

Worker Representation in China

Session Abstract:

This session will examine recent developments in worker representation in China. It will touch upon union elections, NGOs, as well as union responses to strike activity.

Session Description:

Despite the fact that China's experience with industrialization and labor conflict broadly mirrors the historical precedent set by earlier developers, the country's system of worker representation remains anomalous in that all unions must be integrated into the Party-controlled ACFTU. How have the official unions sought to represent workers in an increasingly conflictual environment? In particular, what have been the effects of recent experiments with union elections and other reforms within the ACFTU? What kinds of results do we see from alternative forms of representation such as NGOs, hometown associations, and CSR efforts? And what are the implications of workers frequent rejection of any forms of representation in negotiating strike settlements? In this panel, we will assess how dynamics of worker representation in China have changed in recent years, with an eye towards the implications for labor relations, politics, and China's development more broadly.