

# Understanding the Pension Protection and Pension-Driven Strikes in China:

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## ABSTRACT

(For theme 1: the workplace)

Subsequent to the promulgation of the Social Insurance Law in 2011, migrant workers in China have staged an increasing number of strikes around pension protection. This paper seeks to understand the effects of the Social Insurance Law and other pension-related social policies on labor activism, and vice versa. It will address the following questions. What institutional, policy, legal, and demographic factors have shaped this type of strikes? In what ways has labor activism influenced government policies? What are the implications of pension-driven strikes for class politics in China?

This paper aims to synthesize the insights from the labor studies and social policy fields to examine the pension-driven strikes. Previous research in the field of China labor studies have tended to concentrate on issues pertinent to production, while paying little attention to social reproduction, i.e. how the society supports retired population (and reproduces labor forces). Moreover, although social policy researchers have examined the Chinese pension system quite thoroughly, their studies have largely focused on the analysis of legal and social policies, while neglecting social actors such as workers and labor NGOs. The insights from labor studies can bring social actors back to policy analysis, while social policy studies' concern for social welfare can widen the scope of enquiry in labor studies by bringing the politics of reproduction to the latter. This paper is drawn from interviews with 50 workers, 15 labor NGOs staff conducted from the period of April 2014 to December 2015.