party-led discretionary resolution.
同 时 加 剧 的 罢 工 与 群 体 事 件

Strikes and demonstrations also increase
The Third Plenum: Decisive Decisions?

- Raise the retirement age
- End One-Child Policy
- End hukou restrictions for small cities; gradually relax hukou restrictions for medium cities; strictly control population of largest cities
- Expand social welfare to new urban residents
- Establish new mechanisms for “social governance”
- Improve judicial system’s autonomy from local governments
Third Plenum Reforms in the Context of Declining Growth, Increased Social Instability

- Party-Led Social Management
- New fiscal burdens on local governments
- Rising expectations of new urban residents
- Loss of land as social security as state-led urbanization intensifies
- Increased competition between locals and new residents for public goods
Politics: Kick Left; Economics: Kick Right