

[Beijing wages in the 1960s and 70s](#)

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Note from the editors: As Josh says below, you can contact him privately if you have relevant info -- But other members might be interested in this question too, so feel free to respond to the entire list as well.

Hello PRC historians all

I've been working (it seems like forever) on the recycling sector in Beijing during the Mao era. One of the matters that is mentioned repeatedly is that recyclers are looked down upon, to the point that many are concerned they cannot find a marriage partner. Various documents and folks I've interviewed have said one way the city tried to compensate for this was through paying recyclers slightly better than for similar jobs and also through some bonus schemes. But other documents claim they were poorly compensated, paid even less than garbage workers. A 1960 report says average pay was 45 yuan (that averaged in managers too). An interviewee with a very sharp memory recalled the very highest manager got 62 yuan in the mid 60s, while most workers ranged from 32.5 to 47.5, with bonuses ranging from 3 to 7 yuan.

I'm wondering if anyone out there knows much about wages/salaries for other Beijing workers--various factories or professions like teachers, any sort of comparison would be helpful. This of course raises a potentially larger (more interesting?) issue about how much pay differences mattered in comparison to other benefits, or to more amorphous conditions that could be seen as providing fulfillment: a sense of status, potential for kinds of advancement, recognition, etc.

Thanks to all. Please feel free to respond to me privately to at jlgoldst@usc.edu

Best

Josh