

The London School of Economics and Political Science

*Social Policy, State Legitimacy and Strategic Actors:
Governmentality and Counter-conduct in
Authoritarian Regime*

YAN WANG

A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology of the London
School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London,
March 2020

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of <85,141> words excluding references and appendices.

Statement of conjoint work

I confirm that Chapter 4 was jointly co-authored with Professor Xufeng ZHU (Tsinghua University) and I contributed 60% of this work.

Statement of use of third party for editorial help

I can confirm that my thesis was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by *Eve Richards* (EveRichards51@msn.com).

Abstract

Far from acting defensively to preserve the social relations and red ideologies that originally gave it power, the Chinese Communist Party is leading a social and economic transformation that could be expected to lead to direct challenges to its authority. The surprising degree of change in the Chinese socio-economic transformation and the fact that this transformation has been going on for forty years now and has not yet resulted in fundamental challenges subverting its rule have inspired my study. The overarching theoretical enquiry in my dissertation resonates with one of the most important theoretical questions in political sociology: how does the state maintain compliance from the governed in periods of rapid social and economic transformation, and how does the logic of its governmentality change along with its priorities? My work is built on the Weberian and Gramscian tradition of understanding state rule and highlights the individual's rationale of "believing" and "consent", but also takes account of the Foucaudian "governmentality" the state uses to maintain its rule and investigates the underlined rationality. Empirically, I take advantage of the pension changes among China's social welfare reforms, decipher a two-way story of statecraft in authoritarian regimes and explore whether there may be room for cognitional counter-conduct from the public. My work demonstrates that the Chinese state works through benefit allocation, propaganda, experimentation with policy and many other approaches, in order to shape public expectations and justify its rule. However, the state's well-designed statecraft needs to enable individuals to make sense of their experience and must resonate with their "common sense". Individuals can update their knowledge from personal interest, information from government policies, signals from current society (their peers) to decide whether to stay loyal or choose non-compliance. In a situation when active counter-conduct such as resistance is not possible, individuals may choose cognitional rebellion and falsify their public compliance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION -----	11
Generating compliance: governmentality -----	13
<i>Theoretical setup and context</i> -----	14
<i>Relational power: the modern state’s legitimation issue and its governmentality</i> -----	14
<i>Challenges brought by transitional scenarios and the state’s toolkit</i> -----	16
<i>Dealing with the people: governmentality that generates compliance</i> -----	19
<i>Coercion or consent: why coercion alone cannot do the work</i> -----	20
<i>Generating compliance: a two-actors model and the state’s options</i> -----	22
<i>Constraints, choices, and state-individual interaction in transitional situations</i> -----	26
Structure of the dissertation -----	28
<i>Chapter 2: Review of the literature</i> -----	29
<i>Chapter 3: Revealing the governmentality by the case of pension reforms</i> -----	30
<i>Chapter 4: Evaluating the effectiveness of statecraft with a sub-reform</i> -----	32
<i>Chapter 5: Note the cognitive counter-conduct of the public</i> -----	34
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW -----	36
Section 1 Why legitimacy matters and how the existence of the public shapes statecraft? -----	36
<i>Understanding state power: “legitimacy” and “governmentality”</i> -----	36
<i>A Weberian conceptualization of legitimacy and consent</i> -----	36
<i>Sources of authority and state rationality</i> -----	38
<i>The Foucauldian state: Governmentality of the modern state</i> -----	39
<i>Legitimacy and governmentality in non-democratic and transitional countries</i> -----	41
<i>Importance of ideological legitimacy, censorship and technological statecraft</i> -----	41
<i>Performance-based legitimacy and welfare provision in non-democratic regimes</i> -----	42
<i>Transitional state and potential legitimation crisis</i> -----	45
Section 2: Transitional State Socialism and authoritarian resilience: why did the dramatic social change in China not incur a regime failure? -----	47
<i>Transitional state socialism in general and in China: similarities and differences</i> -----	47
<i>Current transitional theories: market transition and societal transition</i> -----	50
<i>Transitional scenario in the social welfare area: the communist legacy and privatized social rights</i> -----	53
<i>Authoritarian resilience: why did the dramatic change not cause a regime failure?</i> -----	56
Section 3 Individual subjectivity: “being shaped” and “counter-conduct” -----	58
<i>State power and the population as the state’s strength</i> -----	58
<i>The circular “state strength” and a capillary model of power</i> -----	58
<i>Being shaped: how individuals incorporate policy changes</i> -----	60

<i>Counter-conduct and cognitional rebellion</i>	61
<i>“Counter-conduct”: why and how it is possible</i>	61
<i>What’s in people’s toolkit? Participation, everyday life resistance and counter common sense</i>	62
CHAPTER 3 WHO DESERVES SOCIAL BENEFITS AND HOW?	
DIFFERENTIATION AND KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AS STATECRAFT	
IN PENSION REFORMS	68
<i>How do entitlements differ: differentiation in benefit entitlement</i>	70
<i>How does persuasion help: domesticating your ideas</i>	72
Who gets what and how: population-based governance	74
<i>Changes in policy reform: what does timeline tell us</i>	76
<i>Generosity and coverage: what the statistical evidence tells us</i>	82
<i>Pension plan for Government Employees (PGE) and Public Institution Employees (PPIE)</i>	83
<i>Pension plan for Enterprise Employees (PEE)</i>	86
<i>Pension plan for Urban Non-salaried Residents (PUR) and Rural Residents (PRR)</i>	88
Who deserves benefits and why: constructed truth and knowledge.....	91
<i>Data cleaning and an exploration on topics</i>	94
<i>Mind the time: Pension reform as instruments</i>	100
<i>The politics of redistribution: what is fair and just</i>	108
<i>Redistribution among different social groups</i>	108
<i>Redistribution between different generations</i>	115
<i>The state-individual relationship: what should the citizens expect from the state?</i>	118
<i>Unfolding the locus of responsibility: topic-based promotions</i>	119
<i>Promoting shared responsibility: the glory of being employed and the common interest</i>	125
Conclusion	129
CHAPTER 4 CONDITIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE: POLICY	
EXPERIMENTATION, SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND POLITICAL TRUST ---	132
From state socialism to shared responsibility for welfare provision: Risks in the social welfare transition.....	134
Combining social policy experimentation with official propaganda: Statecraft and the respective motivations.....	138
Substantive context: The Chinese pilot scheme for urban pension insurance.....	143
Testable hypotheses, data and identification strategy.....	147
<i>Hypotheses</i>	147
<i>Data and variables</i>	149

<i>Identification of policy effect</i> -----	153
Selection of pilots -----	156
<i>Individual balance</i> -----	156
<i>Time trend</i> -----	156
<i>Regional Balance</i> -----	159
Policy effects on locus of government responsibility -----	160
<i>Mixed effects of policy experimentation and policy propaganda</i> -----	161
Concurrent effects on political trust -----	163
<i>Short-term and long-term effects of combined statecraft</i> -----	163
<i>Short-term and long-term propaganda effects on the directly targeted group</i> -----	167
Robustness test-----	169
Conclusion -----	172

CHAPTER 5 TRUTH OR DARE: FALSIFICATION IN MANUFACTURED

COMPLIANCE----- 175

Research rationale, conceptualization and context -----	176
<i>What is a falsified attitude, socially and politically?</i> -----	176
<i>Falsification in political attitudes: why it is important in authoritarian regimes and how</i> -----	178
<i>Theoretical discussion about possible mechanisms</i> -----	179
<i>Involution of political attitudes in the Chinese population</i> -----	181
Research design and testable hypotheses -----	182
<i>Rationale of the research design</i> -----	182
<i>Testable hypotheses and structured research questions</i> -----	184
<i>Heterogeneity of falsified consent</i>-----	184
<i>Identifying potential mechanisms</i>-----	187
<i>Heterogeneity among social groups</i>-----	187
Data generation process -----	189
<i>Supplementary interviews and methodological modifications</i> -----	189
Different faces of compliance: the words in shadow -----	192
<i>Local or central government: differentiated compliance</i> -----	192
<i>The top leader's golden shield and defections regarding nationalist requests</i> -----	196
<i>Face on/off: a smooth transformation</i> -----	200
The dual track of political knowledge -----	201
<i>Being led by the nose? Sure, I know</i> -----	201
<i>Socialist? or Capitalist? And why is a market necessary?</i> -----	203

<i>Mitigating cognitive dissonance or living with it?</i> -----	205
Possible sources and mechanisms-----	206
<i>Persistence of ideologies and fear</i> -----	207
<i>Persistence of social knowledge and historical events</i> -----	207
<i>Censored voices and the fear of punishment</i> -----	209
<i>Ignorance, apathy and collective conservatism</i> -----	211
<i>Low efficacy and political apathy</i> -----	212
<i>I'm all right, Jack</i> -----	213
<i>Pluralistic ignorance: the population is just too diverse to tell</i> -----	214
Heterogeneity of social groups: education and one's generation-----	215
<i>Education as a double-edged sword</i> -----	216
<i>Be aware of the punishments and rewards</i> -----	216
<i>Illusion of individual autonomy</i> -----	217
<i>Generational difference: Unthinkable or unthought?</i> -----	219
Heading (no)where: actions or agencies-----	220
<i>Action or inaction: exit, voice or loyalty</i> -----	220
<i>Falsification, pressure of ideological involution and possibility of "free will"</i> -----	223
Conclusion-----	225
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION -----	227
A recap: elaborating on the analytical model with empirical evidence-----	227
Contributions and Implications-----	230
<i>Revisiting "governmentality" and "legitimacy" in state theory</i> -----	230
<i>Methodological innovations</i> -----	231
<i>Brief thoughts on regime future: empirical implications</i> -----	233
REFERENCE -----	236
APPENDIX A DATA EXPLANATION AND MODEL VALIDATIONS -----	261
A1. Additional data for Chapter 1-----	261
A2. Statistical data in Chapter 3-----	263
A3. Textual data in Chapter 3-----	265
<i>Corpus descriptive statistics</i> -----	265
<i>Validation of Topics: optimal K</i> -----	265
<i>Validation of Topics: topic content</i> -----	271
<i>Hand coding: flowchart and second coder</i> -----	277
<i>Validation of classifiers</i> -----	279

<i>Additional results: Topic with covariates</i> -----	281
A4. Additional statistics for Chapter 4 -----	282
A5. Interview data for Chapter 5-----	282
A6. Survey Experiment Design of Chapter 5 -----	284
<i>Survey experiment design</i> -----	284
<i>Questionnaire</i> -----	287
APPENDIX B DATA REPLICATION -----	293
B1. Text analysis (Chapter 3)-----	293
B2. Causal inference (Chapter 4)-----	295

Figure 1. Economic Development and Polity Type.....	12
Figure 2. Education and Urbanization Development.....	13
Figure 3. Thought Map of Compliance Typology and Respective Statecraft.....	24
Table 1. Comparison between Different Pension Schemes in China (in 2015).....	76
Figure 4. Timeline of Segmented Pension Plan reforms.....	79
Table 2. Pension Benefit for Government Employees and Public Institution Employees (Combined data).....	85
Table 3. Pension Benefit for Enterprise Employees and Others.....	87
Figure 5. Pension Benefit for Enterprise Employees.....	88
Table 4. Pension Benefit for Rural Residents.....	89
Table 5. Raw populations by Types of Pension Scheme Recipient (10000 persons).....	90
Figure 6. Performance of different methods of initialization.....	95
Table 6. Selected topics with keywords.....	97
Figure 7. Correlations of Topics.....	99
Figure 8. Topic proportions by Year: economic reform and pension reform for enterprise employees.....	102
Figure 9. Topic proportions by Year: birth control.....	107
Figure 10. Topic proportions by Year: social justice and rural immigrants.....	115
Table 7. Descriptive statistics of document categories (Hand Coded).....	119
Figure 11. Topic by covariate: locus of responsibility.....	122
Table 8. Topic proportion by covariate responsibility.....	124
Table 9. Topic proportion by multiple covariates.....	125
Table 10. Descriptive data of two rounds social survey.....	150
Figure 12. Provincial variations of the dependent variable: LoR perception.....	151
Figure 13. Visualization of three waves pilot policy.....	152
Figure 14. Provincial variation of local official propaganda efforts.....	153
Figure 15. Time trend of provincial index.....	158
Table 11. Balance check: Event History Analysis (EHA) of the provincial index.....	160
Table 12. Policy effects on locus of government responsibility.....	161
Table 13. Effect of pilot policy and policy propaganda on locus of government responsibility.....	162
Table 14. Effect of pilot policy and policy propaganda on political trust.....	164
Table 15. Effect of policy duration and policy propaganda on political trust.....	165
Table 16. Short-term and long-term propaganda effects on directly targeted group in piloted provinces.....	168

Table 17. Robustness test with Order logit model	169
Table 18. Robustness test with multilevel model (Random intercept at Provincial level).....	170
Table 19. Robustness test with intergenerational difference.....	171
Table 20. Robustness test with other confounding variables.....	172
Figure 16. Qualitative data collection on falsified compliance.....	192
Figure A17. Urban Labour Type	262
Table A21. Codebook of pension schemes comparison and statistical data	264
Figure A18. Number of Documents in the Full Corpus	265
Figure A19. Optimal Topic Number (FindTopicsNumber in topicmodels package, segwords version 1)	266
Figure A20. Optimal Topic Number (FindTopicsNumber in topicmodels package, segwords version 2)	267
Figure A21. Optimal Topic Number using Perplexity (5-fold cross-validation)	268
Figure A22. Optimal Topic Number (searchK in STM package, segwords version 1)	269
Figure A23. Optimal Topic Number (searchK in STM package, segwords version 2)	270
Table A22. Topics with keywords (STM package, K=30).....	271
Table A23. Topics with keywords (topicmodel package, K=30, terms=15)	274
Table A24. Coding Validation.....	277
Figure A24. Flowchart of Hand Coding.....	278
Table A25. Performance of Supervised Models.....	280
Table A26. Topic proportion by multiple covariates (“denounce”)	281
Table A27. Descriptive statistics of the main demographic variables	282
Table A28. Case list	283
Figure A25. Survey experiment design on falsified compliance	285
Table B29. Codebook for Chapter 3.....	294
Figure B26. Simplest Difference-in-Differences Setup.....	296
Table B30. Codebook for Chapter 4.....	297

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chinese society since the beginning of the nineteenth century has been subject to a number of momentous transformations. It has experienced imperial aggrandizement, state collapse, integration into global markets, imperial occupation, political revolutions, and transformations in its class structure. Important as each of these has been in Chinese history and in determining the shape of contemporary Chinese society, the current effort of the authorities to engineer an unprecedented social and economic transformation since its economic reform and opening-up from 1978 without loss of control is among the most attractive phenomena for social scientists. The specific social and economic challenges—changes in economic endowment, ideological foundation, and social (re)distribution—during the transitional process provide a good opportunity for social scientists to examine theories of social change and regime domination. For instance, in Huntington’s discussion of modernization and political order, he argued that a mismatch between social modernization and institutional modernization tends to produce social frustration and political instability (Huntington, 2006). China’s “reform and opening-up” process strongly stimulated **economic growth and social modernization**, and gave rise to **an increasing demand for public participation**. This transformation in the market, recalling Polanyi’s description of “great transformation” (Polanyi & MacIver, 1944), incurred an accelerated commodification of human capital, natural resources and other non-market values, such as social practices, family functions, and so on.

However, the corresponding political institutions did not provide adequate channels for public participation. As shown in Figure 1, the rapid development of the Chinese economy¹ is in sharp contrast to the generally static nature of its political institutions². In addition to the gross increase in size of the economy, the economic structure has also changed; more diverse ownership of economic entities has emerged and contributes to the economic growth. For instance, until 2015, civilian-run enterprises contributed to more than 60% of GDP, providing around 80% of urban jobs, and attracting 70% (or more) of the rural migrant labour force (Bank, 2017). Moreover, as indicated in Figure 2 and Figure A17, the modernization of China’s economy and society took place together and very rapidly, which had taken Western countries centuries to achieve. Its socioeconomic modernization can be judged not only from its rapid

¹ Economic data source: CEIC data (<https://www.ceicdata.com/en>).

² Polity data series: the “Polity Score” captures this regime authority spectrum on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (hereditary monarchy) to +10 (consolidated democracy). The Polity Scores can also be converted into regime categories in a suggested three-part categorization of “autocracies” (-10 to -6), “anocracies” (-5 to +5 plus three special values: -66, -77 and -88), and “democracies” (+6 to +10). (<http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>).

urbanization process involving large numbers of international and domestic migrant workers, but also its rising level of education and spread of literacy, which may have led to changes in public consciousness. Thus, applying Huntington’s formula to China’s transition, would predict identity erosion, inequality and corruption, among other typical issues of socioeconomic transformation, to disrupt society and lead to political instability. Moore’s comparative study contains similar concerns drawn from the lessons of China’s rural revolution; if “something happens to threaten and destroy the daily routine” of most people, there may be a “revolution from below” (Moore, 1966, p. 204).

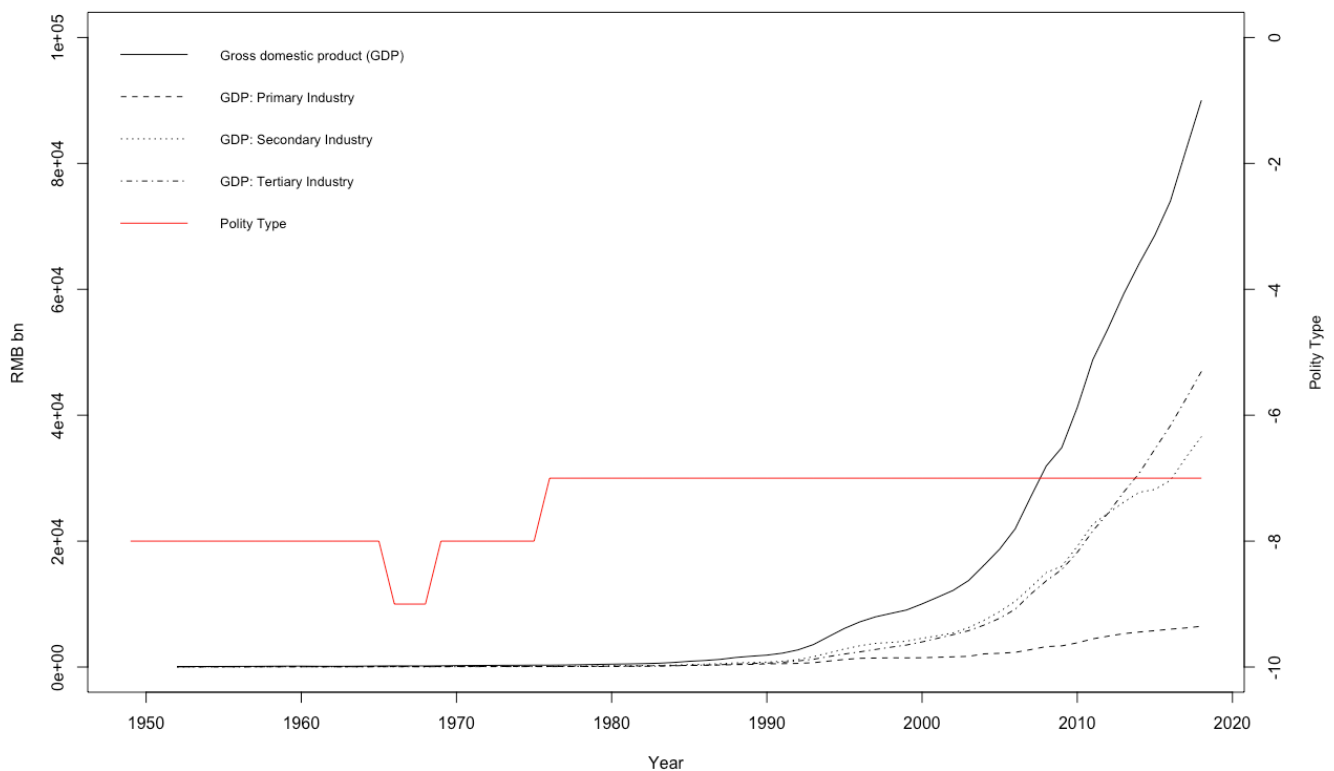


Figure 1. Economic Development and Polity Type

Nevertheless, fundamental disruption has not occurred, even after the turbulence around 1989. More importantly, far from acting defensively to preserve the social relations and red ideologies that originally gave it power, from the very beginning, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has in fact led the social and economic transformation that could have been expected to directly challenge its authority. In other words, the central authority actively took the opportunity and the benefits of modernization as brought by the social and economic reform, while also absorbing the risks brought by the trade-off between the opportunities and challenges of dramatic transformation. It is the surprising degree of change in the Chinese social and

economic transformation, and the fact that this drastic transformation has continued now for forty years without rousing the radical challenges that might have subverted the authorities' rule that have inspired this study. China's case brings up intriguing questions: **how does the state maintain compliance from the governed in periods of rapid social and economic transformation, and how does the logic of its governmentality change along with its priorities?**

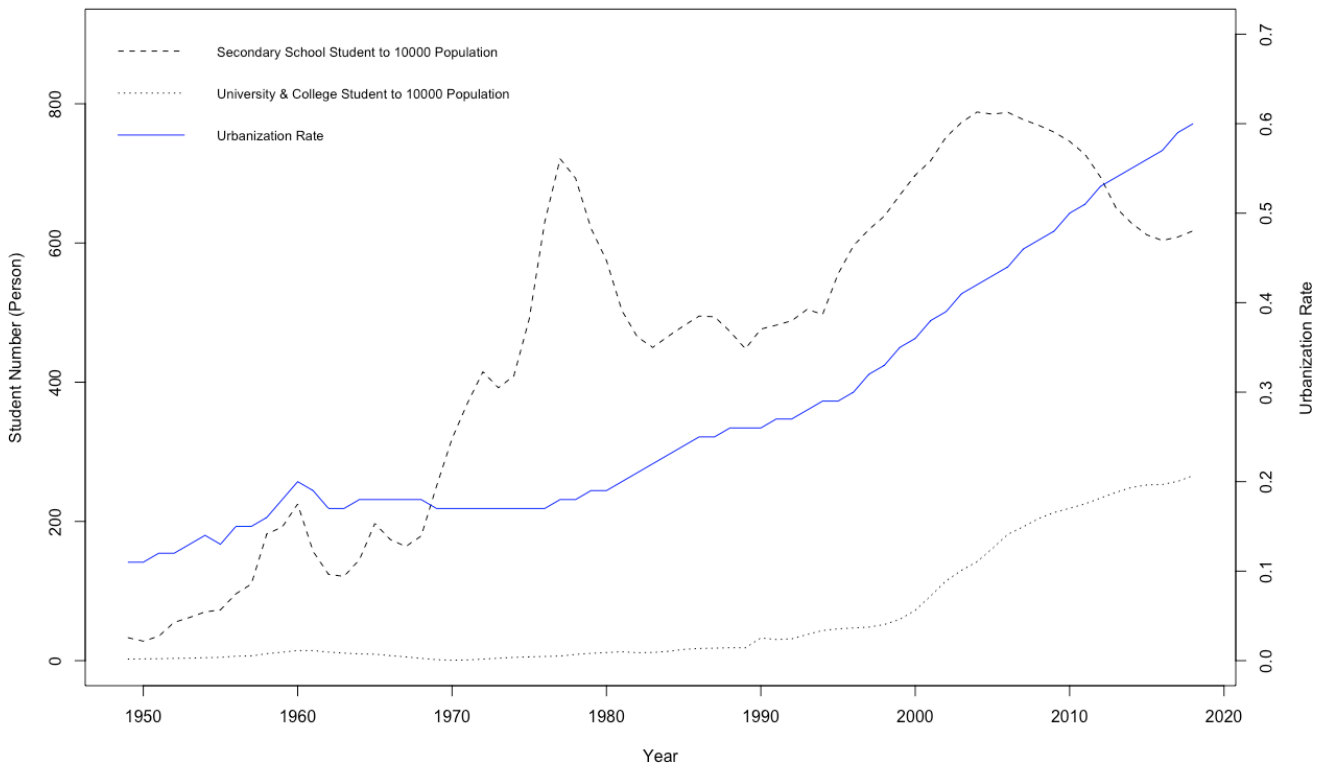


Figure 2. Education and Urbanization Development

Generating compliance: governmentality

Building on Weberian and Gramscian traditions that emphasise the importance of public consent, my dissertation enriches the theoretical discussion by **highlighting the role of the population in state governmentality and focusing on the issue of “dealing with the people” so as to maintain its authoritarian rule.** Empirically, my work deploys the case of the multi-wave pension reform in China during its reform period, deciphering a two-way story of statecraft in authoritarian regimes and the room that may be made for cognitional counter-conducts from the public. Before discussing the analytical paradigm of my project, I want to elaborate on two questions: theoretically, why governmentality matters for tracing the question

of legitimation and ruling of the modern state; and practically, what conditions in China's case bring challenges to state governance and existing explanatory schemas.

Theoretical setup and context

Relational power: the modern state's legitimation issue and its governmentality

The interaction between state and individual is a typical power relation where the state needs to maintain its authority and expects compliance from the governed. Under certain conditions the population renders to the authority co-operation and obedience—which provide enough stability for the authority to withstand shock and failure. In other words, cooperation from the public imposes constraints on the governance of modern states; governments need to acquire legitimacy in order to develop, operate and reproduce themselves effectively. At a point in their interactions with the state the public may change its compliance. People who have suffered during the interactions, due, for instance, to the state's misbehaviour, or experienced dissatisfaction with the social policies, may choose to resist.

Many political sociologists argue that the essential theme of state “ruling” is the issue of *consent*. The Weberian tradition regards the legitimation of the government as an essential factor for sustaining people's compliance, since the state's rule fundamentally depends on consent rather than any fear induced by coercion alone. States cannot do whatever they want and expect their citizens to acquiesce; constant and crude coercion may cause a revolution from below and eventually state collapse. As Weber (1978) pointed out, consent from the public is necessarily rooted in people's belief. The consent that signals the people's active acceptance and compliance may take the form of ideological trust or spontaneous supportive actions. However, beliefs are not arbitrary and can be manufactured by exogenous powers. Gramsci's hegemony theory (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell-Smith, 1971) suggests that the interaction between the population and the state is never a simple watertight match. People's seemingly “spontaneous” attitudinal or behavioural consent are result from some invisible and subtle ideological, cultural, or institutional infiltration from the state. In other words, in the state-society relationship the state can reconstruct and use people's knowledge, politics and even daily life in a way that favours the authority. The other side of the story is that resonating beliefs must be rooted in the experiences of individuals (Gramsci et al., 1971). Any inquiry into consent must grapple with both the expectations of citizens and the behaviour of states, and the fit of both with one another. Thus, although the state generally holds more institutional resources than individuals do, it is not all-powerful; its legitimacy can be earned or lost. A “legitimacy crisis” ensues when

the regime is finding it difficult to managing the equilibrium between state governance and the people's expectations.

The idea of “governmentality” answers the questions of **whom to govern and how to govern**. As a form of state rationality, governmentality can be recognized as a power relation between “man and things” (Foucault, 2009, p. 97); state governance therefore involves governing “a sort of complex of men and things” (Foucault, 2009, p. 96). The objects of the governance include not only men and their complex relationship with things (such as resources), but also things' relationship with other things, such as customs, dependency, habits and so on. The instruments, such as statistics and biopolitics, that a government uses to achieve a better being of the population (such as the population's wealth, longevity and health) involve and act directly on the population itself. State governmentality can be identified as institutions, regulations and procedures: it can also be identified as a tendency of changing forces which reveals the state's sophisticated understanding of the people, and as the efforts that it makes to figure out proper ways of managing changes and consents, and the process of knowledge development (Foucault, 2009, p. 109). Through the dynamic governmentality that has been designed and adjusted by the state, the boundary of the state, the boundary between being “public” and being “private” is revealed. A thorough investigation of governmentality will unpack not only the way that governmental activities unfold their effect, but also how the individual's subjectification process is shaped by statecraft, and how the risks of resistance from the public affect statecraft in return. Unpacking its governmentality, therefore, is important in addressing the legitimation and issue of ruling of the modern state.

In empirical investigations of governmentality, which indicator is appropriate in identifying the nature of the state's power over the people? Many concepts have been used to describe the ruling of authority over the people and could indicate the success of the state's governance. Commonly used terms include the ones mentioned above: “legitimacy”, “consent”, or other concepts such as “political trust” and “compliance”. The conceptual details of such notions are also debated by various scholars. For instance, the approach to conceptualizing “legitimacy” can be from the standpoint of legalism and normativity, as in issues of legality, or a particular normative definition of justice or procedure (e.g., Lord & Beetham, 2001; Smoke, 1994). It can also be analysed from the standpoint of belief, following Weberian notions (Weber, 1978). As stated, my work is built on the Weberian and Gramscian tradition of understanding state rule and highlights the individual's rationale of “believing” and “consent”, but also takes account of the Foucaudian “governmentality” the state uses to maintain its rule and investigates the underlined rationality. What then is the best way of integrating these approaches into one

analytical model? Compliance, which covers both **positive/active consent** and the **passive or even coerced acceptance against state authority** of the population, seems to be a good indicator to measure the state's rule over its people in general. In this sense, the concept of compliance is more appropriate than consent in capturing the "willingness to defer to political authority regardless of the reasons", or "with multiple motivations" (Grimes, 2008; Levi, 1997). In the following section I further discuss the theoretical model constructed on the inclusive measurement of "compliance".

The statecraft used in different regimes consists of choices built from an authority's own political, social and economic scenarios. Compared to their democratic counterparts, authoritarian states have more of a reputation for using oppression and violence in sustaining their authority. But no regime that relies only on oppression and violence can stabilize its governance and maintain its resilience in the long term (Gramsci et al., 1971). Dimitrov (2013), in his study, implied that, in a mature communist regime, the use of repression actually declines, and patronage is distributed to a wider segment of the population, citing the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin. If this is so, an authoritarian regime also needs to employ various strategies and skills to manufacture "spontaneous" consent from the public. Moreover, such a regime in a prolonged transformational stage, like China in the past 40 years, requires significant public compliance to maintain overall stability.

Challenges brought by transitional scenarios and the state's toolkit

China's transition is one form of the large-scale institutional changes in communist regimes that started in the late 20th century. The process of de-stalinization, liberation and democratization involved the deformation of central planning and a transition of state socialism. In these post-communist states, the newly emerged market has led to a change in the distributional principles and in the rate of return on financial, productive and human capital, and has also altered the social structure. Meanwhile, the boundaries between state, market and society have been redrawn and negotiated through interactions between different sectors. Challenges to the legitimacy of the Chinese government have followed one another since the economic reforms of 1978. Economic development has increased people's income, and also changed the public's expectation of the state-individual relationship; people's loyalty towards the state authority has become complicated. On the one hand, the benefits brought by economic development were able to help the state to buy public support; on the other, economic development brought people a keener consciousness and more demands for other rights, and therefore threatened the public's acceptance of the state's authority. Moreover, the transition

process extended from the economy to the society: 40 years of development in the economy has led to an expansion of social inequality along with the entrenchment of a social class system. The transitional scenarios brought by marketization, privatization, and institutional reform have led to some fundamental changes in distribution, redistribution, and social justice.

In addition to the large-scale economic-social reforms, the transition of socialist regimes features another key point, due to the special ideological foundation and historical legacy of China. As a communist government, the authorities rely heavily on the “red ideology” in the political culture, which was also one of the main sources the CCP’s legitimacy during the civil war period and the early years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). With markets penetrating every aspect of social life, communist ideology has also been reformed in the post-Mao era, particularly in recent years to fit the new social and economic scenarios. For instance, the illusion of government omnipotence persists and coexists with mixed attitudes to liberal notions. Many people buy into the story that individual merit is highly encouraged while “waiting, relying, and demanding” (with regard to government help) is criticized (M. E. Gallagher, 2011), and the spirit of devotion and equality from the revolutionary period has been undermined. In other words, the transitional process also shows a de facto shift away from the revolutionary communist legacy that originally gave it power: a state-controlled planned economy, semi-universal welfare provision and a communist ideology, etc.

Social welfare provision is one of the most important areas of change, partly because it can be directly perceived by the public. In this area there has been a noticeable trend which has led to some degree of public discontent due to the fear of loss of social benefits and an increased welfare burden on some social groups. Before the economic reforms of 1978, China was experiencing the “creation of a socialist egalitarian society promising a relatively stable livelihood at the expense of economic development” (Leung & Xu, 2015). Work units (*Danwei*) acted in urban areas as administrative social integration sections, as well as providers of public goods (Lu & Perry, 1997). Urban work units provided not only jobs for life but also pensions, housing, education and health care to employees and their dependants. More than 80% of the urban labour force was covered by the Danwei system (Leung & Wong, 1999). At the stage of state socialism the state’s patriarchal role underwrote a collective welfare mechanism that collectively secured social rights (Xie, 2016). Corresponding to the economic reform, the state promoted social reforms that helped to shift the state’s welfare burden and boost efficiency. The ongoing reform in welfare provision threatens life-time employment, pensions, health and the housing system in urban areas (B. Li & Zhong, 2009; Wong & Ngok, 2006). Very many employees of state-owned enterprises were laid off during the marketization process. The newly established

basic health insurance scheme also required contributions from individuals and employers. Furthermore, the hospitals started to employ market-competition principles in their operation. Individual workers found that their total welfare contribution accounted for quite a large proportion of their salary (Ringen & Ngok, 2017). Many of these reform plans were understood to add up to a withdrawal of governmental responsibility and emphasis on the roles of the market and the family. The schemes do not treat equally members of different age groups, occupation groups and political identity groups; some enjoy more than others.

Facing all the dramatic social and economic changes described above, the state needed to spend some time on generating public compliance to prevent a serious crisis of legitimacy and even regime change caused by bottom-up revolts against the transformation. Theoretically speaking, the skills in the state's governance toolkit include propaganda, repression, absorption, allocated benefits and so on. In practice, what we can observe of the state's efforts to manufacture compliance is different "strategies" that involve either one or several skills. For instance, in promoting certain policies, a state could combine economic benefits with propaganda (comparable to the "social construction of target populations" (A. L. Schneider, Ingram, & Deleon, 2014)), while coercion and information censorship could also be used to attain its goal. The toolkit of maintaining compliance for an authority also changes depending on the various challenges in different periods. For example, in Mao's era when the party class identified struggle as the main problem in China, an ideological campaign was the central approach to producing loyalty and consent. In the "opening up and reform" period, many scholars argue that the Chinese authorities has used performance-based legitimacy and maintains its rule by providing material security (Zhao, 2001).

Some scholars highlighted the institutional features and tricks in China's governance. For instance, Andrew Nathan used the term "authoritarian resilience" to describe the situation whereby the Chinese government has reconsolidated itself in the midst of the political instability and potential governance crises. He attributed the authority's resilience mostly to the "institutionalization" of the state, such as the normalization of succession politics and the meritocratic promotion of bureaucrats (Nathan, 2003). Scholars such as Yan (2017) emphasized that the capacity of the state to absorb and assimilate is one of the main instruments that keeps the state and the party stable. Perry (2017) contended that, by strategically using symbolic resources such as the traditional culture, the state shapes the higher education institutions and wins the allegiance of social elites. Other descriptions in existing studies include "a balancing act involving the supply of carrots and sticks" (M. Gallagher & Hanson, 2009), a "Guerrilla Policy Style" (Perry & Heilmann, 2011), "nationalism ideological articulation" (Bernstein, 2013; Gries,

2004) and so on. One common issue in existing studies is that statecraft is treated as a set of static and isolated skills rather than a comprehensive, sophisticated design. The role of “the ruled”—people, or population, is also missing or not emphasized in shaping the specific governmentality.

In this dissertation I argue that the strategy used by the state to respond to the potential crisis brought closer by social and economic transformation and to generate public compliance even though it drifts away from the communist legacy is hybrid, organic, and dynamic. In particular, I emphasise that public compliance is not only acquired through buying off the public with governmental performance and transferred benefit, but is also manufactured through an ideological foundation, such as nationalism, which has been rebuilt by the authority. China’s authoritarian governance has been an active process which is constantly adapting to new social and economic situations, especially since the notorious repression in the late 1980s. On the one hand, the state captures public expectations and adjusts its own strategies to meet them; on the other, the state intentionally shapes the public’s expectations and manufactures compliance to keep its reforms working. For instance, in the field of social welfare where the process of privatization might cause severe discontent, the authority has employed a mixture of retrenchment and generosity and designed diverse schemes for different social groups in order to effectively “divide and govern”. Moreover, the state has carefully employed propaganda skills using traditional culture and the ideological legacy of the socialist period, in order to legitimize its choices and engender consent from the public. Based on the arguments above, my dissertation enriches the Weberian legitimacy theory by examining how the Chinese authorities whilst experiencing far-reaching social and economic changes over the past 40 years have maintained legitimacy and generated public compliance. The dynamic and organic state strategies identified in this research also enrich the discussion of authoritarian resilience by highlighting the role of the public (and its active consent), and the constraints that it imposes on the effectiveness of the state’s governance and production of legitimacy.

Dealing with the people: governmentality that generates compliance

The fundamental assumption in this research is that, the nature of state power is a relational concept. States provide security, resources, solidarity and identity through benefit allocation, propaganda, education and many other approaches, in order to shape public expectations and justify their rule; while individuals can update their knowledge about the state from personal benefits, public policy and current society (their peers) and decide whether to stay loyal or rebel. To better understand the logic of the state’s rule and its choices of various forms

of statecraft in dealing with its population, in this section I decipher state's governmentality and explain the analytical logic of my work with a semi-modelled clarification.

Coercion or consent: why coercion alone cannot do the work

What are the existing theories about the state's choices for generating compliance? The state, as Gramsci argued, is an entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules (Gramsci et al., 1971). The state is a combination of dictatorship and hegemony in which the state power relies on both ***political society*** (force) and ***civil society*** (consent). In other words, there are two general approaches that the state uses to deal with its subordinates in modern society: using either force and coercion, exercising dictatorship; or using consensus building, cultural hegemony and maintaining moral and intellectual leadership (Kohli, Shue, & Migdal, 1994). A coercion-based approach is very efficient in maintaining short-term stability and long-term fear, while consent-based governance enables the state to enjoy more compliance and the "expression of these subaltern classes who want to educate themselves in the art of government" (Gramsci et al., 1971, p. 126). In the spectrum of coerced compliance and voluntary compliance, authoritarian states have the reputation of using oppression and violence to sustain their rule. Therefore, in the context of an authoritarian regime, an inevitable question arises: why would the state need to manufacture consent if it can use coercion or force to stay in power? The questions "Why can't coercion alone do the work", or "Why is manufacturing active compliance from the population important for rulers in authoritarian regimes?" have been studied in many empirical and theoretical works.

Empirically, we do see some authoritarian regimes, or regimes at an authoritarian stage, showing significant use of coercion and force in their rule. For instance, mass terror, repression and indoctrination were frequently used in totalitarian periods by Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, or military regimes such as Franco's Spain and Pinochet's Chile. Compliance generated by fear was common in these regimes. But any regime that relies only on oppression and violence cannot stabilize its governance and maintain its resilience in the long term. The integrated global economy and the development of the internet has also made mass killing costly and less attractive for autocrats. In recent years, we observe more non-democratic regimes using sophisticated statecraft to hold on to power. For instance, some imitate the format of democracy and hold elections to obtain normative legitimacy, while their election processes exhibit wholesale bribery, illegal competition and information manipulation. Wedeen's case of Asad's

cult in Syria argued that rhetoric and symbolic display reduces the need to rely on sheer repression as a mechanism of control (Wedeen, 1999).

Studies also employ formal models to demonstrate the unsustainability of using violence in non-democratic regimes and justify an authority's choice of hybrid statecraft to maintain compliance. By combining the manufacture of consent with coercive tools, the state can maintain a stable hegemonic position vis-à-vis the population. Repression/violence are among the most extreme ways to crush protest/revolution and alter public opinion through physical coercion (Gregory, Schröder, & Sonin, 2006). However, repression is not a once-and-for-all solution. In Kricheli, Livne and Magaloni's working paper, they present a formal model of protest under authoritarianism (Kricheli, Livne, & Magaloni, 2011). Their two-period signalling model shows that, although regimes which are more repressive in the first period can better deter civil opposition, they are more likely in the second period to experience cascade since protests' information revealing potential is maximized in these regimes. In addition, the work of Acemoglu, Ticchi, and Vindigni (2010), Svobik (2012), Egorov and Sonin (2011) shows that the authority may experience a greater threat from its military allies once the repression is over.

Thus, in most cases, the authority tends to consider integrating different tactics in preventing revolution and gaining compliance after rational assessment by the governed. Scholars citing theoretical and empirical evidence have identified many specific combinations. Wintrobe (1990, 2007) modelled two instruments—repression and loyalty—that dictators used to stay in power, dividing such regimes into four categories—tinpots, tyrants, totalitarians and timocrats—according to their different objectives and correspondingly invested instruments. For instance, totalitarians always aim to maximize their power; therefore they combine high repression with a capacity to generate loyalty; while tinpot dictators prefer to maximize their own benefits under the constraint of minimum power, so their investment is low on both counts. Although theoretically feasible and easily achieved, eliciting compliance through a redistribution of benefits—irrespective of whether the distribution is to the ruling alliance or to the remaining population—needs credible commitment from the authority (e.g., Boix & Svobik, 2013; Gehlbach & Keefer, 2011; Myerson, 2008). Such commitment in non-democratic regimes is often fragile without relevant institutional guarantees; and fragile commitment from the state will discount the effectiveness of its effort to allocate benefits for the sake of compliance.

In addition to buying compliance through material means, a more sophisticated way of generating voluntary compliance is to wisely use information and manipulate through censorship, guidance by propaganda or knowledge construction. For instance, a state authority

may allow free social media so as to obtain the information about the population that the state needs, even though the information may also be used by the society to coordinate its protest (Egorov, Guriev, & Sonin, 2009). To avoid a potential backfire from the free media, the authorities may also actively send out biased signals through their own propaganda to mislead the public in evaluating the state's capacity (Edmond, 2013). Chen and Xu's work (2017) presents a new view: that allowing people's information communication in society actually helps the authorities to obtain material and prevent coordinated revolt from the public.

To return to the main question of this sub-section, how useful are these sophisticated tactics compared to simple violence? Guriev and Treisman's work in 2015 proposed a comprehensive argument about the different ways in which modern dictators could help themselves survive. In a game of political leaders trying to convince citizens (some of whom are informed elites) of their competence, a "dictator can invest in making convincing state propaganda, censoring independent media, co-opting the elite, or equipping police to repress attempted uprisings" (Guriev & Treisman, 2015, p. 4). The authors show that the portfolios of states' techniques differ in the competence of the leader and result in multiple equilibria, while "violence either is a last resort when all else has failed, or is used sparingly when it is possible to conceal it, since competent dictators do not need to use repressions and reverting to repressions immediately reveals the dictator's incompetence to the public and ultimately results in his downfall" (Guriev & Treisman, 2015, p. 33). To summarize, violence alone cannot do the work of maintaining governance for an authority which wants to rule in the long term. The modern state enjoys considerable choices of statecraft that enable it to stay in power without much challenge from the population.

Generating compliance: a two-actors model and the state's options

Following the discussion of the context and theories above, I present the analytical paradigm of my research. The paradigm adopts a holistic viewpoint, integrating both consent-oriented statecraft and coercion-based statecraft and highlights the state's strategic selection of statecraft based on its objectives and constraints. My research focuses on an interactive model which consists of two actors: the state authority and the population³. A population ruled by an authority may express compliance, non-compliance, or collective non-compliance such as coordinated rebellion and revolution. The ultimate goal for the state is to remain in power; in other words, to ensure that the population is compliant. Putting the population's reaction on a

³ Since this dissertation deals with the state-society/individual relationship, I don't include bureaucrats in the model as many studies using a similar approach do.

continuous scale, the state would prefer sincere support (active consent) to forced obedience, while the public's collective non-compliance is more dangerous for the state than a single individual's public non-compliance. There are cases where an individual's private non-compliance goes unnoticed or is tolerated by the authority as long as it doesn't turn into public non-compliance or, worse still, public collective non-compliance. The objective of the population in the model is to optimize its living conditions, economically, socially and politically, though the ranking of importance of these different aspects of living standards differs for different social groups. The engine of this interactive model's operation in my work is not simply the objective economic situation, as in Wintrobe's pioneering model, but the general design of the ruler, which is constantly updated according to its understanding of the current situation, the public and its own objectives, or simply as, "governmentality".

The state as ruler enjoys resources (such as economic or organizational resources) that could be used to achieve its objectives, but it may not master every detail of the population. Although named compliance, the population's acceptance of the authority's rule differs in degree. In Figure 3, I present a thought map of the means and outcome of statecraft of modern state. The upper panel displays the various possible statecrafts the state could use in a continuum of hard-soft approaches. In the bottom panel, I demonstrate that in the scale of outcome of statecraft, public reaction could vary from sincere believer who present their full consent, to forced compliance for which the population would choose alternative options rather than the incumbent authority if they are given chances, and to collective non-compliance which could be dangerous to the state's rule. Both of the typologies do not exhaust all the possibilities, but act as a guidance of the interactive relation between the state's actions and the potential outcome from the public.

A population has true believers who are sincere loyal to the incumbent ruler. It has supporters who accept the governance, while not necessarily holding the beliefs that the true believers hold. It should be noted that these two categories of "supporters" may not be easily identifiable from their daily behaviour, but they may choose altogether differently when presented with alternative options of governance. The population's obedience may also be generated by interest exchange, or coercion, as commonly identified in existing studies. The compliance categories are not mutually exclusive—they may be generated simultaneously in response to either a single item or a package of statecraft. As presented in the following table, the state can either construct social knowledge through propaganda, education, or manipulated information, building consensus through policy experiments, or use interest exchanges to buy the population off. It may also use coercive approaches such as censorship and force to maintain

public compliance. Again, these tactics can be used by the state either alone or as a package; and if necessary can also be tailored for different social groups.

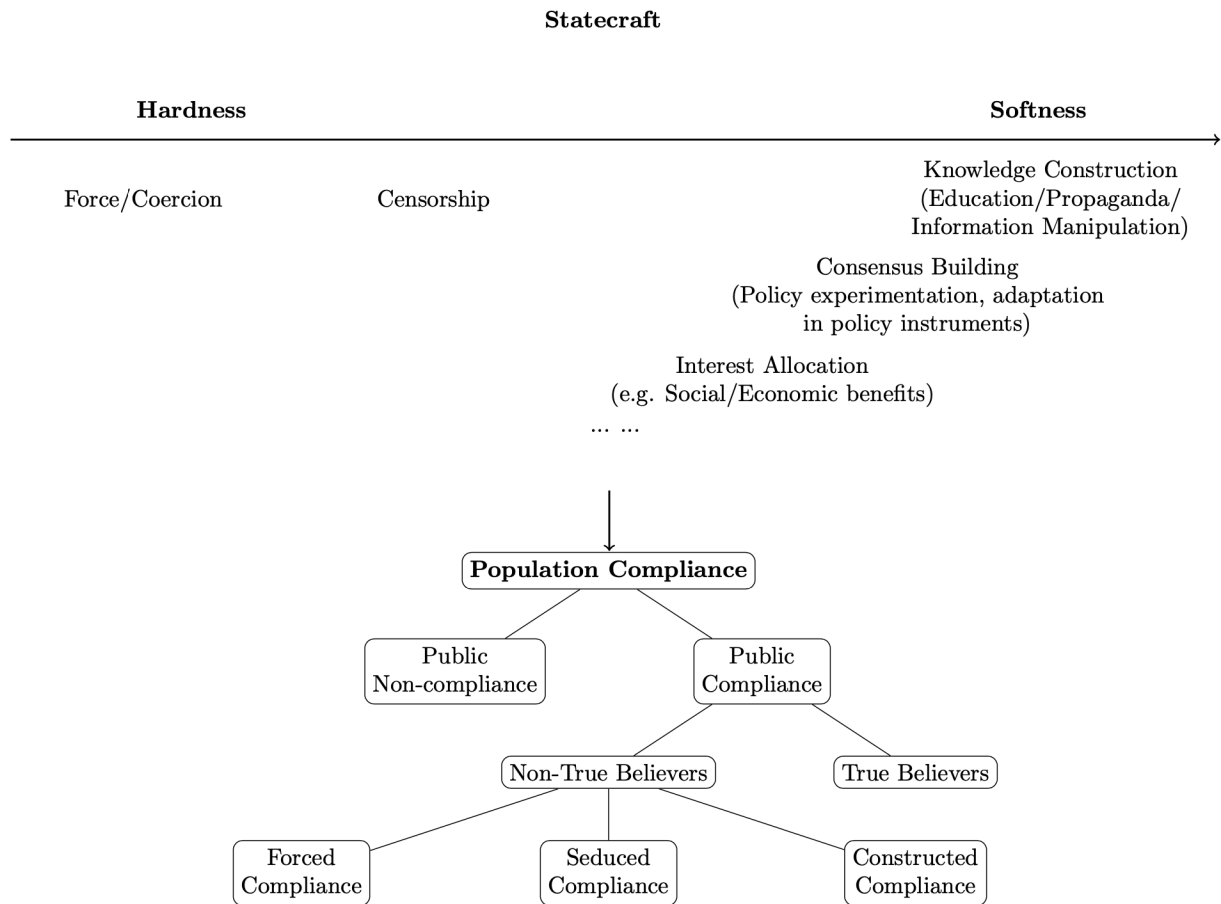


Figure 3. Thought Map of Compliance Typology and Respective Statecraft

Constructing social knowledge is among the most sophisticated but commonly used tactics for generating compliance. Education is a traditional approach that can impose specific knowledge when an individual is in being socialized and forming his/her value system. Even individuals who have established a relatively stable value system can have their existing knowledge reshaped by a strong input of information from outside. Modern techniques allow the state more possibilities of promoting its ideology and shaping public opinion. Online platforms have become more and more popular in the propaganda toolkit in addition to conventional media such as newspapers, TV, radio broadcasts, books and journals. The mouthpiece of the state can publicize well-constructed information about policy, social facts and excuses for the state’s latest moves. The state may also employ internet trolls or hire real people—such as the “50 cent party” in China’s case (Han, 2015; Simon, 2014) —to lead the

online public opinion and diffuse pro-government arguments. These seemingly “soft” tactics can in fact signal the repressive capacity of the state. As H. Huang (2015) has shown in his work, the capacity to broadcast propaganda and the capacity to repress rebellion are positively correlated.

Consensus building through policy experimentation differs from other compliance generating processes in its way of highlighting the adaptations of state governance and the dynamic process of governmentality. It is especially useful in cases where the population is divided, the regional features are distinctive and the policy that the state wants to promote is somehow controversial. In China, policy experiments are among the most commonly used strategies; it takes a moderate approach to policy changes and allows enough space for the central government to practise “trial and error”. Referred to as “crossing the river by feeling the stones”, policy experiments are of great importance in avoiding radical changes in national policy. Policy experimentation is frequently used in social welfare reforms due to the geographical variation and social and economic diversity between provinces. The reform of a social welfare scheme can be very costly for the central government if it wants to collect comprehensive information about the population. Moreover, since most of the current social welfare schemes in China are fragmented and specific to certain social groups, it is impossible to push any thoroughgoing social reforms. Therefore, the central government regularly uses policy experimentation when it implements new policies. For instance, in healthcare, about 60 cities from 1994 onwards participated in the reform in basic urban social health insurance. In education, a pilot policy of abolishing fees for rural compulsory education was initiated in 2006 and expanded to other non-pilot areas in the two years afterwards.

Benefits allocation is another commonly used strategy in exchange for people’s compliance with the state. As I elaborated in the theoretical set up section, the benefits can be material rewards, such as incomes, bonuses, tax reduction and so on. They can also be welfare benefits, such as access to certain subsidised programs. In some cases, it can be political incentives, for instance permission to joining a Party (membership), or be promoted within the bureaucratic system. The governed decide on their consent and support after reviewing the social and economic benefits received from the authority. Constructed on the social and economic outcome of governmental behaviours, some scholars refer to the population compliance generated by benefits allocation as a specific source of state legitimacy—performance legitimacy.

Censorship is not as direct as pure violence, nor as sophisticated as the knowledge construction approach; but it still can achieve the goal of generating compliance because of its value in increasing the information asymmetry between the individual and the state (Bennett &

Naim, 2015; McMillan & Zoido, 2004). By blocking publication, filtering the internet, bribing the owners and journalists in the “independent” media and even threatening these content producers with jail, the authority can prevent the spreading of unfavourable information. Not only can the capacity of the state be shown in the process, but more importantly, it discourages any prospect of coordinated protests and aggravates the pluralistic ignorance in the society. The strategic use of censorship which adjusts to different levels of social tension can bring the state more benefit than the use of free media (P. Lorentzen, 2014).

In my dissertation, I focus on the rationale, context, design & implementation, and the potential effect of the various statecraft in generating public compliance. Most importantly, I highlight the soft statecraft and ordinary people’s potential counter-conduct (falsification in constructed public compliance) on this thought map, underline the social nature of state legitimacy and governmentality. In other words, my work argues that legitimacy as a social phenomenon rather than normalized procedures, and my evidence presents how people are socialized, in which ways their subjectivity been shaped by history/social culture/state policy, how their expectations and the social nature of legitimacy been taken account in the governmentality rationale.

Constraints, choices, and state-individual interaction in transitional situations

In ruling the population, the state faces two constraints when it seeks to generate compliance and minimize the non-compliance in society. One is the state’s own resources for dealing with popular revolt/revolution. The resource constraint is closely related to state’s economic capacity, organizational capacity and the military capacity. Available resources can be used to fund such means of knowledge construction as education and propaganda, or can be used for economic/social/political benefits that can buy off compliance. Resources can also be used to censor unwanted information or fund state apparatus such as the police, the military and prisons. All these investments will help the state remain in power: the population remains compliant and collective non-compliance and regime change are kept at bay.

As in an interactive power relation, the second constraint that the state faces is the information asymmetry regarding people’s desire to be non-compliant, both individually and collectively. The story from the population’s side in its power relationship with the state is that they would expect to optimise their living situation. In theory, if the living conditions enjoyed by individuals meet their expectations, they will repay the state by compliance. In this sense, individuals’ objectives can be understood as the price of their compliance with the state (it should be noted that, although the state might prefer sincere loyalty, this does not necessarily

entail a higher price). If their expectations are not met, individuals may choose non-compliance or revolt, which will also carry certain costs to themselves. But the people's intention to rise up and their doing so are not crystal clear to the state. In theory, the possibility of the people's collective non-compliance is a function of their capacity, motivation and coordination, which are supported by traditional social movement theories about the resources, grievances, political opportunities and social networks of the activists (Le Bon, 1897; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996). The state, therefore, needs to tackle all these aspects in order to reduce the collective non-compliance of the public.

Under the two constraints above, the state chooses a hybrid solution from its toolkit which includes both tolerant approaches—such as consent construction and benefit allocation—and intolerant approaches—such as censorship and force—to maximize the compliance from the governed. Each of these tactics has its distinctive effect on the public. The state's intolerant statecraft may be useful in whittling down the capacity as well as the coordination of the population's rebels. However, it may also cause non-cooperation/noncompliance in the long term and increase people's motivation for further revolt/revolution. Tolerant strategies such as propaganda, education and benefit allocation may not be as efficient as force, but can be useful for undermining the motivation of the prospective rebels. The knowledge construction approach tends to gain more stable compliance than the strategies based on benefit exchange do. However, radical loyalty could turn into radical opposition if ever the believers' expectations of the authority are disappointed. The tolerant and intolerant approaches are strategic substitutes limited by a specific capacity at a certain time, while become strategic complements when obtaining information from the population. When the state's resources are given at a certain time, the state can increase its investment either in strategies of force or strategies that could manufacture public consent. When seeking certain information from the population, a state must complement any increase of force by efforts to create consent in order to avoid further challenge from the governed.

As I have suggested above, the state rationale and its implementation of statecraft faces the risk that its tactics to maintain state legitimacy will backfire in the population: all these techniques, no matter how sophisticated or powerful, must make sense with individuals' experience and resonate with their "common sense". The resulting backfire can be dangerous for tolerant strategies that are designed to shape people's ideology. For instance, in a situation where people's personal knowledge and public knowledge mismatch, the state's efforts to constructing knowledge may result in discontent rather than advocacy. The state may add force to supplement its governance and have its intentions executed, for example, pushing reforms while censoring

opposed opinions. However, when individuals cannot say what they think, they may falsify their reported/public consent and the accumulated falsification of political attitudes may produce “cascades” (Kuran, 1991). In this case, any initial small-scale protest, if it can ever be formed, will act as an important signal for the whole society to update its belief with regard to the state (Kuran, 1991; Lohmann, 1993, 1994). The possibility of room for people’s counter-conduct therefore leads to further implications about the state’s action and, forces the state to include the estimated population reaction in its decision-making process.

A state’s conduct, or governmentality, in dealing with its people is not just a static design. It is a dynamic process of governing and using the best possible portfolio of statecraft practices in response to changing conditions. This feature is especially easy to identify when dramatic social/economic changes occur. For instance, the perception of an individual’s expectations of redistribution, as well as their estimation of the general expectations of the society as a whole, will change when a reformed distribution is under way. In this case, the government’s demand for information regarding the public’s expectations and the distribution of public opinion can be especially strong. The increased demand for information then needs a decent amount of tolerance in the authority’s approach to minimize the cost ascribed to the information asymmetry. Meanwhile, following economic development, a shift of the capacity curve will permit an increase in both the investment in force and the manufacture of consent. In this case, the equilibrium point of various forms of statecraft shifts, and the specific direction of the shift, or the portion of each strategy, depends on the slope of each constraint line.

This paradigm clarifies the way in which the two-way story of state-individual interaction in modern society works and how a rapidly changing social and economic scenario may prompt a state to adjust its governmentality. The analytical paradigm is designed to be as comprehensive as possible to capture all the possible options in the state-individual interaction and can be formally developed in the future. My dissertation project can be seen as the first step in illustrating the theoretical schema with empirical evidence. I also suggest some possible future developments in the concluding chapter.

Structure of the dissertation

The process of addressing the production of compliance and maintenance of legitimacy in transitional China, as well as the logic change behind its governmentality is complicated and requires a sophisticated design to address it properly. In my dissertation, I not only focus on the practices of the state and the changing expectations of its citizens, but also I highlight their fitness with each other in a transitional social and economic scenario. My empirical chapters use

evidence of the Chinese government's efforts to maintain its governance while leading a rapid social and economic transformation. These empirical chapters elaborate on different pieces of my analytical paradigm, and also dialogue with each other in many ways. In Chapter 3, I identify the state governmentality which reveals, through the trajectory of the social welfare changes in China, knowledge construction combined with benefit allocation. In Chapter 4, the specific statecraft that has been identified involves policy experimentation combined with propaganda in a pension reform for enterprise employees. Chapter 5 concerns the issue of falsified compliance in China's population, using various approaches to ascertain its existence, variations and mechanism. In addition, I discuss the implications of this cognitional counter-conduct of individuals for their actions and for the legitimacy of the state in the long run. In terms of methods, I employ a combination of institutional analysis, national survey data, social and economic statistical data and in-depth interviews (which will be further discussed in each chapter). These methods together make it possible to unpack the broad question of state legitimacy in the context of the social transition in China. The structure and a synopsis of each chapter is presented as follows.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

In Chapter 2, I present a rationale for investigating governmentality in modern society and review the current theoretical discussion on the legitimation of the state, while highlighting the special context of transitional authoritarian regimes. My theoretical setup is built on the Weberian conceptualization of legitimacy, together with Foucauldian governmentality and statecraft, in which I focus on the consent in population's belief and the statecraft used by the state to manufacture the consent. With these theoretical assumptions in mind, I focus on countries without representative institutions and the rule of law (normative legitimacy). The state legitimacy and governmentality in these countries differ from their democratic counterparts in many ways. The different socioeconomic and historical constraints in these countries has largely changed the logic and presentation of the maintenance of legitimation and the use of statecraft. Governance in these regimes relies more on ideological legitimacy through knowledge construction and censorship, performance-based legitimacy and, beyond doubt, coercion.

The issue of state legitimacy and governmentality gets more complicated when a regime is experiencing a radical transition promoted and led by the authority. Therefore, in the second part of the literature review, I consider the studies on transitional state socialism and the specific trade-off between opportunities and challenges available to China by its social and economic changes. More importantly, I examine the existing studies on authoritarian resilience and

summarise the governmentality that has been identified as responsible for preventing the regime's failure, despite these dramatic social changes.

Notwithstanding the effective statecraft of the authorities, individuals as an important part of the two-way power story enjoy some degree of agency when it comes to changing the power equilibrium. Normally, people as they perceive external social and economic changes adjust their political attitude and behaviour accordingly, but in certain conditions, they may choose to take action and affect the policy process through a range of approaches (such as voting and protesting). In the third part of the literature review, I investigate the power interaction between the state and individuals especially in the Chinese context, with a focus on the agency of individuals and the options open to them when faced with such macroscopic notions as “policy”, “state” and “transitional society”. I probe the mechanism at the individual level through theoretical discussions on the formation of political attitudes and behavioural change, together with the potential for counter-conduct in an individual's toolkit.

Chapter 3: Revealing the governmentality by the case of pension reforms

The logic of whom to govern and how to govern can be revealed by the design of governmental programmes, the way that social problems are defined and divisions/distinctions are established and the knowledge produced to shape people's ideologies. In Chapter 3, I examine some designs for policy experiments/schemes and the techniques that have been used intentionally by the Chinese government to shape the public's expectations, before discussing the rationale behind these practices. As I observed above, of the social and economic changes during China's transition, social welfare provision is one of the most important areas that the public can directly perceive and it is also an arena in which we can vividly see the close interaction between the state and the public. My substantive case in this chapter, therefore, focuses on social policies relating to old-age benefits, an area that reveals the state's purposeful design in modifying the distribution of public goods and redrawing the roles of the government and the public. Because people are not likely to give up their existing benefits, any state that plans to make changes in this respect must proceed carefully. In China's reformed welfare system, the social right to income and social security are now defined more frequently on an individual basis, rather than collectively through work units and people's communes, as they were in the previous system. The question of “who gets what and how they get it” has gradually been connected to individual endowments, such as social status, political identity, social capital, and so on. Therefore, it is time to ask how the new system allocates pension benefits to different social groups now that the

institution has drifted away from the old communist system; and what the rationale is behind various policy experiments/adjustments carried out by the government.

In the first part of Chapter 3, I trace all the social schemes related to the old-age benefits in China since 1978 and make comparisons between the policy schemes according to the different political status of the recipients. To precisely identify the different entitlements to benefits across segmented pension schemes, I collected statistical data from China Labour Statistical Yearbooks, Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbooks and other datasets, compared variations such as the eligible population, participating population, coverage rate, pension benefit per person per year, incremental rate of pension benefit of welfare provision and so on. Empirical evidence suggests that the strategy of differentiation in the government's welfare allocation to minimize the fiscal burden, is first to sacrifice the social benefits for employees of state-owned enterprise (SOE) and later on those for public institution employees, while providing modest/slim welfare benefits for social groups that can be bought off with minimal expense. Meanwhile, the government officials, as the core elites of the governing class, have constantly enjoyed the most generous social benefits. Evidence that support this argument is observed from policy shifts to and from various pension schemes, such as the retrenchment policy reform for SOE employees; expanded coverage for rural residents and migrant worker from rural areas; and a reformed contribution ratio in the pension scheme for public institution employees. To summarize, the resource allocation strategy in China's segmented pension reform favours the core elites and distributes limited fiscal resources to social groups which cost least per unit.

If this new differentiation system is becoming entrenched, how did the state frame and justify its new policies and, through them, the legitimacy of the state itself? In other words, what kind of knowledge about pension benefits was produced and promoted by the state when it tried to persuade the public to accept the reform? In the second part of Chapter 3, I investigate the knowledge construction from the content of the policy statements and official newspapers by fleshing out the use of discourses, differences in sentiment and the order of prioritization when the large-scale welfare retrenchment took place for the employees of enterprises and public institutions. I use quantitative text analysis (QTA) to show that the persuasive discourse from the government produced intentional belief and knowledge about pension benefits, and the allocation of responsibility and accountability. It also constructed specific images of deserving and undeserving beneficiaries. The text data mainly come from the official news data in the People's Daily dataset.

The QTA analysis focuses on two specific pension reforms: the pension reform for enterprise employees in the late 1990s and early 2000s and the pension reform for rural residents in the 1990s (as pilot projects in local regions) and late 2000s (as nationwide policy for action). The successive waves of pension reform for enterprise employees were closely connected with the economic reform of state-owned enterprises and reallocation of state-individual responsibility for old-age welfare. The state needed to persuade the enterprise employees that they had to take care of themselves and make clear what they should expect from the state. The pension pilots launched by local authorities for rural residents in the 1980s and early 1990s also served to promote the one-child policy, while those in the late 2000s accompanied the process of rapid urbanization. To reform the rural pension schemes, the state had to convince the public why rural residents deserved greater pension benefits.

Evidence from the official newspaper shows that the logic of reconstructing the public's knowledge and expectations regarding the redistribution of social benefits and the locus of responsibility between the state and individuals, mainly focused on reiterating the principles of: "contribution and reward", "rights and obligations". As a consequence, individuals' personal lives were socialized and initiated in a broader system than the previous one, which had been based on work units or localized systems. People's personal interests were materialized and assessed in relation to the performance of society, or the state, as a whole; and the government sought to persuade them that they could receive rewards only by contributing to others.

Chapter 4: Evaluating the effectiveness of statecraft with a sub-reform

If the state is as easily capable of manipulating policy design and promoting social policy reform as it appears in Chapter 3, are these strategies effective in changing the public's attitudes? In this section, I use causal inference and investigate the effect of the government's strategies of combining experimentation and propaganda in a specific policy reform in China.

As indicated in Chapter 3, the context of China's social policy reform is that the old social welfare system based on enterprises and financed from the state-budget was gradually changed to fit the nature of a market economy. The provision of social welfare in particular emphasised "purchased rights" and "individual contributions". Individuals and families, society and commercial organizations were called upon to play larger roles and fulfil the responsibility abandoned by the government when the state was retreating from the front line. However, the public has not reached a consensus regarding the relative positions of the state and individuals in welfare provision. The inertia inherited from the tradition of state socialism constantly reverts to portraying the state as the main party responsible for welfare provision. Therefore, the

privatization of welfare provision by either relieving the state of its burden or sharing responsibility for it stands in stark contrast to the previous concept of the state-individual relationship. People do not seem to have adjusted to the rapid change and the loss of their existential security may cause anxiety and deep concern. The situation may become even more critical if we factor in the increasing consciousness of the value of a social right to decent education, health, pensions and so on. The expectations of the public and the state's approach appear to be at odds. The authorities therefore have been pressured to take steps in their reforms that will adapt them to maintaining public consent.

I addressed the research question of this chapter by taking advantage of a quasi-experimental pilot scheme in China, the enterprise employees' old-age social insurance scheme reform, and designed a counterfactual difference-in-differences (DID) analytical approach which looked before and after a policy intervention at its effect on the welfare preferences and regime support of the public. The pilot policy was implemented in 2001 or 2003 in selected provinces, then expanded to other provinces in 2006 or 2008. Policy experimentation can help downplay the controversy of reforms by relaxing the pace of implementation and minimizing the public's confusion and anxiety. In the process of policy experimentation led by the central government, local governments' promotion of the reform tends to follow the typical dependency on communist official propaganda which exaggerates the omnipotent role of the state, while also trying to avoid the risks entailed in the reform. In other words, articles in the official local newspapers described the pilot policy as closely associated with the generosity of the state, which may have increased people's expectations of the state's duty to take care of individuals' social welfare. In other words, there was a mismatch between the official propaganda and the policy content.

Using individual data from two rounds survey, I employ DID method to leverage the causal relationship between the statecraft and the individuals' change in attitude. The empirical result reveals that the pilot policy launched by the central government has had significant effects on citizens' understanding of the privatization of responsibility in general, and society has accepted the underlying individual responsibility for taking care of the social risks that face older people. The length of experience of the policy has amplified the attitudinal change and clarified individuals' expectations of the government's role. In addition, the analysis confirms my hypothesis on the interactive effect of the local official propaganda and the pilot effect. The official propaganda effect that emphasizes an omnipotent government has successfully moderated the treatment effect of the pilot scheme on the general public's understanding of the privatization of welfare responsibility. Beyond the public's attitudinal change regarding welfare

responsibility, I also found that the influence of local propaganda interfered with the pilot policy and had a contradictory effect on people's political trust. Controlling for other factors, short-term exposure to the local propaganda may increase the public's confidence in state institutions, but long-term exposure actually reduces political trust. The result highlights the fact that the Chinese government's experimentation effort can in the short term generate a significant change in people's attitudes and build a certain consensus which favours the reform, while words of praise on the government's greatness from the official newspapers increase people's political support. However, the disjunction of the policy content and propaganda content actually backfires on institutional trust in the long term.

Chapter 5: Note the cognitional counter-conduct of the public

In spite of their well-designed statecraft, the authorities run the risks of falsified compliance from the governed. People's apparent compliance carries the seed of transformation within it. They can reflect on the idea of "state", "politics" and the "state-individual relationship" in their interactions with the public power. These reflections as seeds of ideological rebellion will play an important role in shaping the expectations and consent of the general people in the long run, such as the distrust risk brought about by the disconnection between propaganda and policy content mentioned above. Therefore, Chapter 5 is designed to investigate possible cognitional counter-conduct in authoritarian regimes and what falsified compliance implies for the future of a regime. To make the conceptualization and measurement easier, I take falsified compliance in authoritarian regimes as the hidden discontent and disdain towards the authorities in people's voiced consent. Falsified compliance can include political trust of the government and the incumbent leader, compliance (or not) as regards political uncertainties during the reform, attitude to the official propaganda, and so on. Empirically, it is not easy to find people's real attitudes, especially in answers to questions which may be quite sensitive. Therefore, I used a combination of interviews and a (design of) experimental survey to address this problem and subsequently changed the research material into a combination of observational data and supplementary interview data in response to external constraints (a more detailed explanation is to be found in Chapter 5).

The data reveal rich details of falsified political compliance, various mechanisms that lead to a change in people's public/private faces and the heterogeneity across social groups. My analysis show that people's compliance regarding different representatives of the state changed substantially with specific issues and the atmosphere at the time. Although the central government, the party and the top leader enjoy more approval, even in private conversations,

people sometimes refuse to bear the political cost at the individual level. In addition to the political institutions, private political knowledge and public discourse sometimes run along different tracks. However, even though many people can identify the disconnection between public and private knowledge, as well as the discontinuity with official discourse, many choose to live with it without further questioning. Why would many people still choose (intentionally or unconsciously) to rearrange their public/private face regarding certain political/societal issues? The reasons can be traced from the existing cultural, historical and educational factors that have socialized their ideas from the beginning. It can also be identified in the external forces imposed by the state and the society and the resulting fear, political apathy and group ignorance in the population.

Does falsified compliance vary among people in different social groups? Although my qualitative data cannot make an inference for the general population, the people from my sample with different endowments, experience and capital do present different patterns of political compliance. For instance, education can bring someone more socioeconomic capital, as well as a certain illusion of autonomy, but it also imposes a binding power when individuals face a threat from the state. Regarding generational differences, the past experience of the older generation may turn some of their “unthinkable issues” into “unthought issues” for the next generation. What, then, are the implications, for one’s actions and the potential breakthrough of individual subjectivity, of falsifying one’s political attitudes? My evidence shows that, although many people are pessimistic about all kinds of political participation, some tend to keep their awareness, consciousness and rationality despite the pressure from the state and society.

In the final chapter, Chapter 6, I revisit the research question with a cross-reference with the evidence drawn from each empirical chapter, discuss the contributions and empirical implications of my work and lay out some possibilities for further investigation.

Chapter 2 Literature review

In this chapter, I present a rationale of my project with reflective discussions of the existing literature. To be more specific, I begin by illustrating the existing theoretical discussion of legitimation of the state and showing why governmentality in modern society needs investigation. I present the special context of transitional authoritarian regimes, and the way institutional characteristics shape the state's efforts to maintain the public's compliance. Following the theoretical setup, in Section 2, I demonstrate the substantive features of transitional state socialism and the relevant theories both in general and as applied to China. By elaborating on the social changes in transitional societies, I clarify the opportunities and risks that authority faces in its governance, highlighting the required skills as scholars see them. But how about the other side of the power relationship—the “people”? In Section 3, I address the individual's subjectivity facing state power, how personal attitudes and actions are shaped by governmentality, and the possibilities of “counter-conduct” that people in general have as well as people in non-democratic regimes.

Section 1 Why legitimacy matters and how the existence of the public shapes statecraft?

Understanding state power: “legitimacy” and “governmentality”

A Weberian conceptualization of legitimacy and consent

Any power relation reveals the need of the dominant side to maintain its authority. The power relation between the state and the individual, which has been a fundamental topic in political sociology and political science, is a typical dominant-dominated power relationship. For a modern state, its survival requires order, stability and effective governance; all demanding considerable co-operation from its population. While differing in content, several classical studies share the logic that the legitimation of the government secures enough co-operation to maintain the system's capacity to withstand shock and failure (Giddens, 1981; Lipset & Man, 1960; Tilly, 2017). From legitimacy, the subordinates in a power relationship can obtain moral grounds for co-operation and obedience and the power or authority gets the right to expect their compliance.

Max Weber offered the most influential definition of legitimacy in political sociology. He wrote, “the basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a belief, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent

prestige”(Weber, 1978, p. 382). By combining a descriptive and normative typology of legitimacy, Beetham identified three distinct elements of a general concept of legitimacy: in his definition, it conforms to established rules, which can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate groups, and there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation (Beetham, 1991). Developed from the Weberian tradition, Lipset (1959) gave a clearer definition of the legitimacy of political systems, stating that this term “involves the capacity of a political system to engender and sustain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society”. Linz (1988) also defined legitimacy as “the belief that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the political institutions are better than others that might be established and therefore can demand obedience”.

The importance of “belief” is also true in a Gramscian analysis of power relations, since social groups or institutions are fairly capable of generating a hegemonic order by modifying the common sense of them. “Manufacture consent” lies in the core of Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony” (1971), which refers to the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by the dominant social class over others. The state’s main function in the modern period is educative and formative; it can train individuals to accept the existing production processes through influencing their “common sense”. In this way, the state can diffuse its power through civil society. Unlike “political society”, which works through force, “civil society” operates by constructing consent through schools, the media, and so on. As Gramsci said, “they (civil society) operate without sanctions or compulsory obligations but still exert a collective pressure... and obtain objective results in the evolution of customs, ways of thinking, morality, etc.” (Gramsci et al., 1971, p. 242). In addition, when a state is experiencing “transformation” and the “redefinition” of a previous ideological and institutional hegemonic structure, it may help itself by re-articulating ideological factors and rebuilding a new world-view for the governed (Gramsci et al., 1971).

In practice, the consent of subordinates can be manufactured with obvious or subtle persuasions. For instance, Burawoy extended Gramsci’s discussion of cultural hegemony to the micro dimension of the factory (Burawoy, 1982), and specified that “the economic process of producing things constituted as a game is simultaneously a political process of reproducing social relations and an ideological process producing consent to these relations” (Burawoy, 2012, p. 194). His work suggests that unlike a despotic regime, using arbitrary coercion which could create uncertainty for its subordinates, a hegemonic regime will persuade its subordinates to accept the idea that the social structure is a game and to hand over consent. Like the Gramscian

elaboration, the concept of consent manufacture through persuasion is also found in studies of communication, such as that of Herman and Chomsky (2010). These writers developed a propaganda model to describe the situation where the media select specific information to shape the public's consensus regarding certain issues. They acknowledged that "it is much more difficult to see a propaganda system at work where the media are private and formal censorship is absent", than the system "in countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, [with] monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship" (Herman & Chomsky, 2010). Nevertheless, they still managed to identify the societal function of five structural control mechanisms that the media employ to deny public's access to alternative views in the US.

Sources of authority and state rationality

If legitimacy is crucial for the modern state, then why exactly are people willing to entrust (or change) their consent to the state and to support it? Discussions of the source of authority are indispensable if we want to investigate the different mechanisms used by modern states to exert power over their populations. Weber distinguished three ideal types of legitimacy. a) Traditional legitimacy rests "on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authorities under them" (Weber, 1978, p. 215). Under traditional legitimacy, the subordinates offer their support to the authority as laid down in enduring ritual; b) Charismatic legitimacy rests "on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber, 1978, p. 215). Subordinates offer their consent with a genuine belief in the personality of the authority; and c) Legal-rational legitimacy rests "on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands" (Weber, 1978, p. 215). In the modern world it has tended to outdo the other ideal types. To be more specific, competitive elections form the basis of legalized government in liberal democratic countries. Offe (1987) specifically argued that the rule of law, representative democracy, and provision for "civilian security" through the welfare state are three components of the modern state-citizen relationship. In this relationship, the state turns to the "people" as its ultimate source of authority, while the citizens, having lost both the feudal forms of paternalistic "welfare" and individual economic autarchy, depend upon the state (Offe, 1987). Offe's work is an approach to understanding the relationship between the state's behaviours and individuals' choices in giving consent. Similar explanations can be found in Lipset's work (1994), which states that legal-rational authority can work because of a popular acceptance of the appropriateness of the system of rules under which they have won and held office.

Among Weber's three types of authority, bureaucracy is the core feature of the rational-legal authority because it constitutes the most efficient and rational way in which human activity can be organized and because systematic processes and organized hierarchies are necessary to maintain order, maximize efficiency, and eliminate favouritism (Weber, 1978). It benefits from the process of rationalization and is indispensable for modern states, enterprises and many other organizations in modern society. A typical bureaucratic system has many unique characteristics: hierarchical organization, formal lines of authority, division of labour, officials with expert training, and so on. As Weber wrote, "Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of files, continuity, unit, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administered organization" (Weber, 1978, p. 978). Inside the bureaucracy structure, bureaucrats or officers are positioned hierarchically, and their actions are regulated by strict rules. Each of them is assigned proper duties and their cooperation makes possible even large-scale organizational operations. Its efficiency, power and strict hierarchy make the operation of bureaucracy especially appropriate to state administered benefits; which also provide the society and state with rationality and efficiency.

The Foucauldian state: Governmentality of the modern state

In capturing the nature of the state rationality and state politics, Foucault also grounds it on "power", but focuses on the techniques that the state use to rule the population. Foucault's approach to deciphering state power focus on its technologies, governance objects and calculation, or, in his words, "the state is nothing more than the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities" (Foucault, Davidson, & Burchell, 2008). Foucault developed his view of governmental rationality from the philosophy of Perrière and Machiavell and rescaled the meaning of governance. State governance is governing ***a sort of complex of men and things***; the objects of governance include not only men and their complex relationship with things (such as resources), but also the relationship of things with things, such as customs, dependency, habits, and so on. Foucault also recognized that government has a purpose: it arranges—or, in his word, "***disposes***"—things for a particular end, a suitable end for each of the things to be governed (Foucault, 2009, p. 99). In line with the ***things*** of various types, the ***ends*** for the state fall into multiple types. For instance, increasing state wealth, maintaining a reasonably-sized population, sanctioning obedience to the laws, and so on. What is important for the state is the tactics that might be employed to attain the various targets.

The governmentalized state developed from the late 16th and 17th centuries and in the 18th century the emergence of the population problem brought into play the art of government when the traditional family model disappeared before the exponentially increasing size of the governed. Instruments such as statistics were devised for governments to use in pursuit of a better “being” (with reference, for example, to the population’s condition, its wealth, longevity, health, etc.); in other words, governmentality, in acting directly on the population, made it both the target and the tactic. Governing the population obliges the state to pay attention to both the individualized interests of each person and the interwoven interests of the entire population. However, from the viewpoint of the governed, even though the population is aware of its own needs and aspirations, it is in most cases basically ignorant of ongoing governmentality. I will discuss individuals’ reactions and choices confronted by various forms of statecraft in Section 3.

How then are the details of governmentality to be depicted? Foucault recognized three dimensions of meaning for governmentality as state rationality. “Governmentality” refers to “the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of state power ... having the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and the apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. Governmentality can also be identified as “the tendency, the line of force, that... has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses and the development of a series of knowledges. Moreover, “governmentality” can be understood as “the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually ‘governmentalized’” (Foucault, 2009, p. 109).

The governmentalization of the state became prevalent at the start of the 19th century, and has since become constantly modified and redefined. When the government changes its practices, the state itself is also reconstructed. The tactics of government allow the continual definition of the “state’s domain, what is public and what private ... [the] state’s competence”, and most importantly, the “survival and limits of the state” (Foucault, 2009, p. 109). In other words, the state’s governmentality provides a window for scholars to make backward inductions about the design and realization of state power.

Legitimacy and governmentality in non-democratic and transitional countries

Importance of ideological legitimacy, censorship and technological statecraft

Countries without representative institutions and the rule of law differ in many ways as regard state legitimacy and governmentality. The distinctive socioeconomic and historical constraints in these countries have largely shaped the logic and presentation of statecraft. Current theories propose that the governance in these non-democratic regimes relies more on ideological legitimacy—through knowledge construction and censorship—and performance-based legitimacy than it does in their democratic counterparts.

Ideological legitimacy can be drawn from traditional, religious or other established forms of belief and provides authorities with a reasoned right to rule. As Douglas (1986, pp. 45-46), “to acquire legitimacy, every kind of institution needs a formula that finds its rightness in reason and in nature ... for a convention to turn into a legitimate social institution it needs a parallel cognitive convention to sustain it”. Ideological legitimacy also provides the governed with an interpretative schema of order. Empirical studies in East Asian countries have verified that the Confucian scholar-official still functions in the psycho-cultural construct of East Asian societies (Tu & Du, 1996). Shin’s study (2012), based on the Asian Barometer Survey, also argued that most East Asian countries with a Confucian legacy tend to adopt a “paternalistic meritocracy”, take a pragmatic approach regarding economic development and overlook the procedural meaning of democracy.

In non-democratic regimes where state censorship is easier to implement and state propaganda is much more powerful, the reliance on ideological legitimation is heavier than elsewhere. In these regimes, authority commits to ideas and uses ideas rather than normative procedures to derive policies. For instance, Linz argued that in authoritarian regimes, the leadership is constrained by “ill-defined but predictable norms, limited pluralism, [and] distinctive mentalities” that fall short of a “full-blown ideology” (Linz, Greenstein, & Polsby, 1975, p. 297). Ideological indoctrination (combined with mass terror, as in Nazi Germany, Stalin’s Russia and Maoist China) compresses the space of societal interaction, and closely supervises the amount of information that individuals may access. As Thompson described it, “lonely’ people” due to a lack of “individual autonomy”, “find fulfilment in the totalitarian ideology that offers a pseudo-community, with the ‘mission’ to build a new society in which scarcity is abolished and human happiness achieved” (Thompson, 2002, p. 82). The elements used by the state to persuade its people that the authority has the right to rule change over time and with the challenges the state encounters. They may be summed up as collective honour,

moral merits or the legacy of tradition and can also be egoism's rational choices. In China's case after the "reform and opening up" in 1978, when the social and economic scenario shifted away from the old communist system it used to rely on, scholars were keen to figure out the new world-view that the state used to manufacture consent along with other skills for maintaining legitimacy. I give more details of the substantive context of China's transition and the theories explaining the Chinese government's statecraft in Section 2.

The development of technology provides authoritarian regimes with more tools for implementing "meticulous governance". For instance, e-governance and big data⁴ have made it easier for the state to collect information about the population and conduct risk evaluations; GPS technology had yielded more precise measurements of the territory; AI skills enable the police to identify and locate criminals in a crowd. With better technology, the state could manage, model, share and transfer data, turning the "uncontrollable" into "controllable". For instance, with a smart supervision system, big data can analyse the correlations between events of small probability and improve the prediction of social risks, thereby reducing the unpredictability of public crises. This makes it easier for the state to manage a mobile and fragmented society. All these skills extend the state's infrastructural power into every aspect of society and individual lives, navigate for the state's governmentality and help implement the state's will.

Performance-based legitimacy and welfare provision in non-democratic regimes

Some scholars (such as White, 1986) argue that socio-economic performance can also be a form of legitimacy basis for the government, even though no well-constructed theoretical schema has been used in sociology.⁵ Performance legitimacy differs from other ideal types of Weberian sources of authority in that it is constructed from the outcome of governmental behaviours. The population decides on its consent and support after reviewing the social and economic benefits received from the authority. Among the Weberians, Lipset (1959) has touched on the importance of state performance to a regime's stability, where state performance "means the actual performance of a political system, the extent to which it satisfies the basic functions of government as defined by the expectations of most members of a society and the expectations of powerful groups within it which might threaten the system, such as the armed force". Yet, he separates performance, which he relates to the "effectiveness" of the government, from legitimacy, since he believes that "effectiveness is primarily an instrumental dimension, legitimacy

⁴ "The project instruction on 'Big data driven management and policy making' Project (2017)" (Chinese), <http://www.nsf.gov.cn/publish/portal0/zdyjjh/info69876.htm>. [Accessed 2019-06-12].

⁵ The notion of "performance legitimacy" is frequently mentioned in political science studies and also used in the literature of organizational sociology.

is more affective and evaluative” (Lipset, 1959, p. 86). However, Zhao (2009) insists that instrumental performance directly shapes the evaluations of the public. Nannestad and Paldam (1994) also identified the “vote-popularity function” in explaining public support for the government as one of the functions of the economic and political outcomes.

Generally speaking, we can split the performance-based legitimacy of the state into three, corresponding to the political, economic and social fields in modern society where the authority can act to gain and maintain legitimacy with the public. The regime can consider providing civil liberties such as free speech, an independent press, the rule of law and genuinely competitive elections, among others. It can also provide other products, including economic benefits and social welfare.

The three types of performance are naturally different. The political rights⁶ issued by the authority refer to “the rights that involve participation in the establishment or administration of a government and are usually held to entitle the adult citizen to the exercise of the franchise, the holding of public office and other political activities” (Merriam Webster). Political rights generally include the right to vote, to be elected, to organize political associations, and so on. They are protected by the constitution and are necessary for citizens’ effective participation in politics. Habermas (1994, p. 2) argued that political rights are “positive liberties”, since these rights “guarantee not freedom from external compulsion but the possibility of participation in a common praxis, through the exercise of which citizens can first make themselves into what they want to be—politically autonomous authors of a community of free and equal persons”. Through the rights of association, free speech, the press and many other practices, citizens can insert their own interest as political input and influence the formation of government, the making of policies, and so on.

Economic rights such as work, property and economic security promise people access to the benefits of development and material resources. Some scholars have stated that economic rights are a “basic need” of individuals and should be protected even before the issue of adequate political rights (e.g., Donnelly, 1981; R. Howard, 1983; Shue, 1996; Streeten, 1980). Beetham (1995, p. 44) argued that, “in a world rich in resources and the accumulation of human knowledge, everyone ought to be guaranteed the basic means for sustaining life”. A broad sense of economic rights implies more than basic needs or survival; individuals should be permitted to pursue larger profits within the institutional structure. In other words, the fulfilment of economic rights triggers a distribution of resources.

⁶ Political rights are generally related to civil rights despite some subtle differences between them (Marshall, 1964).

In modern societies, the benefits brought by social protection, assistance and insurance are classified as individuals' social rights, whatever the regime. The concept of social rights derives from sociologist T. H. Marshall's work "Class, Citizenship and Social Development" (1964). His theory identifies three elements of citizenship—political, civil and social. One significant and valuable point in his theory is that the concept of social rights enabled him to introduce the positive notion of liberty into citizenship: rights to welfare and resources, such as the rights to health, education and a dignified level of social and economic wellbeing, regardless of economic standing (Plant & Jones, 1991). Social rights are inherently different from political rights and civil rights since they refer to claims on the redistribution of resources and claims to benefits guaranteed by the state, but not claims made against the state (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000). The principle of social rights addresses such questions as "Who should provide social services and which groups should get what kinds of social resources?". Therefore, social rights are more probable issued in regimes where the authorities are hesitating to issue political rights.

These three kinds of rights are very important to the authority's rule. However, a sustainable level of legitimacy does not always need them all to be guaranteed. Moreover, we might expect a conscious or unconscious shift in the legitimacy-base when the state perceives a potential crisis of legitimacy. We see many combinations of performance legitimacy in practice. In countries without competitive elections and other political rights, the government may work on other benefits in order to gain support and maintain the stability of the state. For instance, in the absence of proper political rights less developed countries usually prioritise economic growth and development (Young, 2008). Communist regimes generally provide a high level of social welfare: a comprehensive educational and health care system, security of employment and stable prices, modest but steadily rising living standards and upward career mobility, all of which are sustained by high and steady rates of economic growth within a framework of public ownership and central planning (White, 1986). Lipset noted that "non-traditional authoritarian regimes are more brittle than democratic ones"; and "if autocracies fail economically and/or socially, their lack of legitimacy will facilitate a breakdown" (Lipset, 1995, p. 9).

Theoretical studies in political science shed more light on the reason why the state is more likely to deliver social rights in non-democratic countries. Some scholars highlight the paternalistic role of the authority in explaining the public welfare in those regimes (Beck, 1997; Leung & Nann, 1995). A functionalist approach may expect the state to provide certain social services in exchange for people's loyalty (Haggard & Kaufman, 2008; Rimlinger, 1971). Karshenas and Moghadam (2006) argued that many non-democratic countries in the Middle East and North Africa have since the 1960s achieved quite remarkable improvements in their

health and educational indicators, which have contributed to the legitimacy of the new post-colonial nations. Therefore, welfare provision can be used as a tool for social control, or to maintain social stability and legitimacy (Cook, 1993, 2013; Nechemias, 1980; Nullmeier & Kaufmann, 2010) and even works as a way to promote economic development (Rudra, 2008).

Many scholars have pointed out that the public support for Chinese government is constructed upon the performance of China's economic progress since the transformation from the former state, which was partly founded on an equalitarian system of social welfare. In the early stages of China's "reform and opening up", the state imported the market principle to drive development and address such political consequences of radical communism as the "Great Leap Forward" and the "Cultural Revolution". At the time, the economic benefits brought by the high rate of economic growth led to an increase in public support for the state. Meanwhile, the social rights that accompanied the planned economy were more or less discarded. From the beginning of the 21st century, the persistent substantial slowdown in the economic growth rate has provoked questions about the formal theoretical model of "economic performance legitimacy" (C. K. Lee & Zhang, 2013). The growing consciousness of public rights and the changing demographic scenario of the society indicated that the government's legitimacy could be compromised by widespread public dissatisfaction if government failed to provide basic social welfare (Booth & Seligson, 2009). Some scholars suggest that the expansion of redistributive policies, such as delivering pensions and health insurance, hence became important tools for consolidating the legitimacy of the state (Meng & Zhu, 2015).

Transitional state and potential legitimation crisis

The issue of state legitimacy and governmentality become more complicated when a regime is experiencing transition. Legitimacy can be earned and brings a "legitimacy crisis" when it is lost. Lipset distinguished two general kinds of legitimation crisis generated from the "crisis of change". This occurs "during a transition to a new social structure, if (1) the status of major conservative institutions is threatened during the period of structural change; and (2) all the major groups in the society do not have access to the political system in the transitional period, or at least as soon as they develop political demands" (Lipset & Man, 1960, p. 78). As examples, a type (1) crisis occurs during the process of transformation from an aristocratic monarchy to a democratic republic and a type (2) crisis can be identified from the emerging of the bourgeoisie. The difference between these two types is that the first is a systematic crisis of custom while the second is specifically related to the effectiveness of the current system. As Lipset noted, "after a new social structure is established, if the new system is unable to sustain the expectations of

major groups (on the grounds of ‘effectiveness’) for a long enough period to develop legitimacy upon the new basis, a new crisis may develop” (Lipset & Man, 1960, p. 82).

Habermas had a specific view of legitimacy and legitimation problems in the capitalist world. He argued that, in advanced capitalism, the state has two main roles: “on the one hand, the state apparatus regulates the entire economic cycle by means of global planning; on the other it improves the conditions under which capital is exploited” (1976, p. 366). The state as a ruler needs mass loyalty to perform these roles. However, the political system cannot itself ensure loyalty to its policies. Through the interdependency of the cultural system, economic system and political system, the problem of a motivation crisis—“syndromes of civil and familial-vocational privatism”—“ultimately shifts to a legitimation crisis in the political system of capitalist countries” (Jürgen Habermas, 1975, p. 75).

Because a transitional regime is more susceptible to legitimacy crises, the state must be more cautious and has dynamic (changing) ideas of governmentality. Even though China features a different polity and culture, the legitimation problem applies equally to China as to the West. The common factor in regard to Lipset’s two types of crisis, for Habermas’s capitalist states and my case of China after 1978, is that all of these cases are dealing with social transitions. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the transitional process of China’s economy and society did bring many problems for the authority. China is not necessarily experiencing a legitimation crisis; however, the government is working to manage its legitimacy in order to prevent a crisis from emerging (Sun, 2004) and adjusts its statecraft accordingly.

Section 2: Transitional State Socialism and authoritarian resilience: why did the dramatic social change in China not incur a regime failure?

In discussing governmentality and statecraft, the answer to “what’s special about China’s case?” involves three important aspects of the state. First of all, as an authoritarian regime, it has no rule of law, no normal legitimacy and the state is more capable than a democratic one of using unconstitutional power. The second aspect concerns the special ideological foundation and historical legacy of China: as an heir of communism, the authority relies heavily on the “red ideology” in the political culture. Finally, starting from the early 1980s, the state has been leading a large-scale socioeconomic reform by bringing the market principle into all the dimensions of social life. The transition process brought by marketization has entailed fundamental changes in distribution, redistribution and the notion of social justice in Chinese society. I have discussed the specific constraints posed by authoritarianism on the governmentality of the state in Section 1. In this section I further elaborate on the feature of a communist regime in transition (taking China as an example) and discuss the respective governmentalities.

Transitional state socialism in general and in China: similarities and differences

The late 20th century witnessed large-scale institutional change in communist regimes. The process of de-stalinization, liberation and democratization distort central planning and a transition to state socialism. Identified as redistributive (Polanyi & MacIver, 1944), “state socialism” features a centrally directed distribution of goods and services by a structure of social organization from lower production units to the centre and back again. Within state socialist regimes, the political, economic and social affairs of the whole country were monopolized by the undivided power of the Marxist-Leninist party-state (Kornai, 1992). As a special form of society, state socialism enjoys its own institutional mechanism regarding development, production relations, redistribution and social welfare. For instance, Kornai identified the *shortage economy* and *soft budget constraints* that guide the reproduction and distribution of state socialism; and finds that the *soft budget constraint syndrome* is usually associated with the paternalistic role of the state vis-à-vis economic organizations and private firms, non-profit institutions and households (Kornai, 1992). In his definition, the shortage economy suffers from general, frequent, intensive and chronic shortages in all spheres of the economy and results in low efficiency, technical backwardness and conservatism.

The basic principle of state socialist regimes is that material resources are distributed through central planning and a political identity system. Taking China as an example, the state

organizes and governs individuals through *work units* (Danwei, a place of employment) in urban areas and *people's communes* (Renmin Gongshe, an administrative institution) in rural areas. These economic and administrative systems pose some serious challenges to continuous governance: the collective ownership hinders efficiency and incentives for improving productivity; the scarcity of resources cultivates an inequality manipulated by the privileged group, in other words, the unsustainability of the institutional setting, led to pressure for reform for state socialist countries in the late 20th century (Szelenyi & Szelenyi, 1994; Zhou, 2011). In China, importing the market principle was also an important way of overcoming the political consequences of radical communist movements, such as the “Great Leap Forward” and the “Cultural Revolution”.

In both East European and Asian countries, the economy takes the lead in the transition process. The new economic mechanism of a market-rational or market-oriented model operated first in Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union and China. As Szelenyi and Kostello (1996, p. 1089) noted, “the crucial change of circumstances was that private economic activities became legal”. Private initiatives rose and entrepreneurial activities increased in the expanded market. In China, the economic reform in rural areas began with the adoption of a household responsibility system and urban areas followed by promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship. The agricultural market, industrial market and labour market grew out of “plans”. Meanwhile, the prices were freed and determined solely by the market in many Eastern European countries. The mass privatization of state enterprises under the political mandate formed the driving force for recovery and growth in the early 1990s. At the same time, China’s Township-Village Enterprises (TVEs) in rural areas operated in the form of local government-controlled firms that to a certain extent liberated and decentralized the property rights (Y. Huang, 2001; Qian, 2002). As Bian concluded, China’s reform has involved a gradual process in which public and private economic institutions intersect with each other; economic segmentation links the state monopoly sector and the private sector; and a dual logic of market competition and interest politics underlies the reform and stratification processes (Bian, 2002; Bian & Qiu, 2000).

Beyond all the similarities, China had some specific features that have shaped the process and performance of its transition. The differences also triggered lively and fruitful debates in the theoretical explorations of the social scientists. One of the most important differences is the degree of fulfilment of state socialism. Unlike the Soviet Union, which expanded its public welfare to the whole urban and rural labour force, before its economic reform China primarily favoured the workers of the urban state sector (Walder, 1995). The urban labour force enjoyed guaranteed employment (the “iron rice bowl”), egalitarian distribution and cradle-to-grave

welfare coverage (K.-l. Ngok, 2010), whereas in rural areas public welfare was basically a co-operative system. Through this system, welfare responsibility was shared publicly and collectively, in what was called the *Maoist moral economy* (Perry, 1999). Pei (1996, p. 135) differentiated these Soviet and Chinese types as “complete state-socialist economies” and “incomplete state-socialist economies”, arguing that the difference in the scope of the socialist welfare state at the micro-level deeply shaped the response.

In addition to the different level of involvement in state socialism, China's reform, unlike that in many post-communist countries, *de facto* observed a continuity of polity as well as a continuity of official ideology. As discussed in Section 1, ideology can be used to provide legitimacy for the state. It defines the rightful source of authority, provides criteria of collective interest, group identity and common knowledge. The communist regimes rely heavily on ideological legitimacy. For instance, the revolutionary ideology and communist ideals gave the CCP legitimacy during the civil war period and the earliest years of the PRC's formation. It replaced the traditional idea that the political authority came with the “mandate of Heaven” and theorized the CCP's right to rule with “historical materialism, class struggle and scientific socialism” (Guo, 2003, p. 8). The idea that socialism is more advanced and is destined to replace capitalism is promoted and believed by the top leaders, intellectuals and civilians.

Although the collapse of the Soviet Union indicated to some an “end of ideology”, China never gave up its reliance on ideological legitimacy of communism (Holbig & Gilley, 2010). David Lane (2007) compared the degree of political and economic reform in all transitional countries, including those of Latin American, saying that China conducted “great economic reform” but “limited or no political reform”. Moreover, unlike its Eastern European and former Soviet Union companions, China in its official discourse regarding the reform insisted on the self-perfecting correction of its own communism even though the Party is aware of the fading of socialist ideology (Gilley & Holbig, 2009). Political reform is never a choice for the top authority and the “reform and opening up” was more like an effort to “strengthen the normative and functional basis of one-party rule and the party's capacity to govern” (Holbig, 2008, p. 18). The idea of “pragmatism” (such as “It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it can catch mice”) promoted by Deng Xiaoping said nothing about the change to communist ideology and the primary leadership of the party which actually brought new life to the “worn-out socialist tenets” (Holbig & Gilley, 2010, p. 405).

Moreover, instead of completely abandoning traditional culture as in the first 30 years of the PRC, the refurbished ideological legitimacy in China after the “reform and opening up” was

and still is justified by many notions from traditional political culture. Concepts such as the “rule by virtue” (*ren zhi*, 仁治), “popular consent” (*min ben*, 民本), “established rules” (*he fa*, 合法), “benefiting the people” (*li min*, 利民) and “equal distribution” (*jun fu*, 均富) have been used to justify the rule of the CCP (Guo, 2003, p. 17). The concepts of top leaders, such as “Three Representations” (in the Jiang era), “Harmonious Society” (in the Hu era), “Eight Honours and Eight Disgraces” (in the Xi era) are all vivid examples (Holbig, 2008). Therefore, a more consistent political institution and ideological inertia indicate the strengthening dependence on routine during the transformation process.

Current transitional theories: market transition and societal transition

The emergence of a market led to a change in the principles of distribution, the rate of return on human capital, the social structure and the formation of “transitional theory” in sociology. Sociologists have debated the paths, motivations, effects and prospects in regard to the transition from state socialism in Eastern Europe, East and South-East Asia and the former Soviet Union. Several groups of theories stand out among these explorations, including transitional market theory and transitional society theory.

The market transition theory and related debates focus on the way in which economic institutions change and the emergence of the market leads to a change in the mechanism of social stratification. In understanding the dynamics of institutional change, some studies have taken a teleological approach and debated whether the transition process is turning into a new capitalism. In constructing a “neo-classic sociological theory”, Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley sought a Weberian interpretation of the transition process in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and addressed the making of capitalism without capitalists (1998). Burawoy echoed Polanyi and labelled the transition process a ***second transformation***, in which the socialist countries have descended into capitalism (Burawoy, 2000). Other scholars have rejected such an approach, which implies a common trajectory and common destination for the state (Heyns, 2005). Stark (1991) suggests that post-socialism transformation is a path-dependent re-adjustment of current institutions to fit into new circumstances. Mario Nuti cited the example of Belarus to explore whether a reformed “market socialism” could be a resilient and sustainable alternative to capitalism, or in his words, “a command economy without central planning” (Nuti, 2000, 2007). Oi and Walder argued that the Chinese economic transition is de facto a process of decentralized redistribution where the market mechanism has been used to complement the process and the state is still on “this side of the barricade” (1999). Whatever the nature of

China's economic reform, the economic benefits it has brought to the public have contributed considerably to the acceptability of the authority.

Other writers have concentrated on the causal process through which the emerging institutions have transformed the existing societal structure. They have engaged in lively debates regarding the social inequality in transitional socialist societies (Cao & Nee, 2000; Nee, 1989, 1996; Szelenyi & Kostello, 1996). Ivan Szelenyi's (1978) theory of social inequality in state socialism asserts that the state sets the price of labour from an administrative perspective and through this it obtains a surplus from non-market trading. Social inequality is thus generated during the state's redistribution process, which in return causes discontent and instability among the disadvantaged social groups such as rural residents. Constructing his theory on Szelenyi's hypothesis, Victor Nee used China's case, arguing that the "market-based power, incentives and opportunities" led to a decline in social inequality, since the "transition to a market-like economy should result in higher returns to human capital characteristics" (1989, 1991, 2000). To contradict Nee's conclusion, Bian and Logan (1996), for example, bring evidence that the urban unit system persisted and maintained a return rate of political capital and Rona-Tas has contended that the redistributive power was transformed into the private property of bureaucrats (Rona-Tas, 1994).

In order to synthesise the debate and construct an inclusive theory, Szelenyi and Kostello attributed the resulting social inequality to different types of market penetration: local markets, socialist mixed economies and capitalist-oriented economies (1996). They treated the process of "Hungary and Poland from the mid-1960s until around 1980 and, with some differences from the East European cases, in China between 1977 and the mid-1980" as the emergence of a local market where and when the equalizing effect could be observed (Szelenyi & Kostello, 1996, p. 1088). Later on, in Eastern Europe between 1980 and 1989 and in China after 1985, the socialist mixed economies dominated and market competition began to play a greater role, leading to a dual system of inequality (Szelenyi & Kostello, 1996). In all the Eastern European countries, the privatization of public property became state policy after 1989 (while in China the public sector has been maintained briefly). Szelenyi treated these as capitalist-oriented economies in which inequality was generated mainly by the market. 20 years later, Jackson and Evans (2017) used comparative longitudinal data, suggesting that the new transfer institutions that developed in central and Eastern Europe after the move from socialism to the market have led to a decline in social fluidity.

Some studies on transitional state socialism focus on the social structure change per se and the bottom-up pressure that drives the reform. Sun's research on China calls for greater attention to be paid to the transformative relationship between the state and the society. He stresses that the changing political and economic systems have a profound effect on the possible formation of civil society and the rebuilding of society (2004, 2005). Howard's research (2003) displays similar concerns about civil society in Russia and Eastern and Central Europe. A growing interest in theories investigating societal transition is the process of the solidification of social classes: we are observing clearer class boundaries and class identities and also witnessing a decline in social mobility. Part of the reason for this may be the imbalance of social rights between social groups. In other words, people of different positions and endowments enjoy different access to resources and many of them have begun to appeal against this injustice. As Sun described it, the entire society is in a situation of "fracture" (2006). Extended sociological research has highlighted the lack of motivation of social change from the bottom, due to the blocking of social mobility and the deteriorating political environment (Yu, 2011).

In addition to the above transitional theories, scholars have also paid special attention to the subtle and perplexing change in the mainstream culture and public opinion in transitional societies. People's attitudes to redistribution, development and the state-society relationship are heavily influenced by their life experiences, demographic factors and the institutional changes that have socialized people's perceptions and attitudes. Thus, scholars have made multi-dimensional and seemingly contradictory discoveries.

In their work on Russia's reform, Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1997) found that the citizens in post-communist Russia do not embrace the ideology of a free market democracy and that their attitudes to politics and the state are deeply shaped by the socialist legacy. White's study, using data from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine from 1993 to 2006, pointed out that while there is generally a positive attitude to the political changes, the social and economic shortcomings of the transformation have led to public disapproval (White, 1986). Evidence from Eastern Europe also supports this observation, since "literally over a single night, all the things that had been taken for granted were no longer valid" and many people suffer from a "serious identity crisis" (Ekman & Linde, 2005, p. 357). The socialist institutional settings not only equalized everyone's income and social risk, but also cultivated a strong belief in an omnipotent government. Munro took the discussion a step further and argued that the persistent scenario of the socialist legacy has also deeply shaped citizens' political behaviour (Munro, 2006).

But there are also some different trends. Ukraine and Russia, despite the widespread suffering caused by the reforms, still harbour the belief that the liberal recipes of marketization and privatization could work, if they were properly implemented (D. Lane, 2007). Even the traditional left wing has accepted the neo-liberal rhetoric and private property introduced by the reform policies. Gallagher (2011) deciphered some similar phenomena in China's reform era and found that individual merit is highly encouraged while "waiting, relying [on] and demanding" governmental help is criticized. The official propaganda promotes the notion that "the market economy doesn't pity the weak" and people should take responsibility for their fate. In addition, Gallagher's work implies that a significant group of people in fact buy into this new ideological formulation.

From the previous discussion, we can identify that transitional state socialism poses a special context for the society and the state. Human capital, natural resources and many other non-market values are dragged into the accelerated commodification process. Social inequality is expanding while the social classes are solidifying. For individuals, the persisting illusion of government omnipotence is mixed with a sense of liberal notions. For governments, their infrastructural power is re-adjusted while the political structure is maintained.

Transitional scenario in the social welfare area: the communist legacy and privatized social rights

The institutional transformations of state socialism in the past few decades have caused another theoretical challenge—fitting the post-communist welfare states into the existing typologies of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990) seems to be particularly complicated. Some studies have made an effort to understand welfare provision in non-democratic contexts by adapt mainstream theories. For instance, in Titmuss's (1974) and Wilensky's (1974) typologies, Soviet Russia was comparable with other countries according to such standards as productivity-based social policy or mass participation conditions. Lipsmeyer also examined six Eastern-Central European countries in which the right-left ideologies "conflict" and showed how this shaped the social policies (Lipsmeyer, 2000). However, the distinctive variations of the main explanatory variables in these theories cause many problems. Most governments in non-Western countries lack the procedural legitimacy of their democratic counterparts. In addition, the civil society in these countries is fragmented and much weaker in pursuing people's social rights (Ferge, 1997, 2001; Paluckiene, Taljūnaitė, Blom, & Melin, 2000).

In addition to the inconclusive welfare theories, we have seen little attention to the transition of social welfare among all the theories surrounding the transitional events in China.

The shift in social welfare provision away from the communist legacy following the privatization of the economic reform is among the most important changes that have occurred in China. Moreover, because these changes are directly related to people's daily lives, they are obvious to the public. Scholars have investigated the outcomes of the transition process in regard to healthcare, unemployment and poverty, among other issues. But we still need a systematic examination of these outcomes with clear awareness and assessment of the unique combination of the state-individual relationship and the legacy of socialism in transitional societies. Among the current studies, there is too much focus on institutional changes instead of the interactions of the main actors: the public and the state. Few have asked how the government prevents the social welfare reforms of developing into a legitimacy crisis and maintains people's consent to their present social rights. Therefore, my research focuses on the social welfare transformation during this specific period, to discern the role of state power through a) the interactions of the public and the state in allocating the responsibility for welfare; b) its knowledge construction on welfare benefits, social justice and redistribution. But first of all, how is the welfare reform in China after 1978 looks like?

The social welfare reform in urban China which was set in motion only in the early 1990s lags slightly behind the economic reform. The main welfare plan for urban enterprise employees in the 1980s and early 1990s was to "reduce welfare expenses, minimize the welfare commitments of SOEs and privatize public services" (C. K. Chan, Ngok, & Phillips, 2008, p. 241). The economic reform brought huge pressure on social welfare. The fund-raising burden was mostly on local governments and affiliated institutions such as hospitals and schools. Individuals and families, if the work unit could not support them, had to rely on their social network or bear the hardship alone. At this stage many people who could not adjust to the new economic relations were disregarded and simply excluded from decent housing, education and medical care. The welfare structure in urban areas at this point was fragmented, localized and parsimonious.

Simply to address the problems caused by the economic reform, the social policy reform made a sluggish start in the SOEs in 1993. The pressure came from the reconstruction of SOEs and the population of laid-off workers. From 1995 to 2002, the total number of SOE workers dropped steeply from 112.6 million to 71.6 million following the selling and bankruptcies of SOEs (C. K. Chan et al., 2008). The government therefore had to establish a new welfare system that tackled the problem of so many SOEs retirements and the newly emerging private enterprises following the market economy. From the mid-1990s, we can see a trend of marketization and privatization in welfare provision, fund-raising and regulations. Moreover, the

connection between welfare accessibility and employment was strongly promoted by the government. The idea that welfare benefits should be restricted to those who contributed to society excluded many disadvantaged social groups from a decent standard of living and in early 2000s. This disparity and social injustice caused considerable problems. Entering the late 2000s and 2010s, the government realized that unfair social redistribution was becoming critical and the social reform in this stage took the direction of selectively expanding its coverage.

The social welfare reform in rural China is less obvious and less dramatic than its urban counterpart—marketization and privatization in the rural economy did not dramatically impair the welfare of rural residents in the 1980s. This was mainly because the welfare provision in rural areas was much more sparse. Before the economic reform the constrained state could not provide comparable compensation for the large numbers of rural residents (more than 80% of the total population in the 1970s and more than 60% in the 1990s), and its development plan was to “prioritises industrialization”. However, the social welfare in rural areas drew policy makers’ attention in the Hu-Wen administration (from 2003) and it gradually received more policy support, such as the “New Rural Collaborative Health Insurance Scheme” (Council, 2002), the “New Rural Old-age Social Insurance Plan” (Council, 2009), and so on. In the same period, the large scale migration of rural workers into the cities in a rapid urbanization process raised the issue of reforming the welfare of migrant workers. Entering the 2010s, the government began to promote more integrated welfare plans (such as “Urban-Rural Residents Basic Old-age Social Insurance Scheme” (Council, 2014)) which covered both rural and urban residents, in order to reduce the previous inequality of the dual track welfare system.

Thus, we can see that the transformation of the socialist basis of welfare, especially in urban areas, has been largely affected by the progress of economic reform and the social problems that this brought. Examples can be found in the reform of the SOEs and the following pension reform for enterprise employees, or the cancellation of the rural healthcare programme in the 1980s. Moreover, the changed content of the new welfare system, for instance, the format of welfare provision, contributors, and calculation of risks are dominated by a mixture of organizational relationships (such as work units, or rural communes) and market-based relations. The government may not be capable of anticipating all the chronic problems, but at least it is constantly adjusting its tactics and policy directions to improve its management of the new social conditions.

Authoritarian resilience: why did the dramatic change not cause a regime failure?

Having reviewed the dramatic changes in socialist China during the reform era, I am fascinated by the following puzzle: how does the Chinese government handle the legitimacy challenges brought by the significant social changes? As I noted in Chapter 1, many famed theories argue that dramatic social changes seriously threaten the dominating regime; for example, the dis-match between social modernization and institutional modernization, as Huntington sees it, tends to produce social frustration and political instability (Huntington, 2006, p. 55); or Moore's argument that if "something happens to threaten and destroy the daily routine" of most people, it may trigger a "revolution from below" (Moore, 1966, p. 204). Acemoglu and Robinson's (2013) theory of "inclusive" and "extractive" institutions even argues that China's "extractive" institutions may cause instability in the long term.

However, despite experiencing some dramatic and significant social changes, the Chinese government has not only survived but also adapted itself and remained the unchallenged authority. Some studies ascribe this to its institutional tricks. For instance, Andrew Nathan uses the term "authoritarian resilience" to describe how the Chinese government has reconsolidated itself from a potential crisis of political instability and governance. He attributes this resilience mostly to the "institutionalization" of the state, such as the normalization of its succession politics and the meritocratic promotion of bureaucrats (2003). In contrast with some scholars who suppose that China's reform did not bring adequate opportunities for political participation for the public, Nathan treats the local-level elections in work-units (T. Shi, 1997), village elections (Manion, 1996), letters-and-visits departments (*Xinjiangju*), people's congresses, and so on as evidence of public participation that has strengthened the CCP's legitimacy among the public as a whole. Steve Tsang (2009) took the further step of developing a framework of "Consultative Leninism" to describe the way that China's new political system keeps the authority in power. Tsang summarized a few key characteristics of this framework that have evolved from the Leninist political machinery. For instance, the authority designs continuous governance reform to pre-empt public demands for democratization, devoting sustained efforts to enhancing the Party's capacity to elicit, respond to and direct changing public opinion (Tsang, 2009). In this framework, the authority also promotes pragmatism in economic and financial management, replacing communism with nationalism.

Scholars such as Yan (2017) have emphasized that the state's capacity to assimilate and absorb is one of the main instruments keeping the state and the party stable. Through political absorption and assimilation, the state can effectively shape a pro-party political identity and

mobilize pro-party political participation. For instance, Yan (2017) traces many political practices on the part of the government to absorb the new social groups generated by the economic development during the reform era. One successful practice was to promote rural business proprietors to village party secretaries in the 1980s and 1990s (for a similar argument see (Tsai, 2013)). Compared to the older generation, these newly emerged local leaders pursuing entrepreneurship are more adaptable to the new situations brought by the transition. In addition, Perry (2017) argued that, by strategically using symbolic resources such as the traditional culture, the state shapes higher education institutions and wins the allegiance of social elites. Other descriptions in existing studies include “a balancing act involving the supply of carrots and sticks” (M. Gallagher & Hanson, 2009), a “Guerrilla Policy Style” (Perry & Heilmann, 2011), “nationalism ideological articulation” (Bernstein, 2013; Gries, 2004), social control through “informal institutions” (Mattingly, 2019) and so on. The work of Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2005) suggests that the regime is efficiently distributing such public goods as infrastructure, but not political rights or freedom of the press, in order to achieve basic support and avoid the risk of being challenged.

These inspiring studies provide various perspectives on the Chinese government’s tactics through radical socio-economic transformations. Nevertheless, a common issue in existing explanations is that statecraft is treated as a set of static and isolated skills rather than a comprehensive, sophisticated design. Moreover, the role of “the ruled”—the people, or population, is missing or not emphasized in shaping specific governmentality. My study, which seeks to identify the dynamic and organic state strategies, will, it is hoped, enrich the discussion of authoritarian resilience by highlighting a two-way story between the state and individuals: the way the state works to manufacture the public’s compliance and the constraints it lays on the effectiveness of the state’s governance and reproduction of legitimacy; the way that individuals can find room for counter-movement and how the existence of possible counter-conduct in return shapes the state’s choices and the rationale of governmentality.

Section 3 Individual subjectivity: “being shaped” and “counter-conduct”

As I have constantly emphasised in the introduction and in the present chapter, the interaction between a modern state and its population is dynamic, organic and relational. State needs to maintain its authority and expects compliance from the governed, who repay the authority with their co-operation and obedience. As a rule, people perceive external socio-economic changes and adjust their political attitudes and behaviour accordingly, but in certain conditions, they may choose to take action and affect the policy process in many ways. In this section, I investigate the interaction of the power relation between state and people, with a focus on individuals’ agency and options in the face of macroscopic notions such as “policy”, “state” and “transitional society”, above all in China’s situation. I pay special attention to the mutual process and probe the mechanism of the population’s “counter-conduct” (as described below) at the individual level.

State power and the population as the state’s strength

The circular “state strength” and a capillary model of power

“This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have recognized in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects” (Foucault, Quote from (Dalal, 2014)).

Foucault’s work on power reminds us how the state-individual power relationship turns people into subjects. State power can effectively change an individual’s ego, identity, self-awareness through the incidents of everyday life. For instance, in his archaeological analysis of “police”, Foucault demonstrated that the truth of “police” is that “man” acts as its subject. Moreover, “man” is thereby motivated to devote himself to “[making] possible the perfection of the state” (Foucault, 2009, p. 322).

But how exactly can a state achieve the objectification of its population? Foucault identified three modes: dividing practices, scientific classifications and subjectification through the process of self-formation and self-understanding (Foucault, 2009). From the viewpoint of the state, it’s important for people to be virtuous, to be obedient and to be workers and not idlers: the good quality of the state depends upon the good quality of its people (Foucault, 2009: p322). The objective of the state is the control of and responsibility for men’s activity insofar as this activity constitutes a differential element in the development of the state’s forces and a constitutive element of the state’s strength (Foucault, 2009, p. 322). In this case, there is a circle

which “starts from the state as a power of rational and calculated intervention on individuals and comes back to the state as a growing set of forces, or forces to be developed, passing through the life of individuals, which will now be precious to the state simply as life”; both the state’s strength and individual felicity (i.e. people’s “well-being”) are embedded in it (Foucault, 2009, p. 327). Therefore, what we see as the population’s happiness, wealth, and satisfaction ultimately become the strength of the state.

The circular strength of the state through the people is embedded in the societal, economic and institutional relations, working in a subtle and capillary way. For instance, in a liberal society, the social relations are infiltrated by the economy, the civil society becomes a sign of the economic connections throughout the population. Civil society therefore works as a governmental technology, or as the correlate of a technology of government, the rational measure of which must be juridically pegged to an economy understood as a process of production and exchange (Foucault et al., 2008, p. 296). The Chinese state may not display its power through civil society, but it showed its changing strength through other forms of state-individual relations. In China’s transition process, we can observe an emerging shift from the old unit-/commune-based connection to organizational/political status and the occupation-based economic connection. The art of governmentality had to change accordingly. In the old connection, each person’s anti-risk rationality towards uncertainties (economic and social) was organized in institutions, but the marketization reform has added an individualized anti-risk rationality. In this case, state power through institutions and through economic technology combined has allowed the authority to be more capable of managing the population’s desires and choices.

The state may also use some rhetoric and symbolic practices, such as spectacles to achieve its dominance and control over the society (Wedeen, 1997). In Wedeen’s case of Asad’s cult in Syria, the state power works through spectacles in the way that the leader was deified as omnipotent while also pan-individualized. The previous feature operates to produce power and state building since “the systems of signification are consumed, upheld, contested and subverted” (p.18); while the latter feature generates the community and build the nation since the leader is no one, but everyone. Individual’s belief and rationality is reshaped in the process of collective performance, during which “everyone in his or her own way is both a victim and a supporter of the system” (p.76).

Being shaped: how individuals incorporate policy changes

Existing studies have proposed many explanations of the way that the individual processes state power and the mechanism of manufacturing public compliance by state governmentality. One of the most important indices of people's compliance is their political attitudes to the state, shown as ideological loyalty, institutional trust, or active political participation. Political attitude also plays a vital role in analysing people's political behaviour: as their expressed compliance, electoral choices and decisions to take non-compliance action. Many studies have confirmed that people's attitudes, opinions and preferences are sensitive to exogenous structure change, either as institutional change or from policy. What then are the specific channels that lead to change in an individual's perception? Or, in other words, what are the specific channels through which the state power shapes the population's ideas?

The most frequently identified approaches to discovering the public's way of incorporating external changes are the exposure-acceptance model and the self-interest model (Stockmann & Gallagher, 2011; Tang, 2005). Geddes and Zaller (1989) found that individuals' information about a policy (measured by their level of education, information about politics, political involvement, and so on) indicated the degree to which they had been exposed to the state's persuasion and framing. The exposure is among the state's strategies to influence citizens' political awareness and preferences, in return for helping to maintain the state's governance (Stockmann, 2009). For instance, the study by Zhu and his colleagues indicates that citizens may hold a negative attitude to local corruption if the citizens are under the influence of state-controlled media (J. Zhu, Lu, & Shi, 2013). The self-interest path can easily be identified from policies relating to the distribution or redistribution of resources. Taking social welfare policy as an example, the expansion of educational benefits in China (abolishing school fees in compulsory education) has enhanced welfare for rural residents (X. Fan & Fu, 2009), by addressing not only the state-individual relationship but also the rural/urban gap. Households which receive the benefits have largely increased their expectations in regard to the government's financial obligations and their support for the central government (Lü, 2014). Miller, Hesli and Reisinger (1994) found that for citizens in post-Soviet states, the perceived improvements in individuals' economic conditions correlated with a preference for greater personal responsibility for individual well-being rather than a preference for an omnipotent government.

Apart from these two approaches, networking, spatial and temporal factors also matter in hanging political attitudes when exogenous institutions change. After analysing longitudinal attitudinal and network data, Lazer and his colleagues (2008) noted that individuals tend to shift

their political views to the political views of their associates. Wallace et al (2014) even verified that localized political events such as organized marches and protests can also shape such political attitudes as political efficacy or political alienation. In addition, studies have shown that these mechanisms can be mediated or enhanced by people's demographic factors, individual experiences and personalities. The demographic differences include religious differences, distinctive occupations, social capital, and so on (C. J. Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Murphey, 2013; Yep, 2004). Hale and Colton's study (2017) on the cascading defection from regime support revealed that individuals who have had more negative experiences with the regime are more likely to defect than those with more positive experiences; the early and eager movers in such a cascade are young males without higher education.

Counter-conduct and cognitional rebellion

“Counter-conduct”: why and how it is possible

The interactive nature of power relations determines that resistance is coextensive and contemporaneous to any functioning power. In this sense, Foucault used **conduct** and **counter-conduct** to describe governmentality as state power and the resistance of the population respectively. Foucault did not use concepts such as “revolt,” “disobedience,” “insubordination,” “dissidence,” and “misconduct,” because they were, in his view, “either too strong, too weak, too localized, too passive, or too substance-like” (Foucault, 2009, p. 200). Conduct and counter-conduct emphasises the idea of the same thing being **utilized and re-utilized** in state-population interaction, analogous to describing the state's strength and its circular working through the population's well-being. In Foucault's example of techniques of Christianity, he argues that one of the most important aspects of Christianity's “pastoral” power is that it has a sophisticated understanding of the congregation's imagining of the world, their inner secrets, their expectations of reality. The respective counter-conduct against the pastoral power similarly relies on the form of the tactical elements being used in conduct.

The substantial side of the interactive power story can be understood in the way that, in the context of transitional China, its specific economic, social and political structure actually promises some space for individuals' choices. The societal, economic and organizational relations that people are entangled in can, in return, provide opportunities for individual's counter-conduct against state power. Informal institutions such as social networks, as well as cultural and ideological factors, acting as important mechanisms shaping organizational and individual actions. Hence, people can employ their resources, experience and understanding of opportunities to bargain with formal institutions and other social groups. Bargaining attempts

from individuals, in return, shapes the statecraft that can and will be used by the authority and the observable situation of state-individual relationship.

What's in people's toolkit? Participation, everyday life resistance and counter common sense

It may be asked, “What’s in people’s toolkit of ‘counter-conduct’”? First of all, the change in individuals’ political attitudes can manifest itself as public opinion and make a difference in changing the political process. Going one step further away from ideas, people can also take active roles and directly participate in the political process. These actions are also of great importance in displaying the public’s consent, approval and support to the state and its policies. Although recent sociological studies have not paid much attention to this process (Burstein, 1998; Manza & Brooks, 2012), we can still speculate about the behavioural choices that people may make, with the help of “public participation theory” or “resistance theory”. Moreover, we can even learn something from Gramsci’s discussion of “common sense”.

Generally speaking, public participation is achieved in democratic circumstances where citizens enjoy constitutional political rights and freedom as well as the sufficient capacity to understand and be involved in politics. In the broad sense of participation, furthermore, the subjects of participation can expand into groups or organizations that are intended to affect the policy-making process (Freeman, 2010). According to Quick and Bryson (2016, p. 1), “public participation in governance involves the direct or indirect involvement of stakeholders in decision-making about policies, plans or programmes in which they have an interest”. Citizens as stakeholders join the policy making process and are willing to take part in managing the state, society and political affairs. As a process of engagement in governance, public participation generally refers to formal political actions, such as voting, campaigns, hearings, etc. But a broader sense of political participation also implies citizens’ actions—we may think of demonstrating, boycotting, appealing, and so on. Political participation in any form matters as a fundamental part of the public-government relationship in democracies (N. Roberts, 2004). The participation process can also enhance public trust and provide a foundation of fairness, justice and political rights for the public (X. Wang & Wan Wart, 2007).

In non-democratic regimes where individuals’ political rights such as voting and organizing are not de facto fulfilled, scholars tend to argue that the normal approaches to public participation are not working (Arnstein, 1969). Individuals are not granted substantial rights to decide the policies that may deeply affect their own lives. The political game is played by a small group of people through a top-down decision process.

However, there is evidence to suggest that citizens in non-democratic regimes still have a certain space to play some part in the policy-making process. He and Warren (2011) developed an ideal type of deliberative authoritarian model. They argued that in authoritarian countries such as China, there are multiple approaches to public participation such as citizen evaluation forums, village elections and local approval voting. Local participation channels include village elections (Epstein, 1997), independent deputy elections in local People's Congresses (Fishkin, He, Luskin, & Siu, 2010), and so on. In particular, in the Legislation Law passed in 2000, public hearings were promoted as part of the decision-making process for new legislation. Local government also put forward many innovations to secure public participation, such as deliberative pooling in Wenling City,⁷ and the internet-based public hearing process in Hangzhou⁸. Other forms of public participation include online political forums of the "Local Leadership Message Board" kind and the Mayor's Mailbox, where people can post their concerns regarding local social and economic problems. Although they have been shown to be selectively responsive (Distelhorst & Hou, 2014; Su & Meng, 2016), both these new channels provide valuable possibilities for individuals to voice their demands and indirectly shape the policy-making process.

Outside the formal public participation approaches, contentious politics theory suggests that people can also use certain other options to signal their political preference. People may join a collective action to push the authority to make changes: strikes, appeals (*Shang Fang*, 上访) and lawsuits are all in their action toolkit. Besides, the widespread application of the Internet across the world provides people with favourable conditions by arming them with convenient and efficient channels through which to express themselves. Even though the exact figures for social conflicts and protests cannot be addressed here (Tong & Lei, 2010), it is obvious that the rise of mass incidents⁹ (*Qun Ti Xing Shi Jian*, 群体性事件) in China has drawn the attention of scholars in various academic fields. According to the "Annual Report on China's Rule of Law No.12 (2014)" published by the Institute of Law of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the total popular contentions with more than 100 participants reached 871 cases from 2000 to 2013. The collection of diverse public reports by Chen Chih-jou identifies 1097 "mass incidents" in China's mass protest from 1997 to 2007 (C.-J. Chen, 2009).

⁷ Wenling Department of Propaganda, 2003

⁸ Hangzhou Municipal Office of Legislative Affairs, 2007

⁹ The concept of "mass incidents" is defined broadly as "any kind of planned or impromptu gathering that forms because of internal contradictions", including mass public speeches, physical conflicts, the airing of grievances, or other forms of group behaviour that may disrupt social stability. It is frequently used in official discourses referring to social conflicts. (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/dec/16/china-land-grab-undermining-democracy>) [Accessed 2017-12-20]

In non-democratic regimes, the less sensitive objects and claims relating to social policies actually promise people a good deal of space for debates and contentions. The invocation of social rights is also more likely to gain broad-based support. Since the claims over social rights are relatively easy for the state to respond to, in countless cases people's claims and actions have put pressure on current policies and eventually encourage a policy change in China's context. Peter Lorentzen and Suzanne Scoggins (2011) suggest that "rights consciousness" emerged in some cases in which the activists' attempt was directed against the central authority with the aim of stopping or preventing the central authority from ruling arbitrarily. Kevin O'Brien, Lianjiang Li and their colleagues (2006) argue that farmers in China are making claims about their own rights, which is evolving "into a more far-reaching counter hegemonic project". Paik Wooyeal and Lee Kihyun considered the case of the "Minor Property Housing (MPH)" phenomenon and stated that the peasant is not a passive loser who seeks "justice from above, but a proactive winner who sometimes becomes aggressive enough to follow an illegal course and collude with local officials as land developers do in the non-MPH land development" (Paik & Lee, 2012, p. 272).

Moreover, James Scott (2008) identified a less risky and less costly form of resistance than the traditional forms of violence, revolution and social movements: everyday resistance. Everyday resistance as a weapon of the weak basically refers to informal and non-organized resistance such as poaching, squatting and desertion. Developed from Scott's concept of *infra politics*, Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) have provided a clear identification of everyday resistance, it is individuals' mundane or unconscious actions in their daily life, everyday resistance is a practice rather than an intentional action expecting a certain outcome. They also suggest that scholars should take a historical view regarding such practices rather than a "separated, dichotomous or independent" interpretation (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013, p. 39). In addition, these practices are intersectional in terms of power relations and heterogeneous and contingent according to their context and situation. As a form of resistance, everyday resistance also reflects the power relations between the resisters and the targets. Therefore, scholars should figure out who is following such practices and who are the targets (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016), as well as the place, the strategies and the sequences.

The reason why everyday resistance matters is that, it is a practical way of expressing discontent and reconstructing state-individual relationships. This practice is especially important when individuals find that they lack political opportunities, resources and the ability or even knowledge to engage in identifiable resistance such as a protest. For instance, Ying's study (2003) of rural resistance records the case of a villager who pretended to be mute in order to escape a

fine for breaching China's one-child policy. People may also use the strategy of repeatedly (sometimes rascally) venting their grievances to obtain sympathy and benefits when negotiating with local officials (Duara, 1991). Other "everyday resistance" includes actions akin to fake obedience or purposely free riding.

In addition to everyday resistance, Gramsci's concept of *common sense* (1971) provides a unique vision for exploring other possibilities of people's counter-conduct. In Gramsci's hegemony theory, he argues that quite a few of the state's efforts to manufacture consent rely on the complex and contradictory nature of people's common sense. Common sense is generated from past ideas and history and serves the role of a convenient toolkit for people with which to understand the world where they have been socialized. In particular, in times when dramatic social and economic changes happen, we cannot easily figure out what is new in the transition and unconsciously turn to our taken-for-granted common sense to interpret the unfamiliar landscape. Common sense can, however, be borrowed and manipulated by the state to manufacture consent and manage its legitimacy. For instance, the Chinese traditional culture has left a long shadow of family-state structure in Chinese recognition, which claims that the state is an extension of a family or clan. Therefore, it is easier for people to accept the official discourse of nationalism since they prefer to regard domestic affairs as inner-family business, and the country as a victim during the "century of national humiliation" could be interpreted as personal humiliation.

Nevertheless, as Gramsci emphasized, people's common sense also carries the seeds of transformation within it. Common sense is not rigid, although it draws on past ideas and traditions; rather it keeps being reconstructed and refashioned by external pressures and continues to evolve to give meaning to new developments, solve new problems and unravel new dilemmas (Gramsci et al., 1971). The mobile nature of common sense offers space for a "war of position", within which people can reflect on the idea of "state", "politics" and the "state-individual relationship" to which we used to say "of course". For instance, the retrenchment of the state's welfare responsibility may cause people to be suspicious about the so-called "socialist parental" state. When people experienced frustration in terms of their appeals for pension benefits may result in inner ideological conflict regarding "fair/good government". These reflections as ideological rebellions will play an important role in shaping the expectations and consent of the general people. When enough people start to question the idea that preserving "harmony" is beneficial for "our state" and "our family", it is possible that a request will emerge for the state and the people to have an equal position.

To take individual's counter-conduct one step back—to cases where public non-compliance is hard or impossible to achieve—people might in some cases falsify their compliance and consent when faced with mistreatment from the state or perceived discontinuity in the policies. They might choose to hide their true attitudes/preferences rather than reveal them in public; sometimes people may intentionally construct their public/reported preferences/attitudes. In many situations, the falsification of public preference could be fundamentally dangerous for the authority since it may lead to a “cascade” when least expected (Kuran, 1991, 1997). Hence, the falsification of public opinion is in many ways fascinating to investigate, especially in circumstances where falsification as a cognitional rebellion is the only option that people have against the state authority.

Among the institutions and arenas that generate falsification, the authoritarian states, especially the ones with past or current experience of transition from a communist era, have attracted the attention of many. The transition from the communist period (or, as many have called it, the “totalitarianism period”) has caused many cracks in people's belief in the state. For instance, as in Khrushchev's 1956 revelations, or as in East Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, the ideal communist type is found to have been a lie; a passive compliance therefore became common in both the general population and the elites and the degree of discontent was not revealed until the final call for regime change. China's special scenario of a transition communist country hence provides a valuable chance of investigating questions such as “Why and how do the subordinates disentangle the reported consent and private attitudes/choices? How do different mechanisms work for different social groups? What is the threshold of tolerance and the acceptable cost of the public's having to face controversial governmental reforms?” In the final empirical part of my dissertation, I explore some of these problems with cross-validated empirical evidence.

To summarize, in this chapter, I illustrated the rationale of my investigation on governmentality in modern states by examining the current theoretical discussions of state legitimation and state rationality, the special context of transitional authoritarian regimes and the possible counter-conduct of individuals in the power relationship with the state. My theoretical setup is built on the Weberian conceptualization of legitimacy as well as Foucauldian governmentality and statecraft, which respectively highlight the consent in the population's belief and the statecraft used by the state to manufacture public compliance. Countries that lack representative institutions and the rule of law differ from their democratic counterparts in many ways with regard to state legitimacy and governmentality. I present the existing discussions (and substantive examples of transitional socialism, China's in particular, in Section 2) on governance

constraints and options in these regimes. Their characteristics—such as relying more heavily on ideological legitimacy through knowledge construction and censorship, performance-based legitimacy and coercion—impose both challenges and opportunities for individual resistance. The governmentality that constructed specific societal, economic and organizational relations can be used by the population to reshape the political process, whether through formal political participations or informal contentions. Moreover, potential counter-movements as matters of the individual’s common sense can become a hotbed for “cognitional rebellion” (for example, falsified compliance) that in return brings state governance a legitimation challenge.

Chapter 3 Who deserves social benefits and how? Differentiation and knowledge construction as statecraft in pension reforms

The task of capturing the tactics used by the state in maintaining its legitimacy from observable policies is complicated, especially as regards social policies that change frequently and differ for various social groups. However, the governmentality logic underlying *whom to govern and how to govern* are shown in the design of governmental programmes, the way that social problems are defined and divisions/distinctions are established, and the different kinds of knowledge produced to shape people's ideologies. This chapter, therefore, probes into the different designs of policy experiments and schemes and the techniques intentionally used by the Chinese government to shape public's expectations and manufacture public consent. More importantly, I discuss the rationale behind these practices.

Among the social and economic changes during China's transition, social welfare provision is one of the most important areas that can be directly perceived by the public, and also an arena in which we can vividly see a close interaction between the state and the public. The "trade-off" between opportunities and challenges of promoting a welfare reform, for instance, in pensions or health, is that it provides opportunities for the state to manage the budget, increase efficiency through privatisation and so on; at the same time, it also brings challenges due to the fact that some sectors will disappear during the process, and the allocation of social benefits will face a possible major reshuffle. To best capture the details from a specific area of social policy, my empirical work in this chapter uses the substantive case of pension policy change during the social welfare reform conducted by the Chinese government after the "reform and opening-up" in 1978. I focus on social policies relating to welfare for the elderly (such as old-age insurance, pensions, and so on) considering that this area is one that can reveal the state's purposeful design in modifying the distribution of public goods and balancing the role of the government and the public in welfare provision. The existence of multiple programmes—such as basic social security, old-age insurance, and pension plans—also suggests that social policies relating to old-age benefits are in an area where many negotiations are possible. People are less likely to give up their existing benefits; thus, the state needs to devote greater effort to the changes that it plans.

The first questions I answer in this chapter are "How is access to welfare resources distributed among different social groups, and how does the distribution change along with the reforms?" In the reformed welfare system of China, the social rights to income and social

security are now more frequently defined on an individual basis than they were in the previous system. They used to be defined collectively through work units (*Danwei*, a place of employment) and people's communes (*Renmin Gongshe*, the highest administrative levels in rural areas). Unlike the old system, in the new system, the issue of *who gets what, and how they get it* has gradually become connected to individuals' endowments, such as their social status, political status, social capital and so on. Hence, a logical and basic inquiry for researchers is "How exactly the pension benefit across different social groups was allocated when the institutional setting shifted away from the old communist system. From the late 1990s, the government promoted various pension scheme reforms, under which people with different occupations have their own distinctive accessibility to various welfare benefits. For instance, the reform of basic pension scheme for enterprise employees distinguishes the individual contribution rate levied on different age groups, a scheme which is exclusive to employees from other sectors such as public institutions. Identifying how and why the state distributes certain benefits but not others, and to some groups/regions but not others, may help to answer the questions regarding the state's overview of population-based governance and its tactics of resource differentiation.

If a new system is being built up, how does the state frame and legitimize its new policies and maintain its own rule? In other words, what kind of truth and knowledge about pension benefits is produced and promoted by the state when it tries to persuade the public about the many policy experiments and reforms? The underlying epistemological assumption is that what we know about society is never entirely consistent between individuals or uniform over time. Sociologists have long discussed the process of "socialization" during which the norms and ideologies about society are gradually internalized for each individual. The state is among the powers that provide input for the socialization process; it is equipped with various tools to intervene in political socialization, such as education, the public media, and legal systems (Glasberg & Shannon, 2010). Thus, the state can produce certain truths and knowledge that shape the way which people understand their society and the blueprint they can expect. For instance, what is appreciated and condemned? What is the virtue desired of a "good and responsible citizen"? What is a proper relationship between citizens and state regarding welfare responsibility? What should citizens expect to get from the government when faced with such social risks as unemployment, illness and ageing? and Why should some social groups be awarded more social benefits than other social groups? These knowledge constructions may not be easy to directly identify from individuals' attitudes and behaviour since the individual's socialization may be affected by many inputs. But we can trace the construction process from

the content of the policy statements and official newspapers by fleshing out the use of discourses, differences in sentiment, and the positions of priorities.

To address the question of resource differentiation, I trace the social schemes related to old-age benefits in China from the early 1950s (with a focus on the period after 1978's "Reform and opening up") and sort comparisons among the different policy schemes that were available to people of different political status (Hukou¹⁰, occupation, party membership and so on). For instance, in the 2010s, there have been several parallel pension plans, because distinct schemes have been devised to cover people of different status. There are pension plans tailored for government employees, for employees of public institutions, employees of enterprises, urban non-salaried residents and rural residents. The political status which combines residential and occupational difference is crucial for Chinese people seeking access to these differentiated welfare benefits. I give detailed evidence of such differentiation in the allocation of pension benefits. To figure out the way that the state legitimises and promotes its social policies, I collect text data from relevant articles in official newspapers. The rich text in these collections provides vivid evidence of the government's strategic employment of language, concepts and sentiments. By classifying topics and estimating category percentages (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013), I have been able to identify what kind of message was being sent through the descriptions of the policies. For instance, whether collectivist discourses would be more frequently used in promoting a policy that expands the coverage of pension benefits; would more individualist discourses be used when issuing a retrenchment-oriented policy. In addition, to better understand the techniques of persuasion, I identified what is "praised" and "denounced" in the policies promoted by the state by analysing the tendency of the sentiment in the official discourses.

How do entitlements differ: differentiation in benefit entitlement

Welfare benefits, as a type of scarce resource (or public good), can be used by the state in exchange for loyalty, forming coalitions, or breaking down a population's coordination in collective action. In theory, the distribution of welfare benefits can be the result of the authority's intentional manipulation, negotiations between interest groups, and the influence of socio-historical factors (for instance, demographic and geographical features that may respectively lead to the varied distribution of health issues, and change the distribution of certain

¹⁰ China's "*Hukou*" system is a family registration programme that serves as a domestic passport, regulating population distribution and rural-to-urban migration. It is a tool for social and geographic control, enforcing an apartheid structure that denies farmers the rights and benefits that are enjoyed by urban residents. (<https://www.thoughtco.com/chinas-hukou-system-1434424>) [Accessed 2016-1-21]

health care benefits). Therefore, it is difficult to image a welfare regime in which everyone enjoys exactly the same social benefits—we are more likely to see various welfare schemes and programmes tailored for different social groups and regions, some enjoying more social benefits than others (Frazier, 2010). Hacker in his book “*The divided welfare state: The battle over public and private social benefits in the United States*” (Hacker, 2002) described the coexistence of public and private social benefits which are unequally distributed to different populations in the US. Some programmes are fully funded by public expenditure, and some programmes benefit the recipients through tax breaks and credit subsidies. There are also programmes that are promoted and regulated by the government while is totally funded by private contributions—normally from higher earners. In China, we also find multiple welfare schemes and programmes, as detailed below.

A mechanism that leads to the coexistence of multiple programmes may not be the same for regimes with distinctive political institutions and paths. In the US’s case, Hacker identified the timing and sequence of policy development during which the public-private social benefits are constructed through political debates. Business interests play a central role in shaping the landscape of welfare distribution. In an authoritarian regime such as China, the central government enjoys more power in the process of policy making and resource allocation. Even in a typical policy experiment which is assumed to be more flexible and open-ended than the one-off policies, the central government would set the direction and guidance, and then local governments would enjoy only a conditional and limited autonomy in localizing and reinterpreting the details of the policies. The situation of multiple social programmes coexisting is more a consequence of centralized policy-making. Therefore, if the central government is under constraint from a limited budget, how does it design the differentiation of social rights and what are its main criteria?

In the existing studies of China’s society, one important standard that is identified in the differing accessibility of resources is political status (Bray, 2005; Lu & Perry, 1997; Q. Zheng, 2015). The difference of political status mainly results from the Hukou system (Cheng & Selden, 1994). People in China are born with the political status of being either rural or urban residents of their local area and are not supposed to move freely across regions. The rural/urban status, or *Hukou*, is “political” in the sense that it largely determines an individual’s access to initial public resources such as education (since schools are mostly localized resources), and local elections at the village and district level. Thus it is constructed on residential variation, and when individuals get a job, they enter into an occupation-based status: they can join the staff of the government, staff of a public institution, staff of an enterprise, or work as a peasant, and so on (M.-k. Lee,

2000; Xie, Lai, & Wu, 2009). These status categories determine certain other public resources that an individual can access, such as pension plans and health care plans (D. Wang & Chai, 2009). To give an example, as the economic reform has proceeded, many rural residents have left the countryside to search for temporary jobs in cities. However, even though they work in the cities, their Hukou is still that of rural residents and they are ineligible for public goods such as education, housing and pension benefits in the cities where they live and work (Y. Song, 2014). In other words, people with different endowments do not enjoy the same public resources in China. Moreover, the unevenness of benefit allocations across different types of public resource schemes is distinctive. For instance, Cai and his colleagues (2018) identified the differentiation and polarized pension benefit allocation in China, using public transfer data. They showed that the public transfer in pension benefit is more concentrated on the top quartile, than it is for those in education and health care: those from the top quartile aged 75 receive an annual pension of 12,029 RMB on average, and from the second quartile receive around 3,460 RMB per person, while the elderly from the bottom quartile receive less than 189 RMB (Yong Cai et al., 2018).

The variation of welfare benefits in China's case applies not merely to differentiation in one policy, but is systematically designed to provide different social group with different programmes in order to maintain a balance of loyalty as well as avoiding the risk of a coalition. The formation process of such segregation entails less political conflict, as in the representative political system, but shows more sense of "overview" or "seeing the bigger picture" from the ruler's standpoint. It would seem quite in order if certain groups were privileged or sacrificed to improve "the general good" or reduce "the general cost". The question then arise "Who is to be sacrificed and who is to be kept safe in the era of transformations, and what tactics will the state use if public discontent is stirred up over the inequality? A reasonable assumption is that the central government is motivated to treat the core elites generously in its the power-sharing logic (Svolik, 2012), while sacrificing marginal social groups in the old power circle when necessary (e.g. when budget constraints are apparent). Those in the power circle who were first included and then excluded may become very discontented to see such favouritism. An easy way for the government to handle this loss of public support is to replenish the pool of social support by buying off the politically and economically disadvantaged ones who will cost least.

How does persuasion help: domesticating your ideas

Even though the state can sacrifice a certain group of people in order to minimize the budget or ease its burden, there is risk of irritating the target population and losing its support. In other words, the government needs additional tactics to help promote institutional changes

that hurt someone's existing interests and keep a minimal degree of public consent for its own survival. Institutionalism generally supposes that the state has a sophisticated understanding of its subordinates (though it is not necessarily 100% correct), and it tries to figure out proper ways to manage changes in public compliance. The state, therefore, can decide to manipulate people's emotions through shaping, sculpting and mobilizing the options, expectations, and daily lives of individuals. Government and governance not only signal the power relationship, but also issue selves and identities to its population (Dean, 2010). The process and the rationale of designing/shaping people's ideas and behaviour can be drawn from the *conduct of conduct* in Foucault's theory of state power (Foucault et al., 2008). Hence, an analysis of the various tactics used by the state to shape public cognition can dig deeper by asking such questions as "What does the state want the public to expect and what identities and roles have been established for the governed and the governors?" In practice, there are many objects that the authority can borrow in its framing or discourse: for instance, ideologies of materialism and rationalism, doctrines from traditional culture or religion, experiences from comparable countries, and so on.

Stefan Svallfors in his book "*The political sociology of the welfare state*" summarises that one aspect of the welfare state is to embody and create norms about what is fair and just, and to form citizens' expectations and demands (Svallfors, 2007). More importantly, his discussion stresses that the interaction between the state and its subordinates is dynamic, which pushes the governance into a reflective and experimental process. On the one hand, the correspondence between institutions, rules and policies provides a stable imagination of the state-individual relationship in the delivery of welfare. On the other, however, if the imagination of individuals about what to expect and what to demand is deep-rooted, any changes to the value and policies promoted by the state may cause a legitimation problem. The state therefore needs to make a new effort to try to rebalance the relationship and reproduce the corresponding knowledge.

The observer, through an examination on official discourse about the desired rules, norms, and social values, can capture the changing governmentality of the authority. The implications of these theoretical discussions on my exploration of China's case, therefore, is to be aware of the hidden design of the policies that are issued and be sensitive to the changes in the discourse. As I further explain in the following empirical section, articles on the official newspaper which were designed to promote a certain policy or reform provide me with a good opportunity to investigate the process of the state's "knowledge production".

Who gets what and how: population-based governance

The allocation of welfare benefits is recognized as a useful tool for showing the generosity of the authority and buying loyalty from the public (Haggard & Kaufman, 2008; Karshenas & Moghadam, 2006; Rimlinger, 1971). If budget constraints occur in a given period, one reasonable assumption regarding the allocation of welfare benefits is that the government will distribute the limited fiscal capacity to the social group that costs least per unit (that is, per person, or per group of people), and can maximize the gains for the state. But how to decide which group to favour and which to give up? There are two common assumptions about the objectives of the state: to maintain broad social stability, and to maintain active compliance, such as support or consent. The former is more basic while the latter is more desirable; but they are in general not mutually exclusive. If the priority/objective for the government is “political stability”, then the resource will be allocated to those who enjoy the greatest negotiation and bargaining power. As regards maintaining compliance objective, the public’s consent is fundamental to the state’s legitimacy; it relies heavily on people’s perceptions of social justice, equality (at least superficial in the attempts to redistribute) and the belief that the authority will meet the public’s expectations. Hence the central authority does its best to meet or pretend to meet the public’s needs in order to get loyalty in return when the authority senses pressure/risks over legitimation. Under the assumption of consent manufacture and maintaining compliance, the state is more likely to redistribute public resources to social groups which are relatively disadvantaged. I develop my hypothesis of the government’s choice in welfare allocation on the basis of careful consideration regarding these two assumptions, and take into account the nature of authoritarian authority—which has an instinct to share power and benefits within its inner power circle. A strategic resource differentiation therefore, is a reasonable hypothesis: uphold favouritism towards core elites, but wield the weapon of redistributive equality when necessary, and only to a certain extent. Meanwhile, the government employs other tactics such as persuasion by propaganda, and gradual experiments to keep the general public opinion under control.

In this section, I bring evidence that supports my argument through institutional analysis and statistical comparison of China’s pension reforms. The institutional analysis focuses on the distinctive pension schemes and addresses variations in a reform’s timing, direction, and content, so as to collectively present a whole image of strategic differentiation in welfare benefit allocation by the government. To precisely identify the different entitlements to benefit across pension schemes, I collected statistical data from the China Labour Statistical Yearbooks, Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbooks, National Statistical Bureau Dataset and other datasets (such as G.

Zheng, 2016)¹¹, and compared variations including the eligible population, participating population, coverage rate, pension benefit (per person per year), incremental rate of pension benefit, and so on.

In the 2010s there are five parallel pension plans¹² tailored for 5 groups of people: government employees, public institute employees, employees of enterprises, urban non-salaried residents and rural residents. The fragmented pension scheme is compatible with the categories of political status, which originated from the socialist planning economy that locks the whole populace in a registered permanent category of residence (rural or urban) and a work unit (in an SOE, government post or elsewhere) (Whyte, 2012). From Table 1, we can identify the differences in accessing the public resources between the distinctive social groups. In the present pension system, only government employees enjoy the full fiscal funded retirement payment (Pozen, 2013). Public institution employees, who used to enjoy a similar political status and comparable welfare benefit to those of government employees, are now confined to a hybrid pension system in which individuals share the responsibility for making pension contributions after the reform of the scheme in the 2010s. Enterprise employees before the economic reform had their workplace unit and the government as accountable welfare providers. Nowadays, however, the pension plan for enterprise employees features this responsibility shared between government, the enterprise and the individual. The pension plans for urban non-salaried residents and rural residents are similar; both are defined contribution pension insurance schemes which enjoy a certain (slim) subsidy from the government compared to other types of employee (L. Wang, Beland, & Zhang, 2014). Still, before the late 2000s, they had no systematic pension plan at all.

¹¹ A more detailed discussion of the codebook is available in the appendix.

¹² In China's case, the full state-funded pension is literally called the "retirement allowance", and a pension that requires individual contributions is called a "pension/social insurance".

Table 1. Comparison between Different Pension Schemes in China (in 2015)

Scheme recipients	Scheme name	Nature	Funding source
Government Employees	Pension plan for government employees (PGE)	Government funded pension	Government
Public Institution Employees	Pension plan for public institution employees (PPIE)	Government funded pension → social insurance	Government → Government and Individual shared
Enterprise Employees	Pension plan for enterprise employees (PEE)	Enterprise funded pension → social insurance	Enterprise (Government took the ultimate accountability) → Government, Enterprise, and Individual shared
Urban Non-salaried Residents	Pension plan for urban non-salaried residents (PUR)	Social insurance	Government and Individual shared
Rural Residents	Pension plan for rural residents (PRR)	Social insurance	Government and Individual shared

Source: author.

Changes in policy reform: what does timeline tell us

As the main embodiment of the authority, government officials with formal contracts enjoy the most generous payments after they retire. We can find solid evidence from existing studies which demonstrate the welfare privileges of government-related work units compared to the enterprise units and urban residents compared to migrant workers and rural residents (K. W. Chan & Buckingham, 2008; K. W. Chan & Zhang, 1999; Selden & You, 1997). Right after the foundation of the PRC, in 1955, a non-contributory pension scheme was issued for government officials. The employees were not required to contribute to the pension pool since the whole fund was subsidized by the state budget. The replacement rate for retired government employees can reach 90% or 100%, according to the “Tentative Retirement Regulation for Government Employees” (State Council, 1956). The “Notice of Salary Reform for Government and Public Institution Employees” issued in 1993 specified that the in-service salary for a government

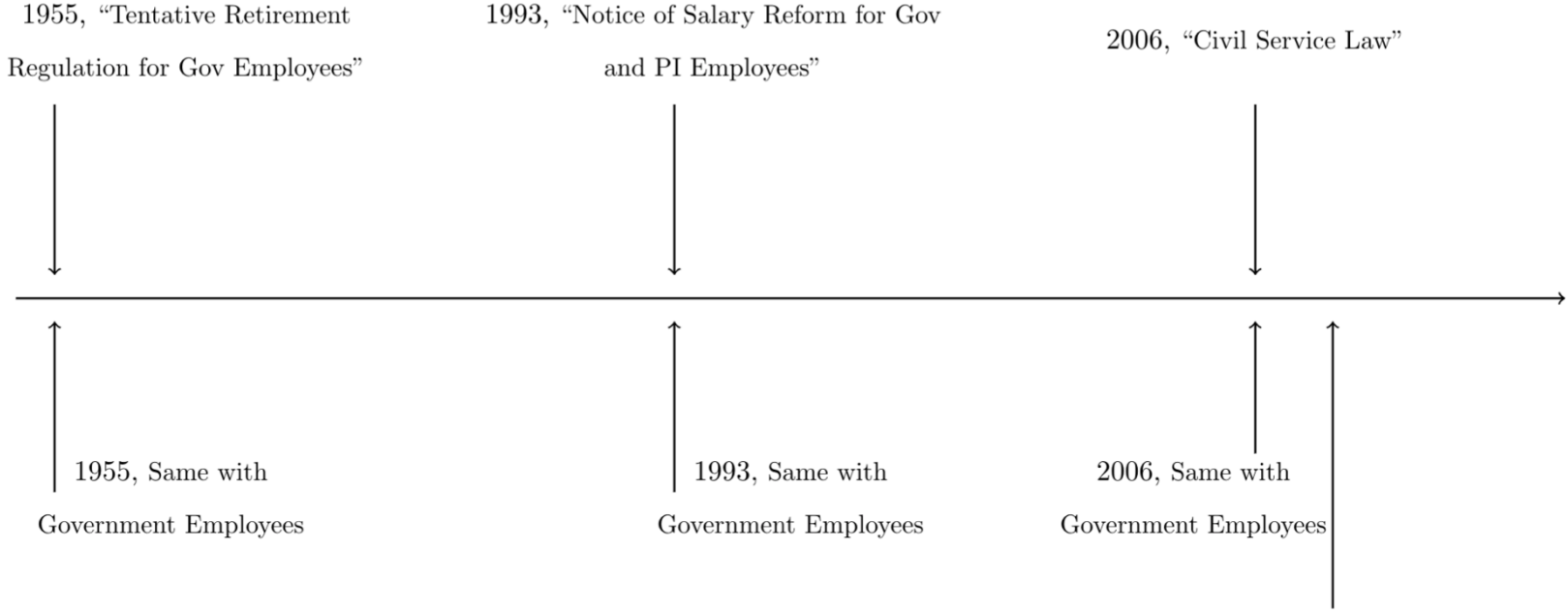
worker would consist of four parts: the duty wage, rank wage, basic wage and seniority wage (State Council, 1993). A retired government employee can enjoy the full previous basic wage plus the seniority wage. The retiree also receives some subsidy from the government in line with the duty wage and rank wage based on his/her working years: the longer the employee has worked, the higher replacement rate he/she gets after retirement. Starting from 2006, when the “Civil Service Law” was issued, the salary system for government employees changed to a 2-layer structure: duty wage and rank wage, plus the corresponding allowances. Since the reform, a retired government employee can still enjoy a replacement rate above 80 percent of his/her previous income.

Public institution (PI for convenience in the following discussions) employees, such as school teachers, doctors in public hospitals, employees of radio or TV stations, and so on, are also generally thought to be people who enjoy an “Iron Rice Bowl”. The pension plan for PI employees is exactly the same as that for government employees before the 2006 salary reform: officially, the PI employees are subsidized by the state budget in full or in part (depending on the nature of the work units). The 2006 salary reform specified that the retirees of public institution no longer enjoy the allowance and performance wage, though the pension is still much better than that of people in other occupations such as enterprise employees. The generous pension plan for government and public institution employees has caused great discontent in other social groups¹³ for quite a long time. Under huge pressure from the society, the government claims to have changed the dual track of one pension plan for government-public institution employees and another for the remaining social groups in early 2008. The reform plan (in the form of policy experimentation) launched in 2008 turned out to be a proposal that differentiates the pension benefits of PI employees from those of government employees: the old non-contributory pension scheme has changed into a defined contributory pension insurance scheme. Started in 2008 as a pilot policy, it was then implemented across the nation in 2014; all PI employees from then on have had to add their contribution to their future retirement fund¹⁴. In Figure 4, below, I show the chronological changes in the pension scheme reforms for government employees and public institution employees.

¹³ People’s Daily Report, 2012, “Unfair Dual track of Old-age care: [dramatically] different treatment for people with different status”. (<http://finance.ifeng.com/news/macro/20120326/5802741.shtml>) [Accessed 2018-11-01]

¹⁴ China News, 2014, “Track convergence of pension scheme: 30 million public institution employees will start paying into social insurance from July 1st”. (http://district.ce.cn/newarea/roll/201406/30/t20140630_3062399.shtml) [Accessed 2018-11-12]

Pension Plans for Government Employees (PPGE)



Pension Plans for Public Institution Employees (PPPIE)

2008, "Pension Insurance Reform for PIE"

Pension Plans for Enterprise Employees (PPEE)

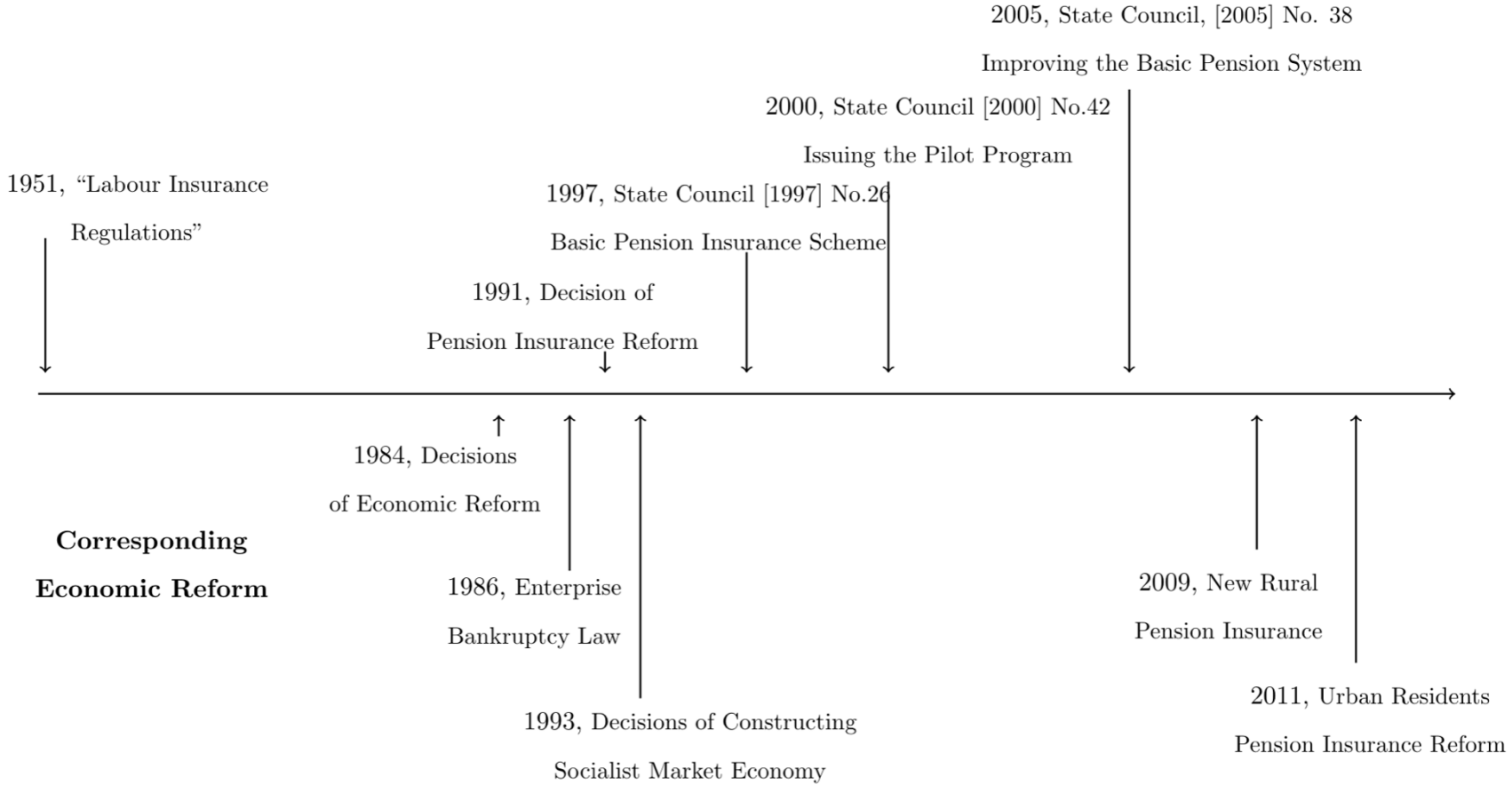


Figure 4. Timeline of Segmented Pension Plan reforms

As the main component of the labour force, especially after the economic reform in China, enterprise employees are a treasured possession for the ruler, and form what is seen as the core engine for economic development, but when they retire they are bad assets—the ruler is impatient to shake off this burden of their welfare provision. Before the economic reform in the 1980s, only state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were allowed to exist in China. SOE employees during that time enjoyed high social and economic status, and had an enterprise-funded, government-accounted form of social insurance (as had all the enterprises owned by the state) that included education, health care, pensions and many other benefits. However, when the economic reform started in the 1980s, numbers of SOEs were re-structured and hundreds and thousands of employees were laid off (Gu, 1999, 2001). The remaining SOE employees suffered from the retrenchment of pension benefits,¹⁵ while the new pension scheme was designed to fit the economic reform of marketisation, cut fiscal expense and relieve the work units and the government of their burden.

The changes started from the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the dilapidated old pension system for enterprise employees was re-designed as a multi-layered pension system. The State Council issued the “Decision on a Pension Insurance Reform for Enterprise Employees” in 1991, calling for a division of pension responsibility between state, enterprises and individuals. The pension system as pictured by this “Decision” is a basic retirement programme managed by the state; supplementary retirement programmes funded by the enterprises; and individual savings in the form of a retirement account chosen by each employee (Chao & Dickson, 2003). But this announcement was more like a proposal and was difficult to set in motion due to the lack of funding. People were still expecting the government to admit fiscal accountability and the enterprises were unable to fund the pension pool on their own. A more official-looking reform started in 1997 when the State Council issued Document no. 26, named “Decision on Establishing a Unified System of Basic Pension Insurance for Enterprise Employees” (Council, 1997). This “Decision”, again, promoted the idea that the responsibility for raising funds for this new pension system should be shared between enterprises, employees and government, although, de facto, it was still not compulsory. The “Decision” issued in 1997, however, had a clear plan for the size of contributions: individual accounts should be kept at 11% of the employee’s salary and individuals had to contribute 8% of their salary (starting with 4%). The employer should make up the shortfall in individual accounts, namely, 3% of the individual’s

¹⁵ This pension plan was later applied to employees of all enterprises, regardless of ownership.

salary, whilst separately contributing no more than 17% to the social coordination account (the total contribution of an enterprise should not exceed 20% of an individual's total wages).

To further clarify the divisions between individual and social pooling accounts, as well as to make up for the deficit in individual accounts, the central government issued Document no. 42 in 2000 (S. Council, 2000) and State Council No. 38 in 2005 to promote the new policy experiment of “fully funding individual accounts”¹⁶ (Council, 2005). These documents specified the clear articulation of constructing a workable three-dimensional hybrid pension reform for urban enterprise employees. First, at the individual level, contributions to individual accounts were to be borne solely by employees paying at a rate set at 8% of the contributory wage. Meanwhile, the contributions from the enterprise should not be partially diverted to individual accounts but paid in full into an account under the social coordination plan. This definition of the contributory pension scheme clarified the private nature of individual pension accounts and implied that individuals should play a larger role in the funding of their pensions. In addition, this reform emphasized that the longer the employees contributed, the more they would receive when they retired, thus strengthening the connection between an individual's working history and his/her entitlement to the related welfare. The reform also expanded the coverage of the pension system to wage earners in other categories, such as employees of small private businesses, in addition to the employees of state-owned or collective-owned enterprises. This was to pluralize the sources of the funding, as well as the enterprise annuities, encouraged by the government as a way of supplementing the basic pension insurance. In the meantime, the reform recommended individuals to explore the possibilities of registering with commercial pension schemes. Until then, a multi-sourced, defined contributory pension plan has been established for all enterprise employees.

Unlike the above salaried urban citizens, rural residents and urban non-salaried residents had no clear pension plan at all until the late 2000s. Although some scattered pilot policies to pay pensions to rural residents were implemented at county level in 1992 (also called the “Old Rural Pension Plan”), these initiatives were mostly unsuccessful and none of them was turned into a national policy. In 2009, the State council issued the “Guidance on Establishing a New Rural Pension Scheme (Pilot)”, also called “New Rural Pension Plan”. The nationwide policy started in 2011 and thereafter rural residents were able to register with a pension plan where they could contribute a certain amount of money (the original plan in 2009 included 5 contributory rates: 100 RMB, 200 RMB, 300 RMB, 400 RMB, 500 RMB; the scales would be adjusted every year

¹⁶ More information of this policy experimentation is available in Chapter 4.

according to the annual net per capita income of the rural residents) and they would enjoy accordingly a subsidy from the government's fiscal budget. The pension plan for urban non-salaried residents, which was issued in 2011, is similar to the rural residents' pension plan. They are both defined contributory pension schemes funded jointly by individuals and the state.

The reforms for different social groups were conducted at various times and went in various directions. As shown in Figure 4, the pension policy reform process is a multi-track segregation in the fulfilment of social rights. From the content of past pension reforms, it is not difficult to figure out the favouritism shown to core elites, government employees who have greater political power and help to maintain the function of ruling. They enjoy the most generous pension benefit and the government budget takes full responsibility for their lives after retirement. Facing the big wave of economic reform and pressure on the fiscal capacity, it was the enterprise employees (of state-owned enterprises in particular) that suffered from the large-scale lay-offs and were encouraged to take charge of their own social risks. Later on, when the discontent regarding the dual track heated up, the central authority was happy to shirk its responsibilities and shift the blame onto public institution employees in order to appease the widespread sense of grievance. A follow-up tactic to replenish the political support pool for the government, was to launch the pension plan for rural residents and urban non-salaried residents in order to buy off the least costly population. I give more details below of the state's efforts to carry out a "loyalty buyoff" with rural residents in the section on the generosity of the pension scheme.

Generosity and coverage: what the statistical evidence tells us

Though the timeline of reform shows the timing and brief directions of the welfare allocations, it does not show enough detailed benefit differences between schemes. Generosity and coverage are commonly used indices for identifying the details of welfare programmes (X. Huang, 2014; Ratigan, 2017; Riedmüller, 2008). Thus, to address the different entitlements of benefits between one pension scheme and another, I collected statistical data from multiple sources of datasets and explained the variations, including the eligible population, participating population, coverage rate, pension benefit (per person per year), incremental rate of the pension benefit or welfare provision and other statistics showing how they compare.¹⁷

¹⁷ Due to a highly scattered and incomplete condition of welfare yearbooks, I tried my best to collect all available data from various sources. There are certain places where the data do not match very well since the statistical bureau stopped publishing many indexes (such as the population and pension benefit for government employees after 2009) and often changed the grouping methods. Thus, I appended notes to each table to clarify the sources and calculations. More information on the codebook is available in the appendix.

Pension plan for Government Employees (PGE) and Public Institution Employees (PPIE)

Since the government data are constantly kept confidential and vague, I used two approaches in my calculation to show the high replacement rate of the pension plan for government employees and public institution employees. As noted above, these two privileged groups, the government employees in particular, are the ones who enjoy the most generous pension benefits and a higher coverage rate than the enterprise employees and rural residents. Both calculation approaches listed below endorse this argument.

Calculation method 1: according to the pension policy content

First, we can address the generous pension benefit for government employees and PI employees directly from the policy content. The following calculations for pension benefit come from the “Civil Service Law” which was issued in 2006. In this reform, the salary structure for government employees was split into two levels: duty wage and rank wage, plus the due allowance. The replacement rate of pension benefits is quite high. As shown in the calculation, pension benefit (b) is related to the pre-retirement salary (s_{r-1}) and working years (n):

$$n < 10, b = 0.5s_{r-1};$$

$$10 \leq n < 20, b = 0.7s_{r-1};$$

$$20 \leq n < 30, b = 0.8s_{r-1};$$

$$30 \leq n < 35, b = 0.85s_{r-1};$$

$$35 \leq n, b = 0.9s_{r-1};$$

where s_{r-1} is calculated differently according to the different stages of the reform of the pension plan. Employees who had worked for less than 10 years when they retired enjoyed only a replacement rate of 50%. But someone who had worked for more than 20 years would enjoy a replacement of above 80% of their previous salary (it could even reach 90% if they had worked for 35 years before retirement). The pension plan for public institution employees is quite similar.

Calculation method 2: published statistical data

We can also check the generosity of the pension benefit for government and public institution employees from the published statistical data. Columns 2 to 7 in Table 2 come from the China Labour Statistical Yearbook, while the total data on employee numbers and salaries come from the Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbook. The other columns are self-calculated statistics

(as in column 12, I weight the average salary of all government and PI employees according to size). Due to the grouping method in the original data, I can display only a number for all government and public institution employees combined here, rather than separate numbers for the two groups for the purpose of comparison. Pension benefits are calculated in **Yuan** per person per year.

Table 2. Pension Benefit for Government Employees and Public Institution Employees (Combined data)

	Persons participated at the yearend (10000 persons)			Revenue and expenses of Pension fund (100 million Yuan)			Self-collected and calculated data					
	Total	Workers	Retiree	Revenue	Expense	Balance	Total employees	Benefit p/y (Yuan)	Inc. rate	Coverage rate	Salary (weighted)	Repla. rate
1999	762.5	642.6	119.9	93.2	61.8	89.3	3860.9	5150.2		0.197		
2000	1131	977.6	153.4	189.8	145.4	186.1	3852.6	9481.3	0.841	0.294	8738.4	1.085
2001	1278.2	1068.9	209.3	253	204.4	233.2	3831.3	9766.1	0.03	0.334	9886.6	0.988
2002	1458	1199.4	258.6	387.8	340.1	364.5	3777.7	13152.8	0.347	0.386	11670.3	1.127
2003	1625.3	1322	303.3	470.6	405.9	441.7	3795.8	13382.8	0.017	0.428	13459.7	0.994
2004	1674	1346.4	327.6	529.9	470.9	475.7	3838.5	14374.2	0.074	0.436	14897.2	0.965
2005	1772.1	1409.8	362.3	601.6	545	534.3	3889.7	15042.8	0.047	0.456	16884.1	0.891
2006	1909.7	1512.9	396.8	677.2	609.4	619.8	3945.1	15357.9	0.021	0.484	19317.6	0.795
2007	1902.3	1492.6	409.7	823.6	811.3	633.2	4004.5	19802.3	0.289	0.475	21854.7	0.906
2008	1939.7	1504.1	435.6	940.1	882	690	4071.7	20247.9	0.023	0.476	26645.3	0.76
2009	1983	1524	459	1070.3	1007.8	751.8	4113.1	21957.2	0.084	0.482	30932.6	0.71
2010	2072.9	1579.6	493.3	1201.1	1145	818.1		23210.9	0.057		34248.4	0.678
2011	2108	1595	513	1409.9	1339.3	888.5		26106.7	0.125			
2012	2154.9	1620.2	534.7	1638	1553.3	973.3		29049.7	0.113			
2013	2168.9	1612.6	556.2	1831.7	1729	1076.9		31085.4	0.07			
2014	2178.5	1598.7	579.8	2004.2	1907.4	1173.7		32897.6	0.058			
2015	2237.9	1632.5	605.5	2727.7	2671.8	1229.6		44125.5	0.341			

Sources: China Labour Statistical Yearbooks; Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbooks; Author.

From 1999 to 2015, the rate of retirees compared to the workers in post increased from 18.6% to 37%. The burden of pension funding largely increased; in other words, the state budget investment also increased. Although the data seem less than 100 percent precise, we can still see an typical pattern of the high replacement rate of pension benefit for government and public institution employees (higher than 80% in the late 1990s and early 2000s), especially when compared to the situation for enterprise employees (about 50% in the 2000s, shown in Figure 5). The low coverage rate may result from the calculation problem in the original data, since the statistical bureau of the government published only the figures for the participants in the pension insurance scheme which needed self-contribution, while most government employees did not need to contribute anything and had access to full repayment from the public pension budget fund. Thus, the coverage rate here more probably calculated by the participants in public institution employee schemes dividing the number of public institution employees and government employees combined. Either way, we can find that the pension benefit that the government and public institution employees enjoy is generous and is largely covered by the state budget.

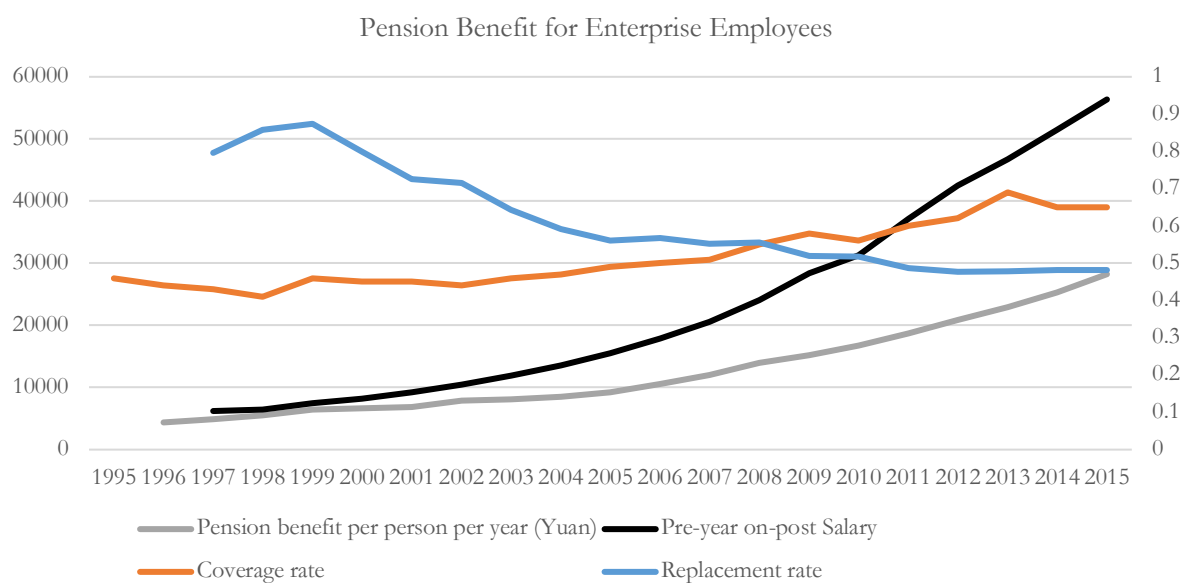
Pension plan for Enterprise Employees (PEE)

The pension plan for enterprise employees experienced the most frequent modifications during the whole reform period, as shown in the previous section on changing policies. Here I present the changes in pension benefit and rate of increase. Table 3 shows the combined statistical data of pension benefits for employees of SOEs and other types of employment (such as self-employed persons) from the China Labour Statistical Yearbook; and Figure 5 shows the enterprise employees' pension coverage rate, benefit per person per year and replacement rate data from the report by Zheng (2016). Compared to government employees and public institution employees, enterprise employees enjoyed far lower pension benefits, considered as raw benefit per person per year and rate of increase. The benefit per person per year for government employees and public institution employees in 2015 was about 44125.5 yuan, while for average enterprise employees it was about 27108.2 yuan (or 28236, in Zheng's calculations) even though their on-duty salary was around 56360 yuan before retirement. In other words, enterprise employees would have experienced a steeper drop in living standards after retirement. Moreover although the coverage rate increased after 1997, the replacement rate went in the opposite direction: a drop from 80% to 50% from the late 1990s to the late 2000s, as shown in Figure 5.

Table 3. Pension Benefit for Enterprise Employees and Others

	Persons participated at the			Revenue and expenses of Pension				
	yearend (10000 persons)			fund (100 million Yuan)				
	Total	Workers	Retiree	Revenue	Expense	Balance	Benefit p/y (Yuan)	Inc. Rate
1989	5710.3	4816.9	893.4	146.7	118.8	68	1330.1	
1990	6166	5200.7	965.3	178.8	149.3	97.9	1547	0.163
1991	6740.3	5653.7	1086.6	215.7	173.1	144.1	1592.8	0.03
1992	9456.2	7774.7	1681.5	365.8	321.9	220.6	1914.4	0.202
1993	9847.6	8008.2	1839.4	503.5	470.6	258.6	2558.6	0.336
1994	10573.5	8494.1	2079.4	707.4	661.1	304.8	3179.2	0.243
1995	10979	8737.8	2241.2	950.1	847.6	429.8	3781.9	0.19
1996	11116.7	8758.4	2358.3	1171.8	1031.9	578.6	4375.5	0.157
1997	11203.9	8670.9	2533	1337.9	1251.3	682.8	4940.1	0.129
1998	11203.1	8475.8	2727.3	1459	1511.6	587.8	5542.6	0.122
1999	11722.9	8859.2	2863.7	1871.9	1863.1	644.2	6505.9	0.174
2000	12486.4	9469.9	3016.5	2088.3	1970	761	6530.9	0.004
2001	12904.3	9733	3171.3	2235.1	2116.5	818.6	6674	0.022
2002	13278.6	9929.4	3349.2	2783.6	2502.8	1243.5	7472.8	0.12
2003	13881.4	10324.5	3556.9	3209.4	2716.2	1764.8	7636.4	0.022
2004	14678.9	10903.9	3775	3728.5	3031.2	2499.3	8029.7	0.051
2005	15715.8	11710.6	4005.2	4491.7	3495.3	3506.7	8726.9	0.087
2006	16856.6	12618	4238.6	5632.5	4287.3	4869.1	10114.9	0.159
2007	18234.6	13690.6	4544	7010.6	5153.6	6758.2	11341.5	0.121
2008	19951.4	15083.4	4868	8800.1	6507.6	9241	13368.1	0.179
2009	21567	16219	5348	10420.6	7886.6	11774.3	14746.8	0.103
2010	23634.4	17822.7	5811.6	12218.4	9409.9	14547.2	16191.6	0.098
2011	26284	19970	6314	15484.8	11425.7	18608.1	18095.8	0.118
2012	28271.9	21360.9	6910.9	18363	14008.5	22968	20270.1	0.12
2013	30049.5	22564.7	7484.8	20848.7	16741.5	27192.3	22367.3	0.103
2014	31945.9	23932.3	8013.6	23305.4	19847.2	30626.3	24766.9	0.107
2015	33123.2	24586.8	8536.5	26613.2	23140.9	34115.2	27108.2	0.095

Source: China Labour Statistical Yearbooks; Author.



Data source: Zheng, 2016.

Figure 5. Pension Benefit for Enterprise Employees

Pension plan for Urban Non-salaried Residents (PUR) and Rural Residents (PRR)

The pension plan for urban non-salaried residents and rural residents started quite late and with very limited payments. Table 4 shows the pension benefit change for rural residents from Zheng’s report in 2016. Tables, 2, 3 and 4 together display the difference in pension reforms that supports my argument of “benefit differentiation”. For rural residents, the pension scheme has a far lower coverage rate and a low replacement rate. From the data we can identify that the pension benefit per person per year for rural residents was about 1000 Yuan, which is far less than their urban counterparts received (e.g. enterprise employees got 20270 Yuan in 2012 on average). In addition to the net number of benefits, the replacement rate in the rural residents’ pension scheme was around 13% in 2015, while urban enterprise employees enjoyed a replacement rate of 50% (2015) and government/public institution employees enjoyed 67% (2010, weighted). To better understand the strategic side of this differentiation, a final comparison that I want to show in Table 5 is the difference in population of the different social groups in China from 1987 to 2009¹⁸. Though without solid evidence, a reasonable strategy for a

¹⁸The government stop publishing the employee number and related conditions of government units and public institution units from 2009.

government wanting to reduce its burdens would be to push the largest working population—enterprise employees—towards the open market. And when a government needs to show generosity and appease discontent over inequality, it could give a modicum of “alms” to a large but less advantaged population—rural residents—in exchange for more loyalty at least cost.

Table 4. Pension Benefit for Rural Residents

Year	Expense (100 million Yuan)	Recipients (10000 persons)	Benefit p/y (Yuan)	Income (Yuan)	Replac. Rate
2011	598	8760	683	6977.3	0.098
2012	1150	13075	880	7916.6	0.111
2013	1348	13768	979	8895.9	0.110
2014	1571	14313	1098	9892	0.111
2015	2117	14800	1430	10772	0.133

Source: Zheng (2016).

According to my preliminary interviews in summer 2016, many rural residents, especially the older ones, were very content with any subsidy from the government. This is mainly because they had enjoyed quite a few benefits from the state budget beforehand and most of the old people caring for them came from the family or local community. Any cash subsidy from the government may have seemed like a bonus to them, especially in view of their relatively low income compared to urban employees.

Table 5. Raw populations by Types of Pension Scheme Recipient (10000 persons)

	Government Employees	Public Institution Employees	Enterprise Employees	Rural Residents (permanent)
1987	805	2032.8	10376	81626
1988	843	2101.9	10662.7	82365
1989	885	2175.2	10564.1	84164
1990	913	2301.2	10697.3	84138
1991				84620
1992				84996
1993	986.16	2426.52	11436.02	85344
1994	1043.8	2653.5	11560.7	85681
1995	1022	2736.7	11542.2	85947
1996	1050.5	2823.1	11347.3	85085
1997	1062.1	2905.2	11068.7	84177
1998				83153
1999	1068.1	2792.8	8269.3	82038
2000	1073.7	2778.9	7759.9	80837
2001	1070.5	2760.8	7334.5	79563
2002	1054.2	2723.5	7207.5	78241
2003	1071.6	2724.2	7172.4	76851
2004	1092.3	2746.2	7260.2	75705
2005	1096.3	2793.4	7514.4	74544
2006	1111.8	2833.3	7768.1	73160
2007	1130.3	2874.2	8019.9	71496
2008	1156.8	2914.9	8120.8	70399
2009	1183.3	2929.8	8412.7	68938

Sources: China Labour Statistical Yearbooks; National Statistical Bureau; Author.

To conclude, the empirical evidence suggests that the strategy of differentiation in the government's welfare allocation has been to sacrifice the social benefits for employees of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and later on the employees of public institutions to reduce the fiscal burden, while providing modest/slender welfare benefits for social groups that could be bought off at minimal expense. During the process, government officials as the core elites of governance power consistently enjoyed the most generous social benefits. We have evidence that supports

this assumption from the various policy shifts of different pension schemes, such as the retrenchment policy reform for SOE employees; the expanded coverage for rural residents and migrant workers from rural areas; and the contribution ratio reform of the pension scheme for public institution employees. To summarize, the segmented resource allocation in China's social welfare reform has favoured the core elites, while it distributed limited fiscal capacity to the social groups which cost least per person.

Who deserves benefits and why: constructed truth and knowledge

What kinds of truth and knowledge about pension benefits are produced and promoted by the state when it wants to persuade the public about its multiple and distinctive policy experiments and reforms? For instance, from the institutional analysis and statistical comparison in the section above, we see that the enterprise employees and public institution employees were the ones whose expected pension benefits were reduced; while in the early 1990s and late 2000s, pension plans for rural residents were piloted in which the peasants were encouraged to participate in the schemes. How did the state manage to push the reform? How did persuasion work to help promote the controversial reforms and what kind of knowledge regarding social rights was produced by the state? In this part, I investigate the knowledge construction from the content of the policy statements and official newspapers by fleshing out the use of discourse, differences in sentiment, and the positioning of priorities when the large-scale welfare retrenchment was felt by the employees of enterprises and public institutions.

I use quantitative text analysis (QTA) to show the persuasive efforts of the government when it sets out to produce truth and knowledge about pension benefits, social fairness and responsibility allocation. To better capture the details in the text (and constrained by the availability of data), in the QTA part, I focus mainly on two sets of pension reforms. The first set concerns the enterprise employees in the late 1990s and early 2000s. There were several waves of pension experiments for enterprise employees, all of them were closely connected with the economic reform of the state-owned enterprises and reallocation of state-individual responsibility for care in old age. The state had to persuade the enterprise employees that there was good reason to take care of themselves, and tell them what they should expect from the state. In the following section, I employ text data illustrating that in the process of welfare retrenchment for enterprise employees, **the government mobilized and worked through people's risk preferences, sense of obligation and lifestyles and constructed the desired images of a self-regulated and self-motivated "socialized self", while denouncing the old**

“(work) unit-based self”. The second set of pension reforms centres on those for rural residents in the early 1990s (as pilot projects in local regions) and late 2000s (as a nationwide policy). The pension reform for rural residents in the 1980s and 1990s was mainly used to help promote the one-child policy, while the other reform in the late 2000s was part of the process of rapid urbanization. For these reforms, the state needed to show the public why rural residents deserved the expanded pension benefits. My text analysis of official discourse demonstrates that **the key instruments that were used included reconstructing the character of social redistribution, emphasising the overall situation with Chinese characteristics, and packaging the development with social stability.**

The text data include official news data mostly from the People’s Daily dataset¹⁹ and supplementary data from the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CNKI database)²⁰ and Wisenews dataset²¹. The People’s Daily is the mouthpiece (official newspaper) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the biggest newspaper group in China, with a circulation of 3 million²². It is the weathercock of current political, social, and economic trends, delivering information to the public from the central government. It publishes not only the main policies, leader’s activities, journalistic reports, but also editorial comments, readers’ mail, scholars’ theoretical discussions, and so on. It differs from the rigid contents of the policy statements since the media can elaborate more on the policy design, targets and details in various styles, whereas the policies themselves are mostly published or issued in a particular format. Analysing the text in the People’s Daily is one of the best ways of decoding the policy direction and “top-level design” in China. Since the original People’s Daily dataset contains only the articles published in the People’s Daily from 1946 to 2003, I supplemented the original dataset with news data from the CNKI and Wisenews datasets. The consolidated dataset of People’s Daily articles covers the time period from 1946 to 2008. To fit the plan of analysing the two sets of pension reforms, I generated the analytical data by searching with the keywords “old-age insurance” and “pension” while confining the time period to 1978-2008, resulting in 3390 articles with these keywords in the context (a corpus descriptive statistics is available in the appendix). The sample pool for the analysis here, therefore, is all the news articles relates to pension reform and old-age care, which is consistent with the main research interest in this

¹⁹ People’s Daily Dataset: <http://rmbw.xyz/simple/>.

²⁰ China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database: <http://oversea.cnki.net/kns55/default.aspx>.

²¹ Wise News dataset: <http://wisenews.wisers.net/>.

²² It should be noted that, the original text from People’s daily is in Chinese. Hence, all the quotes in the analysis are my translation.

chapter. More discussions about the potential restrictions on topic analysis posed by the specific sample pool can be found in the model validations in the appendix.

Analysing the text content with computer assistance has been handy for researchers and popular among them in the past few years, especially when automated text analysis is used in text mining (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013; Hopkins & King, 2010; Lucas et al., 2015). Unlike traditional hand coding and dictionary methods, which are mainly based on the frequencies of selected keywords, supervised and unsupervised automated text analysis extracts richer information from the content. Moreover, some new methods can provide more choices for the researcher who wants to validate the categorization of text and integrate information with meta-data such as dates, column types, authors and even the length of documents.

In order to better understand the content of the news rhetoric, I use a combination of inductive and deductive approach in addressing the topics, key classifications, & elements of knowledge construction of the documents. Unsupervised method helps with the identification of topics discussed in the articles as well as the relationship within topics without much pre-assumptions imposed. The descriptive information from the topic identification process reveals rich information on the priorities of government's efforts on policy promotion in various periods and circumstances in pension reforms, and latent structure of knowledge been employed in the state news. While the usage of supervised methods takes advantage of the current literature and my understanding of the text, classify the documents into various key categories. Combined with the meta data of the articles, it provides further information on the elements been used by the government to construct people's knowledge about the reforms in specific stages. In the analysis part, I integrated the topics with the categories to make further investigations about the features of official discourse.

Unsupervised text mining allows researchers to explore the topics in the whole meta-text data without much *ex ante* classification. The Structural Topic Model (STM) uses mixed-membership topic models and is able to incorporate contextual covariates (i.e. document-specific metadata) in the prior distribution. This is suitable for long texts: each document is assumed to present a mixture of topics, each topic is represented by many words, and each word therefore has a certain probability of belonging to certain topics. With STM, metadata such as dates and sentiments can be included in the topic model through either topical prevalence or topical content. The former approach allows us to identify the way the metadata affect the frequency with which a topic is discussed, while the latter allows the observed metadata to affect the rate of

word use within a given topic—that is, how a particular topic is discussed (M. E. Roberts, Stewart, & Tingley, 2014).

Supervised learning methods, for their part, require researchers to read and code some training documents in advance, and then use certain algorithms to accomplish the categorization of the remaining documents. This approach is useful for analysing the text more precisely with the classifiers designed by the researcher to address particular research interests. In this section, I used results from support vector machines classifier, as well as the human coded result of the full corpus to make support my analysis. The original training and test set was generated by randomly selected a sample of 400 documents. Then the documents were manually categorized into the categories of “locus of responsibility”, “praise”, “denounce”, “national conditions”, and “international experience”. The “locus of responsibility” included 5 responsibility allocations regarding care for the elderly (pension payments, daily caring, and so on): “no clear direction of locus”, “state/party”, “individual/family”, “enterprise”, “social coordination”²³. “Praise” and “denounce” refer to the tone of the document, while “national conditions” and “international experiences” referring to the main highlights in the document (whether the whole document emphasised the local situation in China/Chinese characteristics, or experiences from other countries). With the hand-coded data, the classifiers followed up and classified the remaining documents with specific rules. In addition to the classified results using supervised model, I also hand coded the classifications for all the documents in the corpus, which later on is used to compare with the predictions from supervised models. A complete comparison of the performance metrics of various classifiers is available in the appendix.

Data cleaning and an exploration on topics²⁴

To prepare the data, I used SegwordCN in the “tmcn” package (J. Li, 2019) (and validate the text pre-processing with “JiebaR” package) to carry out the word segmentation, then turned the words into a word corpus after cleaning the punctuation, stop words, and blank spaces²⁵. The first step in inspecting the data is to figure out the themes in the metadata using the unsupervised text mining method. The topic model presents the probability distribution of terms in the corpus, and can assess the similarity of documents; it is therefore suitable for describing a text collection. Since all the documents are connected to pension benefits in one way or another,

²³ A flowchart of coding rule for category “locus of responsibility” is provided in the appendix.

²⁴ The original code can be found in the replication files.

²⁵ The dictionaries that I used to help identify core keywords included “Dictionary of common words in government official reports”, “Dictionary of common words in social policy”, “Dictionary of common words in socialist theories” etc. downloaded from sogou.com.

I used a mixed-membership model in order to include as much information as was in the corpus. In this case, the documents were not assumed to belong to single topics, but simultaneously to several and the topic distribution varied across documents.

As with all mixed-membership topic models, the estimation of topics and correlations depends on the starting values of the parameters, such as the distribution of words for a particular topic. A spectral initialization uses a spectral decomposition (non-negative matrix factorization) of the word co-occurrence matrix, which is deterministic and globally consistent under reasonable conditions (M. E. Roberts, Stewart, & Tingley, 2016). The method of initialization covered in STM package includes Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), Dirichlet Multinomial Regression Topic Model (DMR), a random initialization or a previous STM object (M. E. Roberts et al., 2014). Below is the graph showing the average for each model and topic specific scores (see Figure 6). From the graph, we can see that the spectral initialization performs slightly better than the others. I also used the “`topicmodel`” package (Grün, Hornik, & Grün, 2018) to validate the generated topic; the main identified topics are similar (as further validated in the appendix). These were all results generated by STM package (in which LDA is also the default option) in the main analysis.

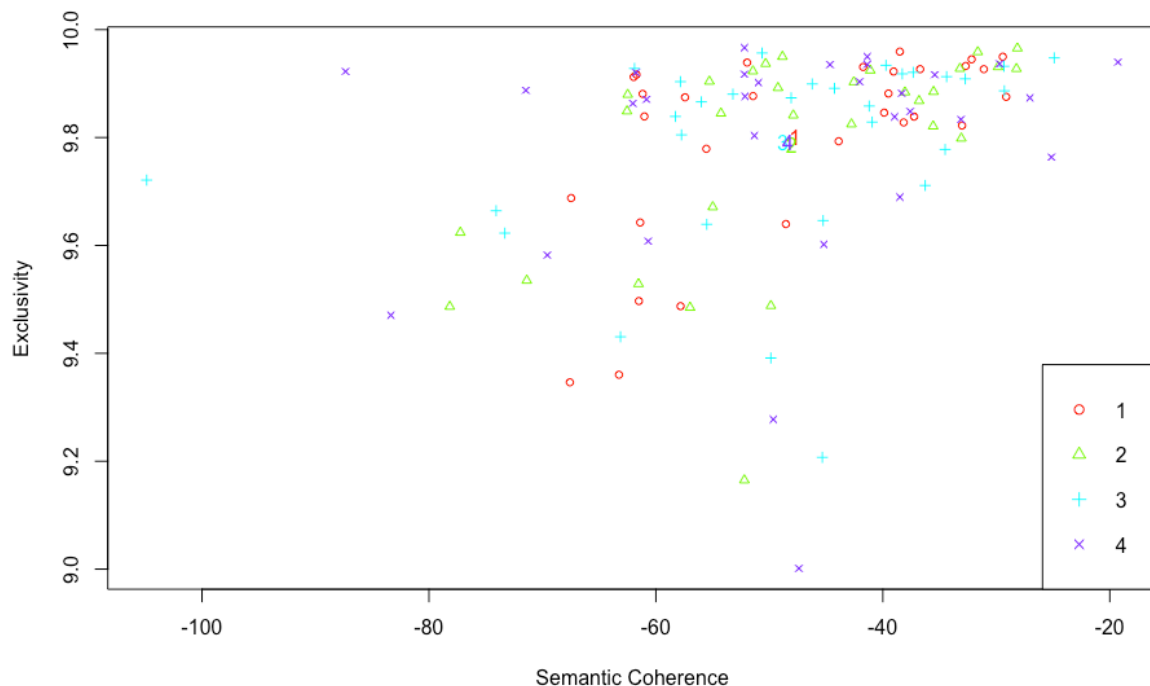


Figure 6. Performance of different methods of initialization

With the help of the STM package, I generated topics setting the topic number $K=30$ and 60 respectively (validation of optimal K number can be found in the appendix) and estimated with spectral initialization and topical prevalence the parameter “year_month” (time when the article was published). Topical prevalence captures how much each topic contributes to a document (M. E. Roberts et al., 2014) and this prevalence varies with the metadata. The results present the highest probability words, FREX words, lift weighted words and score words²⁶. Most of the topics are meaningful and easy to interpret, such as those related to economic development, including such core words as development (发展), increase/growth (增长), income (收入), consumptions (消费), production (生产); the ones related to the reform of state-owned enterprise and laid-off workers, including core words such as employment (就业), labour (劳动), enterprise employees (职工), work unit (单位), insurance (保险), layoff (下岗) etc. There are some junk topics that are meaningless or have no relationship with pension reform. These bias is tolerable in my analysis since 1) it would only increase the probability of identified topics if there is no junk topics; 2) my analysis are built on the through reading of the full corpus of myself, which allow me to identify the meaningful topics as human coders. Moreover, I provide a full list of topics from the unsupervised models in the appendix, with validations of different word segmentation and pre-processing process and k settings. The selection of topics in Table 6²⁷ is mainly the most meaningful topics that relates to the pension reform and old-age care setting $K=30$. In labelling them, I focus on the main issues addressed from the topic descriptions, and label them use the most intuitive and informative words.

²⁶ Weighted words are identified by their overall frequency and how exclusive they are to the topic. Lift weighted words are generated by dividing the frequency of the words in other topics, thus giving greater weight to words that appear less frequently in other topics. Score words come from dividing the log frequency of the word in the topic by the log frequency of the word in other topics (Roberts, Stewart, & Tingley, 2014).

²⁷ Some Chinese words have several meanings or act as several parts of speech (PoS); I include word extensions inside brackets.

Table 6. Selected topics with keywords

<p>Topic 4 “SOE Reform” Top Words: Highest Prob: enterprise, reform, state-owned, market, economy, operation, management FREX: state-owned, amalgamation, shares, transfer, bankrupt, enterprise, assets Lift: final fight, bad debt, strategy Score: enterprise, state-owned, reform, market, operation, assets, amalgamation</p>	<p>Topic 9 “Laid-off Workers” Top Words: Highest Prob: employment, employee, laid off, enterprise, labour, insurance, staff FREX: laid off, employment, unemployment, Liaoning, assure, positions, difficult Lift: apathetic, bureaus, bring Score: employment, laid off, employee, unemployment, state-owned, enterprise, insurance (protection)</p>
<p>Topic 20 “Economic Reform” Top Words: Highest Prob: economy, development, reform, market, society (social), job, state FREX: macro, control, current, price, rectify Lift: international market demand, victory, soft landing, signs, Keqiang, braveness, nothingness Score: economy, macro, reform, currency, finance, development, market</p>	<p>Topic 19 “EE Pension Plan” Top Words: Highest Prob: insurance, elder-care (social security), social (society), enterprise, protection, employees, fees FREX: elder-care (social security), pay, insurance, trust, participate, social coordination, account Lift: rest of the life, transgression, account division, current, employed Score: insurance, elder-care (social security), pay, employee, society (social), protection, enterprise</p>
<p>Topic 23 “Institution Reform” Top Words: Highest Prob: society (social), development, protection, institution(system), economy, reform, construction FREX: harmony, distribution, public, society (social), institution (system), ideology, fairness Lift: missing parts, variables, overstep, should Score: society (social), protection, institution(system), reform, economy, ideology, market, harmony</p>	<p>Topic 29 “Retired/Pension fee” Top Words: Highest Pro: retire, employee, yuan, fees, salary, enterprise FREX: factory director, factory, own, working years, surrender insurance, retire Lift: rumors Score: retirement, factory, employee, yuan, salary, fee, pension</p>
<p>Topic 16 “Birth Control” Top Words: Highest Prob: reproduction, plan, population, giving birth, work, women, development FREX: reproduction, women, plan, female, population, couple Lift: still, early marriage, boys, contraception, pregnancy, as low as Score: reproduction, population, women, plan, contraception, couple, giving birth</p>	<p>Topic 5 “Old-age Care” Top Words: Highest Prob: old, old people, society (social), disabled, elderly care, age, service FREX: old people, disabled, old age, care, recover Lift: few children Score: old people, old age, disabled, age, old, home-based, care</p>
<p>Topic 25 “Rural Migrants” Top Words: Highest Prob: peasant, rural area, worker, urban-rural, agriculture, city FREX: peasant, lose land, urban-rural, land, migrant, city Lift: Dujiangyan, deep water, whole scale, Pujiang, Xinyang²⁸ Score: peasant, rural area, urban-rural, lose land, agriculture, worker, rural</p>	<p>Topic 2 “Commercial Insurance” Top Words: Highest Prob: insurance, company, invest, bank, market, China FREX: client, life, annuity, life insurance, company, business Lift: be clever, actuary, collusion Score: insurance, life insurance, company, life, annuity, client, bank</p>

²⁸ These are all names of places.

To better understand the relations of these topics, I present the topic correlations (with $K=30$ in order to have a manageable graph) in Figure 7²⁹ using a force-directed layout algorithm. Positive correlation suggests that both topics are likely to be discussed within a given document. The distance (or position in the graph) does not mean a high or low degree of topic connection, and nor does the size of the circle. From the correlation graph, we can identify the cluster of topics 4 (SOE Reform), 20 (Economic Reform), 23 (Institution Reform) and cluster of topics 9 (Laid-off Workers), 19 (Enterprise Employee (EE) Pension Plan), 29 (Retired/Pension fee). It is easy to identify that topic 4 refers to the reform of state-owned enterprises, topic 20 and 23 cope with economic reform, marketization and redistribution; topics 9 and 19 relate respectively to the theme of enterprise employees' layoff and their pension plan, topic 29 mainly addresses pension fees. There are some clusters/topics that seem not directly related to the pension reform. For instance, topic 30 (Letter/Visits) addresses the theme of appeals, issues and the government. Topic 15 (State Budget) discusses fiscal problems, the budget, and expenditure. Topic 7 (Community Care) covers key words such as people, difficulty, life, disability, warm, street level administration and so on.

²⁹ Each topic in the figure is labelled with one or two key words for easier identification. It should be noted that each topic contains more complicated information than the labels.

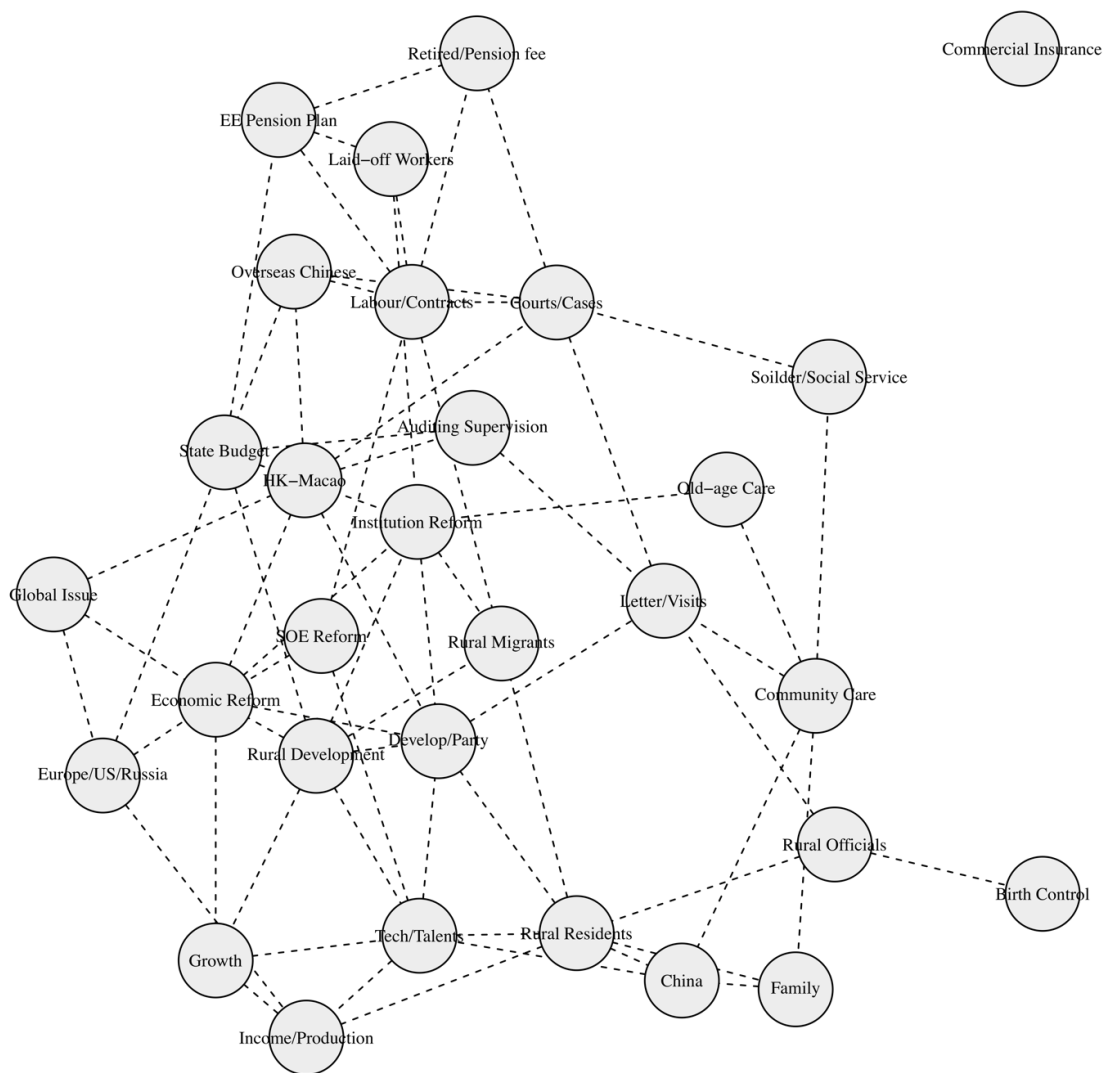


Figure 7. Correlations of Topics

The isolated topic 2 (Commercial Insurance) refers to the theme of commercial insurance, which addresses the promotion of purchased rights to cover social risks. In the documents that relate to commercial insurance, the social risks for each individual are treated as capital, are calculable and are avoidable once complete preparations have been made. One example³⁰ of topic 2 is a selected letter to the newspaper editor from a former worker:

“Dear editor: Both my partner and I have retained our posts in our original work unit while salary payment has been suspended. We have started a small private business since our “iron

³⁰ Based on my understanding of the full corpus (with a full reading of the whole sample text) and the instruction of the key topics (with unsupervised models), I select some excerpts that can best describe the feature of certain topics.

rice bowl” has disappeared. Therefore, we have quite a strong sense of (potential) risks and want to invest in some basic insurance to avoid future problems. I know there are several insurance companies and many kinds of insurance. Can you tell me what I should pay attention to when choosing insurance?” (“What we should pay attention to when choosing personal insurance”, Reader’s letter, 1997-05-28) (present author’s translation, as in all subsequent quotations)

The editor replied with a long discussion of the difference between various types of commercial insurance. It can be addressed from the angle that people who make plans for their own and care about preparing for risks in life (especially those who have been laid off due to the SOE reform) should be warmly encouraged. In another document, “commercial insurance” is identified as the stabilizer of society:

The social attributes of commercial insurance make it capable of adding up to and supplementing the government’s social insurance scheme. (Its existence) is good for reducing people’s anxieties and it functions as “the stabilizer of the society”. (“Bring out the role of commercial insurance as ‘the stabilizer of society’”, Zeng Yujin, 2004-09-18)

Another special topic I want to highlight here is topic 16 (Birth Control), which is not directly related to cluster 4-20-23 or cluster 9-19-29. Topic 16 refers to the “one-child policy” and birth control, correlating with topic 8, which covers keywords rural, village, and towns. It correlates with topic 5 (Old-age Care), which addresses the social group of elderly people. The main keywords are society, elderly, population, life and problems, through topic 7 (Community Care). Why do these topics show up here? I give more explanations in the following part which discusses how social welfare policies are used as instruments of other contemporary major reforms.

Mind the time: Pension reform as instruments

Policies and their promotions are never isolated or arbitrary, they are proposed and framed in a way that is consistent with their socio-economic conditions. Welfare policy in particular is not just concerned with the allocation of social benefits, but also extends to employment policy, tax policy, and demographic policy. After sorting out the content and correlations of the core topics, it is important to connect the topics and their longitudinal variations with the grand socioeconomic reforms initiated by the government. The interaction or dialogue between welfare policies and other policies at the same time shows the comprehensive and sophisticated design of the governance. We can also find how the details of a welfare

policy—such as eligibility standards, subsidy methods—are shaped by their social and economic circumstances. As my chief objects in the text analysis, I address two main social groups during the period from the 1980s till 2000s: urban enterprise employees (especially SOE employees), and rural residents. In this part, I explore further the way that pension reforms interact with the other reforms imposed on these two social groups, in particular the way that the official discourse works to help address the main problems brought by the socio-economic transformations.

Economic reform and state-owned enterprise reform are generally recognized as the main engine of China's nation-wide reforms from the late 1970s. As shown in Figure 4 (*the chronological schedule of pension reform*), the “Decisions on Economic Reform” was issued in 1984 and the “Enterprise Bankruptcy Law” was promulgated in 1986. In 1993, the “Decisions on Constructing [a] Socialist Market Economy” accelerated the process of economic reform following Deng's visit to southern China. The reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is a core element of China's social and economic reforms. SOEs formed the backbone of China's economy during the central planning era; their transformation is the most prominent of the changes in China's enterprise system that have been made in tandem with other institutional and policy reforms in the course of the transition to a market-based economy (Garnaut, Song, & Fang, 2018). The marketization of the SOEs was followed by the laying-off of millions of workers. The official total of redundancies increased from 3 million in 1993 to 17.24 million in 1998 (Yongshun Cai, 2002; Jefferson & Rawski, 1994). The numbers of laid-off workers brought challenges to the social stability and pressure on pension reform. According to the OECD's report, the unemployment rate in urban areas increased from 7.6% to 12.7% between 1995 and 2001 (OECD, 2005). Thus, the government needed to persuade people of the need for the reform and tell them what the employees of enterprises (SOEs in particular) should expect from the government about their social benefits.

In addition to the reforms of the state-owned enterprises, the emergence and exponential growth of private enterprises (as briefly shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**) following the economic reform also brought challenges to the existing pension system for enterprise employees. In 2003, private firms (about 3 million domestic private enterprises and 24 million sole proprietorships) contributed 59% of the economy (OECD, 2005). Their employees were not covered in the traditional socialist pension system, and the central government was unlikely to provide “cradle to grave” social protection, as in the old system. Therefore, the authority needed to push for the acceptance of a new welfare system for employees of enterprises (whatever their ownership) in which individuals shared the responsibility.

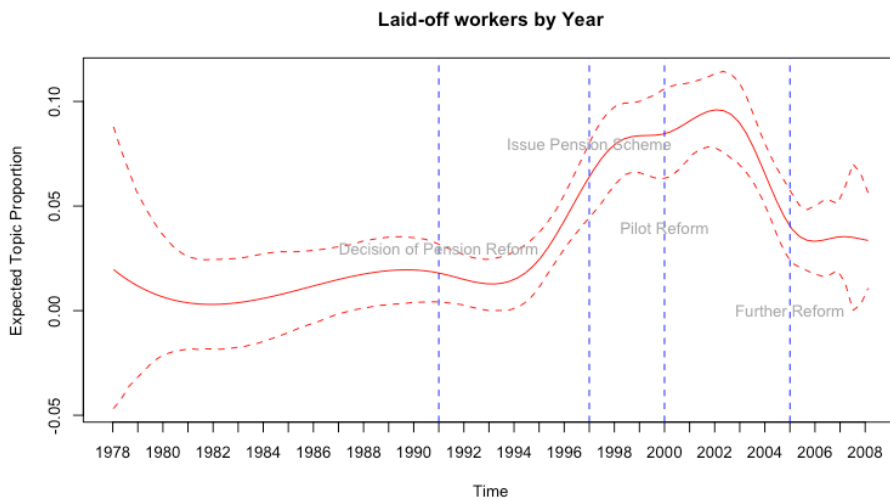
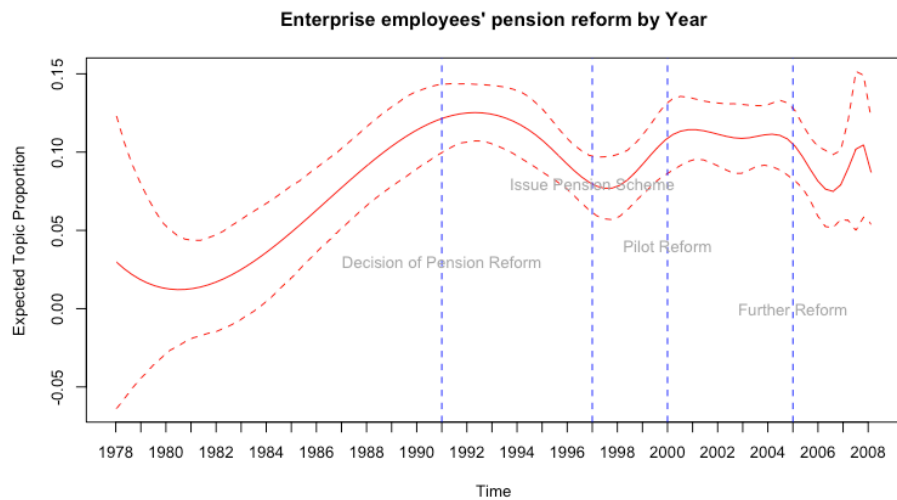
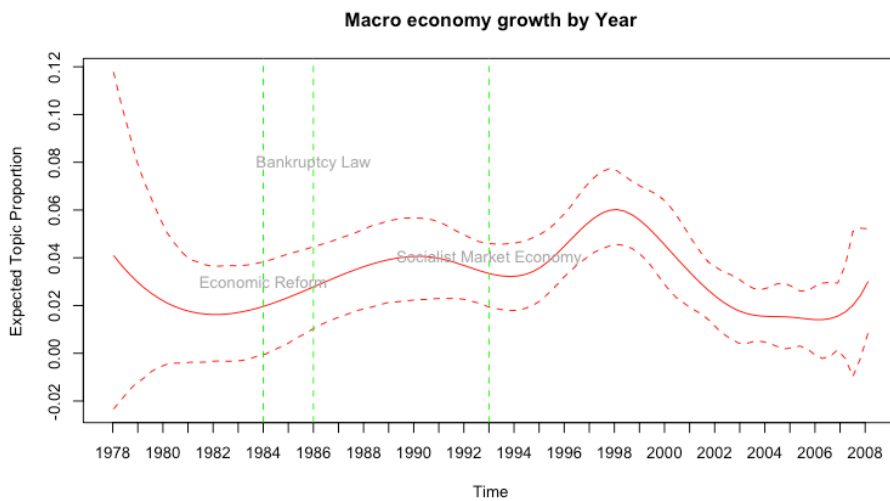
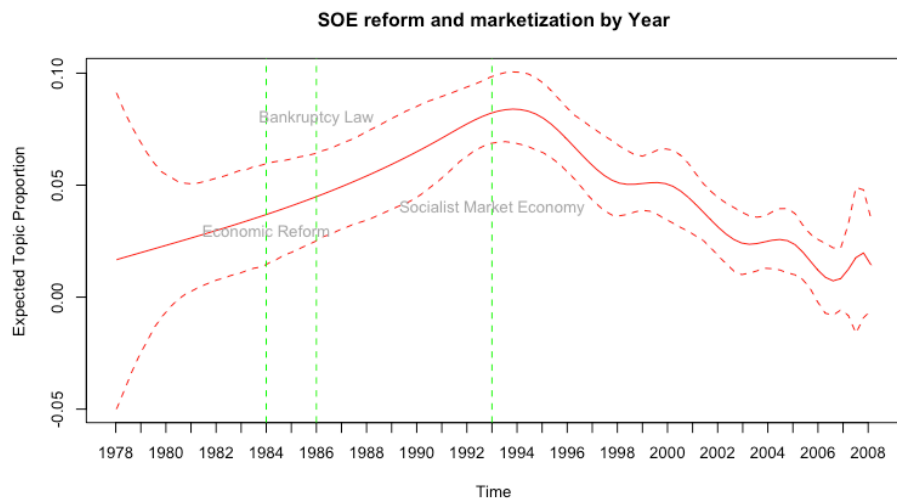


Figure 8. Topic proportions by Year: economic reform and pension reform for enterprise employees

Figure 8 presents the change of expected topic proportions for the themes of economic reform (topic 20), SOE reform (topic 4), pension reform (topic 19) and laid-off workers (topic 9). I also highlight the critical events during the reform. The green dash lines are critical events for the economic reforms: “Decisions on Economic Reform” (1984), “Enterprise Bankruptcy Law” (1986), and “Decisions on Constructing [a] Socialist Market Economy” (1993). The blue dash lines are the critical events for the pension reforms of enterprise employees: “Decision on Pension Insurance Reform” (1991), “Basic Pension Insurance Scheme” (1997), issuing the pilot programme of fully funded individual accounts for the reform of pensions for enterprise employees (2000), and “Improving the Basic Pension System” (2005). The changing trend of topics to do with both the SOE reform, marketization and the reform of pensions for enterprise employees is increased in the 1980s and reaches a high point around the early 1990s. The topic of institutional change has a similar pattern, although the absolute proportion is smaller. The issue of laid-off workers is highlighted at a late stage of the marketization and the pension reform for enterprise employees from 1994. How does the content of these topics dialogue and echo with each other? In the following part, I educe some typical examples of each topic, then discuss the governance logic behind the discourse usage.

The economic reform itself was described as a desired future for everyone in Chinese society. Topic 20 (Economic Reform) which refers to the macro of economic growth, emphasises the urgency of the “overall situation” in current society in terms of development, social stability and long-term vision. For instance, it says:

Dealing with the relations between reform, development, and stability correctly, and resolving the important issues during the process, are crucial for the progress of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in order to attain the goal of building a society prosperous in every sense, for the long-term advancement of all kinds of socio-economic affairs (“Making the effort to resolve the crucial questions of the overall situation”, Shi Zhongxin, 2003-09-04)

As a main component of economic reform, the reform of the SOEs is described as the most efficient and effective way of achieving the “prosperous society”. Therefore, from the text of Topic 4 (SOE reform and marketization), we can identify the main points of promoting the efficiency of the reformed SOEs: it is all tied up with economic performance and statistics. For instance, in a passage of the text introducing an example model of SOE reform, the discourse reads:

When we liberate the small SOEs we cannot use a unified mode of “one size fits all”, or

just leave them on their own. Here is a summary of the Xinle city's practices of liberating small SOEs. The reform started in the second half of 1992, when the debt asset ratio of 8 branches of SOEs (including industry, light industry, and retailing, etc.) was close to 100%, and the scale of loss was about 63%. The nation's fiscal capacity was almost exhausted. Three years after the liberalization of the small SOEs, the profits and taxes from the SOEs had increased dramatically. [This precedes a long statistical justification] ("Using multiple strategies, coordinating the government and enterprises, Xinle's reform for small SOEs is alive and stable", Wang Qingshan, 1996-07-18)

Along with the SOE reform, one important task of the pension reform has been to help the state and enterprises ease the pension burden on employees. When the state started to promote pension reform for enterprise employees in the early 1990s, we see that the official discourse warmly commended the necessity and importance of this reform:

The decision from the state council pointed out that the reform of the enterprise employees' pension insurance system was an important move protecting the lives of retirees and maintaining social stability. It's also very important for reducing the burden on the state and on enterprises, advancing the reform of the economic system, and guiding domestic consumption in a rational way. This work (of reform) is highly policy-centred and will affect many aspects of socio-political life. All levels of government need to enforce leadership, follow the spirit of this decision, design concrete implementation plans based on the local situation and promote the reform in positive and steady ways. ("The state council made the decision to reform the pension insurance system for enterprise employees; [we will] gradually construct a system which combines basic pension insurance, enterprise-supplemented insurance and employees' personal savings", 1991-10-10)

Also, in a summary text about welfare reform, the difference between the desired new hybrid welfare system (with shared responsibilities) and the unwanted old system (social protection based on the work unit) is stated as an expected change which fits the overall trend of the social and economic reforms:

The old system, unit-based, fully covered, exclusive and inefficient, in which the state takes full responsibility, has been replaced with a new multi-layered system of shared responsibility, socialized basic protection and inclusive schemes. A new welfare system which fits the requirements of a socialist market economy is now built ("The new opportunity for deepening the social welfare reform brought about by the advent of WTO membership", Zhang Yitian, 2002-03-23)

The SOE reform has left many employees facing the risk or experience of being laid off. A large number of people unemployed can pose many risks to social stability. The central government in response proposed a “social security system with Chinese characteristics” based on “three security lines” (2002): first, a basic guaranteed living system for those no longer working in an SOE, intended to safeguard basic living standards, pay social insurance contributions and encourage re-employment; second, an unemployment insurance system, which provides unemployment benefits and actively encourages re-employment; and third, guaranteed minimum living standards for all urban residents whose family income per capita is lower than the prescribed level (K. W. Chan & Buckingham, 2008). In the official discourse addressed to laid-off workers, the government draws attention not only to the importance and correctness of the reform, but also to the point that the government would never abandon this group of people, but still encourages them to make a new life if they can.

(In a visit to Liaoning,) Zhu Rongji (the Premier at the time) pointed out that the policies of “encouraging amalgamation, regulating bankruptcy, re-directing laid-off workers, cutting jobs and boosting efficiency, [and] implementing a re-employment scheme”, and of constructing basic protection for the SOEs’ laid-off workers, pension insurance and unemployment insurance, secure minimum living standards, and so on, have shown themselves to be absolutely correct. These policies play an important part in deepening the reform of the SOEs, advancing the adjustment of the institutions and maintaining social stability. Hence, they should be carried out comprehensively. The path of pension reform in Liaoning is absolutely correct and we should persevere unwaveringly. (“Zhu Rongji emphasised during his visit to Liaoning, that [we] need to pursue to the end the path of pension reform and use our best efforts to improve the state of employment and re-employment”, Liu Siyang, Meng Huan, 2002-07-25)

All these discourses, ether they refer to economic efficiency, the national interest, well-being for everyone, or simply to the competence of the government, all serve the intention of carrying out economic reform while preserving social stability.

Another good example of social policy as an instrument of reform is the reform of the rural pension plan. The rural pension plan was not as well-designed or widely implemented as the pension reform for employees of urban enterprises. As shown above in the discussion of differentiation, the rural pension plan was in the form of a policy piloted in scattered local regions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, initiated and promoted by local governments. The central government at this stage acted as cheerleader. The text analysis identified that Topic 16

(Birth Control) was related to the rural pension scheme. Why was it? From a typical example of the text promoting the rural pension policy but connecting to the one-child policy quoted below, we may note that the pension benefits are being offered in exchange for willingness of rural residents to practise birth control.

The priority of controlling birth is in rural areas, which is also one of the most difficult work [in one-child policy implementation]. But Zhejiang's practice tells us that the difficulties can be overcome. Recently we investigated 100 households in 50 villages from 10 counties in the company of officials from the Zhejiang Birth Control Association. Our experience made us feel that their work here has made renewed progress ... The way that this progress was made benefited from several skills. First of all, they promoted the birth control policy in every household. The association members paid many visits to households, bringing educational materials specifically designed to combat the difficulties in each of them, combining reasons of different kinds and clarifying misunderstandings with detailed information. For instance, the chair of the birth control association from Hengdu village, Anji County, visited all the villagers and helped them to calculate possible future expenses like this: parents who already have a girl must, if they have a second child who is a boy, pay at least 150,000 yuan when he marries and at least 200,000 yuan for his education. But if the household participates in the pension insurance programme they need to pay less than 30,000 yuan in order to receive a pension of 800 yuan when they get old [60 for males, 55 for females]. This calculation totally persuaded the villagers. Many couples of childbearing age said that even if their first child was a girl, they wouldn't try to have a second child ("Birth control birth while enjoying a pension is a good idea", Zhao Xiangru, 1988-12-17)

Another example reads as follows:

Currently more than 800 counties have started to pilot the pension insurance system, and about 7 million are participating. Peasants are thrilled and praise the pension insurance scheme, saying "The party and the government have given us a dutiful son", "[it] is a nursing home without fences". ("Our social welfare is going ahead vigorously", Chen Hong, 1992-10-06)

The one-child policy was introduced in 1979, modified in the mid-1980s to relax regulations in rural areas (Scharping, 2013), and finally replaced by a "second child" policy that encourages couples to have more children at the end of 2015. In order to promote the policy, the government from the 1980s allocated 5 yuan per month to families with only one child (the amount is gradually increasing in step with the economic development), and also gave these

households a “one-child glory certificate” (with which the parents could enjoy longer maternity leave, subsidised social insurance and so on). The one-child limit was most strictly enforced in densely populated urban areas, where the government found it easier to grant benefits and impose punishments (such as a heavy fine or mandatory contraception) through the citizens’ work units. The situation in rural areas is more difficult to manage. For rural residents, one extra child means a bigger labour force, and the government has no way of enforcing punishment on all who “deserve” it. Thus, rural residents are now allowed to have 2 children, especially those whose first child is a girl (so long as they wait for some years after her birth). Since it is difficult to enforce birth control among rural citizens, the government has to use other means such as subsidies and praise. Social policy hereby is wisely used to encourage birth control and gender balance. Figure 9 presents the chronological changes in the expected topic proportions for topic 16 (Birth Control). The topic proportion was high from the early 1980s, dropped in the mid-1980s and increased again in the early 1990s. The overall trend since the 1990s is, however, declining.

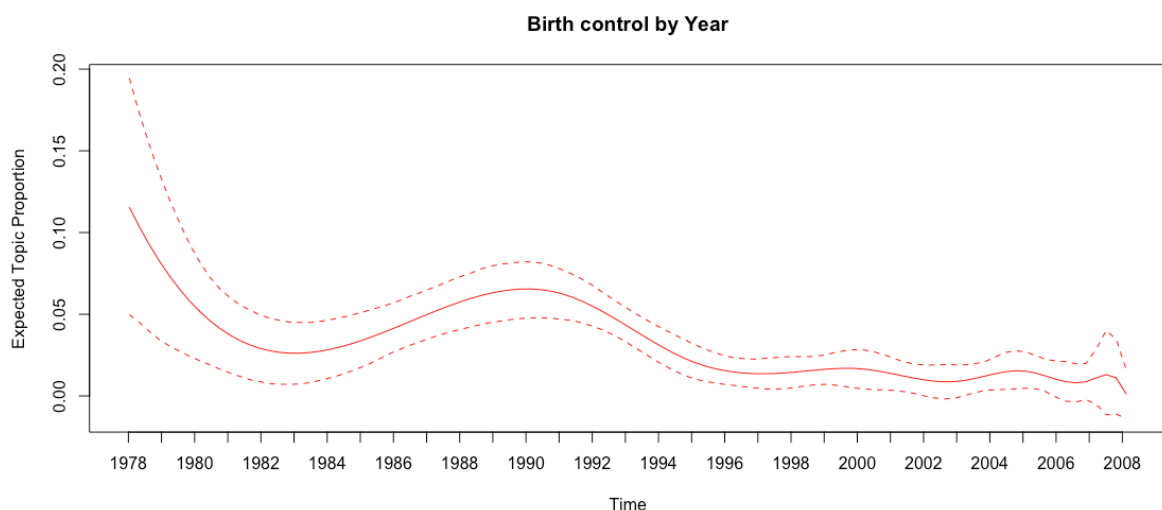


Figure 9. Topic proportions by Year: birth control

The interactions between pension reforms and their parallel social and economic policies, and the ways in which the pension reforms been used as instruments for other reforms show that the authority’s governance in China is dynamic, reflective and experimental. The increased proportion of references to pension reform for enterprise employees and the attention to the laid-off workers explicitly indicate the government’s anticipation of potential problems from the economic reform and the SOE reform. The promotion of birth control, the pension plan (although in a scattered pilot form) for rural residents, especially parents who already had a

daughter have functioned effectively to buy people's willingness to comply with the demographic control.

The politics of redistribution: what is fair and just

One important function of social welfare is to redistribute social benefits, in other words, to allow some social groups for some reason to be awarded more social benefits than other social groups. The two pension reforms discussed throughout this section—the pension reform for enterprise employees and for rural residents—relate to the reallocation of social benefits, such as subsidies from the government, or access to certain welfare programmes. In this part I ask what we can learn from the official discourse about fairness: “why someone deserves social benefits and who should pay for them (or contribute to them)”, and further investigate how government in its redistribution of social benefits embodies and creates norms about what is fair and just.

Redistribution among different social groups

There are several difficult situations related to “inequality” that the government has had to address during the whole reform of pensions and social insurance for elderly people. The first “inequality” problem in reforming the pension scheme for SOEs' employees is the different performances of the enterprises. The second is the rural-urban difference when the coverage of social insurance scheme is expanded. The third relates to the rural migrants who work in cities. Due to the dual welfare system opposing urban by rural, rural residents in urban areas cannot enjoy urban social benefits. Therefore, when the urbanization process in China involved migrant workers from rural areas, their lack of social protection became a crucial issue. In all these situations, the government had to address such problems as why the difference existed, why the government had to transfer the social benefits (out of the public budget) to a certain social group, who needed to be “sacrificed” for this redistribution and why.

When the pension reform for enterprise employees started in the early 1990s in the process of economic reform, the burden of paying for the pensions of the retired SOE employees was considerable. Since many enterprises were uneasy about paying for the laid-off workers, retired workers, and early retirements³¹, the solution imposed by the government was to redistribute the burden (of paying the benefits) to the SOEs through *social coordination*. In

³¹ The policy of early or “internal” retirement was adopted by many SOEs as a means of shedding workers who had not actually reached retirement age (normally about 40 to 50 years) and were thus not formally eligible for a pension. (“No way out”, 2008, Chinese Labour Bulletin, can be accessed through https://clb.org.hk/sites/default/files/archive/en/File/research_reports/no_way_out.pdf)

other words, the enterprises that performed better and had fewer retirements were encouraged (later on, required) to pay into a social pool, which would be used to relieve the enterprises that had got into difficulties. In defending the redistribution of the obligation to pay benefits, the government used several types of discourse. One way to address the redistribution was that sharing the burden of retirement followed the general design of the country's economic reform, and helped to change the current distributional system into something better and fairer. Here is an example:

The State Council announced the “Decision on reforming the Basic Pension Insurance for Enterprise Employees” in 1991. The “Decision” clearly addressed the proposal that “following the economic development, [we should] gradually build a system that combines the basic old-age insurance, enterprise pension insurance and the individual's personal savings as insurance”... The principle of the basic pension insurance reform is [to combine] “fairness and efficiency”, “rights and obligations” and “sharing social benefits brought by the economic development”. (“The reform brings benefits for enterprise retirees”, Li Boyong, 1993-04-29.)

In addition to the abstract description of “rights and obligations”, more details of how the better-performing enterprises could actually benefit from contributing into the social pool sounded more attractive to the audience. Shown in numbers and comparisons, these arguments seem to have been quite useful in demonstrating the government's rational and careful design in solving the problems. Here is one example elaborating on the reason why the pension fund needs to be socially coordinated:

For a long time, the enterprise employee's pension in our country was paid by the extra revenue of each unit. However, the number of retirees for each enterprise varies dramatically different from one to another, making the burden of pension payment, unequal. According to census data from the Labour Bureau of Zigong City, Sichuan Province in 1983, the pension expenditure for some new enterprises is only about 2% of their total payroll, while in some old enterprises, the proportion is as high as 60%. Such differences threaten the progress of reform in our distributional system. One of the basic elements of the reform of this system is to connect the total payroll directly with the economic revenue of each enterprise. The current method of pension payment hinders the evaluation of enterprises' economic performance. For some old enterprises, although they may run well and are properly managed, the heavy pension cost leads to less tax revenue than less burdened enterprises must pay ... In such cases, the taxes and profits cannot reveal the real economic performance of

the enterprise, and its connection with the total payroll cannot hit the target of reforming the distributional system.

[The pension payment method] also violates the principle of fair distribution. From the very beginning, the new enterprises were able to develop by using the profits of the old enterprises. For instance, the total handed-in tax and benefits from Zigong's salt industry is around 2.3 billion yuan. This is why the newly emerged enterprises should share the increasing cost of paying the retirees from the old enterprises. If the employees of the new enterprises enjoy a higher income from exploiting such unfair advantages, it will cause disputes between the two sets of employees. Thus, we need to reform the distribution of responsibility for pensions. We should make an overall arrangement and collect pension funding from all kinds of enterprises according to certain proportions and coordinate the money to the retired employees under a central body. In the long term, as the number of retirements increases naturally, the new enterprises will not be taken advantage of; by then their retirees will enjoy pension benefits from the socially coordinated pool. Most importantly, the overall arrangement of the pension fund can direct a smooth reform of the distributional system ("The pension fund should be (socially) coordinated", Tang Liang, 1985-06-09)

Another way in which the government described the benefits brought by sharing the responsibility (as briefly mentioned in the document quoted above) is that it was beneficial for all enterprises to prepare for the lagged risks and uncertainties brought by a steadily ageing population. Here is a good example of the elaborated "lagged risk" argument:

Participating in the social coordination of pensions would generally have two results: either enterprises that had a lighter burden of retirements would need to contribute or those which already had numbers of retirees would seem to benefit from the coordination process. For instance, one nitrogen fertilizer factory in Changde, Hunan province, had 829 employees at work and only 92 retirees. After the social coordination of pension contributions, the factory needed to contribute 40,000 yuan more to the social insurance office, so it counted as a contributing unit. Another catering company in the same city had a pension burden of 498,300 yuan each year to pay for its retirees, who occupied 78% of its payroll. Since the company could afford only 56% of the pension total, after social coordination, the social insurance office had to refund the company 220,000 yuan every year. This categorised the company as a benefiting unit. Does contributing mean losing and does benefiting mean gaining? The chief of Changde's Labour Bureau told us that the employees from the fertilizer factory initially thought so: they were upset about "losing" 40,000 yuan to other

enterprises. But the officials of the Labour Bureau went on to explain to them that their money was just temporarily being used to support other enterprises. When the retirees from this factory increase in the future, other enterprises with fewer retirees will come and support them. The money they contributed to others will ultimately become their own pension in return (“An investigation of pension coordination”, Gong Jinxing, 1991-10-08)

From the text we can also identify the message that it's ethical and moral for enterprises that are running well to make contributions to the social pool. Such moral argument combined with the rational argument (such as forestalling lagged risks in the future) is used to ease the anxieties of many enterprises which feel that others are taking advantage of them. For instance, another commentator argues:

The Baoding No. 1 Cotton Mill does not find paying more social insurance fee to be a sign of exploitation. This spirit is valuable. It's valuable in that the workers' strong sense of social responsibility as they care not only about the mill's own employees, but also about social obligations. It's also valuable in showing that they have a strong “sense of risk”: even when their factory is performing quite well and salaries are steadily rising, they choose without hesitation to contribute to the pension pool and actively participate in the social coordination. Such action shows their boldness regarding reforms and their long-term vision of the future. Accelerating social welfare reform is one of the most important tasks for this year's reform. The core element of welfare reform is to achieve the social coordination of enterprise employees' pension contributions, and extend the coverage to different types of enterprise. In doing so, we intend to increase the social capacity to confront risks and create a better environment for SOE reform. The nature of the pensions' social coordination is actually a redistribution of benefits imposed by the state on enterprises. Thus, enterprises that perform better economically and have fewer retirees will support others that are less efficient and have more retirees. If we base our conclusions only on temporary contributions and cry that “we are being taken advantage of”, we will have a short-sighted view. The reform needs to be understood and recognized by its long-term benefits and the changing situations of market risks. The economic performance, employees' age structure and the expected welfare burden will never reach their optimum [for individual enterprises], because these change so much lot. “I help you today and tomorrow someone else will help me.” In other words, the social coordination of pensions is the “shock absorber” [of risk] for enterprises. They should open their eyes and make full use of the shock absorber! (“Make full use of the shock absorber”, Mo Cun, 1995-04-13)

In the case of promoting rural pension reform, the fairness of redistribution is also useful in showing why rural residents are eligible to enjoy the expansion of social benefits without waiting, and urban areas may have to share the responsibility of paying for it. In the 2000s, when the government was planning to establish a new rural pension scheme for rural residents, we observed an emphasis in news articles on the “unfair” rural-urban differences, the threat of social instability, and the importance of the “common interest”. Here are two well-argued documents:

How huge is the urban-rural inequality? Here are some informative statistics from 2003. The disposable income per capita for urban residents was 8,472 yuan, and 2,622 yuan for rural residents; the participants in [the urban] basic pension insurance numbered 155.06 million, while the participants in the rural pension insurance numbered 54.28 million; across the country there were 22.35 million urban residents who were covered by the Minimum Living Standard Security program while only 4 million rural residents were covered. The imbalance of rural-urban growth has created a bottleneck that obstructs all social and economic development. Yuyao City in Zhejiang province, where the GDP per capita already exceeds 3000 dollars, coordinates the rural-urban development in order to share the fruits of development [with everyone] ... The repayment to rural residents in Yuyao benefits from several innovative principles. First of all, [Yuyao City] persists in unifying the contributors and beneficiaries. Rural residents were the main forces in the opening up and reform; they are the constructors of our socialist career, they are the creators of our social goods ... most importantly, the rural residents have the right to enjoy the fruits of social progress just like urban residents. Second, [the city government] holds the principle of considering “the fundamental interests of the majority”. The traditional social welfare system favours the urban enterprise employees. The frequent occasions of illness-led poverty, natural disaster-led poverty in rural areas relate, to some extent, to the absence of a social welfare system for rural residents. 60% of the population in our country live in rural areas, but we cannot let the peasants lose out, we cannot betray the ultimate goal of common prosperity. Third, it perseveres in taking people into accounts. As a relatively advanced region on the eastern coast, Yuyao has the political and fiscal ability to tear down the fence between rural and urban areas. Subsidizing the peasants won't be in vain; rather, it's a “grand vision” of development, and is beneficial to social stability and long-term growth (“Sharing the fruits of development with the peasants”, Wang Binlai, 2004-07-25)

A common description of sharing the responsibility for rural development with urban areas is “promoting agriculture with industries, and powering the rural areas with the efforts from urban areas”. By highlighting the fact that the countryside and agriculture have contributed to urban and industries development—which is a similar argument to the one concerning the contribution of old enterprises—those who have benefited from them should now pay back their debt for the sacrifices made. Here is another example which integrates the moral argument with the fairness argument to do with rural-urban inequality:

The special industrialization stage, the complexity of developments in agriculture and rural areas determine that we have arrived at the phase of “promoting agriculture with industries, and powering the rural areas by the efforts made by urban areas” ... Industry repaying agriculture sums up the changed urban-rural, industry-agriculture relationship when industrialization reaches a certain point ... Generally speaking, at the early stages of industrialization, agriculture acts as the main strength in the national economy. In order to create more material wealth and increase the level of development and living standards, we need to rely on the accumulation of agricultural production. When industrialization reaches the point when industry becomes the main engine, we need to coordinate the industry-agriculture relationship by having the state increase its support and protection of agriculture in addition to the (existing) market intervention, so we can convert from the model of agriculture-feeding-industry to that of industry-repaying-agriculture. Experience from other countries shows that when the process of industrialization and urbanization accelerates, the whole economy attains the phase of industry-repaying-agriculture. If we strengthen and repay agriculture, the national economy will achieve industrialization and modernization in a healthy way. Otherwise, if we still exploit and ignore the agriculture, it will lead to agriculture lagging behind, growing inequality and a wider urban-rural gap. Moreover, it will sharpen social conflict and lead to social instability and retrogression (“Industry repays agriculture and the urban supports the rural: how to support the rural areas and agriculture in the new scenario”, Han Jun, 2005-11-18)

When rural migrants flooded into the cities on a large scale in the urbanization process, the question of pensions for them, and more generally, social welfare for them, became a knotty problem. Due to the existence of the Hukou system, rural residents had restricted use of schools, hospitals and other public facilities in urban areas. In the 1990s and 2000s, when the number of migrant workers surged, the absence of a proper welfare scheme for them led to many social unrests. However, if the migrant workers had been allowed to enjoy the same welfare system as

the urban residents, the competition for resources would have been fierce and cause discontent from urban residents. Thus, the government tried to persuade society, mainly the urban residents, that there were good reasons for these migrant workers to receive more social benefits and fiscal support. Again, we might expect that the most obvious and frequently used reason is that the migrant workers contribute to the construction of the cities. For instance:

Among the manufacturing, construction, mining and service industries (such as domestic service, catering and so on), rural migrants constitute more than half of the employees. As one important part of the labour force, they deserve fair treatment. This is not only a necessary action defending the migrant worker's legitimate rights, but also directly relates to a defence of social justice and fairness ... Compared to urban workers, rural migrant workers receive low wages (which sometimes can't even be paid on time and take on dirty and dangerous jobs, while enjoying none of the social welfare benefits [of urban workers]). They contribute to the growth of cities, yet they enjoy none of the convenience enjoyed by urban employees in their daily lives and suffer greatly in such areas as children's education ... Treating them fairly requires the government to serve them faithfully, consider their troubles, improve their employment situation, and protect their legal rights with efficient rules. Urban employees have quite different situations from rural migrants; thus some existing policies may not be appropriate for them. The government therefore should be aware of the extreme mobility of rural migrant workers and design policies that fit their needs. Luckily, the central government is already working on the issue of migrant workers. Early this year the "State council's guidance on solving migrant workers' issues" was examined and passed by the State Council ("Treat rural migrant workers with fairness and justice", Bai Tianliang, 2006-03-27)

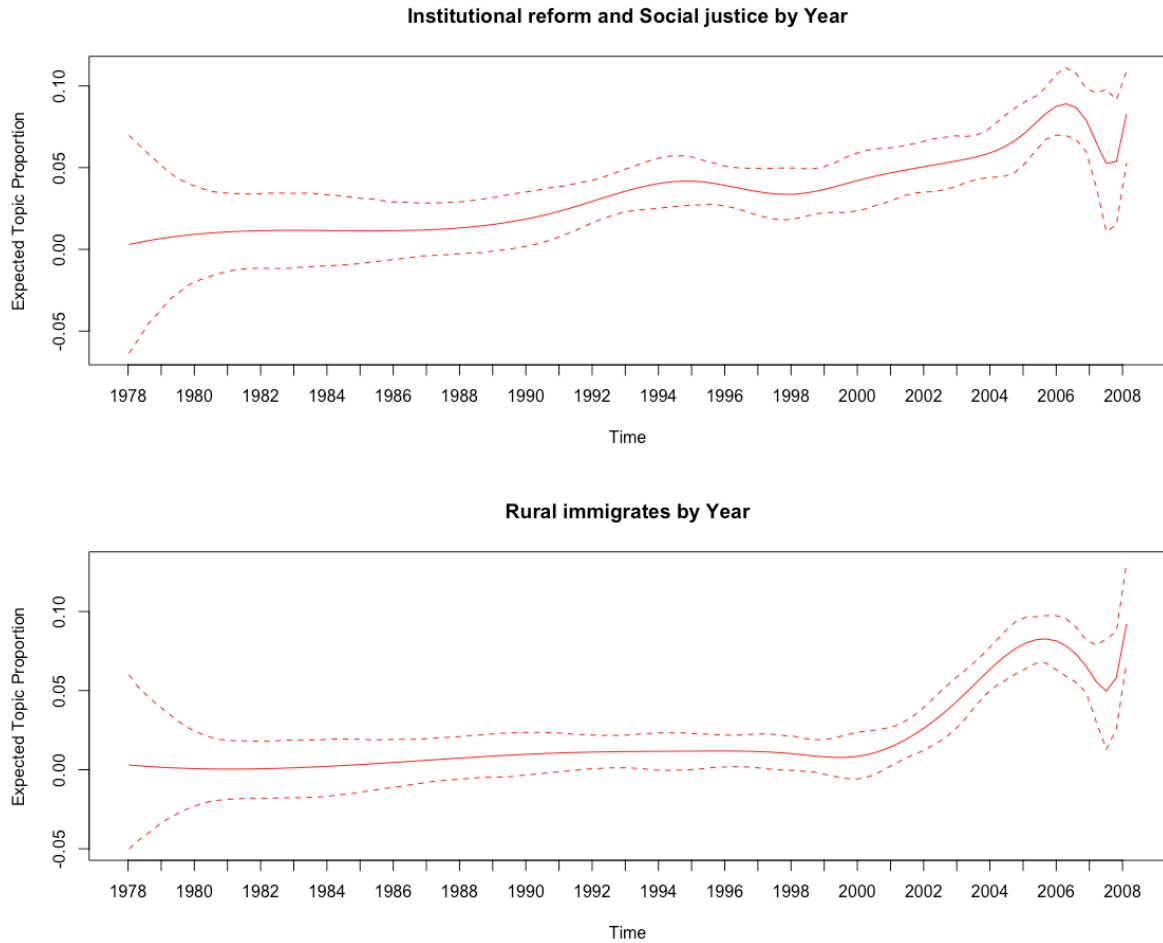


Figure 10. Topic proportions by Year: social justice and rural immigrants

In addition to the text data, we can also identify the changing proportions of the fairness and social justice topic, as well as its connection to certain social problems (such as rural migrants) from the topic model. As noted above, topic 23 refers to the fair distribution and redistribution in the macro issue of institutional reform. If we display the chronological proportion of this topic with the topic that refers to the rural migrants (as shown in Figure 10), it becomes easier to see the resemblance in the trends of these two topics. The emphasis on social justice and fairness increases with the increment in the appearance of rural migrants.

Redistribution between different generations

Apart from the issue of redistribution between current social groups across various enterprise types and regions, the nature of social insurance, especially pension insurance, also brings up the problem of redistribution between different generations. For the trust in pensions to work, the government needs to raise funding from current employee, in particular now that

the state is trying to transform China's previous pension mode, as a "pay-as-you-go" system, into a mixed two-tier system comprising social and individual accounts. The cost of the social transition has to be met by someone. What kind of reasons are provided by the government to justify the redistribution of social benefits between different generations? The first and most convenient tool is highlighting the traditional culture. Filial piety (*xiao* 孝) is one of the most prestigious merits in Chinese traditional culture and conventionally, caring for the elderly is undoubtedly the responsibility of their children. Filial piety is a virtue which means not only caring for one's own parents but also showing love, respect and support for all older people. Hence in the official discourse, a reconstruction of family and piety culture is generously praised:

A recent competition for "Star of filial piety" which selects the person who has been most filial to parents and dutiful to the elderly, is quite unique and deserves our praise. The "Star of filial piety" contest, literally, has the core merit of "filial piety". For instance, one of the winners, Han Shibe, an employee from Hangu Saltworks, is taking care of his grandmother, parents-in-law, and aunt with all his heart and all his strength ...

Appreciation of filial piety is definitely the main trend in our society and matches the willingness of most of our population. Although there are defiant peoples who refuse to care for their parents, they are not the mainstream. More importantly, their attitudes and actions are despised by society as a whole. Once their cases are exposed, they are denounced and disdained by the whole world. Respecting and caring for the elderly is natural in its essence. Just like parents' obligation to bring up their children, adult children have the responsibility of taking care of their elders. The pension welfare system in our country is currently incomplete, caring for the elderly still need to be based in families. Thus, filial piety is particularly important [for us] ("Complimenting the 'Star of filial piety'", Chen Fei, 1997-11-10)

In addition to the cultural factor, older people also deserve respect and benefits from society since they have already given their time to it. In addition, the younger generation should see its own future from the situation of the generation before theirs. Moreover, rationally speaking, the "time difference" will help the social welfare system operate better. Here are some examples from an original text:

Today's elderly, were hard at work yesterday. They contribute to the development of our society in different degrees. Therefore, they deserve to share the material and spiritual benefits brought by the country's development. Today's youth will tomorrow become the elderly. Today when they see the whole society treating old people fairly, they won't be worrying about their

fate [in the future]. They will devote more to their work in the prime of life (“About elderly issue”, Hong Tianguo, He Liangliang, and Zhang Da, 1982-06-22)

Social welfare reform needs to take good advantage of the “time difference”. [It should include] more people in the social insurance scheme ... because most of these people are still young or middle aged and the promise (of a pension) can only materialize 20-30 years ahead. By the time they get old, the social insurance trust will have been accumulated to quite a size and will certainly be able to afford pension and health insurance for these people³². In this case, the new social insurance scheme, the realization of past promises, and the social insurance trust will form a strategic triangle and the lapse of time will be valuable. Taking full advantage of the time difference, our social welfare system will be on the winning side. Because the gap in time will give us enough time to reduce holding shares and realize state-owned assets³³, increase the funding of the national social insurance trust, and boost the confidence of the participants in our social insurance scheme (“Building a new platform of social insurance”, Gao Shusheng, 2003-04-08)

The logic in the discourse on redistribution is fairly simple: **contributions and rewards, rights and obligations**. The old enterprises deserve to be funded by the new enterprises through the coordinated social pension funding, because they contributed to the start-up of industrialisation; the rural areas deserve to have transferred public finance because they contributed to the development of urban areas; the rural migrants deserve fair treatment (more social benefits) because they contributed to urbanization and the construction of cities; the elderly deserve better care because they contributed to the society when they were young. The maxim ‘Someone deserves reward because they contributed’, can also be translated as, ‘Someone should be rewarded only if they contributed’. Social rights are distributed to anyone who has contributed to society. In this way, the rationalized subjectivity of “I am/for everyone” and “everyone is/for me” is highlighted in the politics of redistribution. This inclusiveness which is conditional on “contributions” is especially obvious when taking the “lagged time” into account. We can only imagine our future according to the current redistribution system; therefore, everyone is tightly constrained inside the game of “**producing and giving**”.

³² Ironically, a piece of news reported in 2019-04-12 was that, with the current payment rate, the accumulated surplus pension fund would run out by 2035 according to the “Actuarial evaluation of China’s Pension” published by the Social Insurance Research Center in the Chinese Academy of Social Science (<http://www.bjnews.com.cn/finance/2019/04/12/567254.html>, [Accessed 2019-04-18]).

³³ To subsidize pension funds, China has also resorted to another means: selling off stock shares and privatising in the state-owned enterprises (Frazier, 2010).

The state-individual relationship: what should the citizens expect from the state?

The pension reform, for whatever social group, has been also a move to reconstruct the relationship between the state and the public. This is clearly indicated in the policy content below:

Except for some special programs (such as insurance for occupational injury and childbirth) for which individuals do not need to pay fees according to the law or international practice, the fundraising responsibility for all other social insurance programs should be shared by the state, enterprises and individuals. Enterprises and individuals should pay the insurance fee, while the government provides a fiscal subsidy under exceptional circumstances. Raising funds from individuals is not only helpful for expanding the funding source of social insurance, but also beneficial for increasing labour's awareness of social insurance ("Speeding up and deepening the reform of social insurance system", 1997-05-20)

Thus, in this section I investigate the issue of “shaping citizens’ expectations” in the official discourse: what is the proper relationship between citizens and state regarding welfare responsibility? what should citizens expect to get from the government when faced with social risks such as unemployment, illness and ageing?

The STM package makes it possible to show the way that the metadata affect the frequency with which a topic is discussed using topical prevalence. Therefore, I generated the classification data by dividing the documents into subcategories of “locus of responsibility”, “praise”, “denounce”, “national conditions”, and “international experiences” according to their content. The locus of responsibility includes 5 types of responsibility allocation regarding care for the elderly in general (such as raising the funds for pension fees, daily caring and so on): “no clear direction of locus”, “state/party”, “individual/family”, “enterprise”, and “social coordination”. Since many documents contain more than one topic and sometimes refer to various kinds of message, my coding of the locus of responsibility is based on the most obvious direction of responsibility that can be perceived or identified from the content. Classifying the tone of “praise” or “denounce” in a document is useful as these are covariates in addressing the issue of “what has been endorsed by the government”. The categories of “national conditions” and “international experience” are important in identifying whether the whole document emphasises the local situation of China/Chinese characteristics or learns lessons from international experience. Table 7 below shows the descriptive data for each category from the hand coded classification results. Documents that are categorized as “Praise”, “Denounce”,

emphasizing “National conditions” or “International experiences” are coded as 1 in the data, 0 otherwise.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of document categories (Hand Coded)

	0	1
Praise	2996	394
Denounce ³⁴	3343	47
National conditions	3278	112
International experiences	3282	108

Unfolding the locus of responsibility: topic-based promotions

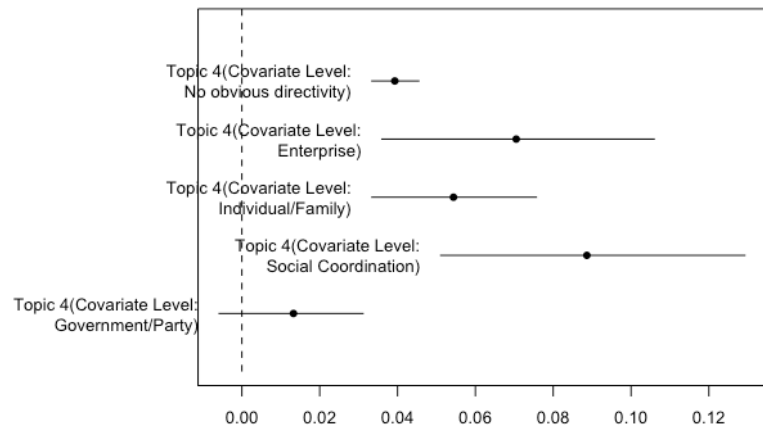
The promoted locus of responsibility regarding elderly care in general (such as fundraising to meet pension fees, daily caring and so on) varied according to topic. Figure 11 presents the expected proportions (X axis) of each topic in different covariate levels of responsibility, and the results are quite intuitive. It is clear that for topic 4 (SOE reform and marketization), the related documents are likely to be coded as promoting the role of social coordination in solving the problem of care for the elderly, while the topic proportion is smaller in the class of government/party responsibility. For topic 19 (EE Pension Plan), the pattern is quite similar. The topic which refers to the laid-off workers, however, has a much higher proportion at the covariate class of government/party responsibility. This is reasonable, since the laid-off workers are the ones who were sacrificed for the economic reform and SOE reform, the employees needed to be reassured that the government was not giving up on them. Topic 29 (Retired/Pension fee) differs from topic 19 (EE Pension Plan) in that it mainly refers to the fundraising problem in pension reform. Therefore, it is reasonable to see the highest proportion resting in the class of enterprise responsibility (and its proportion in the class of social coordination follows). Although the main target of the EE pension reform is to ease the burden for SOEs and the government, there is not much significance in the signals from the official discourse showing that the government is promoting only individual responsibility, or at least cannot be directly perceived by the readers. The more commonly used discourse is “shared responsibility” between the state, the unit/enterprise, and individuals. As we all know, in the

³⁴ The variation of variable “denounce” is small and not significant, so the result of covariates in the latter parts does not include the statistics of denounce related results. They are presented in the appendix.

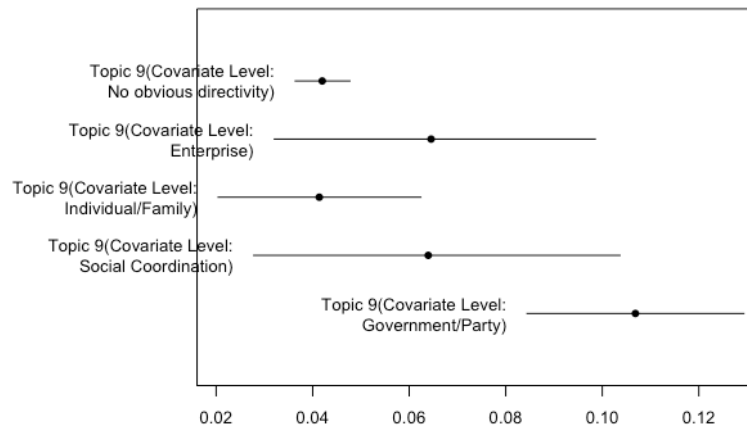
previous system, the accountable source of employees' pensions was simply the state and the work unit. Hence, a proper interpretation of the "shared responsibility" discourse is to increase the individual's responsibility for and contribution to the pension system.

People may ask why the government doesn't directly highlight "individual responsibility" rather than using the obscure discourse of "shared responsibility" if it truly wants to lighten its own burden. The reason for not directly urging a clear reallocation of welfare responsibility is complicated. First of all, the government official discourse has its dependency. The socialist discourse of "an omnipotent state" has become ingrained in habit and even internalised as second nature. Therefore, it is unlikely that the tone will change quickly and to call directly for individual responsibility for welfare. Another easily identified reason is public expectations. Even if the government wished to change the direction of the official discourse, people who used to enjoy considerable benefits from their work unit and government support are less likely to accept the reallocated social responsibility. To be more specific, there was a risk of enraging the target group—enterprise employees, especially employees of SOEs—at the beginning of the EE pension reform if the official discourse had abruptly changed its tone. I give more illustrations in Chapter 4's analysis of official propaganda.

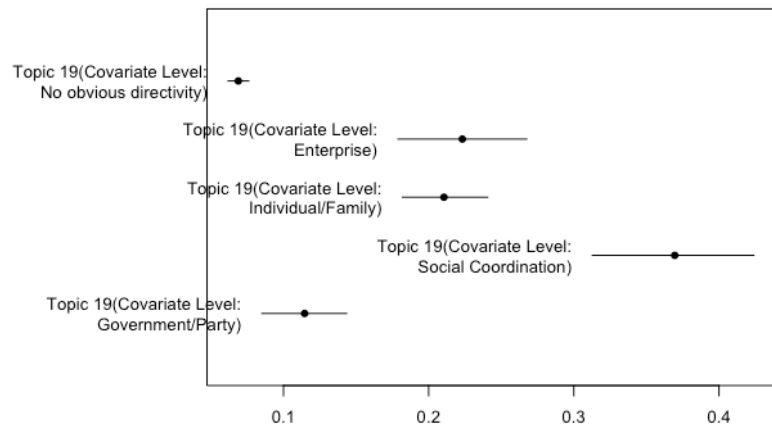
Topic of SOE reform and marketization



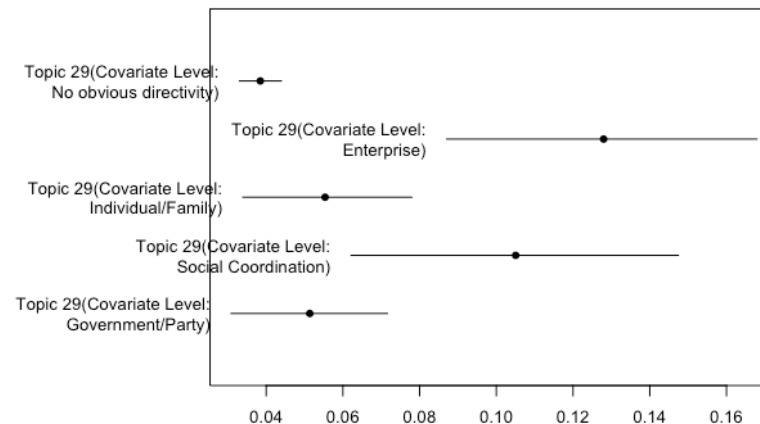
Topic of Laid-off workers



Topic of Enterprise employees' pension reform



Topic of Pension fees



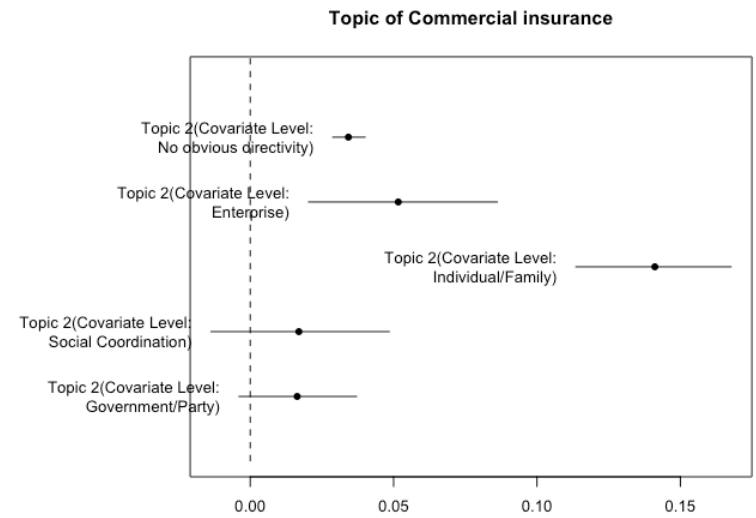
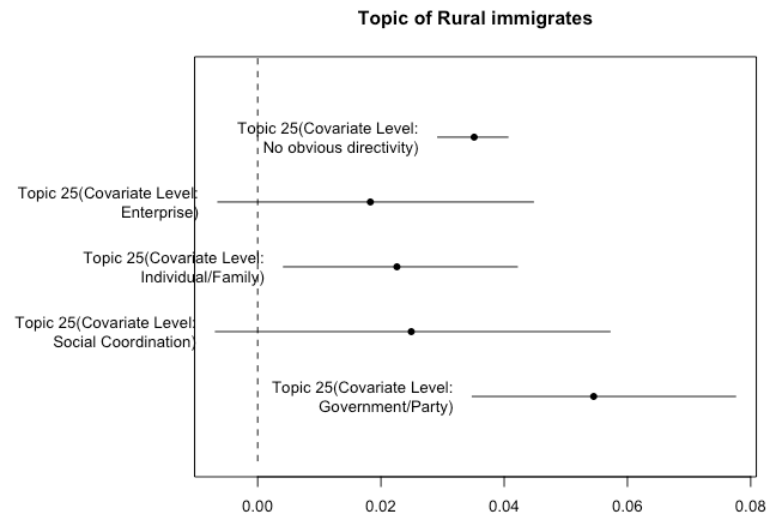
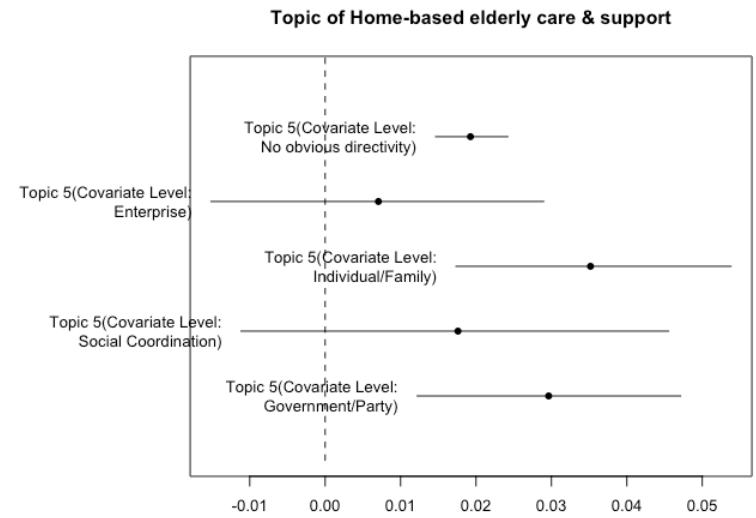
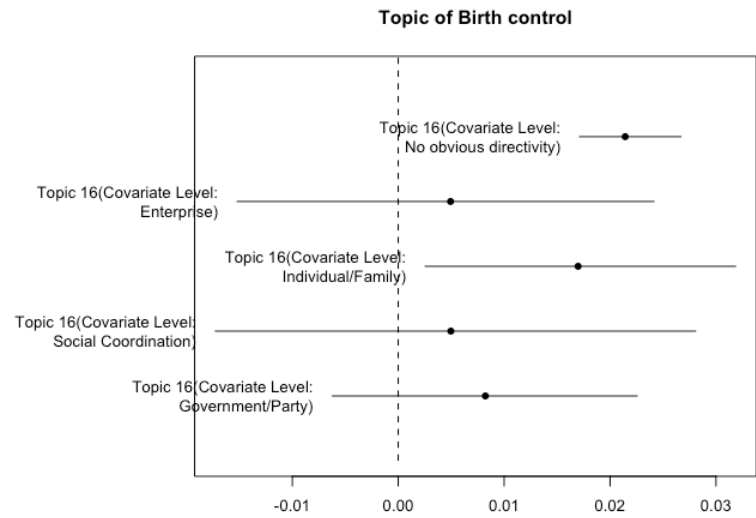


Figure 11. Topic by covariate: locus of responsibility

For topics that relate to other pension reforms, the covariate class of responsibility also fits the design and intention of the policy. The proportions (X axis) for all the covariate class of responsibility are quite low for topic 16 (Birth Control) and the highest class is “no obvious directivity”. This is reasonable, since this topic directly relates to a demographic policy, not a pension policy. Moreover, the pension pilots for rural residents are scattered experiments initiated by local authorities. The main reason why the pension policy is mentioned in association with this topic is that the government wants to trade the pension benefit for people’s willingness to practise birth control. For topic 5 (Old-age Care) which refers to home-based elderly care/support, the main responsibility is shared by the individual/family and the government. This is because the main content of this caring approach—which does not directly address the pension issue—is that elderly people are encouraged to stay in their homes, where the local street government will help them to take care of everyday problems as they arise. For the issue of rural migrants, we have elaborated that the government want to convince the urban residents that rural migrants deserve better social welfare, in view of their contributions to the urbanization; while the government also want to appease their anxieties and assure them that the government will do the job. The topic of commercial insurance, or the right to purchase insurance against social risks, is obviously related to the responsibility of the individual/family.

In Table 8, I present a summary of the models for several selected topics by covariate responsibility, which can display more information about the magnitude of each coefficient. In dealing with the issue of “EE Pension Plan reform” (Topic 19), the responsibility of the government/party, the individual/family, the enterprise and social coordination are all significantly emphasised in the official discourse. However, when we check the magnitude of the coefficients, the role of “social coordination” has the highest correlation with this topic. For the issue of “Laid-off Workers” (Topic 9), government/party responsibility is positively (and significantly) related, while the individual/family is negatively related. For Topic 25, “Rural Migrants”, the related welfare responsibility is also focused on the role of the government/party. As for “Commercial Insurance” (Topic 2), it is mainly individual/family contributions, while the role of government/party is negatively related to this topic.

Table 8. Topic proportion by covariate responsibility

	Topic 19	Topic 9	Topic 25	Topic 2
Government/Party	0.063*** (0.015)	0.078*** (0.013)	0.021 (0.011)	-0.022* (0.009)
Individual/Family	0.146*** (0.017)	-0.006 (0.01)	-0.016 (0.009)	0.098*** (0.011)
Enterprise	0.158*** (0.025)	0.029 (0.016)	-0.017 (0.013)	0.014 (0.017)
Social coordination	0.296*** (0.031)	0.027 (0.019)	-0.010 (0.015)	-0.019 (0.016)

Note: *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001. In all the models, the mode of uncertainty is set as “Global”.

In addition to the classification of responsibilities, the other coded classifications, such as national condition, foreign experience, praising and so on, can reveal more details about the discourse employed. For instance, what kind of sentiment is related to each responsibility allocation? Which topic (and corresponding policy) is more likely to be promoted using examples from other countries? In Table 9, I present the topic proportion estimation by multiple covariates. For both topic 19 (EE Pension Plan) and 9 (Laid-off Workers), there is a positive correlation between the topic proportion and a document being coded as “praise”. In other words, the pension reform for enterprise employees and the government’s efforts in taking care of the laid-off workers are more likely to be reported and promoted in a positive tone. However, the interaction between an enterprise’s responsibility and praise is negatively significant. It seems that in the official promotion of pension reform for enterprise employees, the documents that mention the enterprise’s responsibility are less likely to be praising. For using the national situation or international experience, topic 9 (Laid-off Workers) and 25 (Rural Migrants) are less likely to be related to international experience, while commercial insurance (Topic 2) is negatively correlated with the national condition.

Table 9. Topic proportion by multiple covariates

	Topic 19	Topic 9	Topic 25	Topic 2
Government/Party	0.061** (0.021)	0.097*** (0.017)	0.015 (0.013)	-0.017 (0.013)
Individual/Family	0.155*** (0.018)	0.003 (0.012)	-0.013 (0.01)	0.108*** (0.015)
Enterprise	0.179*** (0.028)	0.028 (0.019)	-0.014 (0.015)	0.005 (0.017)
Social coordination	0.313*** (0.034)	0.041 (0.024)	-0.009 (0.018)	-0.023 (0.017)
Praise	0.063*** (0.015)	0.046*** (0.012)	0.002 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.01)
National condition	-0.024 (0.019)	-0.021 (0.012)	0.007 (0.015)	-0.03* (0.014)
Foreign experience	-0.014 (0.021)	-0.032* (0.014)	-0.024* (0.012)	-0.008 (0.014)
Government/Party*Praise	-0.054 (0.035)	-0.081** (0.025)	0.01 (0.022)	0.003 (0.021)
Individual/Family*Praise	-0.067 (0.047)	-0.046 (0.03)	-0.000 (0.026)	0.014 (0.039)
Enterprise*Praise	-0.177** (0.066)	-0.072 (0.047)	-0.012 (0.039)	0.079 (0.054)
Social coordination*Praise	-0.109 (0.084)	-0.091 (0.047)	-0.017 (0.037)	0.032 (0.044)

Note: *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001. In all the models, the mode of uncertainty is set as “Global”.

Promoting shared responsibility: the glory of being employed and the common interest

What are the desired attributes of a “good and responsible citizen” when the government is promoting the shared responsibility for social welfare? From the text, one attribute that is highly praised and promoted is the glory of being employed: a liberal and free labour force. The idea is quite similar to those in the reforms of other former communist countries. In Ukraine and Russia, despite the widespread suffering caused by the reforms, there is still a belief that the liberal recipes of marketization and privatization could work, if they were properly implemented (D. Lane, 2007). Even the traditional left wing has accepted the neo-liberal rhetoric and private

ownership driven by the reform policies. Mary Gallagher (2011) deciphered some similar phenomena in China's reform era and found that individual merit was highly encouraged while "waiting, relying, and demanding" with regard to governmental help was criticized. The official propaganda promoted the notion that "the market economy doesn't pity the weak" and people should take responsibility for their fate.

For instance, some documents from the People's Daily, below, encourage the laid-off workers to change their mind regarding work, especially the idea of "relying on the state/unit". The former employees, indeed the whole society, should change the idea of the "iron rice bowl", and put more effort into their own attempts in the job market.

Jinan city offered 261 charity positions especially for the "40/50" population. However, there are more than 100 positions that have lain idle since mid-August. One laid-off employee said, "The job of an urban management officer is just too demanding, [will] entail too much outdoor work, and 420 yuan is definitely not worth it" ... [This illustrates the idea that] "relying on the state in seeking a job, relying on a post for life". Many people are just too comfortable with "waiting, relying, demanding", and expect the government to find a position for them. ...

[The idea that] "the only real employment is when you have an 'iron rice bowl'" is very common in society. Following the trend of socio-economic development, since we are now in a market economy, "contractual employment" has been promoted on a large scale. Self-motivated job searching, career building, and fluid employment have not only set the conditions of the job market, but also is an inevitable outcome of social progress. In other words, whether for government employees or enterprise employees, the position is no longer the so-called "iron rice bowl". The most reliable "iron rice bowl" should be your skills and capacities; [people] should create and develop their own career by their honest work ("Talking about ignored vacancies", Jiang Nanke, 2003-09-01)

In another exemplary text shown below, a responsible citizen is expected to enjoy the opportunities offered by the marketization reform. This text specifically addressed several common ideas in society regarding the self-motivated search for a job, such as "only the iron rice bowl is counted as re-employment", or "seeking a job for myself makes [me] lose face", and "re-employment means waiting for job re-assignment". The main idea is to urge enterprise employees to move on from the "old planned economy" and embrace the new efficiency-based, contribution-based market economy. Those who can seize the chance through skills of their own will be valued.

The deepening reform of the SOEs and the process of “reducing staff and boosting efficiency” inevitably lead to some laid-off workers ... Laid-off workers should change their attitude of reliance to independence and try all ways of expanding their capacity to find a job. The idea of “only the iron rice bowls is counted as re-employment” has very deep roots (in this society). Indiscriminate egalitarianism and the iron rice bowl were the products of the planned economy, and have become less and less [popular] since the start of the economic reform and the building up of a socialist market economy. Breaking down indiscriminate egalitarianism is the request of all the enterprise employees and will bring benefits to us; [while] discarding the iron rice bowl is the inevitable outcome of deeper reform. ...

The idea of “seeking a job for myself makes [me] lose face” need to be changed. This idea was born in the old planned economy and in circumstances where all the housing, healthcare, and pension provision of SOE employees were covered by the state. Nowadays, following the reform of social welfare, the difference between the SOE employees and people who have obtained a job by their own efforts is smaller. The old idea should be abandoned along with the abolishment of old (economic) system. Meanwhile, we should see that the new socialist market economy brings everyone the opportunity of choosing a career and a position that can show her/his capacity in line with her/his own willingness, skills, and interests. People should treasure such opportunities. As long as they are allowed to reveal their abilities and work happily while contributing to the society, the [position that they hold] will be the most glorious one [for them].

Believing that “re-employment means waiting for job re-assignment” is a “waiting, relying, demanding” kind of attitude ... It is not possible to wait [for the state] to reassign one’s job. Rather than waiting, it may be better to walk into the job market or seize an opportunity of creating your own employment. The creation of jobs is the realization of self-value and a contribution to the society: the more you create, the more you contribute. (“Expanding the employment possibilities in changing our minds”, 2002-05-31)

Another method of persuasion in official discourse is highlighting the need for common goods, encouraging people to work for better benefits, and emphasising the spirit of collectivism. For instance, in the following textual example, we find a consolidated discourse which indicates that the pension reform for urban and rural areas combines rights and obligations. Therefore, everyone should take part in contributing to the well-being of the whole society. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to recognize the “unavoidable” differentiation inside the society. Hence,

individuals' personal endowments are given their proper value by the contribution-based differentiation in social benefits.

These following principles and tasks need to be highlighted when building the social welfare system that covers both rural and urban residents. First of all, "coordinating the rural-urban development while maintaining differentiation". The progress of the social welfare system in urban and rural areas is unbalanced. The rural pension system is lagging behind and the health system is incomplete. In urban areas, there are some social groups not yet covered by the social welfare system. We need to coordinate the development of both the urban and the rural welfare system and hit the target of "covering the risks that need to be covered". For the situation of migrating workers in the urbanization process, we need to design policies that connect the anomalous standards across welfare schemes. Meanwhile, we need to keep in mind the urban-rural dual structure and the different social and economic levels. Our social welfare schemes designed for each area should reflect these differences. Second, as regards "enforcing governmental responsibilities while emphasising the obligations of units and individuals", we need to highlight the effect of social welfare on social fairness, while considering the efficiency of our system. We need to strengthen the government's management of social welfare and make use of the government's function of redistributing income, defending social justice, and providing equalized public services. We also need to consistently match "rights" with "obligations" by making the units and individuals fulfil their social responsibility and fundraising obligations. ("Constructing a social welfare system that covers urban and rural residents", Tian Chengping, 2007-09-30)

[We should] clarify several misunderstandings about the social welfare system. First of all, we can't regard the social welfare system as identical with "robbing the rich to help the poor", nor as a new version of "indiscriminate egalitarianism". The goal of the social welfare system is to defend social fairness and share the fruits of development with all the members of the society. ... Second, we cannot simply insert the principle of efficiency from the market economy into the social welfare system ...we need to prevent potentially bad outcomes brought by some irrational marketization of the welfare system. Third, we cannot exclude migrant workers and rural residents by treating the welfare system as the special possession of urban residents. However, we cannot ignore the current stage of our national development and try to pursue a universal welfare system too fast. We need to gradually build a unified welfare system through diverse, multi-layered institutional arrangements based on the principle of fairness and interest-sharing. ("Social welfare construction in the harmonious society", Zheng

Gongcheng, 2005-09-16)

To summarize, the rationale behind the government's effort to reallocate welfare responsibilities as it drifts away from the state-sponsored system, is to redefine the subjectivity of individuals as the "socialized self". This is not entirely "individualism," which primarily highlights individuality, but posits a "socialized individual" who can take care of him/herself while contributing to society and the general good. The individual achieves value through self-mobilized and self-regulated work, "a pro-active attitude, a self-monitoring conduct of life" (Lessenich, 2010, p.315). Moreover, the work needs to be ethically related to the society. The specific reasoning, whether "stepping out of one's comfort zone," or "realizing one's value in the wave of marketisation," or "accepting the nature of the multi-layered world," calls for private initiative, personal responsibility and individual autonomy in actively taking social risks. If the benefits received do not match expectations, other people should not be blamed, nor the institution, nor the system. In some ways, Social Darwinism is deeply in-bred in spite of the loud slogans of social fairness. Meanwhile, you should equally contribute to the public good because individuals cannot enjoy the opportunities generated unless the society/state goes in the right direction for its health.

Conclusion

This chapter addresses one crucial segment in answering my overarching question of how the modern state maintains compliance from the governed in a period of rapid social and economic transformation, and how the logic of its governmentality changes accordingly. In this chapter, I investigate the logic of **"whom to govern" and "how to govern"** through a decomposition of the design, implementation, and promotion of the pension reform from the 1950s to the 2010s in China. I pay special attention to the way that social problems are identified, the way distinctions are defined, and the knowledge that is produced to persuade the public.

The general strategy of differentiation in the government's welfare benefit allocation was systematically based on the existing division on the lines of political status, while also taking advantage of the change in bargaining power for different social groups during the social and economic reform. Along with the economic reform (that of the SOEs in particular), the social benefits for SOE employees were cancelled in the name of "improving efficiency" and "encouraging competition". Later on, the social benefits for employees in public institutions were "socialized" in the name of "better social justice," because "we shouldn't allow the existence of a dual system of pension plans (distinguishing enterprise employees from public institution employees)". Then where else can public support come from? The promotion of new

rural pension insurance and the urban residents' pension insurance reform expanded the social insurance coverage to a broader population, and cost less. During the process, government officials as the core elites of governance power never ceased to enjoy the most generous social benefit. Notwithstanding, it seems at the benefits reallocation still faces the threat of discontent from the public. Therefore, I turn to the tactics in official propaganda to examine the way that the state frames and justifies its changing policies.

From the official discourse, the promotion of different key topics in pension reform closely dialogues with and serves the contemporary issues in the social and economic reform. For instance, the documents that addressed the topics of laid-off workers and their pension plans was closely connected to the SOE reform; official discourse in the process of pushing demographic control described the pension plan in rural areas as a “son” that could “take care of” the elderly; the propaganda imported the discourse of social justice and harmony when urbanization and migration were flourishing. The rationale of reconstructing public knowledge and expectations of the redistribution of social benefits, and the allocation of welfare responsibility between the state and individuals mainly focuses on the reiteration of the principles of: “contribution and rewards”, “rights and obligations”, although, technically speaking, persuasions that relate to enterprise employees—regardless of the socially coordinated solution to pension fundraising, or the individual’s responsibility to contribute to the pension scheme—are more likely to use the discourse of profit-oriented “efficiency”. Meanwhile the ones related to rural residents and other urban residents—such as birth control, rural migrants, home-based elderly care and so on—are more likely to borrow moral arguments from the traditional culture.

Individuals’ personal lives, therefore, are socialized, and initiated in a broader system rather than the previous unit-based and localized system. Everyone’s personal interest is materialized and combined with the performance of the whole society, the whole state. Only by contributing to others can people receive rewards. The subjectivity is reconstructed among persons who are directly or indirectly involved in the production process as self-motivated, self-regulated, and self-sufficient in caring. More interestingly in the official discourse is the frequent absence of “action initiators”, the suggestions, appeals, and logical persuasions are commonly unidentified but appeal to “us”: “*we should*”, “*we need to*”, “*our target/job/tasks?*” and so on. The anonymity of initiators in fact, imposes an effective substitution on the readers, and turns them into an “activated-self”, and then a “responsible-self”.

After identifying the governmentality in the use of programme design, the identification of social problems, and knowledge construction in this chapter, a follow-up question for me is “To what extent are these tactics effective in changing public opinion?” In the next chapter, I use causal inference and unlock the mixed effect of the government’s strategies of combining experimentation and propaganda in a specific policy reform, which was conducted through several waves of policy experimentation in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The data from social surveys provide empirical evidence on changing public attitudes (especially that of the target social group of this specific policy reform) under the effect of policy experimentation and related official propaganda.

Chapter 4 Conditional Effectiveness of Governance³⁵: Policy experimentation, social construction and political trust

The late 20th century witnessed widespread institutional transition among the socialist and post-socialist countries. With the emergence of market orientation, these countries have consistently been confronted by the challenge of conducting proper reforms to their welfare systems. Faced with the demands of relieving the government of fiscal responsibility while boosting the economic efficiency of their respective nations, the socialist and post-socialist countries in the 1980s and the 1990s followed the same tendency as their Western counterparts to retrench welfare provision. The old enterprise-based state-financed social welfare systems have gradually been reformed to become suit a market economy. The people's social right to income and social security have been more frequently defined as individual rights in the market-oriented schemes, replacing the collective rights of the previous system. The provision of social welfare in particular has emphasized "purchased rights" and "self-contribution," and individuals, families and societal and commercial organizations have since been encouraged to play a greater role in bearing the responsibilities formerly borne by the government.

However, the public has not reached a consensus regarding the relative shares of the state and the individual in welfare responsibility, such as pension contributions, and the cost of health care. Socialist traditions hold up the state as the main party responsible. Therefore, the reform of welfare provision by sharing responsibilities with individuals (for instance by privatizing certain health services or increasing individual pension contribution rates) contradicts the previous image of the state-individual relationship. The public may disapprove or not easily adjust to these rapid changes and the loss of their existential security may cause anxiety and deep concern. The situation may be even more critical, given the public's increasing consciousness of the importance of education, health and decent pensions as basic social rights in modern society. Government authorities are therefore pressured to adapt the way in which they pursue public consent for their reforms.

How can the government change public preferences while maintaining political support during the reformist process of resolving the dilemmas of welfare reform and government responsibility? More importantly, is the statecraft used in changing public attitudes efficient or not? For example, China's pension insurance reform in the 1990s and 2000s was designed to

³⁵ This chapter was written in collaboration with Xufeng ZHU (Tsinghua University, China). We shared the work of research design, the literature review, data collection, data analysis and writing. I contributed about 60% of the total work. An article based on this chapter is currently under review for publication.

shift the fundraising commitment regarding the pension for urban enterprise employees from unconditional accountability on the regime's part to a responsibility shared by the state, market players and individuals. The Chinese government called it the "socialization of the welfare system" (G. O. o. t. S. Council, 2000). Considering the welfare reform in this period, we identify the statecraft as the combined strategy of regional experimentation of shared welfare responsibility conducted by the central government and local official propaganda, emphasizing governmental efforts in welfare provision. On the one hand, the regional pilot scheme is deployed to facilitate the public understanding of shared welfare responsibility on the pretext that the public has not reached a social consensus. On the other hand, the official propaganda of local governments that emphasizes government omnipotence assists in managing public faith in regime capacity and governance.

In this chapter, we take advantage of a quasi-experimental pilot policy in China, referred as the "pension insurance pilot scheme in urban areas," to explore the case of hybrid responsibility of welfare provision. This empirical chapter offers a counterfactual analysis of the effect of policy intervention and official propaganda on the attitude of welfare responsibility allocation and regime support of the general public by taking advantage of the pilot policy launched by the central government in selected provinces. With the help of two nationwide surveys ("*Chinese Attitudes toward Inequality and Distributive Injustice*") conducted in 2004 and 2009, we collected over 5,000 randomly pooled cross-sectional data of residents in 8 treatment and 12 control provinces.

The empirical results show that the pilot policy launched by the Chinese central government significantly affected the citizens' understanding of shared responsibility and privatized social risks in general and that the public has apparently accepted the underlying accentuation of the individual's responsibility for pension contributions. The length of time that the policy has been in force amplifies the attitudinal change in individuals' perception of the government's role. Local official propaganda, which emphasizes the image of an "omnipotent government," has moderated the treatment effect of the pilot scheme on the public's understanding of shared responsibility. In other words, local propaganda has helped the regime to maintain the public's faith in the government's capacity and responsibility for social welfare provision while gradually implementing the experimentation policy.

Beyond the attitudinal change toward individual welfare responsibility, we also find that the influence of policy propaganda interferes with the pilot policy, as shown by the contradictory finding about the public's political trust. Controlling for other factors, short-term exposure to

the local propaganda—which praises the government’s efforts to respond to people’s expectations and improve people’s living standards—increase the public’s confidence in institutions. However, the disjunction of the policy content, which set out to share with individuals the responsibility for welfare—and content of the propaganda actually backfired on the authorities regarding institutional trust in the long term. Thus, the strategies used by governments are influenced by the conditional and practical aspects of policy promotion and the local governments’ handling of the perceived role of the government for public. A mismatch between the policy content and propaganda details is likely to be caught by the public—especially by members of the target population (enterprise employees) who are more likely to expect a “big government” which can take care of their social risks—and to weaken their support for the institution.

From state socialism to shared responsibility for welfare provision: Risks in the social welfare transition

As a special form of society, state socialism adopts distinct structure of institutions and rules regarding development, production relations, and welfare provision (Polanyi & MacIver, 1944). The basic principle of state socialist regimes is that material resources are distributed through central planning and a system of political identification. Take the example of China. Before the reform and opening-up in the late 1970s, the state organized and governed individuals through work units (*danwei*) in urban areas and people’s communes (*renmin gongshe*) in rural areas. However, the redistributive principle posed serious challenges to governance continuity. In particular, collective ownership hindered production efficiency, while the offering of incentives for productive improvements and the scarcity of resources cultivated a sense of “manipulated equality” among privileged groups (Kornai, 1992; Szelenyi, 1978). The unsustainability of such institutionalized settings pressured state socialist countries in the late 20th century to pursue market reforms (Szelenyi & Szelenyi, 1994). The emergence of market power during the reform led to the change in distributional principles, the return rate of capital and human capital, social structures and so on (Bian & Logan, 1996; Nee, 1996). At the same time, the boundaries of the state, market and society in these state socialist countries were redrawn and negotiated across different sectors, especially in Eastern Europe, eastern and south-eastern Asian countries and the former Soviet Union. Szelenyi and Kostello (1996) argue that market competition, as opposed to state mechanisms, began to play a greater role in Eastern

Europe in 1980–1989 and in China after 1985. Subsequently, among the East European countries after 1989, the privatization of “the public” became a state policy.

The transitional process has caused profound changes in the social welfare provision in China. Market-induced competition has also led the state and urban collective enterprises to reduce or renege on pensions, medical costs and housing for employees (Guthrie, 2012; S. Song & Chu, 1997). The responsibility for welfare provision has shifted from state institutions to the society (including families) and this scheme has been identified by the Chinese central government as the “socialization of social welfare” (G. O. o. t. S. Council, 2000). This special concept captures the change from state-led welfare provision to a welfare system with multiple contributors, in which the state, the market, the sectors of society and families share welfare responsibility and the work units no longer take on the welfare function. To match the socialist market economy, the government has promoted joint responsibility as the practical method of funding, service provision and social welfare regulation (B. Li & Zhong, 2009; Wong & Ngok, 2006).

Such a process is similar to the “retrenchment” and “risk privatization” process in Western welfare states and the emergence of a hybrid welfare system in which individuals are given flexibility but increased responsibility for handling the various social risks related to their personal lives, such as “unemployment, death of a spouse, retirement, disability, childbirth, [and] poverty” (Hacker, 2002, p. 245). From the mid-1970s onward, welfare states faced rising unemployment rates, high levels of inflation and low economic growth, along with demographic changes that made the social policy increasingly costly and unsustainable. Extensive problems over “low-wage, low-skill labour with low work incentives”, which were severe in the case of “welfare without work” burdened the welfare system (K. Anderson & Ebbinghaus, 2011; Pierson, 2001). Meanwhile, the “big government” in welfare provision was recognized as over-committed and underperforming (Mashaw, 2006). In these crises, policymakers decided to address the new social and economic situation by adopting a neo-liberal modernization strategy (Hall, 2001). The welfare regimes in Western Europe, therefore, opted for the retrenchment of welfare provision, which was set to “include policy changes that either cut social expenditure, restructure welfare state programs to conform more closely to the residual welfare state model, or alter the political environment in ways that enhance the probability of such outcomes in the future” (Pierson, 1994, p. 17). In addition to the cutbacks in public spending and other fiscal rearrangements, certain countries started to reconsider citizens’ social right to legitimize the welfare reforms. For instance, rather than the universal entitlement to social rights for every

qualified citizen, welfare support should be provided for the population which truly needs it (Béland, 2005; Cox, 2001).

Models that offer a choice, such as the contracting-out and welfare-mix model, are popular in developed countries and have also been used frequently in less developed countries. For instance, the private pillar in the pension system was adopted in the 2000s in countries such as Chile, Mexico and Uruguay, with varied proportions of public to private (Mares & Carnes, 2009). In East Asia, countries such as Korea and Malaysia also expect a fast-expanding private market in social services (Gough, 2001). Haggard and Kaufman (2008) located their discussion in the context of the global economic crisis and identified the attempts among social policies to retrench in Latin America and Eastern Europe driven by the economic crisis and liberalization. This retrenchment, by reintroducing market and community forces, resulted in extending the hybrid welfare system, in which social welfare responsibilities are shared between the state, the market and individuals (Benish, Haber, & Eliahou, 2017). Individuals now face a long working life and redefined responsibility in a state-led welfare-mix system where they enjoy enhanced “flexibility” and increased “responsibility”.

As the 2010s began, welfare reform in China gradually stopped its pursuit of marketization and socialization. The official discourse about social policy now focused on expanding “welfare coverage” to rural and non-salaried urban residents. Certain scholars have labelled this new trend in the welfare format “state capitalism” or a “state paternalistic capitalism” (Gao, Yang, & Li, 2013). In this chapter, we focus on **the period of “welfare socialization” in the 1990s and 2000s, when the main pension reform for enterprise employees was aligned with the marketization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs)**. This period was an important stage in which the ideas of “a welfare system with hybrid contributors” and “shared responsibility for facing social risks” were developed and actively promoted by the state. Only after the reconstruction of the public’s understanding of shared responsibility can the state be confident in diffusing its attempts to expand welfare coverage without having huge burdens similar to those in the state socialist period.

Existing studies have carefully examined the details of the pension policy in this period, such as the return rate, coverage and return on investment of pension trusts (for instance, J. Li & Ge, 2010; Z. Li & Wang, 2009; Lin & Ding, 2007; Yang, Wang, & Zhang, 2010). However, the effects of the transitional process on social beliefs, especially the public perceptions of the state-individual relationship, and the function of institutional dependency in shaping people’s political attitudes, have not been fully investigated. The rhetoric of “socialism” itself describes the state or

state-managed public bodies acting as sources of social welfare—in schemes similar to a social contract—at the expense of low salaries and limited social mobility (Haggard & Kaufman, 2008). For instance, work units in urban China before 1978 were subsidised by the state so as to provide not only jobs to individuals, but also to generate pensions, housing, education and healthcare to employees and their dependents (Lu & Perry, 1997). In the rural areas, funds were also allocated for the basic education and medical support or healthcare of residents (Wong, 2005). The socialist institutional setting cultivated a strong image of an omnipotent government, in which the state was expected to superintend the social welfare of the public, especially among urban enterprise employees who were expected to be cared for “from cradle to grave” (i.e., with generous welfare benefits). The legacy of this socialist policy is a population with a strong sense of state dependency, attachment to the welfare state and organized stakeholders favouring the welfare setup (Cook, 2013).

However, the cognitional inertia of the public’s assumptions about welfare responsibility arising from socialist traditions may pose considerable challenges when neoliberal reforms come to be implemented. For instance, Cook (1993) corroborated the finding that workers from the former Soviet Union expressed discontent and to a certain extent jeopardized state legitimacy when the social contracts that used to guarantee their economic welfare broke down. Denisova et al. (2012) analysed data from a survey held in 2006 involving 28,000 individuals from 28 post-socialist countries and found that transition-related difficulties influenced their support for privatization reforms, given the preference for state agency and concerns regarding the legitimacy of privatization. Evidence from East Europe suggested that when “literally over a single night, all the things that had been taken for granted were no longer valid,” many individuals suffered from “serious identity crisis” (Ekman & Linde, 2005, p. 357).

Apart from cognitional dependency, several other factors weakened the welfare reforms which were intended to rebalance state-individual accountability. First, when the market principle was introduced in social and economic matters the ruling party in China did not relinquish the claim of communist ideology. Perry (2007, 2017) indicated that its resilience in power was endorsed by its skilled employment of the communist revolutionary legacy and of symbols from traditional culture. Slogans are presented, such as “serve the people”, and “the party represents the benefit of the overwhelming majority of the people”. By combining the destiny of the party and the welfare of the people, these repeated and solemnly vowed ideological claims in fact aided the formation of the “common interest” of the society and became an important element of the “inertial thinking” of the public when it had to face external changes. In other words, people in former socialist states are more likely to treat the government as the bearer of ultimate liability

for all social and economic problems. But at the same time, they are more likely to accept social or policy changes “for the sake of the common interest”. Second, the shadow of previous social policies also shaped the expectations of the people. For instance, the demographic “One-child” policy posed a specific quandary for the care of older people in China. Under the intervention of the “One-child” policy, the obligatory compliance of the people in reducing the number of their descendants—which is the main form of old-age support in the traditional context of filial piety—gave them leverage to make a morally and politically fair request for the government to take charge of elderly welfare. Despite this fairness, urban residents suffered more than those in rural areas, because the One-child” policy was strictly enforced in urban areas.

To sum up, China’s welfare reforms during the “socialization process” in the 1990s and 2000s may have induced a failure of consensus between the state’s conduct and individual perceptions regarding the role of government in welfare provision. The difference may also have endangered state legitimacy by the public’s sense of betrayal.

Combining social policy experimentation with official propaganda: Statecraft and the respective motivations

To avoid a legitimacy crisis caused by the above consensus gap, the Chinese government needed to seriously consider the public’s expectations and anticipate their feedback in its policy-making process, especially during dramatic transitions in the social welfare provision. Our research observed the parallel statecraft of social policy experimentation and official propaganda to address the consensus gap and resolve the dilemma of privatized social risks and shared responsibility during the pension reform process.

In China, policy experimentation is a tool of the incremental policy process, a matter of “crossing the river by feeling the stones.” Such experimentation is very important for maintaining state legitimacy while avoiding radical policy changes at the national level. In other words, policy experimentation is the process of conducting moderate and manageable policy changes to allow enough space for the central government to learn from “trial and error” (Heilmann, 2008b). Policy makers of the central government can determine the types of experimentation and decide what aspects of successfully implemented experimentation can be adopted at the national level (Heilmann, 2008a; Mei & Liu, 2014; X. Zhu & Zhao, 2018a). Provinces, cities, or regions can participate in the selection of pilot sites. Within the process of pilot policy making, local governments can benefit from conditional and limited autonomy if the

central policies permit. Apart from the unified policy guidelines proposed by the central government, local authorities can localize and reinterpret the policy details on the basis of their local conditions (H. Huang, 2013). In such a structure, local governments can employ strategies, such as the construction of rhetoric, enhancing certain policy elements to popularize the policies when they sense potential obstruction from the public.

We propose that policy experimentations in the field of social welfare can be used as a tactic for dialogue with the general public to demonstrate the legitimacy of a reform. The idea of experimentation as a dialogue tactic differs from the conventional understanding of policy experimentation in the theoretical spectrum. The traditional wisdom on policy experimentation has mainly focused on policy makers at the central and local levels, but has paid little attention to the recipients social policies—the public. Conventional theories either highlight the autonomy of local authorities, in which the argument is that decentralized federations contribute to economic leapfrogging (Montinola, Qian, & Weingast, 1995; Weingast, 1995), or accentuate the full control of the central government, whose policy experimentation serves to demonstrate policy correctness (Heilmann, 2008b), identify errors (X. Zhu & Zhao, 2018a), or delimit competition (H. Cai & Treisman, 2006). We emphasize that the government can integrate the public's expectation into the policy-making process into the policy-making process of policy experimentation and employ the feed-forward effect (A. Schneider & Sidney, 2009) to minimize any undesired impact on the society. If the central government pushes for an across-country reform that contradicts its omnipotent stature (which is generally interpreted by the public as being a “caring and accountable” government), then the difficulties for the public of identifying and accepting the new situation can be considered risky, given the cognitional dependency discussed above. By distributing policy changes in selected regions through policy experimentation, the government can measure and test the potential feedback and the limits of the public in turn, and contain the public's expectations in the general process of policy making. Moreover, policy experimentation provides effective channels for the government to further influence public opinion by engaging individuals in dialogue.

The central government can wield power to conduct policy experimentation and achieve its goal of consensus building by facilitating several mechanisms. First, the experimentation is operated on account of the fiscal division of central and local governments. In China's situation, the central government controls the fiscal resources and allocates transfer payments to local governments, whereas the local governments are motivated to accomplish or improve pilot programmes to gain financial resources and cope with welfare expenditure (X. Zhu & Zhao, 2018b). This interactive loop helps the central government find the most appropriate policy

instrument that is a much broader version of the reforms in the experimental policies; moreover, the central government can establish its legitimacy by modestly implementing the reform process (X. Zhu & Zhao, 2018b). Second, the general public may change its perceptions, mainly through an experiential process, in the context of external experimental interventions. Gradual reforms based on policy experimentation instil in the public the belief that a new policy may be cancelled if it does not work. In the regions chosen to pilot the new welfare policy, the public may have derived benefits and observed deficiencies—but with less anxiety. Therefore, the central government can promote new policies without the need to obtain large-scale prior approval from the general public as a whole; rather, it can persuade people by informing them of the pros and cons of the policies as the experimentation proceeds. An incremental pilot scheme facilitates the building of public attitudes, in which the preferred outcome corresponds to the policy design, especially when a controversial policy is involved. During the buffer period of policy experimentation, the public may either accept the permanence of the controversial policy or signal their discontent in ways that are not too radical for the government. To summarize, experimentation can be a useful tool in letting the central government initiate dialogues with the public.

It should be noted here that the risks of policy failure and legitimacy crisis in the piloting of welfare reforms are unevenly distributed between the central and the local governments. In China, local governments are more likely than the central government to be blamed by the public for deficiencies in social policies, whereas the central government can more easily than the local governments obtain rewards from warmly-accepted policies (T. Shi, 2014). Central government generally possesses a higher degree of political trust than local governments do, which is referred as “hierarchical political trust” (Lü, 2014; T. Shi, 2014). This is partly because local governments are the ones that implement the rules and provide the services and such proximity leads the public to focus on their deficiencies and misbehaviours. Cultural factors also matter because Chinese people tend to look up to a “just and upright lord” and believe that most of the local problems are the results of distortion by local officials. Additionally, social instability caused by public discontent may threaten the political career of local officials. As a precaution, local governments may either actively initiate localized innovations when the experimentation scheme allows it or promote central government-instructed policies with carefully designed messages (X. Zhu & Zhao, 2018b). I give further details in the following discussion of local government’s choices in its propaganda efforts and use empirical evidence in the section on the substantive context to further elaborate on its motivation.

In design process of public policy, official discourse is commonly recognized as effective statecraft enabling a government to convince their subordinates regarding new policies and eliminate the possibility of a legitimacy crisis (Beetham, 1991). For instance, in electoral politics, the core principle of making politics work is to mobilize the “majority” of the population. Schneider and Ingram use the theory of “social construction of target groups” to describe the process in developed countries whereby the election elites use certain portrayals to maximize voters’ support and minimize electoral costs by identifying the target population of the policy they want to promote (Boushey, 2016; A. Schneider & Ingram, 1993; A. L. Schneider et al., 2014). The electoral elites sacrifice a small group of people whilst promoting a reallocation of welfare resources through the rhetorical construction of certain weak and marginalized target populations—those who lack effective political power to engage and change the policy process. This is effective, so long as the policy is constructed to be legitimate for the majority (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994; A. Schneider & Ingram, 1993). These constructions are formed from social values, emotions, or stereotypes of the target population. As an example, when policy makers intend to impose a new welfare burden or retrench welfare benefits for a certain group of people, the target population may be constructed as “undeserving” and “selfish”. Therefore, they are denied certain social assistance (Hynes & Hayes, 2011; Maynard-Moody, Musheno, & Musheno, 2003). By so doing, the government can legitimize the proposed policy and alter the expectations, perceptions and even behaviours of the citizens (Donovan, 2001; Lawrence, Stoker, & Wolman, 2013; A. Schneider & Sidney, 2009).

In developing and non-democratic regimes, the logic of social construction in public and social policy changes is slightly different, due to the institutional difference from their democratic counterparts. In these regimes, the government is perceived to be likely to directly issue a policy with or without majority consent and has less motivation to construct portrayals that would do enough to meet the citizens’ expectations. However, in practice, we still find numerous cases wherein the policy promotion delivers rhetorical messages not directly related to the policy itself or contains specific information that is highly sensitive and salient to certain social groups. In this project, we find a strategy which is similar to the situation in electoral politics, but more specific and tailored to the constraints in developing countries—to interpret the motivation and effect of policy making. For policy making in developing countries where there are no mature democratic elections, policies targeting a certain population do not need a voting approval from the whole population. The pressure on policy makers mainly comes from possible discontent from the target population because any instability caused by collective resistance from the target population can lead to a legitimacy crisis for non-democratic authorities (Lipset, 1959). Thus,

welfare retrenchment that is designed to reallocate the responsibility between the state, the market and the target population requires the policy makers to try hard to ensure that the image and logic of a policy are congruent. In this case, policy makers can strategically construct the policy content to gain the acceptance of the target population and avoid the risk of legitimacy crisis from the incongruence of the welfare policies. The ideal achievement of such constructional efforts by government might be a cognitional change in the target population following the design of the policy, together with greater general trust from the entire population, if possible.

In practice, for the authorities to attain the goal of social construction—persuading the public of the advantages of policies and the credibility of governments—they must use the acknowledged tool of propaganda through the public media (Easton, 1975; Shirk, 2011). The incumbent authority can effectively defend or promote its policies and guide or mobilize public opinion by using its own media (Di Tella, Galiani, & Schargrodsky, 2012; Keefer & Khemani, 2011). Many specific components of constructive propaganda are used by governments to help promote policy changes. For instance, propaganda can be designed to magnify the necessity and urgency of policy changes, particularly by connecting these to short-term social problems (Cox, 2001). Propaganda can also emphasize the part of the message in which a government's duty and credibility are enhanced while neglecting other parts where the government has begun to withdraw from its former role. Some propaganda models glorify and exaggerate to the public the benefits of new policies, especially to the target groups of certain policies (A. L. Schneider & Ingram, 2019). Regarding the efficiency of official propaganda, Huang's paper (2015, 2018) on a government's indirect provision of information, identified "subtle and sleek propaganda" as something likely to have a highly persuasive effect, whereas "hard propaganda" may backfire and alienate citizens from the policy.

In the case of China's social welfare areas where the socialist legacy persists amid the transition in socioeconomic conditions, the effort of local governments to promote welfare reform requires a careful social construction tailored to the target population of the reform. In the case of a pension pilot for enterprise employees led by the central government, we observe that the local governments' promotion of the reform described the piloted policy as something closely associate with the generosity of the state. It may be asked why, if the government as a whole intended to share the responsibility with individuals (society) and enterprises in this reform, its propaganda didn't use relevant discourses, such as connecting the pilot reform directly with individual responsibility. The reason why the government's official propaganda about the pilot reform still connected the policy with the state's generosity is partly because of

the citizens' dependence on the socialist media pattern of official discourse. Drawn from the pre-reform period, China's official propaganda, similar to that of its communist counterparts, is famed for its "formalistic, ritualistic and ideological" content (H. Huang, 2015). The state-owned media usually exaggerate the omnipotent role of the state, avoid negative messages/information and signal the capacity of state power (see, for example, McQuail, 1987; Siebert, Siebert, Peterson, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Some scholars who specialise in the welfare state also addressed the point that the authority in non-democratic regimes tends to take a "paternalist role" in public welfare provision (Beck, 1997; Leung & Nann, 1995). Thus, it is unlikely to change its habits completely in its official discourse. Another, more important reason in this case, is that the local government was also trying to avoid the risks that the reform might bring. The promotional content of the propaganda emphasized the role of the government in appeasing public anxiety, especially since the social welfare reform involved incremental changes to a more individually-based type of responsibility. I further analyse local government's motivation to use selective discourse in the following section.

To summarize, policy experimentation can help downplay controversial reforms by slowing down policy implementation and minimizing the confusion and reaction of the public. In cases where the authority wishes to take on the potential trade-off between opportunities and challenges of conducting social and economic reforms (social change), policy experimentation is useful to buffer the associated risks. Meanwhile, it is vital for the authority to promote its intentions, construct knowledge and shape a population's ideology by propaganda. Hence, a combination of incremental piloting of policy and relevant constructed propaganda helps the government to manage any chance of public discontent and build a consensus for the reform.

Substantive context: The Chinese pilot scheme for urban pension insurance

In this chapter, we select the case of the reform of China's urban pension insurance in the 2000s to demonstrate the strategy used by the Chinese government of combining social policy experimentation with official propaganda. The policy process of this reform involved typical policy experimentation in which the central government led the promotion of a new pension scheme for a certain population in some selected provinces. The experimentation was conducted in three waves, which was ideal for investigating the exposure effects of the policy treatment on the public. Another reason for choosing this case was that this reform acted as an important segment of the reconstruction of welfare responsibility in the process of moving away from the state socialist welfare model and "socializing the social welfare" (Ringen & Ngok, 2017;

S. J. Shi & Mok, 2012). As for the propaganda, we chose local official propaganda (published by the local Provincial Party Committee) rather than that of the central government (such as the People's Daily). The reason is that, on the one hand, local official propaganda follows the basic tone of central government in promoting certain policies. On the other, local governments can vary their propaganda efforts (in volume, coverage, emphasis, and so on) according to their understanding of the reform direction, policy details and local conditions. Especially with regard to policy experimentation, local governments are allowed under the general direction of central government to make localized changes. Therefore, local governments' varied efforts in promoting the government's image and the policy reform provide a good case model for analysing the effects of constructive propaganda.

Before the economic reform in 1978, China was in a period when the "creation of a socialist egalitarian society [promised] a relatively stable livelihood at the expense of economic development" (Leung & Xu, 2015). Work units acted as administrative social integration sections in urban areas, as well as public goods providers (Lu & Perry, 1997). Urban work units provided not only jobs for life but also pensions, housing, education and health care to employees and their dependants. More than 80% of the urban labour force was covered by the Danwei system (Leung & Wong, 1999). The state's patriarchal role brought a collective welfare mechanism that collectively secured citizens' social rights at the stage of state socialism (Xie, 2016).

Corresponding to the economic reform, the state promoted social reforms that helped to cut the state's welfare burden and boost efficiency. The ongoing reform in welfare provision would focus on life-time employment, pensions, health and the housing system in urban areas (B. Li & Zhong, 2009; Wong & Ngok, 2006). Numbers of employees of state-owned enterprises were laid off in process of liberation and marketization. Furthermore, the newly established basic health insurance scheme also required contributions from individuals and employers. The functioning of hospitals started to employ market-competition principles. The total welfare contribution from individual workers accounted for quite a large proportion of their salaries (Ringen & Ngok, 2017). Certain areas of welfare provision would be transferred to local government, society or even back to the family. In the areas of funding sources, subjects of the provision and regulation, joint responsibility would become to various degrees as a practical tenet.

Among these welfare reforms, China's pension plan for urban enterprise employees has changed dramatically since the retraction of the "iron rice bowl" and the reformation of SOEs in the 1980s. Beginning from the 1990s, what used to be a pay-as-you-go system of pension insurance has gradually changed to a mixed two-tier system comprising social and individual accounts. The reformation officially started in 1997 when the State Council issued Document

No. 26 entitled “*Decision on Establishing a Unified System of Basic Pension Insurance for Enterprise Employees*” (Council, 1997). According to this, the responsibility for raising funds for the new pension system should be shared by enterprises, employees and the government (Gao, 2006), although the action is not de facto compulsory. The document proposed that each individual account be maintained at 11% of an employee’s salary, to which individuals need to contribute up to 8% of their salary (i.e., starting at 4%). To this, employers are expected to cover the shortfall in individuals’ accounts (i.e., the remaining 3% of an individual’s salary) while separately contributing at most 17% of the payment (i.e., the enterprise’s total contribution should not exceed 20% of an individual’s total wages) for the social account.

However, individual accounts were often “empty” due to insufficient fund allocation and the diversion of funds to the social accounts which were originally designed to cover the needs of retirees. This situation also caused a “common pool” problem, in which current pension contributors always expected the social account to cover everyone’s pensions, although their individual accounts might have been used up by now. To further clarify the division between the pooling of individual and social accounts, and to cover the deficit in individual accounts, the central government issued Document No. 42 in December 2000 to promote a new reform of “*Fully funding the individual accounts*” (S. Council, 2000). The pilot policy reform, which was first implemented in Liaoning Province in 2001, has specified that contributions to individual accounts must be handled solely by employees and the 8% rate must be set from the contributory wage. In 2003, the pilot policy was extended to Heilongjiang Province and Jilin Province. These two provinces adopted similar policy schemes that differed only slightly in terms the regulations regarding the contribution rate. The three provinces in North-eastern China comprised the first wave of pension insurance reform for urban enterprise employees. In 2005, the central government issued “*Decision on Improving the Basic Pension System for Enterprise Employees*” (Council, 2005) and added eight provinces that would form the second pilot wave: Tianjin, Shanxi, Shanghai, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Xinjiang, beginning on January 1, 2006. Jiangsu and Zhejiang Province joined as the third wave in 2008. Overall, 13 provinces took part in the reform’s pilot scheme³⁶.

As explained above, in the process of policy experimentation, local governments can promote a reform through official propaganda. In particular, the local official propaganda emphasises the omnipotent role of the state not only due to the tradition from the communist

³⁶ As a result, the ten-year pilot scheme gradually faded away as the 2010s began, the reason being cited as the unsolved problem of “empty individual accounts” (Zheng 2016).

period, but also as a precaution taken to avoid the risks that a controversial social reform might entail. As I have argued, trust in the political system of China is hierarchical, that is, local governments are more likely to be blamed than a central government for any deficiency in a social policy, whilst, unlike the former, the latter can easily be rewarded for any good policies it may deploy. Social welfare provision is generally considered a local affair, which reflects the situation in fiscal profits during the 1980s. Previously, local governments could retain up to 84.5% of their fiscal revenue and most of the funds were diverted to reinvestment and development instead of the provision of social welfare for local residents. Following the 1994 fiscal reform, the central-local relationship was redefined as a tax-share between them because the balance leaned towards the central government. Under the new system, the central government took 75% of the Value-Added Tax, one of the most important fiscal resources for government revenue. However, the expenditure on social welfare remained a local matter, especially at the prefectural and county levels, when fiscal revenue had already gone through the process of recentralization (Y. Fan, 2015). The situation was worse if we consider that the social welfare index was not even included in the promotion criteria for local authorities until the late 2010s. In other words, local governments are expected to provide social welfare but do not have enough capacity or motivation to provide it; nevertheless, they are more likely to be blamed for a policy that is unwelcome from the public's viewpoint. Therefore, local governments are motivated to take precautions against the possible negative effects of implementing policies when the central government attempts to promote a hybrid type of welfare reform.

In local official newspapers, we find that articles reporting that the pilot policy is associated with the omnipotent role of the state. The articles were full of the following messages: the government's generosity, efficiency and conscientiousness ensure social justice; the framing of "good government," and the government's taking "people's livelihood into account"—all these messages are consistent with the socialist rhetoric. As an example, one of the local official newspapers described the pilot policy as follows³⁷:

This policy aims to support the basic pension and social old-age insurance systems by reforming the methods of calculating the basic pension and allowance. We are ensuring the punctual granting of pensions for retired enterprise employees whilst expanding the coverage of the old-age insurance system for everyone included in the scheme. This requires the government to renew its efforts to collect insurance funding and tighten the supervision and management of it. Moreover, we should also improve and integrate a pluralistic approach of

³⁷ Originally in Chinese, translated by the present author.

fund raising in order to fully fund individual accounts (Shanxi Daily, 2006)

Another widely employed approach in local official newspapers is to magnify the necessity and urgency of the reform by connecting it to general social benefits, where it is consistent with the central government's repertoire of methods of knowledge construction that I addressed in Chapter 3. For instance, one report addressing the 2005 State Council No. 38 as follows:

This decision (Decision on Perfecting Basic System of Pension Insurance for Enterprise Employees) is a significant one made by the central authority on the basis of overall socio-economic development of our country. The decision is vital for the healthy and sustainable development of the economy as well as for the long-term safety of our nation. It is also essential for protecting the well-being of our prefecture's citizens (Tianjin Daily, 2006)

Testable hypotheses, data and identification strategy

Hypotheses

To examine the causal relationship between the trajectory of welfare reform from state socialism to shared responsibility and changes in individuals' perceptions, we propose a set of testable hypotheses on the basis of the policy effect of this quasi-natural experiment created by the pilot scheme for pensions for enterprise employees in the 2000s. The main research interest is the effectiveness of statecraft regarding changes in individuals' attitudes to the locus of responsibility (LoR) of certain welfare provisions and regarding the trust given to political institutions across regions and periods. Individual perceptions of welfare responsibility are sensitive to changes in social policies (Im & Meng, 2015; Lü, 2014) and are of great importance in understanding political support in general. As a market-oriented policy that resonates with the privatization of the SOEs in the late 1990s, the pension insurance reform has as one of its goals the sharing with individuals, the market and the society of the responsibility for social pension insurance contributions. For the central government, the ideal micro-level outcome of the reform is the target population's recognition of its responsibility as individuals for pension contributions, thereby achieving a sustainable system of pension contributions for future retirees. Thus, we argue that the pilot policy discussed in this chapter implies an increase of individual responsibility that can lead to changes in public cognizance. We propose our first hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The implemented pilot experimentation of the basic pension insurance reform increases the popular acceptance of individual responsibility for elderly care. The longer the public experiences the pilot experimentation, the more intensely they become affected by the reform.

The emphasis on incorporating individual responsibility in welfare provision differs from the practice observed during the egalitarian-socialist period, which accentuates the duty of the state to provide elderly care in the form of either pensions or social insurance. Therefore, local governments are strongly motivated to take precautions to offset the potential negative effects of the policies—the anxiety of the public (especially the target population) over losing the state’s support/benefit. Meanwhile, the local governments do not want to be blamed for the reform, as they would be if the public distributed blame/trust in its usual hierarchical fashion, given the special central-local relationship in China. One of the stratagems was for the local governments to use official propaganda to send messages in the course of the basic pension insurance reform emphasizing the omnipotent role of the state. We found qualitative evidence of the propaganda efforts of local official newspapers focusing on the public’s faith in the government’s devotion to duty and responsibility. Drawing on these arguments, we test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Policy propaganda emphasizing the omnipotent role of the government offsets the pilot policy’s effect on public perception and shifts the people’s perception to governmental responsibility.

We recognize the short-term effectiveness of official propaganda in maintaining the public’s faith. However, in the long term, individuals will be likely to distinguish the real target of the policy and even resist its implementation (X. Chen & Shi, 2001; H. Huang, 2018; Kennedy, 2009). In the case of the pension insurance policy reform, although its description in the official media highlighted the government’s efforts to improve the public pension system, individuals reportedly have had to increase their individual contributions to their pension and in retirement have encountered difficulties in claiming benefits. People who conscientiously planned their monthly income and expenditures were deeply influenced by the implications of governmental retrenchment as part of the policy design. Thus, in the event, the reform dramatically changed the individuals’ disposition of their salary and their expectations of risks as they aged, social welfare and the state-individual relationship. This contradiction between policy propaganda and policy experimentation may over time undermine the public’s confidence and trust on government institutions. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis regarding the concurrent effect of the propaganda and pilot policy on the public’s political trust:

Hypothesis 3: In the short term, local official propaganda regarding the pilot policy has increased the public's support for the regime. However, in the long term, local official propaganda regarding the pilot policy can reduce the public's support.

Data and variables

Our measurement of dependent variables (DVs) has benefited from two rounds of household surveys called “Chinese Attitudes toward Inequality and Distributive Injustice,” which were conducted by teams led by Marty Whyte and Mingming Shen in 2004 and 2009³⁸. The two surveys used randomized sampling under the global positioning system. The sample pool of the national adult population involved respondents aged 18–65. The total of observations from the two surveys is 6,119, as shown in Table 10. Since the three provinces in north-eastern China started the pilot policy before 2004, we dropped the samples of these three provinces from the dataset, thus constraining the analytical samples within the window of the two surveys (2004 and 2009). This modification has resulted in 5,280 observations from 20 provinces.

³⁸ Martin Whyte served as the principal investigator for the project, which also involved Albert Park (Oxford University), Wang Feng (University of California-Irvine), Jieming Chen (Texas A&M University-Kingsville), Pierre Landry (Yale University) and Shen Mingming (Peking University), with Jie Yan, Tianguang Meng and Chunping Han as research assistants. The initial project was held in 2004.

Table 10. Descriptive data of two rounds social survey

Province	Survey Year		Total Samples	Pilot Year	Pilot Wave
	2004	2009			
Beijing	121	136	257		0
Hebei	58	44	102		0
Shanxi	112	104	216	2006	2
Liaoning	205	183	388	2001	1
Heilongjiang	239	212	451	2003	1
Shanghai	233	87	320	2006	2
Jiangsu	88	107	195	2008	3
Zhejiang	90	111	201	2008	3
Anhui	177	184	361		0
Fujian	87	71	158		0
Jiangxi	42	84	126		0
Shandong	486	453	939	2006	2
Henan	122	110	232	2006	2
Hubei	251	291	542	2006	2
Hunan	54	68	122	2006	2
Guangdong	164	181	345		0
Guangxi	242	206	448		0
Hainan	58	54	112		0
Yunnan	137	63	200		0
Xizang	94	108	202		0
Shaanxi	67	73	140		0
Ningxia	25	37	62		0
Samples (Total)	3152	2967	6119		

The two core questions in the survey that were used to construct the DVs for hypothesis testing are as follows:

(DV in hypothesis set 1): Between the government and the individuals, who should take greater responsibility for elderly pension provision?

(DV in hypothesis set 2): Do you trust the central/provincial/local governments? (asked as separate questions)

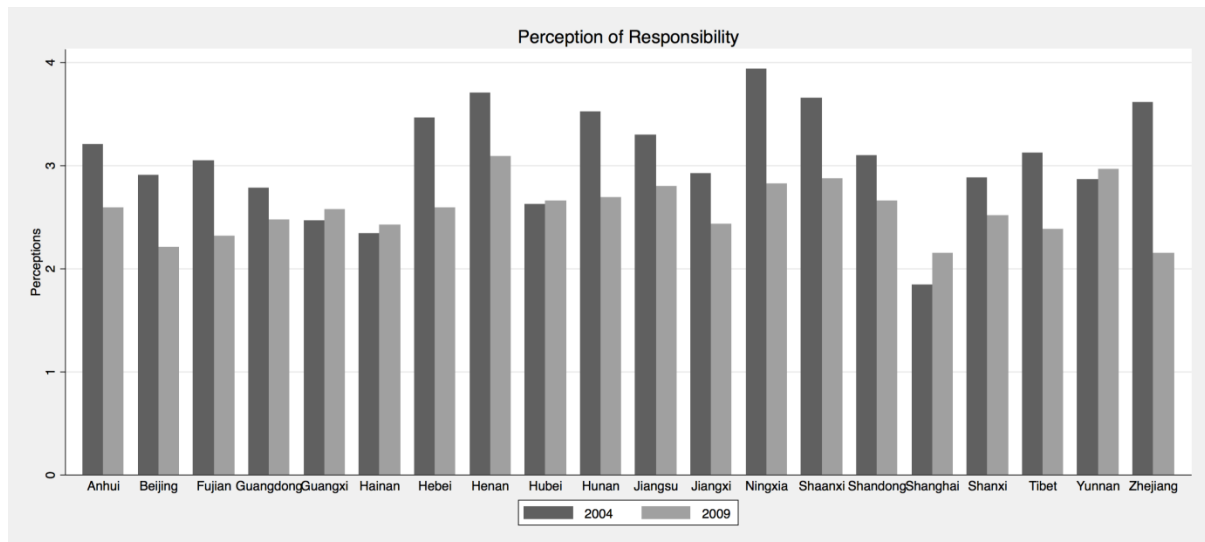


Figure 12. Provincial variations of the dependent variable: LoR perception

In Figure 12, we present the provincial variation of the dependent variable—the locus of (welfare) responsibility from two rounds of survey data. In addition to the dependent variables, the two-round survey also provides demographic information about the respondents, which are then used as control variables in our models. The variables comprise age, gender, educational attainment, marital status, party membership, household income level and residential registration (*hukou*) status, among others.

The main independent variable in our study is the different waves of pilot policy. The full pilot policy started in 2001–2003 and expanded in 2006 and 2008, respectively involving three, eight and two pilot provinces. Figure 13 shows the provinces in the three waves. The construction of treatment variables is explained in the model identification section.

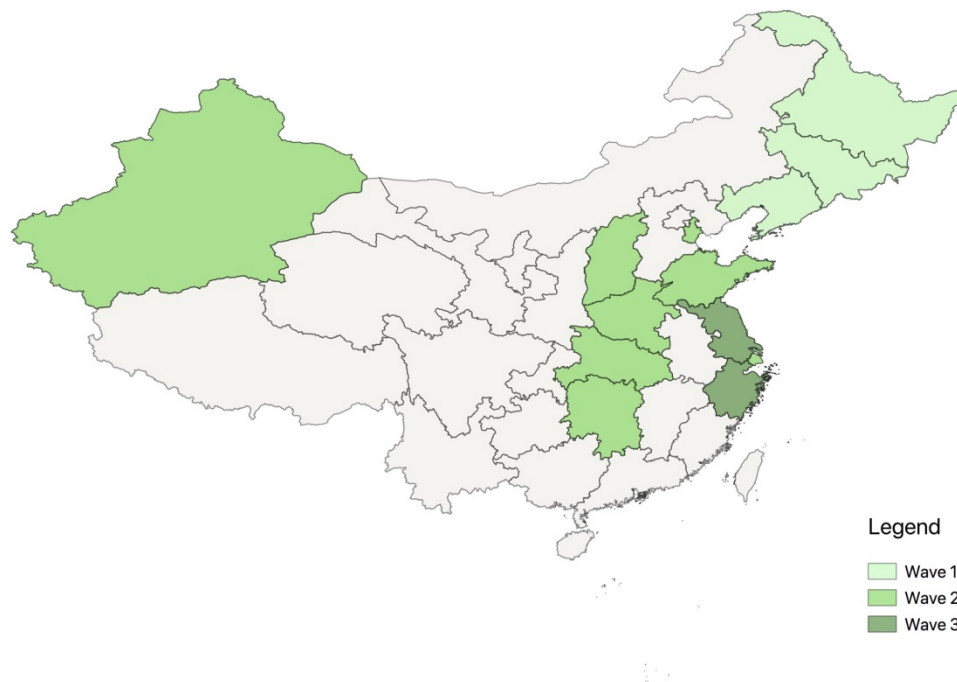


Figure 13. Visualization of three waves pilot policy

To measure the independent variable of local official propaganda, we collected newspaper articles from the “China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database,”³⁹ which covers data beginning in 2000. The official newspapers published by the local Provincial Party Committee were selected, but not all the available newspapers in a certain province because it is the provincial party newspapers that generally highlight propaganda information from the provincial government. Moreover, the propaganda rhetoric of provincial party newspapers can help to construct public opinion in the provinces. Officials’ attitudes to the current welfare policy that are revealed in provincial newspapers can be spread and appear in other media platforms across a province. People who do not read or subscribe to official provincial newspapers are also informed about such attitudes. The collection of data involves keyword searching and manual selection. To capture the intensity of propaganda regarding the pension insurance reform, we collected articles containing the exact name of the pilot policy (i.e., “fully funding the individual accounts”) to construct the variable “policy propaganda” and use the ratio

³⁹ “China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database” (<http://oversea.cnki.net/>), accessed July 2016. The dataset does not include the official newspaper data of Shandong Province and thus is complemented by another newspaper database, that of “Wise News” (<http://wiseneews.wisers.net/>), accessed July 2016.

of the variables rather than absolute numbers. In Figure 14, we present the provincial variation of local official propaganda efforts (as the article rate) on the pilot policy. Moreover, we calculated the accumulated ratio in 3 or 5 years ($Ratio = \frac{\sum(Article\ of\ Pilot\ Policy)_t}{\sum(Total\ News\ Articles)_t}$, where t equals 3 or 5 years before the two survey years of 2004 and 2009, respectively) to capture the long-term effects of the propaganda.

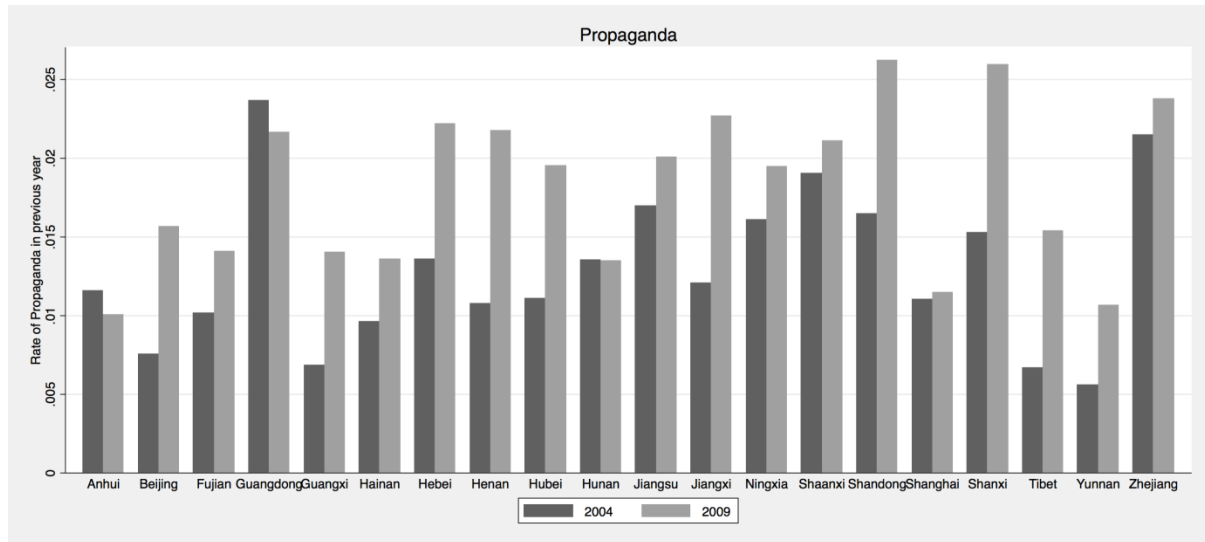


Figure 14. Provincial variation of local official propaganda efforts

To compare the provincial-level covariates between treatment provinces and the rest of the country, we collected provincial level statistical data on social and economic variables—which can influence the possibility that certain provinces will be selected as pilot provinces and the public’s perception of pension insurance—from the National Bureau of Statistics for the period covering 2000 to 2010⁴⁰. The selected social and economic variables included regional economic performance, demographic characteristics, fiscal revenue and expenditure distribution, the implementation and participation rate of pension insurance, and so on.

Identification of policy effect

The nature of the two rounds of survey data permits us to adopt the difference-in-differences (DID) model for estimating the average policy effect on individuals through counterfactual inference. In the DID model, we define the treatment group as all the samples in the provinces that participated in the pilot policy, whereas others are used for the control group.

⁴⁰ “National Bureau of Statistics” (<http://www.stats.gov.cn/>), accessed July 2016.

Our baseline model is to estimate the difference between the treatment area and the control area before and after the policy experimentation.

$$LR_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Pilot_i + \beta_2 Post_t + \beta_3 Pilot_i Post_t + \sum \beta_4 X_{it} + P_i + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where LR_{it} denotes the individuals' attitudes regarding the LoR of pension insurance; $Post_t$ is a dummy variable that equals 1 for year 2009 and 0 for year 2004; $Pilot_i$ is the treatment variable that equals 1 for samples in the piloted provinces and 0 otherwise; the β_3 of the interaction term between $Pilot_i$ and $Post_t$ is the average treatment effect on individuals; and X_{it} is the vector of control variables that is employed to capture minor imbalances in demographic factors that can interfere with the outcome of interest. Given that the pilot sites were selected at the provincial level, we included a dummy variable P_i for provinces to ensure that the selections did not lead to an overestimation of the treatment effects. By taking advantage of the condition that the policy was targeted at urban enterprise employees, we further analysed the occupational and residential differences by using different subsamples.

In addition to the dualistic treatment-or-control variable, we also coded a continuous variable denoted by *Duration* to capture the gradual feature of the policy implementation by substituting the variable *Pilot*. This variable on *Duration* corresponds to the length of time that each treatment province had experienced by 2009, the time that the post-treatment survey was conducted in and the value was set at 0, 1, or 3. *Duration* also captures the slight policy differences between two different waves⁴¹. The model with “duration” as the explanatory variable is similar to Model (1).

$$LR_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Duration_i + \beta_2 Post_t + \beta_3 Duration_i Post_t + \sum \beta_4 X_{it} + P_i + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (2)$$

where *Duration_i* is the length of time for which each sample experienced the pilot policy.

In investigating the mixed effect of the pilot policy and the local official propaganda, we further constructed the difference-in-difference-in-differences (DDD, or triple difference) model as follows:

⁴¹ The pilot policy was conducted in three waves. The full scale of funding the individual accounts by local governments and the financial subsidies from the central government varied somewhat across these three waves.

$$\begin{aligned}
LR_{ijt} = & \alpha + \beta_1 Pilot_i + \beta_2 Post_t + \beta_3 Propaganda_j + \beta_4 Pilot_i Post_t \\
& + \beta_5 Pilot_i Propaganda_j + \beta_6 Post_t Propaganda_j \\
& + \beta_7 Pilot_i Post_t Propaganda_j + \sum \beta_8 X_{ijt} + P_i + \varepsilon_{ijt}, \quad (3)
\end{aligned}$$

where “*Propaganda_j*” represents the individuals’ direct exposure to the pilot policy. The coefficient β_7 of the interaction of *pilot effect* (*Pilot*Post*) and *propaganda* thus caught the concurrent effect on the outcome variable. We contained the same control variables in vector X_{it} and province dummy P_i .

To test the short-term and long-term effects of the local policy propaganda on the public’s political trust, we employed the question in the 2009 survey by measuring the level of Chinese citizens’ trust in the central government, provincial government and local government (county or district).⁴² Short-term and long-term propaganda were identified with the accumulated ratio of articles that contained the exact name of this pilot policy in the previous year, 3 years and 5 years. We constructed the following model by using the interaction between pilot policy and local propaganda to capture the marginal effect of official propaganda on the public’s political trust in the treatment provinces:

$$\begin{aligned}
Trust_{ij} = & \alpha + \beta_1 Pilot_i + \beta_2 Propaganda_j + \beta_3 Pilot_i Propaganda_j + \sum \beta_4 X_{ij} + P_i \\
& + \varepsilon_{ij}, \quad (4)
\end{aligned}$$

where the marginal effect of local official propaganda on political trust was calculated as

$$\frac{\partial(Trust_{ij})}{\partial(Propaganda_j)} = \beta_2 + \beta_3 Pilot_i. \quad (5)$$

Thus, the coefficient $\beta_2 + \beta_3 \times 1$ indicates the estimated marginal propaganda effect on the public’s political trust in the pilot provinces. Here, the dichotomous variable *Pilot_j* can be replaced as the continuous variable *Duration_i* (to be discussed in the empirical section), which then turns the measurement into the marginal effect of propaganda on political trust for one additional year. Using *Duration_i* helps us identify the long-term and short-term effects of propaganda in spite of the stepwise pilot policy.

⁴² There were no questions related to political trust in the 2004 survey. Therefore, we can use only the 2009 survey for data on political trust.

Selection of pilots

Individual balance

The legitimation of a counterfactual DID design relies on the parallel trend assumption, which assumes that the counterfactual “natural” change in the outcome for the units in the treatment group between time 0 and 1 would have been the same as the change in the outcome for the units in the control group between periods 0 and 1. In this study, people’s attitudes to the allocation of welfare responsibility or political attitude in the treatment provinces would have been the same as the ones in the control provinces if not for the policy experiment, or as shown in formula $E[Y_0(1) - Y_0(0)|D = 1] = E[Y_0(1) - Y_0(0)|D = 0]$, which was drawn from the derivation of the average treatment effect on the treated estimation under the DID design. Given that the parallel trend assumption is not directly testable, especially for two periods of data, we approached this assumption in several ways. First, we ran a simple t -test of our main outcome variable (LoR, a large value of the variable indicating considerable agreement on individual responsibility) of the 2004 survey samples (i.e. at period 0) by the treatment and control groups. $E[Y(0)|D = 1]$ and $E[Y(0)|D = 0]$ indicate no significant difference ($p = 0.51$).

Second, being treated during the policy pilot programme is arguably exogenous to individual preferences and political attitudes. That is, ΔY_0 should be independent from the assignment of D . Most sites of policy experimentation in China are not randomly selected and potential bias with certain confounding factors may affect each province’s likelihood of being selected as a pilot. Nevertheless, an in-depth case study on the development of the Chinese pension system implies that the urban pension insurance pilot scheme was designed by the central government, which carefully considered the issue of representativeness in selecting sites (Zhu and Zhao 2018). We conducted the following data description and balance check of key determinants in the selection of pilot regions to empirically address the identification challenge of DID. Third, we ran the baseline models depicted above with various control variables to minimize the bias brought by potential confounders. Finally, we leveraged the time effect conditional upon different groups (such as different propaganda intensities) with triple difference models.

Time trend

Although we cannot display the long-range development of individual perceptions due to data constraints, we can present the variance of provincial-level covariates that may affect the

outcome variables. We used the panel provincial data from 2000 to 2010 and compared the aggregated long-term trends of the treatment and control provinces on economic development, demographic features and social conditions. As shown in Figure 15, the trends of the two groups were nearly parallel to one another on most of the indices.

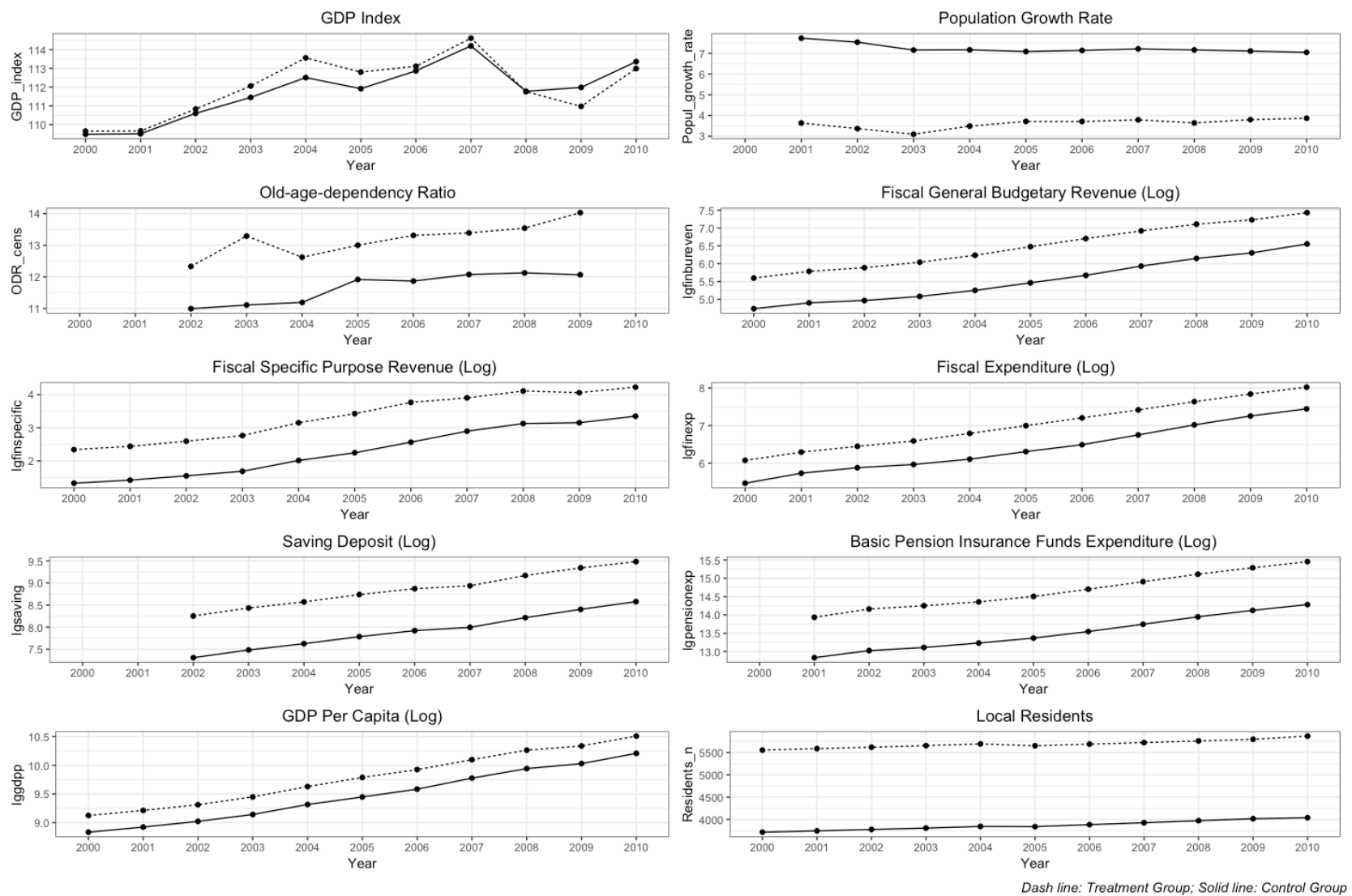


Figure 15. Time trend of provincial index

Regional Balance

Scholars typically find it difficult to identify the selection of the pilot provinces. Several latent factors can cause potential self-selection bias in the process. For instance, provinces affected by the ageing problem in terms of demographic structure are more likely to be chosen as a pilot, but provinces with good fiscal and economic performance will probably be better at deploying the reform. Selection based on unobservable information, such as the motivations of provincial leaders, which vary across provinces, is also possible and the motivations may have changed as the stages of the leaders' tenure changed. Although we were constrained by the availability of insider stories, we could still rule out the endogenous problems through statistical analysis by using observable data (Gentzkow, 2006).

Bearing in mind the nature of the selection of pilot provinces, we first constructed a provincial sample pool through sampling without replacement to address the potential selection bias. For each wave, denoted by year t , we used the social and economic data in year $t-1$ and then coded the province selected for the pilot pool as 1 and other provinces as 0. In the selection of the next wave of pilot provinces, the previously selected provinces were dropped from the selection pool. In other words, a province that had started to implement the pilot policy was not compared in the next round of pilot selection.

We then conducted an event history analysis (EHA) of the significant variables while satisfying the requirement of the variance inflation factor test to measure the imbalance between the selected and unselected provinces. The results are shown in Table 11. Both the time discrete result and the time series result indicated that the difference between selected and unselected provinces was insignificant in terms of economic performance, fiscal condition, demographic situation and the existing pension insurance system (column "*All samples*"). The three provinces in north-eastern China possess some specific features not found in the other provinces: a larger proportion of SOEs, a longer history of industrialization, more severe problem of outflow emigration and so on. Fortunately, these provinces were part of the first pilot wave and thus were not covered by the individual-level data in our study. Thus, we conducted an EHA test dropping on three provinces (columns "*2004-2009 samples*"). As shown by the result, the difference between the selected and unselected provinces in the second and third waves was greatly reduced. Thus, even if the provinces that participated in the pilot were not de facto in the random selection, they were still statistically representative.

Table 11. Balance check: Event History Analysis (EHA) of the provincial index

	Probit Regression		Treated	
			2004–2009 samples (excluding first wave of pilots before 2004)	
	Time- discrete	Time- series	Time- discrete	Time- series
Population growth rate	-0.094 (0.090)	-0.043 (0.112)	-0.049 (0.108)	0.050 (0.134)
Old-age dependency ratio (census data)	-0.225* (0.127)	-0.199 (0.126)	-0.134 (0.138)	-0.067 (0.138)
Urban retired employees participation in Pension insurance	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Urban retired employees participation in Pension insurance	0.009 (0.006)	0.010 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)
Log GDP per capita	0.609 (0.440)	0.900** (0.400)	0.343 (0.477)	0.814* (0.452)
Log Fiscal specific purpose revenue	0.479 (0.465)	0.780 (0.536)	0.151 (0.505)	0.562 (0.590)
Log Fiscal general budgetary revenue	-1.212 (1.117)	-1.508* (0.891)	-0.489 (1.133)	-1.035 (0.876)
Log Basic Pension Insurance Funds expenditure	0.636 (1.156)	0.729 (1.118)	0.216 (1.183)	0.649 (1.300)
Year Dummy		YES		YES
Observations	190	190	132	132

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Policy effects on locus of government responsibility

We present the DID regression results of the public's attitude to the LoR on pensions by using *Treat*, *Post* and the interaction between *Post* and *Treat* (Pilot effect) along with other control variables in Table 12. Clustered standard errors at the provincial level are reported in parentheses. The coefficient of the pilot effect (*Post* Treat*) shows a significant positive effect (0.126), which indicates that the policy in the treatment provinces after the pilot increased the public acknowledgement of individual responsibility on pension insurance. After controlling for province, year and individual demographic variables, the effect remains positive (0.091) but

insignificant. This mixed effect is partly addressed in the following section by discussing the propaganda effect.

As shown by the results in Table 12, the interaction between *Duration* and *Post* (Duration effect) has a significant and positive effect (0.073) on people’s LoR attitude after controlling for the demographic factors, provinces and year dummies. This result indicates that the people in the provinces who experienced longer pilot policy experimentation had higher levels of acceptance of individual responsibility on pension insurance. Thus, our Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Table 12. Policy effects on locus of government responsibility

	Treatment vs			Policy		
	Control			Duration		
Pilot effect (DID)	0.126** (0.060)	0.123* (0.068)	0.091 (0.068)			
Duration effect (DID)				0.085*** (0.020)	0.083*** (0.023)	0.073*** (0.023)
Demographic Controls		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Provincial Dummies			Yes			Yes
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,921	3,790	3,790	4,921	3,790	3,790
R-squared	0.025	0.069	0.148	0.027	0.071	0.150

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The table presents ordinary least square (OLS) results. Clustered standard errors at the provincial level are reported in parentheses. The estimates of treat, post, duration, demographic controls—which include age, age squared, gender, educational attainment, marital status, party membership, household income level and *bukou* status—are not reported. The estimates of constants, provincial dummies and year dummies are not reported either.

Mixed effects of policy experimentation and policy propaganda

As shown in Table 13, after controlling for the demographic features and province dummies, policy propaganda was shown to have a contrary effect on the public’s LoR conditioning in pilot situations. In other words, people affected by the pilot policy were likely to have a higher impression of governmental responsibility when exposed to stronger local official propaganda. The result from the decomposed subsample indicated that the “pulling back” function of the policy propaganda was significant for the target population, namely, the

enterprise employees (−0.161) and the public sector employees (−0.552) in urban areas. Meanwhile, the rural residents who had largely been alienated from the policy were weakly influenced by the propaganda, as shown by the slight increase in their confidence (0.018) on the omnipotent role of the government. Our Hypothesis 2 is thus supported. Along with the pilot policy, local governments’ official propaganda in defending the governmental image in welfare provision as well as the justification of joint responsibility to a certain extent attenuated people’s faith—especially that of the target population of enterprise employees—in the “glorious government”. In other words, official propaganda acted as a moderator for the treatment effect of the pilot scheme and kept the government from “losing face” (faith).

Table 13. Effect of pilot policy and policy propaganda on locus of government responsibility

	All samples	Urban samples	Rural samples	Enterprise employees (Target Population)	Public sector employees (urban)
Pilot effect (DID)	0.500*** (0.117)	0.557*** (0.168)	0.379** (0.176)	0.523 (0.339)	2.245*** (0.722)
Pilot effect × Policy propaganda (DDD)	-0.105*** (0.029)	-0.184*** (0.041)	0.018 (0.043)	-0.161** (0.080)	-0.552*** (0.197)
Policy propaganda	0.017*** (0.006)	0.045*** (0.008)	-0.021** (0.009)	0.038*** (0.012)	0.029 (0.024)
Policy propaganda × Pilot	-0.026* (0.014)	-0.066*** (0.018)	0.012 (0.021)	-0.082 (0.052)	0.142 (0.140)
Policy propaganda × Post	0.079*** (0.025)	0.139*** (0.036)	-0.009 (0.035)	0.123** (0.061)	0.261** (0.120)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,790	1,947	1,846	729	207
R-squared	0.156	0.164	0.149	0.191	0.260

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Concurrent effects on political trust

Short-term and long-term effects of combined statecraft

Despite the image construction of a “caring and accountable” government that may have effectively swayed public opinion in the short term, our presented case showed that the divergence between the propaganda images and the benefits derived by individuals from the pilot policy would probably result in political distrust in the long term. The results of the marginal effect of propaganda on the public’s political trust in the pilot provinces are shown in Table 14. The coefficient of the interaction between treatment and policy propaganda indicates that local official propaganda in pilot areas significantly increased the public’s trust in local governments by 0.286 ($=0.497-0.211$) and in provincial governments by 0.132 ($=0.298-0.166$) in the short term (1 year), according to Equation (5). The effect on the public’s trust in the central government (0.012) is not as significant as the effects on trust in the local and provincial governments. Meanwhile, in the long term (3 years), official propaganda significantly but negatively affected public’s trust in the local and provincial governments (-0.279 and -0.129 , respectively). The effect on the public’s trust in the central government (-0.012) was insignificant. The coefficients of accumulated policy propaganda for 5 years indicate a similar pattern: policy propaganda affected the public’s trust in local and provincial governments (-0.131 and -0.060 , respectively) in a significant and negative way, while the trust in the central government was very weak (-0.006). The effect on the central government was clearly not statistically evident, which is reasonable, considering that the statistically measured propaganda and the above discussion on pilot policy took place only at the provincial level. Therefore, our Hypothesis 3 was supported.

In this result, we also distinguished a confounding variable to capture the self-interest factor under the policy effect: number of older family members who needed to be taken care of (as shown in Table 14). The coefficients of this variable in the various models suggest that the direct self-interest factor has limited influence on the public’s political trust.

Table 14. Effect of pilot policy and policy propaganda on political trust

	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov
Pilot	-0.956*** (0.222)	-0.620*** (0.185)	-0.309** (0.124)	0.721 (0.627)	0.125 (0.514)	-0.269 (0.409)	-0.037 (0.482)	-0.308 (0.401)	-0.397 (0.299)
Policy propaganda (1 yr)	-0.211** (0.088)	-0.166** (0.075)	-0.088* (0.053)						
Pilot × Policy propaganda (1 yr)	0.497*** (0.150)	0.298** (0.124)	0.101 (0.096)						
Policy propaganda (3 yrs)				-0.053** (0.022)	-0.042** (0.019)	-0.022* (0.013)			
Pilot × Policy propaganda (3 yrs)				-0.226* (0.119)	-0.087 (0.096)	0.010 (0.077)			
Policy propaganda (5 yrs)							-0.069** (0.029)	-0.054** (0.024)	-0.029* (0.017)
Pilot × Policy propaganda (5 yrs)							-0.062 (0.062)	-0.006 (0.051)	0.023 (0.040)
Enterprise employee	0.051 (0.056)	-0.050 (0.051)	-0.112** (0.051)	0.051 (0.056)	-0.050 (0.051)	-0.112** (0.051)	0.051 (0.056)	-0.050 (0.051)	-0.112** (0.051)
Public sector employee	0.038 (0.085)	-0.021 (0.079)	-0.086 (0.075)	0.038 (0.085)	-0.021 (0.079)	-0.086 (0.075)	0.038 (0.085)	-0.021 (0.079)	-0.086 (0.075)
#Old age people in the family	0.015 (0.017)	0.015 (0.014)	0.001 (0.015)	0.015 (0.017)	0.015 (0.014)	0.001 (0.015)	0.015 (0.017)	0.015 (0.014)	0.001 (0.015)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,549	1,529	1,555	1,549	1,529	1,555	1,549	1,529	1,555
R-squared	0.076	0.099	0.106	0.076	0.099	0.106	0.076	0.099	0.106

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table 15. Effect of policy duration and policy propaganda on political trust

	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov
Pilot Duration	-0.319*** (0.074)	-0.207*** (0.062)	-0.103** (0.041)	0.240 (0.209)	0.042 (0.171)	-0.090 (0.136)	-0.012 (0.161)	-0.103 (0.134)	-0.132 (0.100)
Policy propaganda (1 yr)	-0.211** (0.088)	-0.166** (0.075)	-0.088* (0.053)						
Duration × Policy propaganda (1 yr)	0.166*** (0.050)	0.099** (0.041)	0.034 (0.032)						
Policy propaganda (3 yrs)				-0.053** (0.022)	-0.042** (0.019)	-0.022* (0.013)			
Duration × Policy propaganda (3 yrs)				-0.075* (0.040)	-0.029 (0.032)	0.003 (0.026)			
Policy propaganda (5 yrs)							-0.069** (0.029)	-0.054** (0.024)	-0.029* (0.017)
Duration × Policy propaganda (5 yrs)							-0.021 (0.021)	-0.002 (0.017)	0.008 (0.013)
Enterprise employee	0.056 (0.056)	-0.048 (0.051)	-0.112** (0.051)	0.056 (0.056)	-0.048 (0.051)	-0.112** (0.051)	0.056 (0.056)	-0.048 (0.051)	-0.112** (0.051)
Public sector employee	0.044 (0.085)	-0.018 (0.079)	-0.085 (0.075)	0.044 (0.085)	-0.018 (0.079)	-0.085 (0.075)	0.044 (0.085)	-0.018 (0.079)	-0.085 (0.075)
#Old age people in the family	0.019 (0.017)	0.017 (0.015)	0.001 (0.015)	0.019 (0.017)	0.017 (0.015)	0.001 (0.015)	0.019 (0.017)	0.017 (0.015)	0.001 (0.015)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,549	1,529	1,555	1,549	1,529	1,555	1,549	1,529	1,555
R-squared	0.076	0.099	0.106	0.076	0.099	0.106	0.076	0.099	0.106

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

A logical concern over the difference between the short-term and long-term effects of propaganda on political trust may arise if we consider the different waves of policy implementation in the treatment provinces. Therefore, we added another test to show how the effects of propaganda varied in the different waves (as shown in Table 15). We replaced *Pilot* with *Duration* in Equation (4). The marginal effect of propaganda on the individuals exposed to the pilot policy for different years is calculated with $\beta_2 + \beta_3 \text{Duration}_i$.

The results, which are consistent with those in Table 14, further validate our hypothesis on the effect of incremental experimentation. For individuals in the treatment provinces that started their pilot policy in 2008, the duration of experience of the reform is 1 year. Therefore, the estimation of the effect of the 1-year propaganda on the public's trust in the 2008 wave of pilot provinces is -0.045 ($=-0.211+0.166 \times 1$). Individuals in these provinces in the 2006 wave of policy experimentation with a 3-year pilot exposure show significant and positive change in their trust on the local government by 0.287 ($=-0.211+0.166 \times 3$), different from the weak negative effect on the ones under the intensity of 1-year official propaganda. For provincial governments, the pattern is similar: short-term official propaganda shows a weak and negative effect (-0.067) for individuals who reside in provinces with a short exposure to the policy, whereas the effect is positive (0.131) for individuals who reside in provinces with a long exposure of the policy. If we accumulate the propaganda effect for the longer terms (e.g., 3 and 5 years), then the negative effect on local and provincial governments becomes extremely high as the exposure to the pilot policy lengthens. As shown in Table 14 and Table 15, which both use 2009 survey data, the long-term decline of the public's political trust is a result of propaganda and of the disjunction of policy from propaganda, rather than the policy itself. Therefore, we can exclude the alternative explanation that the possibility of policy failure caused the long-term distrust we observed.

The idea of official propaganda, no matter whether it is called “social construction”, “frames” or “discourse”, does have a risk of failure. In many cases, unsuccessful alterations of either the image of the target population or the discourse of the policy agenda may lead to a failure of to promote the policy. In our case of a pension pilot for enterprise employees in the early 2000s, the key problem, as I reiterate many times above, is the “mismatch” between the promoted pilot policy content and the local government's official discourse. Such mismatching partially results from the discourse dependency of the communist state-owned media; it also comes from local governments' efforts to maintain the general face (faith) of the “state” before its population. The “mismatch” can be captured by the public in a longer period, such as three or five years and it diminishes their political trust.

Short-term and long-term propaganda effects on the directly targeted group

In addition to the main results, we also exploited the design of the pilot policy to explore the marginal effect of propaganda on the policy's target population. We conducted regression modelling of the official propaganda on political trust with the urban samples (see Table 16) and we focused on the targeted group of the policy reform, namely, the enterprise employees in the piloted provinces. Columns 1 to 3 show the short-term effect of the propaganda on urban residents and its marginal effect on enterprise employees, while columns 4 to 6 present the comparable effect of propaganda over the long term. The outcome for the policy's target population was identical to our hypothesis, in which local official propaganda has incremental effects on political trust in the short term and has reductive effects on the public's confidence in the long term. In particular, short-term propaganda significantly increases the target population's trust in local governments by 0.365 (=0.368–0.003) and on provincial governments by 0.267 (=0.272–0.005). The effect on the target population's trust in the central government (0.015=0.017–0.002) was positive but insignificant. Long-term propaganda, measured as either accumulated over 3 years or 5 years, led to a significant loss of public trust in local and provincial governments among the target population. In particular, the 3 to 5 years of official propaganda exposure diminished the enterprise employees' trust in the local government (from 0.293 to 0.562) and the provincial government (from 0.216 to 0.399). The results show that, with long periods of local official propaganda, the target population's political trust in local and provincial governments regarding the pension pilot policy consistently declined, reversing from positive to negative. In general, we may conclude that the negative effect of long-term local official propaganda on local regime support does not vary among different social groups.

Table 16. Short-term and long-term propaganda effects on directly targeted group in piloted provinces

	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov	Local Gov	Province Gov	Central Gov
Enterprise employee	0.056 (0.097)	-0.008 (0.092)	-0.070 (0.095)	0.044 (0.121)	-0.092 (0.124)	-0.134 (0.130)	0.100 (0.142)	-0.076 (0.144)	-0.107 (0.151)
Policy propaganda (1 yr)	0.368*** (0.122)	0.272** (0.112)	0.017 (0.107)						
Enterprise employee × Policy propaganda (1 yr)	-0.003 (0.011)	-0.005 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.010)						
Policy propaganda (3 yrs)				-0.292*** (0.097)	-0.211** (0.088)	-0.009 (0.085)			
Enterprise employee × Policy propaganda (3 yrs)				-0.001 (0.010)	0.005 (0.010)	0.005 (0.010)			
Policy propaganda (5 yrs)							-0.556*** (0.185)	-0.403** (0.168)	-0.020 (0.161)
Enterprise employee × Policy propaganda (5 yrs)							-0.006 (0.011)	0.004 (0.012)	0.002 (0.012)
#Old age people in the family	0.068*** (0.022)	0.077*** (0.020)	0.037* (0.021)	0.068*** (0.022)	0.076*** (0.020)	0.037* (0.021)	0.069*** (0.022)	0.077*** (0.020)	0.037* (0.021)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	729	711	733	729	711	733	729	711	733
R-squared	0.088	0.111	0.099	0.088	0.111	0.100	0.088	0.111	0.099

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Robustness test

Considering that all the models in the previous discussions are OLS regression estimations, we reran the empirical models with the ordered logit model for robustness testing. Table 17 below shows that the above results for the pilot policy effect were robust.

Table 17. Robustness test with Order logit model

Locus of Responsibility (Ordered Logit)			
Pilot effect (DID)	0.202 (0.126)		0.943*** (0.218)
Duration effect (DID)		0.146*** (0.042)	
Policy propaganda			0.034*** (0.011)
Policy propaganda × Pilot			-0.059** (0.026)
Policy propaganda × Post			0.156*** (0.044)
Pilot effect × Policy propaganda (DDD)			-0.195*** (0.054)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,790	3,790	3,790

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

In addition, we conducted tests by using multilevel models that allowed cross-province random intercepts, with results that were consistent with our main models. The model was constructed as follows:

$$LR_{itj} = \alpha_{0itj} + \beta_1 Treat_{ij} + \beta_2 Post_{tj} + \beta_3 Treat_{ij}Post_{tj} + \sum \beta_4 X_{itj} \quad (6),$$

where $\alpha_{0itj} = \alpha_0 + \gamma_{0tj} + \varepsilon_{itj}$.

The multilevel model results are shown in Table 18: the direction and significance of main coefficients (such as the DID effect and DDD effect) did not change from those of our main models in Table 12 and Table 13.

Table 18. Robustness test with multilevel model (Random intercept at Provincial level)

Locus of Responsibility (Multilevel Logit)			
Pilot effect (DID)	0.089 (0.069)		0.466*** (0.116)
Duration effect (DID)		0.072*** (0.024)	
Policy propaganda			0.010** (0.005)
Policy propaganda ×Pilot			-0.018 (0.013)
Policy propaganda ×Post			0.056*** (0.020)
Pilot effect × Policy propaganda (DDD)			-0.084*** (0.026)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,790	3,790	3,790

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

We also conducted a test to identify intergenerational difference by adding retirement as a third dimension along with the cross-time and cross-province difference by using our data on the urban samples. As shown by the robustness test results in Table 19, individuals who were retired at the time of the survey would have preferred the government to have taken more responsibility, but they did not show significantly different attitudinal change in terms of experiencing the pilot policy.

Table 19. Robustness test with intergenerational difference

	Locus of Responsibility			
	OLS	Ologit	OLS	Ologit
Retired	-0.672*** (0.129)	-1.304*** (0.281)	-0.726*** (0.127)	-1.425*** (0.277)
Pilot effect (DID)	-0.071 (0.117)	-0.119 (0.243)		
Retired×Post	0.401** (0.197)	0.764* (0.424)	0.625*** (0.194)	1.215*** (0.418)
Retired×Treat	0.432*** (0.154)	0.797** (0.337)		
Retired×Pilot effect (DDD)	0.060 (0.236)	0.142 (0.501)		
Retired×Duration			0.183*** (0.051)	0.348*** (0.113)
Duration effect			0.077** (0.039)	0.162** (0.081)
Retired×Duration effect (DDD)			-0.106 (0.078)	-0.204 (0.166)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,560	1,560	1,560	1,560
R-squared	0.163		0.165	
Pseudo R2		0.0636		0.0643

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Finally, we tested the baseline models by adding other confounding variables, such as the expectation of upward mobility and whether the respondents were or were not receiving their pension insurance at the time of the survey. It may be argued that individuals with higher expectation of upward mobility are more aware of individual responsibility. However, after controlling for these variables in the models, the effect of the pilot policy and policy propaganda that we proposed and examined in the empirical section did not change, as shown in the following table, Table 20.

Table 20. Robustness test with other confounding variables

	Locus of Responsibility					
Pilot effect (DID)	0.049 (0.069)		0.413*** (0.120)	0.101 (0.067)		0.504*** (0.117)
Duration effect (DID)		0.064*** (0.023)			0.079*** (0.023)	
Policy propaganda			0.017*** (0.006)			0.017*** (0.006)
Policy propaganda × Pilot			-0.027* (0.015)			-0.026* (0.014)
Policy propaganda × Pilot			0.077*** (0.024)			0.079*** (0.023)
Pilot effect × Policy propaganda (DDD)			-0.098*** (0.030)			-0.105*** (0.029)
Expectation of upward mobility	0.095*** (0.018)	0.096*** (0.018)	0.094*** (0.018)			
W/O pension insurance				-0.250*** (0.042)	-0.254*** (0.042)	-0.248*** (0.042)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,580	3,580	3,580	3,790	3,790	3,790
R-squared	0.157	0.158	0.163	0.156	0.158	0.163

Note: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Conclusion

A government always needs to make the greatest possible effort to promote a potentially controversial policy, especially during a time of socio-economic transition. After the “socialization” period, the welfare reform in China entering the 2010s exhibited substantial diversity in policy design under the increasing pressure from the people over the social justice of redistribution and the sustainability of the welfare system. The government has been proposing reforms such as postponing the retirement age, integrating the rural and urban pension schemes and allowing the social security fund to be listed. However, the steady progress of these follow-up adjustments relies on a consensus over the sharing of welfare responsibility between the state and individuals. Our study takes advantage of a crucial period of transition from a state socialist welfare model and examines the strategies used by the Chinese government to promote the

shared welfare responsibility and convince the public that the reform was in the country's interest. The responsibility reallocation process or the "socialization of social welfare" in China is similar to the hybrid welfare reform in Western Europe, in which the traditional welfare state model has transformed into the residual welfare state model. China's welfare reform also resembles the privatization trend in other transitional socialist countries, in which the previous socialist welfare model was replaced by a mixed welfare model that integrates more freedom and more responsibilities for individuals. The common risk during all these transitions is the problem of public consensus that may not accord with the politicians' reform design. Therefore, strategies such as social construction are adopted by the governments to promote new policies.

Our findings show that China's pension reform for urban enterprise employees is a combined tactic of policy experimentation and official propaganda. However, although the socialization of welfare provision can relieve the government of its responsibility, the transition may also reduce the public's confidence on government capacity and accountability. Therefore, the central government has designed the policy experimentation for the pension reform, which served as a dialogue mechanism between the state and the public for reaching social consensus on a welfare system with hybrid contributors. Accordingly, local governments have employed official propaganda to socially construct and persuade the public with an omnipotent image of the government as a way of maintaining the public's faith on regime capacity.

The empirical results based on two rounds of survey data and local propaganda data show that the pilot policy decreases the public's perception of governmental responsibility on elderly welfare in general. Moreover, the longer the individuals have experienced the pilot policy, the greater they present attitudinal change. Along with the pilot policy, official propaganda has been employed by local governments to maintain the government's image amid welfare provision, but the justification of shared responsibility has reduced the public's faith on the omnipotent role of the government to a certain extent. Moreover, the disjunction of policy propaganda and policy experimentation seems to have been recognized by the public and this phenomenon has led to the decrease in the perceived credibility of the governments in the long term.

The analysis presented in this chapter aligns with those in many studies focusing on the transitional role of governments in providing social welfare and the effect of welfare-related policies on the public. The government's approach for promoting social policy changes and constructing public consensus may include a series of tactics. For instance, China's policy experimentation and propaganda have both been useful at the onset. However, the political

attitude of the public in general have later been influenced by the mixed information arising from the various approaches and their support to the regime may change—or even reverse—unexpectedly in the long term. As I shown with the analytical model, the state tends to rely on tolerant statecraft to reduce the information asymmetry through knowledge construction and consensus building. Facing state’s well-designed statecraft, individual’s options are limited but not null. People are capable of identifying the potential inconsistency in policy details and the propaganda and the state (in a broad sense) “go back on one’s word” might lead to loss of public confidence. Therefore, in the following chapter, Chapter 5, I further unpack the state-individual power interaction from the perspective of individuals and address the possibilities of individuals’ counter-conduct.

Chapter 5 Truth or Dare: Falsification in Manufactured Compliance

This chapter is an empirical chapter which, from the perspective of the people addresses the overarching design in my dissertation—to explore the governmentality of authoritarian regimes in managing social order and legitimacy. In this chapter, I investigate the potential cognitional counter-conduct of the population in an authoritarian regime and ask what the possibility/existence of falsified compliance implies about the future of the regime. Although China is experiencing tremendous social and economic changes, the Chinese government as an authority reports considerable public endorsement from all kinds of survey results, which all suggest people’s praise of the current authority together with a strong sense of belonging and solidarity. In earlier chapters, I have shown that the government uses many tactics to manufacture public consent and minimize the possibility of challenge from the governed. However, people can reflect on the idea of the “state”, “politics” and the “state-individual relationship” in their interactions with governmental power. In other words, despite the well-designed statecraft of the government, **the risks for the authorities of falsified compliance/consent from the people are present.** These individual level reflections and (untold) second thoughts—or ideological rebellions—play an important role in shaping the long-term expectations and superficial compliance of the general people. Many studies have highlighted the constant collective actions from the bottom of the society in China which obviously contradict the orderly scene on the surface. My empirical work in Chapter 4 also showed that in the short term people may express contentment with a controversial policy, but in the long term there is a decline in political support as the real impact of the policy on their everyday lives fails to match the official propaganda. This situation makes China an interesting field for studying the possibilities of falsified compliance and its implications for state governmentality.

Falsification⁴³ in public compliance or consent usually describes the situation when people hide their true attitudes/preference. The population’s falsified compliance could reshape and even distort the social order and public knowledge. The falsification of political attitudes can be fundamentally dangerous for the authority because it may lead to an unexpected “cascade” (Kuran, 1991, 1997). My study in this chapter asks the following specific questions: is the

⁴³ The concept “falsification” here is used as a convenient word to describe the situation of people constructing their public images/attitudes/preferences, which may not be exactly the same as their private images/attitudes/preferences.

reported general and specific compliance of the public regarding political institutions/representations in China true or just falsification? What is the lowest bar of people's tolerance regarding governmental actions/reforms? If intentional construction of their public political attitudes exists in the population, what mechanism propels it? And finally, what are the implications of falsified political attitudes for individuals' actions and, more importantly, for the legitimacy of the state in the long run?

Due to the complexity of the research question, I combine observation, in-depth interviews to investigate the black box of the subjectively constructed public political attitudes of the people in an authoritarian regime. Face-to-face interviews capture the emotions and the choosing of a pause and time to react so as to uncover the unnatural situations of the interviewees. Interviews are also helpful in unpacking the complex and usually self-contradictory logics of individual choices. Survey experimental employs indirect and disguised questions to infer the potential falsification and mechanisms such as rewards, coercion, pluralist ignorance or something else. In the analysis, I construct arguments with empirical evidence from various sources of data, including past observational data that were collected informally. Moreover, this chapter will explore the power relationship between state and individual by highlighting ordinary people's subjectivity and its involution affected by the governmentality of the current authority.

Research rationale, conceptualization and context

Chapter 5 develops from the previous chapters (such as Chapters 3 and 4, which analyse statecraft and its effectiveness) and digs into the seemingly paradoxical situation that, on the one hand, the Chinese report high public consent regarding the authority, while on the other there is empirical evidence of discontent in private, and a lack of confidence in the claims of the official publicity, numerous collective activities and people "voting with their feet". Why and how do citizens disentangle the reported consent from private attitudes/choices? How do different mechanisms work for different social groups? I first define the concept and outline the context of falsified political attitudes in authoritarian countries such as China with evidence from existing studies.

What is a falsified attitude, socially and politically?

The idea of attitude falsification captures the situation when people are unwilling or unable to truthfully reveal their actual preferences (or attitudes) and intentionally (or unintentionally) construct preferences that can be publicly reported. The notion of "constructed attitudes" has its roots in social psychology studies and is sometimes used by the critics of social

surveys. It is also an idea frequently used when describing public political attitudes in authoritarian regimes, as either “falsified compliance” or “preference falsification”. Social science scholars have devoted considerable effort to identifying examples and mechanisms whereby people falsify their ideas. In everyday social interaction, people tend to convey specific information about themselves (which may not be true in private) to others, in order to influence the audience’s perceptions and judgments (Goffman, 1978). The motivation of self-performance or impression management is to either to match one’s own self-image or match audience expectations and preferences. In these practices, individuals can achieve high social value (which is also called “face”) or satisfaction with themselves. Social interaction therefore occurs when a person “... can be relied upon to maintain himself as an interactant, poised for communication and to act so that others do not endanger themselves by presenting themselves as interactants to him” (Goffman, 2017, p. 155). The capacity to present oneself in the way one wishes is in practice distributed very unequally across the population. It may be determined by their resources, experiences, personalities and so on. People’s intentions and actions in constructing social images not only change the way that they express themselves, but also exert a certain social pressure on others and change their behaviours (Bursztyn & Jensen, 2017). In spite of the fact that self-presentation itself is investigated by many scholars, the prevalence of impression management causes inevitable problems in social science studies and opinion polls before elections/referendums. Since empirical social science research relies heavily on interviews and surveys, individuals’ self-presentation can distort the results of empirical evidence. Researchers have identified many conditions involving the “social desirability bias”, such as the “interviewer effect” in interviews and the “pressure of social expectation” in social surveys (Edwards, 1957; Nederhof, 1985).

Research about the falsification of political preference peaked when the social scientist Tim Kuran proposed his theory explaining the unexpected revolutions in East European countries in the late 20th century. He defined falsification as the difference between people’s public preferences and private preferences; “preference falsification” occurs when an individual’s public preference diverges from the one that he holds in private (Kuran, 1991). Building on impression management, Kuran describes a situation when individuals have several public preferences on a given issue, each tailored for a particular audience. He presented a vivid example of a Soviet citizen admitting to “six faces” under communist repression: “one for my wife; one, less candid, for my children, just in case they blurted out things heard at home; one for close friends; one for acquaintances; one for colleagues at work; and one for public display.” (Kuran, 1997). These “faces” differ from each other in that the faces for his family could be very

private and sincere, while the ones worn for colleagues and the public could be disguised. There are some extreme examples (such as during the Maoist period in China) when everyone must perform in a politically correct way even in private, because close family members could turn people in for some casual word or action.

Performance, as opposed to spontaneity, and impression management are fairly common in societies of all kinds, where people are connected with others and receive rewards/punishment from “others”. These “others” may be other individuals, social groups, or certain institutions. For instance, people with unorthodox views may fear to reveal themselves in public due to the social pressure in their community; some candidates running for an election may buy off anyone who does not support them in the first place; the state apparatus can force dissenters to show compliance notwithstanding their strong discontent in private. What is fascinating for the social scientist is to investigate the interaction of powers beneath the norm-enhancement, support and compliance. Among the institutions and arenas that may generate falsification, the authoritarian states, which are generally recognized as intolerant, attract much attention.

Falsification in political attitudes: why it is important in authoritarian regimes and how

Public opinion or public support is one of the most important topics in the social sciences because it is crucial for political stability and even for the survival of the authority. Scholars are especially curious about changes of public opinion in authoritarian states, including the distribution of public opinion, directions of any changes and factors that shape the changes in these regimes. More importantly, observers are keen to see how far the state is perceived to be legitimate by the citizens. Even more intriguing are the events that scholars and the outside world find striking or unexpected, such as the fall of the Soviet Union and the communist authorities in East Europe—there was no clear sign of a revolution before the event (Kuran, 1991). Falsification of public opinion may be one of the main factors to blame. People “knew that to criticize their governments openly could derail their careers or land them in jail ... even in the absence of formal sanctions, there is the universal human desire for approval, which often prevents people from voicing minority opinions” (Frank, 1996, p. 115). In this way, the discontent of the public is disguised beneath the fake flourish of praise. When the time comes, private non-compliance may turn into collective public non-compliance.

The situation of political trust is similar in studies about falsification in China, although the fall of the state has not occurred. It is commonly agreed that the political trust reported from

survey data is very high. Tang's work (2016), along with many others, attributes the high political support to China's economic growth, the effective promotion of nationalism, the individual's external efficacy based on the government's responsiveness to public demand and the cultural tradition of conformity. However, it is also widely admitted in China studies that people in Chinese society do hesitate to report their discontent, especially when it concerns the political authority. Scholars who do not think that the political trust is reported truly believe that, as a typical communist and Asian regime, the high political support derives from people's fear of the authority, or from the patriarchal and hierarchical culture of the society and its politics (Fuchs, 2007; Rose, 2007; Rose, Mishler, & Munro, 2006).

Although the idea of constructing public attitudes and falsifying compliance has been broadly discussed and recognized by plenty of theoretical arguments—especially after Kuran's explication with models and cases—empirical studies that provide evidence of the “preference falsification” in authoritarian regimes are scarce. Currently, several published or working papers have been published. Jiang and Yang's paper in 2016 took advantage of the fall of one high-profile official in Shanghai, China and constructed a semi-natural experiment to examine which people would lie about their attitude to corruption and the government. Their result shows that the falsification was most intense among the groups that had access to alternative information but were vulnerable to political sanctions (Jiang & Yang, 2016). Frye and his colleagues used a list experiment to test Putin's political support among his people and found counter-intuitive evidence: the high approval of Putin in Russia was genuine (Frye, Gehlbach, Marquardt, & Reuter, 2017). Tang's work (Tang, 2016) used a similar design and found similar “true support” in China's case. Other empirical work includes Tannenbergs working paper manipulating the affiliation of the survey—government, or academic institute, or NGOs—to see whether or not people would falsify their answers (Tannenbergs, 2017); and Shen and Truex's working paper considers existing social surveys and compares the abnormal “no answer” replies to sensitive questions and to non-sensitive questions (Shen & Truex, 2018).

Theoretical discussion about possible mechanisms

Many factors that could exacerbate the falsification of ideas in general social interactions and in the context of authoritarian regimes. Falsification in public attitudes may stem from inner utility, external temptations or pressure. For instance, people may find it rewarding to falsify their opinion so as to follow the crowd; or find it frightening to reveal their true feelings in public. In some cases, people simply feel content or happy to present themselves with a certain

public image. Generally speaking, there are several recognized sources of falsification in public political attitudes.

The most obvious ones are the “reward” (or patronage resources, in many studies) and “punishment” associated with one’s reported preference (Magaloni, 2006; Wedeen, 2015). Reward is seen as a common tactic for the authority to exchange for loyalty and votes from the public (C. Lane, 1984; Lust-Okar, 2006; Pepinsky, 2007; Zhao, 2001). People who have fewer endowments and little bargaining power may be bought off more easily and then controlled by the authority (Blaydes, 2006). Sharing benefits can also silence people who may not be pleased with those in power. So long as they display compliance, they may still be entitled to the benefits of a member of the club. Punishment is another common factor that causes political attitudes to be falsified. People who voice their discontent and disloyalty may be punished by violence or must have their voices censored. Authoritarian governments find it easier to mobilize resources to buy loyalty and carry out punishment; people are thus more likely to disguise their true feelings/preferences lest they seem unacceptable or undesired by the authority.

Some indirect sources are also identified in explaining the falsification in public opinion. For instance, individuals may overestimate or underestimate the conditions of public opinion, which is sometimes termed “pluralistic ignorance”. For example, some members of the public could reject certain norms in private, but mistakenly assume that most others accepted them (J. O’Gorman, 1986; Noelle-Neumann, 1993). A lab experiment in social psychology (Asch & Guetzkow, 1951) shows that individuals tend to obey a false consensual judgment rather than risk being isolated as deviants. Centola and his colleagues (Centola, Willer, & Macy, 2005), using a computational simulation, carefully discussed the equilibrium in pluralistic ignorance, whereby few people would actually enforce a norm, but no one realizes this. They found that if agents’ horizons are limited to their immediate neighbours, highly unpopular norms can be enforced by both true believers and non-believers. Another explanation for possible (ignorant) falsification in public attitudes is the effect of socialization and education. For example, students in high school may present a politically correct opinion for questions about politics, simply because they know the “right” answer and have not reflected on it. These two indirect sources are more or less unconscious falsifications compare to the falsification brought by rewards and punishments. However, they may still be useful for the authority and manipulated by state power through information segregation and educational cultivation.

Involution of political attitudes in the Chinese population

When the state acts as a central source of power, both “totalizing” and “individualizing” power (Foucault, 2009), a phenomenon in Chinese political attitudes in line with the effective governmentality can be identified: the involution of people’s political attitude. The concept of “involution” was originally used by Clifford Geertz to describe the process in Java where agriculture appeared to intensify rather than change under the external economic pressure from the Dutch rulers and the internal population (Geertz, 1963). Later on, the concept was borrowed by Philip Huang to describe the rice economy of the Yangzi Delta, which he argued was locked in a pattern of “involutionary growth” with little or no improvement in per capita output and living standards and a pattern of declining labour productivity (Philip C Huang, 1990). Another school stretched the concept “involution” to apply to state theory, for example, Prasenjit Duara (1987), who took China’s example in the early 20th century and introduced “state involution” as an imperfect state-making process wherein the formal structures of the state grow simultaneously with the informal structures.

Entering the 1990s, the concept of involution was widely used in social science writing on China to describe the phenomena of the social economy or cultural system getting into a state of “increase inertia”. Both external restrictions and internal factors are possible reasons for such involution. For instance, in explaining the operational logic of the state-owned enterprises, Li and Zhang argued in their work (1999) that the SOEs followed two contradicting objectives: optimizing the efficiency of the enterprise while maximizing the welfare of the employees. The two objectives dragged the SOEs in the direction of functional involution and staffing intensification and led to the standstill of enterprises. Some other works have addressed the involution of dictatorship, the involution of “Guanxi” (social connections) and, the involution of social class in Chinese society. Generally speaking, it can be used to refer to all kinds of communities or situations where transformation fails and the inner complexities proliferate without new inputs.

I introduce the notion of “involution” here to capture the increasingly obvious trend in Chinese political attitudes. In a situation where the state as a central source of power, the state can construct the knowledge (political or social) in whatever form is most suited to maintaining its power. Individuals who have limited access to alternative explanations of social facts are less likely to interpret the environment in a different way. In the long term, even when citizens are provided with a new possibility, they are not capable of accepting a different version of the story, or reaching out on their own initiative (as shown in Y. Chen & Yang, 2019). To be sure, social

knowledge is still increasing in the society; thanks to the diversity of the population, the historical trend that keeps moving forward. However, it increases without questioning past or current stories, and therefore is leading to an involution of the population's "hard knowledge" (Kuran, 1997). In the following section, I demonstrate with more substantive evidence the "involution" process as regards social knowledge and public opinions.

Is there any chance of breaking the cycle? As noted in the literature review, a Foucauldian understanding of counter-conduct can be found in all kinds of power relation: struggles against exploitation, domination and subjection. Among them, the struggle against subjection has these days become more and more important. Individuals need to make an effort to break out of the subjectification imposed by the state through the process of self-formation and self-understanding. In this research, my exploration of the individual's subjectivity rebellion against the involution of political attitude in authoritarian regimes begins with two different but overlapping approaches: either through falsified compliance (intentionally or non-intentionally) or through active reflection on subjectivity, power and the current state-individual relationship. Of these two approaches, reflection is more difficult to achieve, but more meaningful in breaking the "involution" of public/private knowledge.

Research design and testable hypotheses

Rationale of the research design

In this research, I take falsified compliance in authoritarian regimes as the hidden discontent with and disdain for the authorities in people's voiced consent. Compliance includes political trust of the government and the incumbent leader, acceptance regards political uncertainties during the reform, approval of the official propaganda and so on. It is not easy to find people's real attitudes, especially in answers to questions that may be quite sensitive. Therefore, I planned to use a combination of observation, interviewing and a survey experiment to address this problem.

Observational data are valuable for painting a preliminary picture of the population. Combining with the relevant literature, they are also important for researchers constructing basic assumptions and hypotheses. After living in China for more than 20 years, I had the good opportunity of four years of post-graduate life in London to ruminate on everyday observations of Chinese political attitudes from my past life and to reflect on the subjectivity of ordinary people. In addition, I actively participated in the social life of Beijing during my fieldwork from September to December 2018. I keep track of changes in public opinion through the Chinese

social media and make notes on important texts accordingly as evidence to reflect on. Observational evidence provided a solid foundation for my follow-up research design and data collection; it also worked as a useful source of cross-validating references in my final analysis.

Face-to-face interviewing is a useful tool that allows researchers to observe the interviewees' reactions and add tailored follow-up questions (Seidman, 2006). The emotions, the choice and length of pauses and reactions during an interview are good pointers to the unnatural situation of an interviewee. Moreover, qualitative evidence combined with existing theories helps me narrow down the hypotheses that can be further tested by a survey. Therefore, before devising the explicit content of the survey questionnaire, I conducted 10 face-to-face in-depth interviews with 4 male and 6 female interviewees from various backgrounds. Their ages ranged from the early 20s to the late 60s, and their occupations covered government officials, retired enterprise employees, public institutional employees, private sector employees, unemployed young people, students at school, and so on. 5 of the interviewees were recruited through my own social network (such as a friend of my parents, a remote relative, the parent of a college friend, who might have willingness to reveal their true attitudes to me), while the other 5 were recruited through a local community in collaboration with the Tianjin Social Science Research Institute. Each interview lasted at least one hour, rising sometimes to 5 hours, depending on the situation. To help them relax and feel secure in talking about politics, all the interviewees were informed in advance that the whole conversation would not be recorded and notes would not be taken during the interviews⁴⁴ (with permissions to use the content of our dialogue in the dissertation).

The pre-survey interviews focused on the interviewees' experiences, ideological changes and the politics in their daily lives. We discussed such topics as how they perceived the current political situation, the past 40 years of transformation (reform) and the future possibilities of the society; their view of a desirable state-individual relationship; whether they believed the rhetoric and discourses promoted by the authority; what they thought about the potential challenges of the state. In some conversations, I asked directly about falsified public attitudes in general and their opinion of falsification. In addition to these in-depth interviews, during the fieldwork period I discussed the above topics with more than 15 social scientists from various academic institutions in China in private talks, workshop panel discussions and so on. These materials provided me with primary evidence of the falsification in public political attitudes. Combining

⁴⁴ Thus, the quotations from the interviews that are analysed are not exactly what the interviewees said, but my memories of it, noted after the interviews and translated for inclusion here.

them with the existing theories and the research questions underlying my whole dissertation, I narrowed down some hypotheses, which were designed to be tested with a survey experiment.

The survey experiment was a convenient complement for answering my research questions, because face-to-face interviews can never be anonymous. They may put interviewees under pressure and cause an interviewer expectation effect that distorts the evidence. It is difficult, too, with snowball-sampled interviews to identify an average treatment effect of sensitive items in general. Therefore, I designed a small-scale online survey and used indirect questions to figure out the sort of falsification in political attitudes that might be shown. I describe the survey design (and the respective modification in data collection) more fully in the section on the data generation process.

Testable hypotheses and structured research questions

Heterogeneity of falsified consent

Constructed on the basis of the pre-survey interviews and relevant studies, the first set of hypotheses relates to the existence and different types of falsification of political consent. It has been constantly argued in both theoretical and empirical works that general (or diffuse) political support is substantially different from specific political support since Easton's work on the multi-dimensions of this concept (Easton, 1965, 1975). People may show different levels of compliance regarding different branches of the current political institutions, may have specific complaints regarding certain polities and may even have special expectations of certain politicians. Thus, my investigation of the heterogeneity of falsification in people's political support starts from the varied features related to politics.

The political support for the state's institutions already has considerable variations inside. In the interviews, many of my interviewees had a sense of "*the state is good and sincere (to its people), (it's) just local authorities twisting the policies and instructions.*" The **state** here is more than central government; it's also an abstract idea of the grand governors who rank above local officers. The idea of the "state" for ordinary Chinese people is a vague concept that mixes the notion of country, nation, government and sometimes even the Communist Party. Chinese people in general never seem to fear the expansion of the state—as long as they can get benefit and convenience from the expansion (Xiang, 2010). In this sense, the state-individual relationship reveals some duplicity: on the one side, the "state" as an abstract image is moralized and is given legitimacy by its nature in good faith; on the other side, the public is highly suspicious about the specific actions of state institutions: the interaction between individuals and the branches of

government/officials heavily relies on the exchange of benefits. With such duplicity in mind, it is easy to explain the hierarchical political trust (T. Shi, 2001), as well as the rule consciousness in China's contentious politics (L. Li, 2010): people trust the central government more than the local government and would blame the local government for "not following directions from the centre"; and when people perceive "injustice" from local government, they tend to appeal for "just and right" supervision from a higher authority. Examples of treating local officials/government as scapegoats when a policy fails, but respectfully addressing the top leader as "Chairman Xi", are not uncommon in my interviews, either.

To better understand the complexity of political support revealed in my interviews and the theoretical arguments, I first hypothesise about the potential differentiation of falsified compliance directed at the various types of state representative: the local authority, the central government, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the incumbent president Xi Jinping as top leader. The public's criticism of these state representatives differs in the freedom of discourse: the lower in the hierarchy, the less controlled the speech is. Thus, the deficiencies of local government furnish the least sensitive context. My first hypothesis is about the heterogeneity of falsification of political support: people falsify their compliance regarding the central government, the party and the top leader; but will reveal their true discontent regarding local authorities. The objects that I use to test the varieties of compliance include a multilevel measurement. The first—**attitudinal**—level covers questions about whether the respondents would agree with various statements (which might not be 100% true) about social conditions under the promotion (endorsement) of different state representatives.; for example, "under the lead of CCP, education brings a higher possibility of social mobility", or "under the lead of the central government, the dual track social pension system⁴⁵ has been largely reduced". The second—**cost**—level refers to the individual level of the cost people are willing to bear at the request of different state representatives. Here I distinguish two kinds of cost: the cost of common goods (taxes imposed on individual goods to protect the environment) and the cost of national requests (income/consumption degradation to help China win in the trade war with the US). The underlying rationale here is that people are more willing to express their true feelings in response to questions that are less sensitive to them.

As indicated in the duality theory of the state, Chinese people are quite capable of disentangling the policies from the policy makers. For them, a policy is acceptable as long as it does not hurt their own interests too much. In many cases, people take their chance in the policy

⁴⁵ The different return rates of pensions for government employees and enterprise employees. I elaborate this situation in detail in Chapter 3, above.

reform and bargain with the government (without fundamentally questioning the legitimacy of the policy makers) to gain more benefits. There are many cases of controversial policies which the interviewees criticised in our conversations, but very few of them would directly blame the incumbent central authority. When it came to specific policies, such as the property tax, education reform and health care policies, some interviewees would open with, *“I am not saying there is anything wrong with it, just some things I think the policy could improve in a little bit”* or *“The state may have an overarching design and I believe it’s a good policy, but there may be some local officials who distort it when they put it into action”*. For instance, with regard to the education policy of “lifting the student’s burden”, young parents complained that this leads to the problem of shifting the burden of educating children from the schools to the parents. Since the primary schools are reducing the school hours and the size of the curriculum, parents have to register their children in private education institutions after school. When I probed their complaints, however some of them identified the discontinuity and arbitrariness of the policy to a certain extent. Therefore, we may suppose that the degree of falsification is not significant for specific policies even when the policy is controversial.

The logic of people’s attitudes to the official propaganda is not one-way, either. On the one hand, they are easily guided by the propaganda content, as I show in Chapters 3 and 4. On the other, I also discovered that people could identify the disjunction between official propaganda and the policy content and this disjunction sooner or later led to a loss of political trust. Existing studies suggest that the Chinese public is aware of pro-regime bias from official mouthpieces, but still trust these outlets more than other sources (Truex, 2016). It is possible that the public prefers the official reports to commercial/foreign news sources, while also be able to admit that their preferences are swayed by the propaganda. In other words, people may recognize that the official propaganda only says “good words” about the government and never says “bad words”, but still believe that these words are “real” and “trustworthy”. This is consistent with the model shown in Kamenica & Gentzkow’s work: that the degree to which citizens are persuaded by a positive media report is negatively related to the degree of media bias (Kamenica & Gentzkow, 2011). To further explore the “cognitional duality” regarding official propaganda, I extended my exploration falsified compliance to a third subsection: people’s attitudes to the legitimacy of official news. To be more specific, I wanted to know whether people could identify the element of indoctrination in official propaganda and why they liked biased official news better than other news. The related hypothesis is that, people do not falsify their acknowledgement of the social constructive nature of official propaganda. Moreover, people may be aware of the potential discontinuity in public discourse.

Identifying potential mechanisms⁴⁶

Apart from the existence of falsification, I also interested in the mechanisms that could induce falsification in reported public attitudes. As I explained in the theoretical discussion, people may choose to falsify their true political attitudes because they are aware of the potential rewards of displaying loyalty in public, or because they are afraid of potential punishment of showing discontent, or they mistakenly perceive the general public hold a certain “common” viewpoint. In line with the model of statecraft that been used to generate compliance in chapter 1, the state would prefer to manufacture true consent and avoid false falsification bring by the fear. For individuals, I hypothesis the following relationship between the effect of punishment and rewards on displayed compliance: punishment, rather than reward indicates a higher degree of falsification.

During the interviews, one factor that is not highlighted in the existing explanations is the low political efficacy people have when talking about the reason for not telling the truth or fighting for their own rights. “*There won’t be anything changed even if I speak up*”; “*It’s just not my turn to discuss about (these political issues)*”. This maybe because of the citizens are not confident with the responsiveness of the government, or they are not confident in their own ability of making a difference, or both. To identify the role of political efficacy, one hypothesis I propose to test in the survey regarding the mechanism behind the falsification is: low political efficacy might relate to a high degree of falsification.

Heterogeneity among social groups

In addition to the general scenario of falsification and the average effect of stimulation (such as the rewards of showing loyalty, or the punishments for non-compliance) on the population as a whole, people with distinctive endowments may have different degrees of falsification and various degrees of elasticity regarding the spectrum of stimulation. I show in Chapter 3 that the government is prepared to differentiate the benefit allocation and construct specific knowledge for people of high or low political status. Political status and age group determine “what pension benefits people get”, as well as “what policies/propaganda/education they receive (experience)”. Consequently the cost of expressing oneself truthfully varies and the motivation to construct a public face varies a great deal. Exploring the heterogeneity of falsification among different social groups was valuable for unpacking the varied degrees of falsification in people’s political attitudes.

⁴⁶ An inference design based on survey experiment is not feasible with qualitative data; therefore, in this research I focused only on the details of possible reasons, rather than making causal inferences as shown in the hypotheses.

Jiang and Yang's work (Jiang & Yang, 2016) also touched upon unequally distributed falsification of the attitude to corruption in different social groups. Falsification was most intense among the groups that had access to alternative information but were vulnerable to political sanctions. Shen and Truex (2018) in their working paper also showed that, when they measured the falsification with an unusual inflation of "Don't know" and "No Answer" responses to sensitive questions in cross-sectional surveys, self-censorship was more prevalent among older cohorts (who voiced extremely high levels of support for the regime), women, ethnic minorities, non-Party members and members of the working class. The evidence of these writers, for its part, suggests that people who are marginalized in the society are more likely to falsify their political attitudes with "Don't know" and "No Answer" response.

I highlighted the first category of heterogeneity among social groups by saying that People who are closer to the power system react more strongly (with a higher degree of falsification) to the possibility of punishment than people who are further from it. The logic is that people who are closer to the power system may enjoy more benefits and privilege, but they are also sensitive to the potential loss that they might suffer if they revealed their discontent and moved away from the "guided road". For instance, taking the most prestigious group, would an officer from the public sector be more prone to falsify his/her loyalty to the authority than a farmer? I asked one interviewee from the government sector why he didn't try to use his position inside the government machine to offer a suggestion to the decision makers when he found aspects of policy that were not feasible at the local level. He replied "... we are not like ordinary people who have nothing to lose by arguing with the government. We (government officials) all have to be very careful about picking out errors for the leaders. It's like skating on thin ice—one careless move could ruin everything" (No. 22).

Another characteristic that may determine people's ability to distinguish the problem in official propaganda and deliberately construct their public preferences is their educational level. People who are more educated are more likely to receive diverse sources of information ("alternative information", as Jiang & Yang (2016) call it) and are more likely to be critical about the current political, social and economic situation. Meanwhile, the education level may highly correlate to people's closeness with the power system, which makes them more likely to hide their discontent (if it exists). I propose the next hypothesis; people who are more educated are more likely to falsify compliance regarding nationalist requests from the authority. In addition to the feature of "distance from the power system" and "educational capacity" discussed above, some other heterogeneities may be decisive for people's reported compliance regarding authority and the state apparatus. For example, would a respondent who had been exposed to a socialist

education be less likely to falsify loyalty to the party? Would respondents who belong to a ethnic minority be more sensitive than other people to possible political sanctions? I investigate these questions in greater depth when I analyse the data. The final differentiation of social groups is age, or generational difference. People who have experienced more in the society are in general more likely to conceal their true discontent. Hence, the last hypothesis is, people who are younger are more less likely to falsify their discontent.

Data generation process

My original plan of collecting data includes a survey experiment. However it could not be distributed at the time due to a lack of funding and a sudden tightening up of policy regarding overseas surveys in China (affected by both the temporary international and the domestic situation) at the very late stage of my research. Therefore, I propose to answer the research question in this chapter solely with interview data (from the fieldwork period and supplementary remote interviews in June 2019) and observational data (mainly from the fieldwork period). The survey part (as described in detail in the appendix) will it is hoped, be distributed in the post-doctoral period. My back-up plan of additional semi-structured electronic interviews was conducted in a framework developed from the survey design. In this section, I briefly present the original design of the survey experiment and then introduce the data generation using supplementary interviews with close reference to the observational data and the experimental design of the survey. Since the experimental survey, which essentially relied on randomization, was different from the in-depth interviews that depended on careful probing, I paid special attention to the methodological challenges in remodelling the process of data generation and the associated changes I made in the analytical part.

Supplementary interviews and methodological modifications

Working as a backup plan for the unexpected interruption of research process, the 15 supplementary interviews were conducted in late May and June through the online social platform Wechat⁴⁷ (for interviewees who were located in China) and face-to-face interviews (for the few interviewees who were in London). In order to capture the heterogeneity of the population, I invited interviewees through snowball sampling from a diverse range of ages, genders, occupations, education levels, ethnicity and locations in China⁴⁸. Each interview lasted

⁴⁷ A Whatsapp-like App.

⁴⁸ A detailed table of interviewees' attributes is shown in the appendix.

1.5 to 2 hours. As in the pre-research interviews, the interviewees were informed in advance that the interview would not be recorded and would be anonymous.

The methodological difference between survey experiment and interview forces me to examine the proposed hypotheses in a different way. Rather than following the questionnaire's design of three blocks—"falsification, mechanism and potential actions", the interview questions were tailored for the interviewees according to their personal situations and instant reactions to specific questions. The questions were also continually modified according to the stream of interactions between them and me. Another methodological challenge was that imposing random treatment in interviews is impossible. Therefore, to better obtain true responses from the interviewees, I tried my best to build mutual trust with them, such as highlighting the personal connection, being honest about my background, and reassuring them of the research's ethical guarantee of anonymity.

My strategy of interviewing for falsified compliance and disguised discontent also took advantage of the changing political and social environment in the presidency of Xi Jinping's. The period of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao's administration was widely recognized as open in political power sharing and decentralized. During their administration from 2003 to 2013, much progress was made in social welfare reforms and social events often drove the institutional reform (e.g. (Kelly, 2006; Liu & Sun, 2016; K. Ngok, 2013). The abolition of the "temporary residence permit" regulation is an outstanding instance. It originated from the death of one migrant worker, but it later gathered widespread attention from the whole society and hastened the change of policy on migrants (Qiu & Wen, 2007). It was also the period when online social media platforms (such as Weibo, launched in 2009) and some non-official papers (such as the Southern Weekly) came to the forefront of the forces monitoring political power through publicity and reports (Stockmann, 2013; Tong & Lei, 2010).

Xi's administration, however, started with a vehement anti-corruption campaign, a recentralization of political power and a gradual tightening up of the societal space. Censorship on online content accelerated around late 2017 and 2018. Moreover, in early 2018, the 13th National People's Congress approved the abolition of the limited presidential term in the Constitution proposed by the CPC⁴⁹. Beginning in 2018 and intensifying in 2019, the US-China trade war is posing new challenges in domestic socio-economic situation. This "new normality" affects everyone's daily life, directly or indirectly. Many people have experienced or heard of the

⁴⁹ Xinhua Net, "CPC proposes change on Chinese president's term in Constitution", See http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-02/25/c_136998770.htm, [Accessed 2019-06-22].

“disappearance” or “explosion” of some personal social media accounts. Some government officials or civil servants are required to use a state-issued App called “STUDY (XI) STRONG COUNTRY” every day. All the changes can be seen by people from every background and will be assessed and compared with conditions in previous periods. Therefore, it is fascinating to make use of the theme of **transition** in objective scenarios and to, investigate the subjective perceptions of ordinary people.

In my interviews, I normally started with some casual talk about the worsening trade-war and invited the interviewees to evaluate its impact on their everyday lives. I asked how much they would feel like paying as a patriotic sacrifice if the state requested them to give something up in order to win the trade war. Further questions could then turn to the general social-economic situations in China in past year or two years and how it differed from previous years, with varied questions regarding controversial social policies (such as the education inequality brought by the Hukou system, or the patriotic slogans all over the streets), social issues (such as the perceived loss of space for public speech, or the accusations of teachers from students for their “inappropriate speech” in class), and institutional reforms (such as the lifting of term-limits for the top leader, or anti-corruption moves and the foundation of National Supervisory Commission). In addition to interviewees’ personal reactions, I also paid attention to public opinion and public knowledge as they perceived them.

The potential problem is that the collected interviews data are not distinctively “public” or “private” in the attitudes they represent. They are clearly not “public” since the interviews are all one-to-one conversations, so the interviewees can feel the intimacy of the dialogue and it’s possible for them to trust me as a friend. But nor are they purely “private,” in the sense that I as the interviewer was still counted as a semi-stranger, not in the inner circle for most of the interviewees. However, from a different perspective, this may have been useful for my analysis. By combining the interview data with observational data, I could actually construct a relatively smooth scale, which covered the observational data proper to a public space (online and offline), the interview data of the middle-distance interviewees and the observational data of very close friends/relatives.

It should also be highlighted that, due to the accessibility problem, the interview evidence mainly came from the group of people who are more educated and lived or living in major cities. Even though I tried my best to reach samples with distinctive attributes and backgrounds, the analysis in the following sections has NO intention to offer any general inferences about the whole population. The discussion all focused on interpreting the accessible data from the

interviews and observations, deciphering the rationale of certain choices at individual level and revealing the heterogeneity of political compliance across different social groups within the range of available data. To better present the structure in the analysis part that was changed by the methodological modification and data features, I drew up Figure 16 below to clarify:

		Institutional difference	Difference in compliance
Falsified Compliance	Legitimacy of Representatives of the State	Local Government	Agreements on social facts descriptions;
		Central Government	Attribution of controversial policies
	Legitimacy of Public Discourse	CCP	Controversial institutional reforms;
		Xi as the Top Leader	Pay for a nationalist request
		Official propaganda	
	Political knowledge		

Figure 16. Qualitative data collection on falsified compliance

Different faces of compliance: the words in shadow

In this section, I present the varied political compliance for different representatives of the state, deciphering the differentiated “distinctive faces” that people constructed and the words in shadow.

Local or central government: differentiated compliance

The differentiated niches of the different levels of government resulted in several observable phenomena of people’s political compliance. The first and most obvious one was that people tended to blame the local government for controversial policies while not questioning the ability and good faith of higher-ranking/central government. In other words, people generally do not avoid complaining or discussing controversial policies in public, but would be cautious over attribution. For instance, from late 2018 to early 2019, a new policy of “clearing and unifying the billboard format” was promoted in big cities and caused large-scale debates about the appropriateness of doing so. Many people argue that there is no need to keep the same format (e.g. font, size and background colour) for all the billboards in the street; it is unaesthetic and the government is too controlling. A propos of this controversial urban policy in an interview, one interviewee who works in Beijing said,

“Sometimes I feel like it is the local government that tries to do something excessive to take credit and seek rewards from the upper government or the central government ... The

‘unifying the billboard’ campaign was getting heated last winter. Our office building ... used to be able to control the light outside the building... last year, the local government informed us that we need to remove the original lights and install a new set of lights and follow the unified rule for on and off. We used to show the shape of a Christmas tree in the Christmas period, but now we can only follow the general instructions.” (No. 11)

Although intolerable for some, the policies relating to minor aspects of urban planning such as lighting and billboards seem no big deal to others. They can certainly tolerate the seemingly nonsensical regulations. Many people find it acceptable so long as the government can give explanations, even when a plan may affect local residents’ lives, such as the construction of a chemical plant, or changing the purchase constraints on the real estate market,

“The government has its own difficulties; we (the people in general) should try to give sympathetic consideration to the mountainous problems the government has to solve. If the government gives us reasons (for policies that seem controversial), we should understand and give full support and not trouble them” (No. 16)

Regarding the reason why a higher-ranking government, especially the central government, should be trusted more than the local government, some people reason by comparing the abilities of the officials.

“The appearance of weird/ strange policies is mostly like... the central government puts forward a certain project and the executive department and the local government are responsible for implementing it. However, the policies are very likely to be distorted or twisted in the process. The governance capacity of county level governments is very worrying; the local governmental officials do not possess enough knowledge and ability to capture the whole picture. But I think the cadres and leaders in upper government have higher education and merit, they can deal with the governance problems appropriately” (No. 9)

Although the topics of government, governance and the state are not absolutely taboo in people’s daily conversation, the sensitivity of various representations of the government is varied. As discussed in the section on hypotheses, the sensitivity of political issues relating to the government, party, top leader gets more significance in moving to the right side of the scale. People are less likely (either from will or ability) to publicly discuss issues relating to the top leader, especially after the accession of Xi. For instance, the official accounts of state newspapers would close the comment area (which is in grey and no one can leave a comment under the post) when they posted a weibo (a twitter-like social platform) concerning the top leader. For topics

related to the party or central government, the official account will show only certain select comments with a positive content.

The regulation of the party has become stricter since the large-scale anti-corruption campaign in late 2012. One former member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, two vice-chairmen of the military commission, one alleged successor in the 20th Party Congress and more than 200 provincial level officials are all in jail now due to this unexpectedly intense and protracted campaign. Following the anti-corruption campaign, the party regulations became more and more strict and now directly affect party members in many ways. One of my interviewees who works in a local government office talked about her personal experience and attitude:

“I read the news quite often, but mainly focus on the items which are closely related to my work and life. In everyday work, we basically have quite limited autonomy with regard to policies... we just follow the guidance from the upper government. In recent years, especially after Xi’s reign, the workload has got substantially larger, working overtime is just as common as your meals every day. ...I knew many cases of death by overwork [among] local government officials ... Everyone faces the heavy pressure of performance evaluation (by the upper government and the inspection group from central government) and strict regulation (of your behaviour). The inspection group from the central are just like the feudal prefectural governor (刺史, CI SHI) in the old days⁵⁰ ...I am aware that this is because of the start of the anti-corruption campaign and ideological education is very necessary inside the party. We currently have many ‘red education’ modules, such as party history, new theory, new thoughts (proposed by Xi) and local governments organize a visit for us to the ‘red-base’⁵¹ occasionally. I mean, in the current international and domestic situation, it’s necessary to have ideological unity (inside the party).” (No. 2)

Party members who do not work in a government department can also identify changes in party regulations and have their own understanding of these topics. For instance, as one of the interviewees commented,

“Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (when Xi was elected as the Party leader), the party regulation became a core issue, which is much stricter than in

⁵⁰ The “CI SHI” system, or “feudal prefectural governor” system was originally established in the Qin and Han dynasty (around 202 BC) and continued to be used (with brief interruptions) until the Republic of China period in the early 1900s.

⁵¹ Such as Yan’an, Jing Gangshan, etc., where the CCP originated, or where some historical event has taken place.

previous periods. It starts from the cadres, with the campaign against the “four styles” (formalism, bureaucracy, hedonism and extravagance). Then party members are encouraged to join the ‘two studies, one action’ (study the party regulations, study the leader’s speech, be a qualified party member). There is also the ‘STUDY (XI) STRONG COUNTRY’ app, so all party members are strongly encouraged to use it every day. In other words, the party regulations have been normalized ... There are also campaigns for a youth league, called ‘one study, one action’ (study Xi’s thoughts, be a qualified youth league member). And we all know the interaction between the party and the youth league is very close. We can see that ideological education has moved to the forefront in our society. This is better—the ruler can listen to the public and help to solve the problems at the grassroots. [I think] for a party that wants to rule such a big country with so many people, that it’s necessary and correct to unify its own members and regulate their behaviour” (No. 4)

Another interviewee, who is a member of an ethnic minority and works in a university that gives professional training has similar observations to make in and outside the party:

“My own experience, from school to work, is that the emphasis on ideology is stronger now. There used to be regulations for party members, but these were not strictly followed and no one would come along and accuse you directly. Now it’s getting formal In universities, we would also organize teachers to learn the new thoughts, or new regulations. The ideology is not just about communist or red ideology as you might think, it also includes our traditional concepts such as ‘kindness and love’, ‘respect’, ‘equality’ and so on. We also try to include patriotic ideas in our professional courses; [the attempt] is encouraged and promoted by our city government. For instance, we would introduce the idea of ‘glorious China’ in our textile courses and encourage students to include more traditional beauty in their work ... The existence of such things must have its proper reasons” (No. 3)

Although many people may genuinely find the Party regulations necessary and important, other voices mention the conspiracy feature of the anti-corruption campaign and the Party’s stringent inspection of its cadres. For instance, in informal conversations, people pass on gossip and hearsay, like “*the anti-corruption campaign started with good intentions, but seems to have been used as a weapon that certain people used to pull their opponents out of the party.*” The issues related to the party are, however, generally not very controversial and people find it easy to accept the changes as new governance tactics which will contribute to social well-being. After all, the party regulations reduce corruption and bring better regulated and better behaved cadres.

The top leader's golden shield and defections regarding nationalist requests

When we move from the party to the top leader (of the party and the state), the related issues are less likely to be discussed openly and discontents are less likely to be disclosed. One significant move of the top leader in recent years has been the removal of limits to the term a state president can serve. Following the previous constitutional regulations, the president could not serve more than two consecutive terms; this rule was obeyed from 1982 onwards. But in the 2018 National People's Congress conference this constitutional limit was lifted, with only 2 delegates voting against and 3 abstaining out of 2964 votes⁵². This news attracted considerable attention overseas, because the move technically allowed a person to remain president for life. There were some domestic objections from a few intellectuals, though without anything being changed. What did ordinary people think? In the interviews, I asked, directly or indirectly, "Would you think that if a leader has enough merits, he/she shouldn't be limited by term regulations?". In some interviews, when the conversation went well, I directly asked their feelings about Xi's case and what their friends' reactions had been back in 2018. Their reactions expressed similar passive sentiments. Although they did not agree with the political move of lifting the term limits, they were already trying to accept it and find excuses for it.

"If you ask me, I would say we really need term limits for top leaders. Our society and history are all very different from the Western system. It's difficult to change a 'guanxi' society and our reliance on the assumption of upright rulers. In such circumstances, if a leader stays in power for a long time, we might expect some flaws or wrong doings. Therefore, we need to make sure that when the time comes someone else will be there to fill the position ... But currently, (regarding Xi's move) we have no power to change the situation, although we can complain in private with our friends" (No. 3)

Some interviewees resort to the reasoning that it is "pointless to reject", or "doesn't affect normal life" or "people are already finding life enough of a struggle" when they dislike strong reaction to political change. Some simply respond to such events with "we are not trained to express our opinions", or "we should trust the central government". Here are several examples of interviewees' replies regarding the term limit change:

"I feel like the change of term limit is just a political game. To be fair, whether it changes or not does not make much difference. We are a one-party state, the power and the rule of the

⁵² BBC News, 2018-03-11, "China's Xi allowed to remain 'president for life' as term limits removed", <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-43361276> [Accessed 2019-06-07]

party chairman is not under the control of any other authority ... and for people in general, well, we don't really do anything about it, right? If you can't fight why don't just accept it? I can see it (the party) is moving forward, progressing..." (No. 9)

"I was really worried when I heard about the (term limit) change. However, when I mentioned it to my colleagues, they were, like, not anxious at all. They felt like it had nothing to do with their lives, whoever was in that position didn't matter at all. If it's something directly related to their own interests, they might complain, very probably without doing anything about it. Maybe it's because we were educated to avoid showing our own views when we were young. We can't parade or strike like capitalist countries; we can't unleash our anger" (No. 11)

"The term-limit thing, to be fair, is something you can't change now. People are already thinking how to adjust themselves to it. We don't really have much choice. If we did, we might not be like this; but we don't. Most people feel like the change has no direct impact on our income and living conditions ... currently the cake is large enough for almost everyone [to share], so the resentment is not strong. Even if the state censored most of the political news, people might still feel like events had no impact on their own career. Honestly, I would say that people are very tolerant about issues related to politics." (No. 5)

"It's useless [to try to change it]. I would say, maybe it [the changed term limit] is for the better development of the country. We [ordinary people] should do whatever we can and not make troubles to the state and society ... the term limit change was probably a group decision [by all the central leaders] and we should fully understand and trust them. If anyone has other [different] views, it would be pointless [to voice them] and might obstruct public order" (No. 4)

It seems as though the top leader has a golden shield, which excludes any criticism from the public. Even in private, most of the interviewees choose without much complaint to swallow their worries and discontents over the changed term limit. Below, in later sections, I discuss further their defence of the political apathy in themselves and their circle in response to their weak political efficacy and nationalist ideology.

But, if the public are tolerant of undesired political moves by the leader and still willing to find excuses for it, would things change if they were asked to bear some personal cost in order to promote the state's interests? In addition to people's direct attitudes to the government, I asked questions about interest exchange by taking advantage of the ongoing trade war between

the US and China⁵³ to see if they were willing to accept an individual burden in order to win the trade war. Most of the interviewees said they did not personally feel any direct influence of the trade war (such as domestic inflation, unemployment, or difficulties in international communication). But some mentioned that they had friends working in a factory where the trade war had reduced the number of overseas orders. One interviewee who works for the press said that the reason why many people are not aware of the effect and the danger of the trade war is the information control:

“Now we are having the trade war and the whole economy is slowing down, everyone is stressed out. Like Huawei, directly hit by the conflict. But the central state doesn’t allow much news reporting on the trade war issue—well, maybe some nationalist articles are allowed. I personally feel that the issue is actually quite serious, many companies are laying off employees, just it’s not reported publicly. Any issue, whether it’s a social, political or simply economic issue, if it has a chance of sparking wide public discussion is not allowed to be reported nowadays” (No. 13)

Whether directly perceived or not, if the central government encouraged individuals to bear more costs (in the form of more taxes, inflation, and so on, converting into income reduction), would they agree to accept or not, and why? Some would find it acceptable to bear some burdens if it was for the general good:

“(The trade war) doesn’t have much effect at the personal level. Although, emotionally, you will feel like it’s being at war and we should stand together and stay strong. In reality you can’t really measure any influence, like, our school still have its normal exchange programme with US schools. The price of daily goods may go up slightly, but it’s really small and you can’t perceive it, to be honest. If one day the state calls everyone to bear the cost (of the trade war), I would probably accept a maximum reduction of 5%~10% income. Anything more would affect my personal life. Although, if we really had to bear more costs more than that, I think maybe I would have to accept it. I mean, well, for most people, we just let our complaints loose when we’re at home and in practice you have to bear the cost anyway. Most people don’t really have a choice, or don’t have the capital to make choices” (No. 3)

Some interviewees do not find the costs problematic at the individual level, since very few rational discussions are heard:

⁵³ Swanson, Ana, 2018-07-05. “Trump’s Trade War With China Is Officially Underway”. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/05/business/china-us-trade-war-trump-tariffs.html>. [Accessed 2019-06-07]

“Is the trade war really because China is doing better than the US now? I only have some ideas about the trade war because our company invited a lawyer to show us the changed regulations and further sections that we needed to pay attention to. Our colleagues were kind of patriotic for a bit, but just complained a little bit and didn’t discuss it too much ... We [work for] a Japanese company, so can’t really do much or say much about the stand. Our colleagues do not really consciously care about it. But if you asked them to bear some costs, they might have no objection.” (No. 11)

Other interviewees would refuse to make a patriotic sacrifice proposed by the state:

“Our friends may discuss the trade war a bit about when we get together for dinner or something. But they mostly focus on the things that directly relate to everyday life ...generally speaking, it [the trade war] is not a good thing... About the request to bear an individual level cost, I would refuse. Why should I? I really don’t like this grand storytelling. It [the trade war] is not a war about justice or injustice—it’s just a Party action. I just don’t like the big idea of letting state or country influence my personal life ... I mean, I would be willing to devote myself or make a sacrifice, but I just don’t want to do this for any big, macro concept. I hope we can make judgements from an objective and fair angle, not just some emotional and ideological perspective (calling for sacrifice) ... Other people in the society, I would say, people in a different social stratum or age group may have different degrees of acceptance of nationalist requests, or ideological requests. Maybe older people may be easily motivated, but I don’t think the younger generation will...” (No. 10)

Another example of a refusal to take on an individual burden for the trade war insists that no one should bear the cost because the trade war is merely a typical political game:

“[I think] no one is willing to bear the cost. I personally wouldn’t ... Why would anyone do so? It [the trade war] is caused by certain politicians. There shouldn’t be any sacrifice or cost at the individual level” (No. 8)

Comparing people’s attitudes and reasoning regarding the top leader’s controversial actions and a nationalist request that might directly damage someone’s personal interests, it can be identified that people are cautious about complaining over political issues that relate to core politics, especially when the issues do not directly affect their benefits. However, a nationalist request that might bring about changes in personal living is more likely to be rejected, even though the topic itself is still not publicly debatable.

Face on/off: a smooth transformation

Throughout this research, I identify the falsification of compliance as a distinguishable difference between people's public support and private support. The change from public face to private face, however, does not seem from the interview evidence very distinctive. There are complaints that people are not allowed to publicly discuss or spread certain opinions. But the degrees of falsification differ according to whether the issue directly relates to the speaker's life, whether the issue is sensitive or not and which level of authority the issue refers to. As common sense would suggest, people do not hesitate to reveal their true discontent regarding local authorities. People may be cautious when discussing in public issues relating to the central government, the Party and the top leader, while in private they would be honest. From the evidence above it is clear that people's public faces are not the same as their private faces. But there is no clear line between these faces and people themselves may not necessarily be aware of the difference.

One interviewee reflected on whether or not to publicly present discontent:

“About discontent, normally people are not willing to discuss it in public. Mostly because, if you don't have a better solution, or a constructive suggestion, I would rather not talk about it with total strangers. ... Don't make a fuss. If you simply want to unleash your emotions, it's pointless and will not help to solve the problem. Moreover, it might deepen the social conflicts, or social divisions. And make it difficult for the government to work” (No. 17)

Some close friends expressed their views of people's discontent and the boundary between expressing it publicly and not:

“In my opinion, in today's China, you can discuss your discontent in public, regarding politics, the government, the party or any other authority. But don't touch historical issues such as June 4th, or issues relating to the state's fate, like classified topics. If you do, it might be identified as treason; people might treat you as a traitor to the country.” (No. 19)

Another obvious feature when people talk about politics, in many public discussions and even in private conversations, is that people are very keen to see things from the position of the governor and tend to explain/consider issues from his standpoint. For instance, one friend's view of ideological education runs:

“I would say, everyone should take care of themselves, live their own life. Don't make trouble for the state or the government ... When the international and domestic situation

gets tough and tense, like the trade war, it's totally necessary to emphasise the ideological education from the state's point of view. Or you might say we need special policies in special times" (No. 21)

The smooth transformation of people's public and private attitudes made it difficult to capture the moment when people begin to hide their true discontent intentionally. However, this observation enriches the theoretical discussion of falsified compliance and constructed political attitudes by highlighting the elusiveness of varied compliance and the way in which the cautiousness of political sensitivity is embedded in daily life. In later sections, I investigate further how people manage the discontinuity (and continuity) between different faces.

The dual track of political knowledge

In addition to the varied attitudes to different state representatives, another field in which people may have perceptions in private which are unlike their public discourse is political knowledge. People's social knowledge is shaped by various agents. School, family, public education and past experiences are all effective in establishing or changing the way people perceive, describe and understand their situation. How, then, do people think about the shaping agents of their knowledge? Moreover, is there any possible difference between their public knowledge and private knowledge?

Being led by the nose? Sure, I know

The public media have been recognized as main sources in shaping people's knowledge, preferences and desires. As noted in the literature review, authoritarian and communist countries rely heavily on ideological legitimation, through tactics such as knowledge construction and media censorship. Chapters 3 and 4 also elaborated on the content of knowledge construction in official propaganda and the effect of the media on individuals' welfare preferences. The question then arises, are people themselves aware of the power of the official media in shaping their political attitudes? And do they find information censorship tolerable or not?

The interview data along with observational data show that people do not falsify their acknowledgement of the socially constructive nature of official propaganda. They acknowledge the shaping power of official propaganda and are also aware of the possibility of the state to use biased discourse. However, they would argue that discourse construction is a necessary to maintain the rule of the authority.

"The state is very cautious about changes in public opinion. You can't mention certain issues

in public, for sure ... The whole propaganda system, or the official voice is a bit harsh now, I admit, kind of leaning to the left. But I would also say that 80% of the opinions that were censored or deleted had inappropriate content, or twisted the facts. From the viewpoint of the government, our government is led by the party, no question, so when it feels like its interest is harmed, it will surely take action, like using propaganda, or just censoring wrong opinions ... As individuals, we all only so much energy every day, so we would definitely be influenced by the official discourse” (No. 4)

“I think most people are quite obedient in public and do not publicly criticize the authorities, no matter which social stratum you come from, upper level or lower level ... I think we all have similar perception of the nature of politics. It’s all about governance and rule. So, it’s natural that the official media will only say good things about the country. I totally understand that sometimes the [official] media will avoid tackling social or political issues head on” (No. 1)

One press editor who had worked for several commercial presses in China for 10 years also admitted that the educative nature of the public press has never changed:

“We all know that the press in China is nothing but propaganda. Even the commercial press is just some platform that puts forward official decisions or policies. Well ... several years ago, there was still some space, but now we can feel it getting tighter and tighter. But no matter whether it was years ago or yesterday, the nature of the press in our socio-political scenario has never changed. It’s beyond question a tool for the state to manage its governance” (No. 13)

Some attribute the necessity of news control to the weakness of the Chinese population, arguing that the state needs to lead the trend and public opinion in order to keep society moving forward.

“There are some things the government prefers us not to know. I think it might be because Chinese people are not intelligent enough to digest some information properly. There are many social conflicts in our society, so people are quite easily led by inappropriate opinions ... About the official propaganda, I think the starting point must be good and the intentions are good. I believe the leaders still want to serve the people and the think tanks are not dumb, they definitely know how to govern the country. In many cases we may see the emotions being set above the rationale. But we all understand that we are a huge country with 1.4 billion people, that is very difficult to govern. We have a very complex population

structure so every move of the government needs to be very cautious ... I know there are historical cases that the party does not want to mention or explain, but they have no effect on our domestic development ... When we get strong, all our actions and choices will be understood [by the world].” (No. 15)

It's quite common for people to be aware of the problem of information control while also have very limited optimism about other approaches of obtaining information due to the limited freedom of expression. One interviewee who had experienced the pre-reform period compared the current information control with former times:

“Currently the control on free speech is quite tight. But the sky won't fall if you let people say something. Now I know there are some local platforms, if you say 'too much', your post will be censored. The situation is somehow similar to that in Mao's time. Only good and positive things can be publicly discussed, only things that are beneficial to the state and the party ... other approaches exist (if you want to solve problems other than resorting to the press), for instance, you can write to a government office or something of the kind, but it won't help much” (No. 12)

From the interview evidence and observational evidence on the social media, people are aware of the shaping power of official propaganda and the constructed official discourse when they describe the situation. However, many accept that they are thus influenced and seem not too worried about the extensive role of the state. How is this discontinuity sustainable for them? Below, I discuss further people's passive and seemingly contradictory attitudes in the section on the mechanism.

Socialist? or Capitalist? And why is a market necessary?

Even though China has experienced so many reforms in the short period since 1978, whether politically, socially or economically, the official discourse has been quite consistent regarding the institutional nature of the state. The public description of the political system is still “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and the economic system remains a socialist market economy. However, as many scholars have identified, the economic system in China is more like state capitalism (Philip CC Huang, 2012; Naughton & Tsai, 2015) and the so-called “socialist” structure has largely been changed since the reform. So how does the general population interpret the ideological position and the nature of the current economic system in China? Is private knowledge consistent with or variance with the public discourse? One of the interviewees

who works in a private equity company expressed concerns about the disjunction between the perceived situation and the public discourse:

“In our current (economic) system, I think the state of affairs and the public propaganda don’t match. The state-owned economy serves political ends, but does nothing to improve the market efficiency ... Some people admire the state’s capacity to use collective resources to solve big problems. I certainly don’t doubt it but I’m not quite convinced.

[Would you agree that different kinds of market economy and governance rationale exist?]

I don’t think so. I know many people argue that there are different forms of market economy, such as the ones with Chinese characteristics. I don’t agree. There is one single concept of a market economy and there is only one governance rationale with respect to it, which consists of the market, democracy and the rule of law. If the state claims that it is serving the interests of the people, the only object of people’s interest is to have a living standard comparable to that in the developed countries ... A market economy and the rule of law are indispensable. I agree there are local scenarios for each country. We all have our peculiarities and should definitely try to find our own path. But what I was talking about is the ideal type, the ‘should be’ type, the one we all want to reach in the end” (No. 8)

Unlike the view from a respondent that “there is only one type of governance rationale”, I more commonly noted opinions (in public and in private) that emphasised the special situation in China and the country’s own institutional rationale with Chinese characteristics. For instance, one interviewee found it rational to pay attention to tradition and history in discourse about possible institutional routes for the state:

“I think the cleverest people are among the government officials. In their minds, the so-called capitalist-socialist division is just a conceptual classification. No matter what the form of the politics, the ultimate aim is to rule. The state is essentially a force machine and the nature of human beings is selfish. So, they must have institutions that can rule the population. Different countries have their different culture and history. The Chinese, or Asian culture is so different from those in Europe and North America. Europeans have the accumulated political culture of democratic decision-making, but we have a long history of one-man decision-making, or dictatorship, as some might call it. I would personally support a parliamentary system if I could choose, but I would not prefer a parliamentary system which only had the format and lacked the spirit. Look how Taiwan has gone. We have a quite different history and culture and communication with other countries and systems will surely

help us to find a way that suits us” (No. 9)

Another interviewee made a similar judgement when discussing leftist or rightist positions in the politico-economic spectrum and their indication of the direction that economic reform would take in China:

“I would say, we are in a situation where it doesn’t matter whether its leftist or rightist, so long as it’s useful. In recent years we see clearly that the ‘the state enterprises advance, the private sector retreated’, which is definitely a left turn in the Chinese context ... We have a system called socialism with Chinese characteristics, which literally means that whatever is useful and effective for the authority’s rule can be employed by the authority—without completely crashing the economy, society and people’s lives, surely. From my point of view, the left-right argument doesn’t really matter, and this is also consistent with my observation of the society” (No. 13)

From these two sample opinions, we can identify a pragmatic logic similar to that in political compliance towards the state’s representatives. Constitutional change doesn’t matter, information restriction doesn’t matter, ideology position doesn’t matter, as long as they are useful to the society and development. In the following analysis, I discuss this feature further and show how it shapes the political culture in China. More importantly, I show how it affects people’s choices in everyday life, shapes the scenario of political participation and relates to the governmentality of the state.

In addition to the pragmatic logic, the crisis of democracy in recent years in fact caused confusion for many people who used to firmly doubt the official discourse and believe that China should aim to have democratic politics. As one interviewee said:

“In the old days when our country was still struggling for food, we may have been quite lost about the direction of the political reform. Recently, we have gained some knowledge of a political way out. However, watching how the US and the EU has got on lately, I’m not really sure if we want to follow in their footsteps any more ... quite disappointed about democracy, to be honest” (No. 11)

Mitigating cognitive dissonance or living with it?

One noticeable feature of individuals’ political attitudes from the examples above is that they are full of conflict. It seems that people recognise the misbehaviour of the authority, but also assume that it has kind intentions; some are aware of and feel uncomfortable about the

heavy pressure of party regulations and performance evaluations, but still find it necessary to have the rules tightened. Interviewees sometimes noted that it is unacceptable to ask someone to check on a teacher's talk in class, while also agreeing with the idea that they "would rather go further 'left' than further 'right'"; and some people argued that the government stretched its hand too far into the society/market, while complaining about the government's inaction regarding the high cost of housing.

Psychological studies note that people tend to avoid cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962). However, as Tim Kuran identified in his work on preference falsification, "the models that an individual applies to an issue need not be mutually consistent. A person may subscribe to conflicting models, for instance, a 'big government' model that justifies lower taxes together with an 'educational crisis' model that calls for more government services." (Kuran, 1997, p. 159) In most cases, individuals are leaning to use a coherent supermodel consolidated from multiple explanatory models. People may not be aware of the costs of inconsistency between distinctive models, so long as these models "yield reasonably satisfactory choices and generate fairly accurate predictions" (Kuran, 1997, p. 179).

In China's case, one formula that individuals use to justify seemingly controversial statecraft and public discourses which are not consistent with personal knowledge is: "*It's common in every country to find the state needing to rule the population in many areas. [Countries merely differ in specific actions, but essentially, we are the same]*" and "*It's all for the state's governance, all about legitimacy*". By dissolving the division between the role of the state and of society and seeing things with the ruler's eyes, individuals can find ways of living with the inconsistency in their minds. At the same time, a smooth change between the political attitudes belonging to different faces allows individuals a little space in which to buffer themselves from the external shocks that may challenge their original beliefs.

To briefly sum up the discussions in this section, falsified compliance does exist among the Chinese regarding the current political system and the authorities, but it is a mixture of intentional falsification and cognitive dissonance. In the following sections, I explore the mechanisms of intentional or unconsciousness "hidden words".

Possible sources and mechanisms

The reason why people assume different faces in public and in private and construct a public preference for public display, has been examined by scholars from different areas of social science. Explanations such as fear of punishment, desire for reward, ignorance of the general

opinion, or the motivation of fitting in have been identified separately or simultaneously. In authoritarian regimes, the mechanism of compliance as falsified by the general public can be explained similarly, but has some specific features. For instance, in China's case, many people who work in the public sector receive more respect from the society and treat this reputation as a reward from the Party, thus creating more loyalty. Rewards for them can either conduce to the individual's self-interest such as living standards, or take the form of a long-term payback which can be extracted from the state's stability and development. Some scholars argue that socialist education has a strong influence on the individual's action preference to express loyalty and conceal discontent. My interview evidence, combined with the observational data, shows that the mechanisms in people's choosing to falsify their public compliance are complicated, intertwined and sometimes contradictory of each other.

Persistence of ideologies and fear

Persistence of social knowledge and historical events

People's actions or preferences are strongly directed by the social norms and their past education. Their knowledge about the society and the desired social behaviours that people have encountered in the past are crucial motives of their choices. In understanding Chinese people's preference for political participation and political attitudes, we should address the core features of its political culture. The traditional Chinese culture, which is selectively promoted by the state, emphasises concepts such as the "middle course" (*zhongyong*, 中庸), "tolerance" (*rongren*, 容忍) and "ethics" (*daode*, 道德). These notions can still be identified in today's Chinese politics. For instance, "LI" (礼) in traditional political culture is a layered and societal concept. It can be interpreted as ethics, manners and rules; it can only be established when the whole society accepts and obeys it. Therefore, it nurtures the culture of collectiveness, in which the community rather than the individual is treated as the ultimate principle of achievement. All individuals can realize their personal value only when they have fulfilled the society's requirements. With such cultural incentives, collectiveness and conservatism are prevalent in China's contemporary political culture.

The consistency of Chinese history for more than 3000 years also leads to the phenomenon that people still (consciously or unconsciously) use concepts or terms from Chinese history to describe the conditions or institutions in the contemporary world. One example is the term "CI SHI," which was used by one interviewee to describe an inspection group from the central government during the anti-corruption campaign period (explained in

footnote 53). The idea of a “crown prince” that is used to refer to the successor of a top leader is also a concept from the period of monarchy. These terms were attached to a systematic “ruler and ruled” ideology. Although people often use them unconsciously, they still indicate the enduring shadow of admiration of authority and obedience to it.

Even though the CCP came to the fore by breaking the chain of (worthless) traditional culture and promoting the revolutionary spirit, cases of the state’s promotion of traditional values so as to maintain its authority have actually become very common in recent years. One example is the concept of the “Harmonious Society”, which was introduced by the then president Hu Jintao in his ideology, or “thoughts”, during the “Scientific Development Concept” around the mid-2000s, before being written into the constitution in the National People's Congress Conference of 2005. The idea of a “harmonious society” (which strongly discourages any attempts by the public to “make a fuss/trouble”) was a response to the increasing outbreaks of social unrest in the early 2000s due to economic inequality and the flaws and injustice of government actions. Ironically, over the years, the notion of “Harmonious Society” has developed into a substitute for “stability at all costs,” and what was “harmonized” actually referred to what had been censored on the online platforms. In Xi’s presidency, the central authority also was in favour of “enhancing the national cultural heritage... and building up our cultural confidence”⁵⁴. As indicated above, borrowing the ideas from traditional culture also magnifies the structural features behind it. It reveals the way that the authority imagines its population and the approach it finds (thinks) most appropriate for persuading the public.

Some attributed compliance falsification to the socialist education. As one interviewee remarked, “I don’t think the public choice of staying silent comes from the traditional culture; it’s implanted in the education we’ve received through the past 70 years.” Other qualitative evidence from interviews also confirms that such core concepts as “people’s democratic dictatorship”, “leadership core”⁵⁵ and “maintaining social stability” are unconsciously accepted and used in daily dialogue. Existing studies also confirm that the part played by education (such as the high school politics curriculum) shapes students’ political attitudes (Cantoni, Chen, Yang, Yuchtman, & Zhang, 2017). The socialist education leads to a belief in collectivism and meritocracy and dismisses personal appeals and universal citizenship.

⁵⁴ A related theoretical article on the official website is Jing, Qi, Cui, Xiantao, “Inheriting and promoting traditional culture”, 2015-07-22, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2015/0722/c83859-27343299.html>, [Accessed 2019-06-01]

⁵⁵ A related article and explanation is “Xi Jinping becomes ‘core’ leader of China”, 2016-10-27, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/27/xi-jinping-becomes-core-leader-of-china>, [Accessed 2019-06-01]

In spite of the ideologies, social memories brought by core historical events also shape the population's political preference in the long term. In his work Kuran uses a thought experiment to reveal that small events can be responsible for the establishment of a particular equilibrium of public opinion and are not averaged out over time (Kuran, 1997, p. 108). Moreover, once an event has tipped public opinion toward one equilibrium or another, subsequent events do not necessarily weaken its impact. In China's case, there are many specific actions from the revolutionary period are still carried out at present, such as reporting speech that one dislikes to higher-level supervisors (such as the upper government, or the school, or the administrator of the online forum). Other past events, such as the cultural revolution or the June 4th movement, become terms that cannot be mentioned either in public or in private conversation.

No matter whether the cautiousness of political preference comes from the traditional political culture, the socialist education, or past events, once the intentional concealment of certain individual attitudes (or the meticulous avoidance of certain topics) is established, the interaction of certain preference with everyday rituals form a circle that constantly reinforces itself in the long run. I discuss this "circle" again in the section on "ideological involution".

Censored voices and the fear of punishment

In addition to the pressure brought by social knowledge and historical events, external pressure from state coercion and censorship is also frequently observed in my qualitative evidence. For instance, the pressure on public speech from early 2019 had accelerated, as many interviewees identified from their own experience:

"Recently many public accounts on Wechat have been blocked, sometimes you just don't know why and where you have stirred up a sensitive point in your words" (No. 6)

"There are many restrictions online, like certain topics, issues, certain people and even certain dates. It feels like most people are quite afraid to say something meaningful ... If you do [have a serious discussion] your post will probably be censored or your account will be blocked. We all treasure the Weibo or Wechat accounts which we devoted much effort to maintain, so after several attempts, everyone gets to be docile in their behaviour" (No. 5)

One interviewee told me of the everyday regulations on an editor for a commercial press:

"On average I would receive about 30 messages or emails [from the relevant supervision departments] with instructions on what I should or shouldn't do. It's regulations on every hand. Sometimes the instructions can refer in detail to the words, or phrase corrections in the

articles ... We have a massive bureaucracy which specialises in media management. If you want to join the bureaucracy you need to pass the proper exam ... I know most of the officials in the system genuinely agree on the idea that the propaganda is the tool for the ruler” (No. 13)

When I asked, “How does press, like your institution, find the line between publishable and unpublishable issues”, he replied:

“...through careful trying and summarising the existing cases. Like recently one self-media site got censored on the topic of the ‘trade war’. After communication, we found that it was because they had directly cited a report from the New York Times. So we realized that even on the most heated topic, we are not expected to cite the foreign press directly. It would be safer to cite official reports in that case”

Another interviewee who works for a new media institution faced similar supervision from the government in the selection of content.

“This year we have a special column which is designed to deliver one poem every day to our audience, called the “poem calendar”. On June 4th, we published a poem entitled ‘There isn’t a day in our life’. We didn’t initially intend to signal a memorial or anything special and we didn’t even realize the title had some relevance for this special day. But soon after it was published on our website, I received a call from our leader and got reproved for not being careful enough. I didn’t get a chance to explain ... We can’t control people’s interpretation though ... The selection of topics needs extra care when it relates to issues of the party, minorities and religions. ... Strict external inspection [by the government] surely leads to stricter self-censorship” (No. 10)

The control on information has considerable impact on people’s public knowledge about current society and shapes people’s attitudes in the form of the attitude desired and expected by the authority. For instance, one event in June 2019 that has attracted the headlines in media all over the world is the anti-extradition bill protests in Hong Kong⁵⁶. The protest is the most significant political protest since the umbrella movement in 2014; nearly two million people turned out to demonstrate. However, all information about this protest was blocked in mainland China. One of my interviewees who went to school in Hong Kong and now works in Beijing

⁵⁶ “Hong Kong democrats urge leader Carrie Lam to drop extradition law plans entirely and resign; Sunday protest to proceed”. *Hong Kong Free Press*. 2019-06-15. <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/06/15/hong-kong-democrats-urge-leader-carrie-lam-drop-extradition-law-plans-entirely-resign-sunday-protest-proceed/>, [Accessed 2019-06-16].

told me that, even though she personally uses VPN sometimes to access to external news, she learned about the massive protest only after several days. Until then, most of her colleagues still had no idea what was going on in Hong Kong.

“To be honest, even I, who still have the knowledge and ability to (occasionally) climb the wall (the great firewall⁵⁷) and get access to the external world, was a day or two late in discovering the situation in Hong Kong. There hasn’t been a single mention of Hong Kong in the mainland’s social media” (No. 11)

Several days after the protest, the official government account issued a statement which identified the nature of the protest in Hong Kong as a “riot” and supported the Hong Kong government’s “sensible treatment”. The statement tells a one-sided story of the Hong Kong movement and leaves no space for argument or defence. My interviewee told me that after she read news and reports of Hong Kong’s protest, she tried to explain the complexity of the Hong Kong issue and the appeals of the Hong Kong people to her colleagues and they seemed to be very open to this information and recognized that the protest was not simply the riot that the central authority had claimed. But she still cannot discuss these issues openly online.

“Recently bloggers have complained of the many rules about public discussions and the many topics/issues are not allowed to be discussed. Feels like the restriction has tightened up and the list of sensitive words is somehow extended.”

Not everyone feels this pressure, however. Some voices still argue “I don’t think that the so-called pressure on free speech will affect daily life too much; most of the pressure still comes from the struggle to live without overspending in this competitive society.” I discuss such ideas in the following part to show how censorship shapes public choices and actions.

Ignorance, apathy and collective conservatism

In spite of the structural factors that may shape or constrain people’s choices to express opinions, or signal their preferences, there are many mechanisms that relate to internal reasons on the personal level⁵⁸. For instance, when the interviewees were asked why they would not say something about the issues that they felt to be unfair, they would reply “*For what?*” and “*What would be the point? It won’t change anything?*”. Problems such as weak political efficacy, or sometimes

⁵⁷ For more information on the Great Firewall in China’s Internet Blocking, see (Ensafi, Winter, Mueen, & Crandall, 2015; M. E. Roberts, 2018).

⁵⁸ The structural factors and the personal level factors are surely correlated in many ways. Here I make no causal inferences or comparisons between different mechanisms, but present a description of some observable factors.

incorrect evaluations, in the general view, also lead to reluctant political expression and further appeals for social change.

Low efficacy and political apathy

Political apathy normally refers to a situation where individuals lack interest in participating in political activities. In China's case, many interviewees mention the scenario that people are not interested even in talking about social or political issues.

"In my current working environment, in which most of my colleagues have a background in science education, most of them have no clue about the social or political issues. They kind of live in their own small space, and will even blame you for not 'having your feet on the ground' if you bring up some socio-economic topics. They basically care about their own lives, just trivial things really." (No. 3)

Why would this happen? The unaccountability of the authority regarding social issues tends to weaken the intention to take part in politics. The weakened external efficacy interacts with and reduces people's internal political efficacy. For instance, one interviewee recalled the days when many people still hoped to participate (in whatever forms) so as to push the government or policy to change and when disappointment gradually led to silence:

"In the past, like 10 years ago, people still believed that crowds of onlookers could somehow change society, or China's politics someday. The internet provided a great opportunity for everyone to pay attention to and support people who were miles away when they were suffering injustice. The logic was, crowd attention can bring pressure on the authority and force them to make changes. But now it's totally useless. You can't change anything. Meanwhile, everyone is so pre-occupied by the struggles in their own lives, they barely have enough energy to really engage in social issues. It really takes time, energy and passion and watching things end inconclusively definitely kills the crowd's enthusiasm" (No. 6)

One radical explanation that I received regarding the public's weak political efficacy is that ordinary people are not capable of discussing the political issues seriously and we should trust the wisdom of the government.

"Things are much more complicated than we thought. For instance, for the events of June 4th, there has been much criticism at home and abroad. Some people ask why the government doesn't just make the archives public and then all the criticism and puzzles will be clear. I

would say, the Zhongnanhai⁵⁹ must have thought about this solution and they definitely have a reason for not choosing to do so. There are many things we ordinary people have no clue about, so we can't really comment on them” (No. 4)

Although it seems as if most people care nothing about the political issues, some studies mention that the Chinese make a cult of political rumours (H. Huang, 2017). Many local websites gossip about such things as political factions and conflicts, the direction of international or domestic policies and even the personal lives of government leaders. However, one comment from a friend in a private conversation denies the role of these rumours in Chinese politics:

“All this gossip and rumour is just natter. China’s politics is 100% closed-door politics.”
(N. 23)

I’m all right, Jack

In addition to the changes in political efficacy, the benefit that each person has received or perceived also determines his or her chosen attitudes. Hence, another common reason for not discussing political issues is that some people feel that life is much better now and there is no need to change the current system further or criticize the politics. The self-interest to which this refers is not some dramatic benefit from the current system, but a simple and everyday convenience that one may derive from interaction with current system.

“I think our country is doing very well lately, especially since the Xi’s rule. In the old days, we had an old version of ‘official accountability’, but it turned out to be nothing but swagger and exaggeration. The new version nowadays is more solid. Each level of government takes its role and the general secretary takes full responsibility. Any officials who are not doing their get punished. For example, in the past when you wanted to be reimbursed from the health insurance scheme, you had to go through many offices and counters. Now the whole process is simplified and the officers are friendly to our patients ... This is what I call satisfaction. I definitely thank the government and the Party for that” (No. 12)

“My experience is, the payment for scientists nowadays is far better. Like the decentralization of the funding management, we enjoy more space to maximize the use of project funding. Our research also has nothing to do with politics or society, so why would I care about the change in the term limit, or Hong Kong issues?” (No. 27)

⁵⁹ Current residence of the top leaders of the Party and central government (such as Central Politburo Standing Committee members).

The trifling but recurring benefits that individuals receive from the current system somehow disguises the risks they might incur from the inefficiency of the society as a whole. These benefits also divert people from serious reflection on the state-individual relationship. Personalized longitudinal comparison sometimes shoulders aside the horizontal and societal comparisons with other disadvantaged groups, especially when the information is asymmetric and controlled by the state. In other words, it tends to lead to pluralistic ignorance in the society.

Pluralistic ignorance: the population is just too diverse to tell

If individuals feel personally unable to make a difference, or if personal interest is not affected, how do they imagine other people's attitudes? Would they perceive potential discontent from their peers? As I explained in the theoretical discussion, social psychology scholars identified a bias in group opinion whereby the group members mistakenly assume that the general group accepts a norm even though most of the group members privately reject it. Pluralistic ignorance, therefore, sums up the scenario in which no one in the population believes, while everyone thinks that all the others believe. Kuran also argued that the fear inside individuals would lead to pluralistic ignorance, since the multitudes who objected to communism did not know how widely their resentment was shared (Kuran, 1997). "Even if they could sense the repressed discontent of their conformist relatives and close friends or observe the hardships in the lives of their fellow citizen, they lacked reliable information on how many of their fellow citizens favoured radical political change" (Kuran, 1997, p. 125). The interview data verified part of the mechanism of "unknowing" other's private opinions. Some of my interviewees personally realized the problems of the current system, but felt that the other people in the community would certainly support the regime at whatever cost. For instance:

"If you ask me, I really think most people, especially the ones who suffered a lot in former times, like farmers and rural residents, sincerely support the government. And it may also be true for people whose interests are not directly related to the social problems. They will surely support the party. I mean, if we really open up and get to the stage of a general election, like everyone has a right to vote, I believe most people, maybe 90%, will still vote for our current system" (No. 13)

"I feel like most people in the society don't really find 'big government' problematic. They think that there is nothing wrong with 'imperial power'; the only problem is 'there isn't a good empire yet'. In their mind, there's nothing fundamentally wrong in the system" (No. 10)

Some respondents were even more cautious in identifying other people's opinions, arguing that the whole population is too large to generalise about.

“Everyone has his or her own ideas, I mean, based on their experiences and their affiliation to certain social groups. I really have no idea of their true feelings. There are some popular opinions on the internet, but who knows, many people are not keen to express their ideas. So many people live in our country, it's impossible to have a general idea regarding political issues, not even social issues. If any voice supports something, there must be some voices that disapprove of it” (No. 15)

The pluralistic ignorance in individuals can actually interact with their weak efficacy and political apathy and make people lose confidence and hope that they can change things through any kinds of participatory approach.

Heterogeneity of social groups: education and one's generation

One important reason why people are unwilling to infer the nature of general public opinion is that the diversity of the sub-populations is so great. This diversity leads to different reactions to the socio-economic changes, while their own experience and endowment varies the weights of the mechanisms that lead to compliance falsification. As one of the interviewees argued:

“Falsification? I'm sure it exists in the population. However, I cannot really make a judgement on the society as a whole. It really depends, depends on the subgroups in the society. We have over 1.4 billion people, there are huge internal differences and variations, and there are many social classes. I can't really imagine it, to be honest.” (No. 10)

In this section, I try to identify several important variations of the population that have marked implications for the diversity of falsified compliance. Education is one of the most important factors, in that it correlates with people's knowledge, cognitive capacity and possible experiences. In a society such as China's where the social, political and economic capital are highly integrated, education-based social capital is also highly correlated with the distance to the core political power. Hence, more education may bring rights consciousness, independent thinking, and more resource for political participation. From the viewpoint of the authority, education is a crucial approach to socializing the governed, especially useful when no alternative explanations/stories are allowed/available. Therefore, it may be the case that people who are doing well in the official education system are more likely to approve the notions and ideologies

of the current system. In the heterogeneity section, I briefly unpack the complex ways in which education indicates people's political compliance, with evidence from formal interviews, informal conversations and observations. In addition to education level, a person's age group is another factor that correlates with her/his social status, experience, cognitive capacity and knowledge. It has been identified as a core factor that determines people's political attitudes and behaviours (Braungart & Braungart, 1986). For instance, people who are born in a certain period are likely to experience similar social events, and therefore are quite likely to share a similar social memory (e.g., Schuman & Rieger, 1992). Meanwhile, people in a different age group are in a life stage of their own and the issues and themes that they worry or care about are different. Thus, investigating the heterogeneity in political compliance brought by generational variation is another main theme in this section.

Education as a double-edged sword

Be aware of the punishments and rewards

People who are more educated are generally more likely to be aware of the potential rewards brought by signalling loyalty to the incumbent authority. They are also more likely to acknowledge the potential punishment that follows undesired actions. Hence, educated people are more likely to choose a specific public image that differs from their private image. One interviewee with a college degree addressed the notion of public/private faces as follows:

"In current society you can enjoy a really good life if you have enough power. It's not like we never talk about the social or political issues, just it's only with people you are really familiar with ... There is no need to discuss political issues too much in public, why do it? The upper level will never appreciate your sincerity it just [needs] your loyalty." (No. 5)

If they are rational enough in reaching their decisions, would educated people show less compliance regarding nationalist requests from the state, such as helping in meeting the costs of the trade war? Not necessarily. My qualitative evidence shows that many highly educated people would identify the trade war as a good opportunity for China to establish itself, and therefore they are tolerant of the costs they may need to bear.

In addition to the rewards, people who enjoy more social capital are more likely to react more strongly to the possibility of punishment compared to people ones who are relatively far from the system. For instance, one friend who works in the public organisation affiliated to the State Council told me in a private conversation:

“When you have seen or experienced more, you are more likely to understand the ruling tactics, whatever kind of authority is in power. Punishment will definitely come if you cross the line, so you will become more and more cautious in your choices ... Especially when you have too much to care about, your family, your career, all these (things) will hold you back when you are making choices. In making a decision, the more you have, the more concerned you are.”

The pressure is also high for people who work in education, such as researchers and teachers. One friend who teaches in a university said:

“The intellectuals are less likely to express their true opinions about the society and politics. If you conduct research in a mainland university and your topic entails sensitive issues, such as the constitution, modern or contemporary history, or civil society, you need to be very careful. There are cases in which a teacher in class was reported by the students because they found the teacher’s speech not ‘[politically] correct’.” (No. 23)

Informal conversations with several social science scholars who work in the top universities in mainland China verified the high pressure that they feel on their daily research and life. One of them complained in private that the landline in his office is monitored; another mentioned that, because he came from Hong Kong, his mother-in-law (a government cadre in mainland China) was investigated on tax issues, quite unjustifiably; a third case concerned a research topic, which, a scholar told me, had had to be changed due to political pressure from politics to methodology to avoid potential disputes⁶⁰. These directly perceived pressures cause the people concerned to drastically disguise their public political attitudes. None of them believes that it would be a good idea to reveal their discontents in public.

Illusion of individual autonomy

Theoretically speaking, the social capital brought by education may increase individuals’ confidence in political participation and raise their motivation to pursue their own interests. As Kuran argued, an individual’s proficiency in pursuing her/his own interests may add to the inefficiency of the society. Moreover, the falsified public preference of individuals could cause societal inefficiency to persist (Kuran, 1997). In the interviews, we can identify many pragmatic opinions that exaggerate the autonomy of individual level choices in the current system and take a seemingly “objective”, “neutral”, or “rational” stand on controversial social issues. Many

⁶⁰ Due to the sensitivity problem, I have intentionally blurred some detailed information about the person involved in the case.

people who have less sympathy for others' suffering would imagine that under the current system the space for the individual's personal choice is generous enough. So long as people do their best, it is possible to achieve social mobility and defend personal property. For instance, when they talked about the inequalities in education and the troubles for individuals brought by the inconsistency of educational policies, the respondents said:

"I don't feel the current system puts many restrictions on me. I mean, sure, there are some rules imposed by major structures, but the private space is quite enough for us to develop ... I don't deny that difficulties prevent some people from gaining access to educational resources, like some migrants from rural areas. I won't judge them on their actions or choices, like, if they choose to defend their rights through exposure in the news or political appeals, that's totally fine. But every person in a society has a position that decides the [available] choices. I don't think I will end up in a similar [difficult] position ... Of course, we need social responsibility and caring, but not [from] me." (No. 8)

"The specific issues such as urban-rural inequalities, educational justice, resource distributions, all are crucial challenges for the government. But I feel like the main issue is still the limited resource in our country ... the cake [of the economy] is not large enough for everyone to enjoy; some people must be left behind or sacrificed ... Educational injustice is a problem of our time and it can be solved by creating more education resources ... For individuals, there are many other solutions you can try. Like immigration, (attending) international or private schools (if you don't have a Hukou in your area). Do use your power to act. It won't help if you are too stubborn and just want to fight against the government. It's a waste of your time and energy keep an eye on the institution. These are the facts, I would say; it's your problem if you remain disadvantaged" (No. 4)

"As far as I know, the political opportunities are plenty. The key issue is still your own efforts. Society is already quite open." (No. 12)

There is nothing wrong with the "perceived" potential space at the individual level. However, the illusion of "free choices", whether social, economic or political for different people, actually leads them to underestimate the disharmony between public and private faces. It also prevents them from sharing the pain of other disadvantaged groups and questioning the systematic problems in the society.

Generational difference: Unthinkable or unthought?

Due to the lack of statistical evidence, I give merely a brief summary of the perceived generational difference from the interviews and the observational data. Existing studies suggest that the older generation is more cautious on political topics while the younger generation is more liberal (e.g., Hahn & Logvinenko, 2008; Rose & Carnaghan, 1995). Qualitative data in my study reveal a generational difference as regards political compliance and the contradictions in whether or not to hide discontent. More importantly, the interaction between any two generations indicates the long shadow of falsified political attitudes in preserving a socially conservative ideology.

As I noted in the previous section, social knowledge can persist quite strongly in the shaping of people's political attitudes. The transmission of knowledge from one generation to another is one of the forces that helps social knowledge to persist (Glass, Bengtson, & Dunham, 1986; Jennings, 1996). The younger generation learns about what is "thought" and "unthought" from the society, the family and their education. However, the existence of falsified public opinion has some long-term repercussions. If certain ideas are blocked due to social or political pressure, the younger generation cannot renew them and the older people will die with their ideas unspoken. The distribution of young people's public opinion will undoubtedly reflect the existing bias in social discourse. Imagine certain issues or topics that are unthinkable for one generation because of certain political or social constraints. The unexpressed ideas are less likely to be heard and incorporated into the ideas of the younger generation than the ones in public discourse. In this way, "unthinkable" turns into "unthought" as the generations succeed one another (Kuran, 1997). In the interviews, I encountered some cases where a child has certain ideas or thoughts about politics or historical events, while the parents refuse to share their opinions:

"My education and my overseas experience have made me think a lot about politics and the history of Chinese politics. ... But every time I plan to have a serious discussion with my parents about my ideas, they refuse to have a real conversation with me. They just dodge when I mention related topics." (No. 25)

Another interviewee who is currently in the UK told me about his interaction with his parents:

"My father worked abroad when he was young, it was something like a governmental delegation. I thought he might be quite open to different political attitudes ... There were

times I expressed my disagreement with the government's behaviour, my Dad wasn't very happy and blamed me for being brainwashed by the foreign forces" (No. 14)

The case of several interviewees who had different political attitudes from their parents demonstrated the pressure, but also indicated the possibility of breaking apart the intergenerational heritage (Inglehart, 2018; Svallfors, 2010). As one friend said, *"as long as the state keep open and allows people to interact with the outside world in different ways, the younger generation will have some new ideas denied to their parents and will ultimately change the societal scenarios."* However, it might take a great effort from the younger generation to generate a counteracting bias against the existing bias in public opinion. People will not automatically reflect on existing theories or facts or become critical, even they when have received new information. Unless this information is powerful, their thoughts will tend to conform to the dominant ideas of their parents' generation and internalize the viewpoint that dominates public discourse, due to inherently lazy thinking (Kuran, 1997). In the last part, I want to consider further the potential breakthrough from the existing structural forces, social pressures and the trap of generational knowledge transformation for individuals.

Heading (no)where: actions or agencies

Action or inaction: exit, voice or loyalty

One popular model that describes the interaction between the state and its subordinates is the "exit, voice and loyalty" model originally proposed by Hirschman (Hirschman, 1970). The state can be treated as an organization and the population may choose to stay loyal, or voice their discontent through formal and informal political participation, or leave the state through emigration when they are unhappy with the authority's certain actions. Individuals' choice of reaction is evaluated on the basis of the benefits and costs of each option. The authority will also evaluate the possibilities of its population's choice in the policy making process or subsequent amendments. If the citizens can make a credible threat of leaving, the authority is less likely to impose controversial policies. Conversely, the option to exit will be reduced if loyalty is strong, or is not wholly appealing/feasible. At the other extreme, sincerely loyal members may be more likely to voice their opinion since they care more about the welfare of the organization.

How would falsified compliance affect these strategies? In other words, which of these three options would be chosen by people who falsify their loyalty to the authority? Theoretically speaking, preference falsification is often cheaper than escape or voice and it avoids the risks entailed in public protest. Yet disguised public opinion may cause many to underestimate the

extent of popular dissatisfaction and conceal the possibilities of change. In this part, I give some preliminary evidence of individuals' opinions regarding the political participation, the degree of loyalty when controversial policies are imposed and the choices of emigration. Further explorations such as formal models and statistical inferences can be made in future research.

Existing studies have argued that the Chinese government encourages many innovative approaches to public participation, such as the Mayor's mailbox, local government's comment boards, and so on (Distelhorst & Hou, 2014; Su & Meng, 2016). Does the general population find these voicing approaches valid or helpful? How do they personally rate the effectiveness of individuals' voices in the policy-making process and politics in general? And what do they think of informal political participation (such as appeals, protests, or assembly) compared to formal approaches? The feedback from interviewees who had perceived more constraints in the past several years were generally negative/passive regarding people's function in the current political system: it was both objectively not possible and subjectively not necessary. For instance:

“About the so-called ‘deliberate decision making’, like the ones you mentioned, the Mayor’s mailbox, or Wenling’s case of a collective meeting, I would say that only individuals who were desperate to solve their problems would participate. Normal people won’t voice their opinions if they do not have to. ...Several years ago, there were some cases of informal gatherings to protest against local government’s misbehaviour or against some factory or something. [I] don’t see many similar reports in recent years, maybe very occasionally ...Especially this year, these issues would definitely get blocked online” (No. 11)

“I don’t think individual citizens have a say in policy making. If some policies are claiming to encourage the public’s opinion, we are mostly represented by some ‘officials’. Even if votes are used to decide [something], I don’t believe they are legitimate or transparent enough ...You don’t know where those samples come from. I can definitely say, me and my friends have no idea or interest on these [political participation approaches ...they are] just for show” (No. 10)

How do people who are loyal to the authority explain the voicing space in the current system? Two interviewees analysed their views:

“I understand that most people don’t really want to publicly discuss issues of political reform, or controversial social issues. The key issue nowadays is still development. To achieve that, the state can’t [afford to] be in a mess and no one really wants it become a battlefield (of opinions).” (No. 2)

“I would say, seize the day. Any discussions about politics should be done under the umbrella of development and the stability of the whole society...We should trust the judgement of our peers, the current authority is elected to power, so is Xi ...we should support whoever is in that position ...It’s totally ok to express your own opinion, about the society or about politics, but it should be done in an appropriate way. It’s better to engage in formal ways, like the Mayor’s mailbox; things can be solved very quickly ...It’s definitely unacceptable to ideologically oppose the state or the party ...The social problems we are encountering right now are accumulated problems from the past 40 years. We cannot rush, cannot solve the problems of certain social groups in a flash ...Some people will unavoidably be sacrificed during the process” (No. 4)

The importance of social stability is confirmed by many people, as in one summary from an informal conversation: *“stability suppresses all, this is the motive power of the current authority, higher than any other noble notions.”* One interviewee who is an ethnic minority and born in the frontier region and who later lived and worked in Shanghai, told me

“Being a minority does have some inconveniences, such as applying for a visa, the process takes much longer than it does for my Han friends ...But I think so long as I don’t commit any violation of the law, there is no need to worry. Cooperation with the police is everyone’s obligation, it’s especially necessary for security reasons ...Like, the security check on Shanghai’s tube-trains is stricter than in any Japanese airport. People may complain but I don’t really advocate abolishing it ...The anti-terrorism situation is serious for every country in the world. China just takes it more seriously than some other countries do. We value safety and security more ...Most of us citizens are willing to cooperate with the security checks at tube stations, as long as the process is efficient and the officers’ attitudes are friendly ...We Chinese can really endure hardships and work really hard; we also have a high threshold of tolerance” (No. 3)

If voices are not possible and if someone is not sincerely loyal, is there any preference for “exit”? When I talk about the option of emigration, many people are concerned about the cultural problem:

“I don’t consider emigration as an option. Neither culturally nor in daily habits is it easy to change for people of our age. We also have jobs here, why ask for trouble? Besides, people in other countries won’t really take you in as a fellow-citizen, I don’t want to expend my energy and efforts in a foreign land” (No. 4)

But if there was a chance, they would be happy to send their children abroad for a better view of the world:

“I’m not saying it’s a bad idea to move to other countries if possible, just not for myself. The culture, habits, politics and even legal systems are so different. I don’t think I can adjust to a new environment. Children might do, maybe when they were grown up and if they themselves wanted to go abroad” (No. 9)

Some interviewees who are more capable (or more confident) or more worried about the current system would more readily decide to choose “exit”:

“I am not sure who is going to take the leader’s role and don’t know what the society is going towards. So, I do consider moving abroad as an option, maybe once the child is a little older” (No. 5)

“Yes, (for me) emigration is a possible choice, although I’ve not decided yet. Will (decide) on the basis of my further career plan” (No. 8)

However, for most people who don’t possess the resource to leave, even if they are discontented and would wish to move to some other place if possible, the possibilities are not on their side.

Falsification, pressure of ideological involution and possibility of “free will”

We have talked about the ideological involution in current Chinese society due to the totalizing and individualizing effects of the strong government. The confined resources of social knowledge result in a diverged but limited increment. We have also seen much evidence in previous sections demonstrating the cognitional counter-conduct of individuals through assuming different faces in daily life. However, we may also notice that, in many cases, the falsification of compliance or the change of faces is for many people unconscious. They tend to show more honesty on political issues in private without any distinguishable awareness. Many of them can recognize the obvious restrictions from the authority, such as censorship, the risk of punishment, lack of government accountability (and related weak political efficacy), but many people (and their friends) do not intentionally pay attention to or reflect on these issues.

From the interview data and observational data, another factor that might leads to the involution of people’s social knowledge and political awareness can be identified. Many people who seem politically apathetic, or feel ignorant of political issues, are mostly heavily pre-occupied by social pressures, or everyday life: work, society and life. One example is the recent debate on

the “996” work schedule (from 9 am to 9 pm, six days a week), which is a common and even rampant phenomenon in the high-tech and internet companies. In spite of the fact that the “996” work schedule already violates labour laws, many people actively supported the idea of “hard work”. When the debate was at its peak, Jack Ma, founder of the Alibaba Group, stated in public that “employees who get the ‘opportunity’ to work according the ‘996’ schedule are the lucky ones”, because “in many companies employees don’t even get the chance to work long hours”⁶¹. The excessive workload in China leaves people no time to think, read or question the problems in their lives. As one interviewee told me, she feels like “*the capitalists and the politicians collude with each other, just to exploit people’s labour, time and minds. Sometimes even our dignity*” (No. 11).

There are some other “tailored” social and political pressures for social subgroups in the population. For instance, females are more and more commonly encouraged to go back to the family and resume the traditional role of “good wife”. In recent years, the official policy of encouraging families to have a “second child”, the official propaganda promoting traditional cultural values and the popularity of “moral women”⁶² modules have formed a political, cultural and economic cage, which prevents females from achieving their self-value and self-awareness. Another example is the younger generation, whose members enjoy less and less possibility of upward social mobility. From the interview data, many young people complained of the pressure when they were asked about their ideas on the future of the state and themselves in the next five years. Even some who are positive about the state’s development are concerned about the opportunities for younger people. All these pressures, initiated by the state or generated from the economic environment and traditional culture, leave no space for many people to really think through the current political and societal conditions, to say nothing of deep reflection on the state-individual relationship.

Luckily, we still have some voices which attest to the possibility of “free will”. Unlike those who accept the illusion of individual autonomy, there are some who want access to more knowledge and reflections on the state of society. One interviewee said, “*I want to read more, books or news, to really understand what is going on with myself and the country. I truly want to be clear enough and see through the society*” (No. 10). Another friend from Hong Kong, who also posts frequently on mainland social media, insisted that “*in this time, ask yourself to never be lazy in thinking, never blindly follow the others. Try your best to understand the truth of all kinds of events, keep your sympathy for the*

⁶¹ China Daily, “‘996’ schedule must not be imposed on workers”, 2019-04-15, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/15/WS5cb411e2a3104842260b63fc.html>, [Accessed 2019-06-26]

⁶² For further introduction, see: “Some ‘Moral Women’ promotions already touch the red line of the law” (in Chinese), 2017-05-22, http://www.guancha.cn/Education/2017_05_22_409561_1.shtml, [Accessed 2019-06-26]

disadvantaged, be aware of any kind of power. This is already a form of resistance. Even save an article that you find reasonable (and might disappear soon) and share it with others. This is resistance, too.”

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I explored a complex phenomenon of potential “falsification” in Chinese political compliance. The rationale is the “people-side’s story” of the overarching question of my dissertation—state governmentality and the answering compliance in transitional Chinese society. As argued in the previous chapters, the state may intentionally use knowledge construction, policy experimentation and interest allocation, among many other tactics to effectively shape public opinion and maintain compliance from subordinates. However, individuals enjoy the possibility of hiding their true discontents or opinions when there are limited choices of voicing or exiting and falsified compliance can be dangerous for the authority regarding its long-term rule. To better address the complexity of individuals’ cognitional rebellion, I used a design of interview and observations to collect data.

Even though the qualitative data cannot infer to the situation in the general population, we can still extract some details of falsified political compliance, various potential factors that might lead to a change in people’s public/private faces and heterogeneity across social groups. The information from qualitative evidence can be useful in advising on the research in the future. My analysis shows that people’s compliance regarding different representatives of the state changed substantially with regard to specific issues and the atmosphere at the time. Although the central government, the party and the top leader now enjoy more approval, people in private conversations sometimes object to bearing the political cost at the individual level. In addition to political trust, people’s private political knowledge and public discourse, sometimes run along a separate track. However, even though many people register the disconnection between public and private knowledge, as well as the discontinuity within official discourse, many choose to tolerate it without further questioning. Why would many people still choose (intentionally or unconsciously) to arrange their public/private faces regarding certain political/societal issues? The reasons can be traced back to the existing cultural, historical and educational factors that have socialized their ideas from the beginning. They can also be identified in the external force imposed by the state and society and the resulting fear, political apathy and group ignorance in the population.

Does falsified compliance vary between the people in different social groups? Although my qualitative data cannot make an inference about the population as a whole, the people in my sample with their different endowments, experiences and human capital, do present different

preference of political compliance. For instance, education can bring people more socioeconomic capital, as well as a certain illusion of autonomy, but it also imposes a binding power when individuals face a threat from the state. Regarding generational differences, the past experience of the older generation may turn some of their “unthinkable issues” into “unthought issues” for the next generation. What, then, are the implications, for one’s actions and for the possible breakthrough of individual subjectivity, of falsifying one’s political attitudes? My evidence shows that, although many people are pessimistic about any kind of political participation, some tend to preserve their awareness, consciousness and rationality despite the pressure from the state and society.

Going one step further from the qualitative data of public opinion and individual private opinions, we can also identify some possibilities of subtle statecraft in the management of people’s views. Drawing on the population’s propensity to admire authority, the state may take a number of steps to direct popular opinion: it may allow public debate at a controllable level, send opinion leaders to set the rhythm; and, once the public debate reaches a certain level, issue an “official statement” in the name of “neutrality” and “justice”; if necessary, it may sacrifice some lower-ranking officials as scapegoats; and utter credible threats to the society at critical moments. However, when the manipulation of popular opinion causes the state’s credibility to backfire, leading to severe distrust or even considerable compliance falsification, it may produce a serious challenge to state rule in the long term. For individuals, it takes an effort to break out of the aggregated ideological and political power constraints, but it is not impossible.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The fact that the long-lasting and extremely intense transformation has been ongoing in China for forty years now without meeting any fundamental challenge has attracted much attention from social scientists. My work in particular is motivated by having observed that the central authority in China actively seized the opportunity and the benefits of modernization that the social and economic reform offered and effectively absorbed the risks inherent in the dramatic socio-economic transformation. My dissertation project, therefore, asked how the state maintained compliance from its people in periods of rapid social and economic transformation and how did the logic of its governmentality change? My empirical work, taking the case of the changes in pension policy in the social welfare reform conducted by the Chinese government after 1978, deciphered the strategies of consent manufacture that it used and the changed rationale behind the governmentality. In this final chapter, I first revisit the research question cross-referencing the evidence drawn from each empirical chapter. Then I sum up the theoretical, methodological and practical contribution of my work. Finally, I address the unanswered questions of the dissertation project and set out some possibilities of further investigation.

A recap: elaborating on the analytical model with empirical evidence

My whole project uses empirical evidence of the Chinese government's efforts to lead a rapid social and economic transformation without losing its legitimacy to elaborate my analytical model of compliance manufacture in the interaction between the state and the individual. The model I proposed of the state's strategic governance highlights the ruler's general design, which is constantly updated in light of its understanding of the current situation, the public and its own objective; otherwise known as its "governmentality". With an extensive understanding of its subjects, the state is like a DJ on stage, wielding a mixture of tones to affect people's emotions, interests, desires and actions. These tones can be used both individually and simultaneously and can also be tailored for distinctive social groups. My analytical model covers many types of statecraft that can be used by a modern state to generate compliance: constructing social knowledge through propaganda and education, or manipulating information; building consensus through policy experimentation; or using interest exchange to buy off the population. The state may also use coercive approaches such as censorship and force to maintain a compliant surface.

Building on the statecraft paradigm, I clarified in the introduction chapter the two-way interaction between the state and its population in the process of optimizing its objectives. The

state as a player who intends to maximize the population's compliance and minimize its non-compliance must balance a mixture of various strategies and actively adjust its statecraft in a dynamic process. Under the constraints of state capacity and information demand, tolerant and intolerant approaches are strategic substitutes limited by specific capacity at any given time; these approaches strategically complement one another to elicit information from the people. The individuals, whose objective is to optimize their personal situation, make choices in response to the statecraft that they encounter. In a situation where active counter-conduct such as rebellion, protest and appeals are not possible, individuals may still use cognitional counter-conduct, such as falsifying their public compliance. Facing changing parameters—such as changing social and economic patterns of distribution and actors' strategies—their interactions adjust accordingly.

My whole dissertation, therefore, built on the thought map (Figure 3) and each of my empirical chapters addressed part of the typology. In Chapter 3, by investigating the trajectory of pension reforms in China, I identified the state governmentality of combining knowledge construction and benefit allocation. When the government was promoting a retrenchment reform under economic pressure, it reallocated resources strategically in order to maintain reasonable compliance from the whole population. My examination of the variations in the timing, direction and content of the reform together compose a holistic picture of the government's general design of welfare differentiation. By changing the practice of welfare provision and adjusting the definitions of "privileged" and "marginalized" among the recipients, the state lifted the heavy burden from the beneficiaries of the old welfare system and created new bases of support from social groups which required less in the way of financial investment. In step with the welfare reform, the government used official propaganda to promote the principles of "contribution and rewards" and "rights and obligations". The knowledge of such concepts as the "socialized self", "fairness in social redistribution", "contributing to the general good," and so on, was designed at different stages, tailored for different target groups and aimed at different reform targets. During the process, the state evaluated various social groups on the basis of their membership, the value they could contribute to the state's legitimacy and the resources they could bargain with. Individuals' personal lives were also gradually socialized and initiated into a broader system in which only self-motivated, self-regulated and prudent citizens deserved respect from society.

The specific statecraft tools identified in Chapter 4 were policy experimentation and propaganda, combined in the reform of the social insurance scheme for elderly enterprise employees. To promote the reform and ease the anxieties of the target population, the state took a moderate approach and experimented with the new regulations in selected regions, allowing

enough space for “trial and error”. Meanwhile, official newspapers played the important role of buffering the negative effects that might have resulted from implementing the policies. In addition to addressing the strategies that were used, one important task of Chapter 4 was to ask whether these strategies were successful in changing the public’s attitudes to the reform and the state. For this reason, I employed causal inference in this chapter and discovered that the government’s strategies had had a mixed effect. Through the dynamic governmentality (here in the format of policy experimentation) that had been designed and adjusted by the state, the boundary between “public (state)” responsibility and “private (individual)” responsibility was redrawn. Chapter 4 also presented a crucial flaw in state governmentality: the complexity of its constitution and dependency on past tactics risked causing a mismatch between policy experimentation and local propaganda, and kindred simultaneously used tools. This flaw can be seen as an important gap for people’s cognition to break through. People are capable of identifying potential inconsistencies in the state’s governmentality and their reflections on these flaws may result in a serious challenge on the state’s legitimacy.

In Chapter 5, I investigated the issue of falsified compliance in China’s population and used various approaches to identify its existence, variations and implication for people’s actions and for the long-term legitimacy of the state. Falsified compliance exists in a coercive environment where people’s common sense somehow does not match the external scenario constructed by the authority. It should be noted that the state may not necessarily be using observable threats at the time because the prospect of pressure can effectively be inferred from historical events and reputation. The coexistence of “the state as a moral icon” and “the state as benefit provider” in Chinese political culture has presented a differentiated compliance falsification towards different representatives of the state. My evidence also pointed to a mismatch in people’s political knowledge: although it seems self-contradictory, private political knowledge and public political discourse sometimes run along different tracks. But many people choose to tolerate it without further questioning the persistent disconnection and discontinuity. Individuals’ tolerance regarding the inconsistencies in their knowledge and everyday lives acts as a buffer absorbing the external shocks from the political apparatus and preserving some private space.

From the qualitative evidence, many Chinese people seem to be pessimistic regarding any kind of political participation. However, some people are still keen to preserve their awareness, consciousness and rationality, in spite of the pressure from the state and the society. These people’s reflections on individual life choices, the state-individual relationship and sometimes the subjectivity that they present every day can empower positive counter-conduct. It can turn into

actions such as emigration (voting with their feet), or active political participation at the level of local communities (local elections, public hearings, etc.). Moreover, when the manipulation of popular opinion reveals flaws and leads to severe distrust and falsified compliance, it may lead in the long run to a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the state. An active state, however, will register the changes, readjust its understanding of the current scenario and improve its tactics before the flaws end in a “cascade”.

Contributions and Implications

Revisiting “governmentality” and “legitimacy” in state theory

My overall theoretical paradigm is constructed by integrating two important theoretical approaches to investigating state politics for dealing with the population. Moreover, I take advantage of an interactive relationship, whereby governmentality is treated as a means and population compliance as the outcome. In regimes where normative legitimacy does not exist, the method of using governmentality in response to various types of compliance from the public helps the regime to survive. Compliance as the objective of state governance here represents the condition of no public non-compliance, or, more specifically, no collective public non-compliance. The umbrella concept of “compliance” used in my work covers many possible sources of legitimacy built up through individuals’ expectations and judgment based on experience and the information in existing studies. For instance, Weber distinguishes three ideal types of authority—traditional authority, charismatic authority and legal-rational authority—as bases of the legitimation of power in modern states. Gramsci talks about “consent” from the dominated population, which can be generated by the civil society. Legitimacy can also be secured by the state’s socio-economic performance.

My work argues that these different sources of “legitimacy” do not exclude each other but may coexist in a regime. Essentially, belief about the state’s right to rule is a synthetic thing based on people’s cognition and their perceived information, or, to borrow a Foucauldian term, based on a person’s choice to “disposer”⁶³ the external factors. Individuals choose whether or not to offer compliance to the state authority according to their disposition of external information, personal experience and aspirations. In this way, the individual story of “belief” and “consent dovetails with the state story of “compliance from the population” and “legitimacy”.

⁶³ Foucault describes the state’s way of dealing with people and things using “disposer”.

With compliance as the state's aim, governmentality works as the means whereby the state—through information management, benefit distribution and coercion, among many other approaches—maintains its rule over the population. Scholars have examined various tactics used by the state and emphasised the value of “coercion” for generating passive compliance in non-democratic regimes. However, as clarified in the introductory chapter, the state is an active actor that can take the opportunity to enhance its rule by its methods of managing the trade-off between opportunities and challenges when dramatic social change presents them. Moreover, its governmentality is not isolated but is part of a comprehensive design. I discuss the sophisticated tactics used by the Chinese government and its dynamic adjustments to cope with the challenges in its reform process. The skilled use of policy experimentation, in particular, exemplifies the idea that governmentality is a process with careful design and the authority has a strong consciousness of “feed-forward” (A. Schneider & Sidney, 2009) in its policy making.

In addition to revealing the intertwined relationship of “legitimation” and “governmentality”, my work also addressed individuals' subjectivity in the grand “state theory”. Throughout Chapters 3, 4 and 5, we see how the government manages to objectify the population with well-calculated welfare reform, political status-based reallocation of benefits and strategic use of rationales from tradition, culture, communist rhetoric and economics. Individuals struggle with the subjectivity imposed by the state and external society. Their counter-conduct can take shape only passively, through falsified political attitudes when fear persists and information is controlled and manipulated by state power. However, reflections on the state-individual relationship can be seen in the population and collective reflection is sometimes possible. This recalls Foucault's words about the counter-conduct of people: “Probably the principal objective today is not to discover but to refuse what we are . . . We have to promote new forms of subjectivity while refusing the type of individuality (*more like 'collectivity', in China's case*) that has been imposed on us for several centuries” (Foucault, 1982, p. 785)

Methodological innovations

My work addresses some important methodological issues in sociology. This is shown in my analysis of China's pension reform, in which I address the trajectory and rationale of the reforms with a methodological approach combining the holistic and the positive (Durkheim, Catlin, Mueller, & Solovay, 1938) with individualism and understanding (Weber, 2017).

The holistic and positive approach— in particular, comparative historical analysis, in the broad sense—focuses on the structure and involvement of the institution and interprets social facts in their historical context in order to understand the reasons for their emergence or change.

This approach assumes that institutions or events unfold over time and in time. Therefore, features such as the length of the events and the timing of the appearance of the events affect the outcome or turnover of social facts. Studies following this tradition highlight processes over time, employing systematic and contextualized comparison (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003). This analytical approach is commonly used in social policy studies (such as Esping-Andersen, 1990; Flora, 2017) to identify the reasons for, differences in and outcome of social policies/programmes. In my thesis I traced the design of governmental programmes, sorted out the proposed timing of the reform and duration of the pension policy schemes for different social groups and compared variations such as their generosity, coverage and fairness. More importantly, I settled all these features in their own historical context and addressed their motivation as driven by other social and economic reforms at the time itself. With a systematic approach and treating social change as a dynamic process, I presented the changing design of different schemes together with the state's rationales for each.

The other face of analysing governmentality is “man” and the “things” attached to “man”. A sophisticated design of statecraft draws from the state's understanding of individuals' possible choices and the possible formats of collective behaviour. In this sense, the approach of methodological individualism is useful for addressing the details in statecraft, such as why specific information is emphasized in a certain policy, or why certain types of public knowledge are blocked, but not others. Individualistic analysis also confronts comparative historical analysis, by highlighting change in people's cognitional mode, people's expectations of others and the way that these in the long term put pressure on institutional change in their turn. The individualistic approach which can address the connection between institutional reforms and individuals' cognitive reorientation is also important in investigating people's choice to report or conceal compliance/non-compliance in public or in private, as suggested in Chapter 5.

My work shows that methodological approaches are tools with which to investigate questions that are thrown up by social facts. With appropriate design and modification, different approaches can complement each other in answering the research question. More importantly, as sociology has long debated the tension between “understanding social action as a product of interest-motivated, conscious choices by actors [and] as a product of normatively-constrained, habitualized responses” (Hinings, Tolbert, Greenwood, & Oliver, 2008, p. 486). My approach of treating as a continuum the range of actors' choices and behaviours (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996) in reaction to different socio-economic/historical situations is helpful for shedding light on complexities so long as the researcher can specify the details of these situations.

Brief thoughts on regime future: empirical implications

The substantive puzzle that motivated this research is the Chinese government's active effort to grasp the opportunities presented by social change while using governmentality to avoid fundamental challenges from the population. As my empirical evidence showed, the risks of leading a reform can largely be addressed by the state's constantly adjusting design of statecraft. What can also be figured out from the past 40 years' reform in China is that the Chinese government placed considerable bet on economic development as a way of maintaining its rule. Enlarging the cake for all to share not only increased the state's ability to allocate social and economic benefits, but also enhanced its capacity to issue propaganda and information monitor, imposing censorship and threats.

If economic growth declines, therefore, it can be dangerous for the state, pushing it to adjust and refine its governmentality again. Meanwhile, given the general trend against globalization, the surging conservatism, increasing ideological polarization and more heated conflicts over resources across the world as the late 2010s have proceeded (as seen in Trump's administration, Brexit, conservatism across Europe, the US-China trade war, and regional conflicts in the Middle East), China's governance will also change as it suffers more from external pressures. This pressure may become heavier because of the tight economic connections with the rest of the world that China has built throughout its opening up and reform. This period could be a significant turning point comparable to 40 years ago, when the leaders of the Chinese government actively abandoned the socialist package and led the grand social and economic reform.

China's present situation could bring advantageous opportunities for it to reduce the risks to its governance implicit in its deteriorating economy. For instance, as noted above, the modernization process of Chinese society has been extremely intense: its transformation from an agricultural society to an industrial society and then to an information society, a process which took Western countries hundreds of years, was compressed into half a century. Such an intense process can be a risk for the incumbent authority, since the ideologies and thoughts of the population must change so fast. However, it can also be an opportunity for the government to manipulate public opinion with the appropriate guidance. As evidence from Chapter 5 shows, even after 30 years of opening up and reform, Chinese society still has no established consciousness or consensus regarding modern ideologies or values. Concepts such as freedom, justice, fairness, and so on are doubted by many in such a highly divided society. Many still interpret the world with concepts and logics drawn from a traditional or a socialist political

culture. Once information and knowledge are controlled by the authority, it can easily lead to the aggravated involution of the public's political ideology. If the government could take full advantage of the population's characteristics and information asymmetry, it could persuade the whole country to accept the present economic stagnation and believe that the so-called political system of "Democracy with Chinese characteristics" is legitimate, needing no fundamental political reform.

Some initial changes in China's governmentality are already being made. From 2015, we have seen a tightening up of political power, an increase in the regulatory power of the party and a trend of "Delicacy Social Management" promoted by the government. Taking the "Delicacy Social Management" as an example, a case of city governance in Tianjin shows that the power of the social infrastructure infiltrates into the local community through the party system, mobilized community members and technology:

*"Nowadays, Tianjin has expanded the party organization into the buildings and blocks of the city. ... the governance network is coordinated and all parts of the community are actively involved. Network governance is not new, but in the past, each department had its own grid – they are all of different sizes. The governance responsibility lies mainly on the local community officials who don't really have enough energy or specific knowledge of social problems'... Therefore, Tianjin city divided the 16 districts into more than 170,000 grids and recruited specific officials as coordinators. ... For instance, Beichen district has become 120 grids, each with 1 community police officer and 3 coordinators. Once they see a problem that they can't solve, they report it to a higher ranking governance centre and the centre organizes the proper department to solve the problem ... There are also communities and villages organizing volunteers from the public in order to extend the power of this network governance ... such as the Chaoyangli community. Nowadays we have 1382 registered volunteers, comprising 22% of the community population ... Technology is also helpful for Tianjin's social governance. In addition to the increased number of monitoring units, we have also designed Apps such as 'Hexi power', 'Beijing integrated governance' and so on, so users can upload pictures whenever possible."*⁶⁴

In addition, further examples show the official propaganda tending to play the nationalist card when addressing the international situation; more technology-based monitors, both online

⁶⁴ Li Kun, Tianjin: Enhancing the Party's leadership, construct a "three in one" new version of social governance system. *Xinhua Net*, 2018-12-20, (<https://finance.sina.com.cn/roll/2018-12-20/doc-ihqhqcir8655702.shtml>) [Accessed 2019-06-12]. Author's translation.

and offline; more barriers when individuals want more information than the state mouthpiece provides. As regards the economic stagnation, the state has accelerated the pace of its expanding investment and influence in Africa, trying to help the state's capital to increase and the domestic industrial structure to make the transition. These tactics, however, are inadequate and cannot completely remove the risks of economic collapse and social unrest. They themselves contain the possibility of collective non-compliance that may endanger the authority's rule. For instance, the state's strict preference for social monitoring and sustained social stability may lead to more conflicts when individuals or social groups seek to defend their personal interests. The expansion of state capital may usefully steady the current economy; however, it will squeeze the space available to of the private sector and damage the long-term economic environment. It is still very uncertain which direction the regime will follow and is open to further academic investigation.

Reference

- Abadie, A., & Gardeazabal, J. (2003). The economic costs of conflict: A case study of the Basque Country. *American Economic Review*, 93(1), 113-132.
- Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2013). Why Nations fail-the origins of power, prosperity and poverty. *Id Econo*, 2, 118-121.
- Acemoglu, D., Ticchi, D., & Vindigni, A. (2010). A theory of military dictatorships. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 2(1), 1-42.
- Anderson, C. J., & Tverdova, Y. V. (2003). Corruption, political allegiances, and attitudes toward government in contemporary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 91-109.
- Anderson, K., & Ebbinghaus, B. (2011). The Varieties of Pension Governance. Pension Privatization in Europe.
- Angrist, J. D., Imbens, G. W., & Rubin, D. B. (1996). Identification of causal effects using instrumental variables. *Journal of the American statistical Association*, 91(434), 444-455.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Asch, S. E., & Guetzkow, H. (1951). Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments. *Documents of gestalt psychology*, 222-236.
- Ashenfelter, O. (1978). Estimating the effect of training programs on earnings. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 47-57.
- Bank, C. M. (2017). *China Minsheng Bank Report*.
- Beck, H. (1997). *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia: conservatives, bureaucracy, and the social question, 1815-70*: University of Michigan Press.
- Beetham, D. (1991). Max Weber and the legitimacy of the modern state. *Analyse & Kritik*, 13(1), 34-45.
- Beetham, D. (1995). What future for economic and social rights? *Political Studies*, 43(1), 41-60.
- Béland, D. (2005). Ideas and social policy: An institutionalist perspective. *Social Policy & Administration*, 39(1), 1-18.
- Benish, A., Haber, H., & Eliahou, R. (2017). The regulatory welfare state in pension markets:

- mitigating high charges for low-income savers in the United Kingdom and Israel. *Journal of Social Policy*, 46(2), 313-330.
- Bennett, P., & Naim, M. (2015). 21st Century Censorship: Governments around the World Are Using Stealthy Strategies to Manipulate the Media. *Columbia Journalism Review*.
- Bernstein, T. P. (2013). Resilience and collapse in China and the Soviet Union. *Why Communism did not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*, 40-63.
- Bian, Y. (2002). Chinese social stratification and social mobility. *Annual review of sociology*, 28(1), 91-116.
- Bian, Y., & Logan, J. R. (1996). Market transition and the persistence of power: The changing stratification system in urban China. *American Sociological Review*, 739-758.
- Bian, Y., & Qiu, H. (2000). The social capital of enterprises and its efficiency. *Social Sciences in China*, 2, 87-99.
- Blair, G., & Imai, K. (2012). Statistical analysis of list experiments. *Political analysis*, 20(1), 47-77.
- Blair, G., Imai, K., & Lyall, J. (2014). Comparing and combining list and endorsement experiments: Evidence from Afghanistan. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(4), 1043-1063.
- Blydes, L. (2006). *Who votes in authoritarian elections and why? Vote buying, turnout, and spoiled ballots in contemporary Egypt*. Paper presented at the APSA Annual Meeting, Philadelphia.
- Boix, C., & Svobik, M. W. (2013). The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(2), 300-316.
- Booth, J. A., & Seligson, M. A. (2009). *The legitimacy puzzle in Latin America: Political support and democracy in eight nations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Boushey, G. (2016). Targeted for diffusion? How the use and acceptance of stereotypes shape the diffusion of criminal justice policy innovations in the American states. *American political science Review*, 110(1), 198-214.
- Braungart, R. G., & Braungart, M. M. (1986). Life-course and generational politics. *Annual review of sociology*, 12(1), 205-231.
- Bray, D. (2005). *Social space and governance in urban China: The danwei system from origins to reform*. Stanford University Press.

- Bueno de Mesquita, B., & Downs, G. W. (2005). Development and democracy. *Foreign Aff.*, 84, 77.
- Burawoy, M. (1982). *Manufacturing consent: Changes in the labor process under monopoly capitalism*. University of Chicago Press.
- Burawoy, M. (2000). A sociology for the second great transformation? *Annual review of sociology*, 26(1), 693-695.
- Burawoy, M. (2012). The roots of domination: beyond Bourdieu and Gramsci. *Sociology*, 46(2), 187-206.
- Burstein, P. (1998). Bringing the public back in: should sociologists consider the impact of public opinion on public policy? *Social forces*, 77(1), 27-62.
- Bursztyjn, L., & Jensen, R. (2017). Social image and economic behavior in the field: Identifying, understanding, and shaping social pressure. *Annual Review of Economics*, 9, 131-153.
- Cai, H., & Treisman, D. (2006). Did government decentralization cause China's economic miracle? *World politics*, 58(4), 505-535.
- Cai, Y. (2002). The resistance of Chinese laid-off workers in the reform period. *The China Quarterly*, 170, 327-344.
- Cai, Y., Feng, W., & Shen, K. (2018). Fiscal implications of population aging and social sector expenditure in China. *Population and Development Review*, 44(4), 811-831.
- Cantoni, D., Chen, Y., Yang, D. Y., Yuchtman, N., & Zhang, Y. J. (2017). Curriculum and ideology. *Journal of Political Economy*, 125(2), 338-392.
- Cao, Y., & Nee, V. G. (2000). Comment: Controversies and evidence in the market transition debate. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(4), 1175-1189.
- Centola, D., Willer, R., & Macy, M. (2005). The emperor's dilemma: A computational model of self-enforcing norms. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(4), 1009-1040.
- Chan, C. K., Ngok, K., & Phillips, D. (2008). *Social policy in China: Development and well-being*. Policy Press.
- Chan, K. W., & Buckingham, W. (2008). Is China abolishing the hukou system? *The China Quarterly*, 195, 582-606.
- Chan, K. W., & Zhang, L. (1999). The hukou system and rural-urban migration in China: Processes and changes. *The China Quarterly*, 160, 818-855.

- Chao, C.-m., & Dickson, B. (2003). *Remaking the Chinese state: strategies, society, and security*. Routledge.
- Chen, C.-J. (2009). Growing social unrest and emergent protest groups in China *Rise of China* (pp. 101-120): Routledge.
- Chen, J., & Xu, Y. (2017). Why do authoritarian regimes allow citizens to voice opinions publicly? *The Journal of Politics*, 79(3), 792-803.
- Chen, X., & Shi, T. (2001). Media effects on political confidence and trust in the People's Republic of China in the post-Tiananmen period. *East Asia*, 19(3), 84-118.
- Chen, Y., & Yang, D. Y. (2019). The Impact of Media Censorship: 1984 or Brave New World? *American Economic Review*, 109(6), 2294-2332.
- Cheng, T., & Selden, M. (1994). The origins and social consequences of China's hukou system. *The China Quarterly*, 139, 644-668.
- Cook, L. J. (1993). *The Soviet social contract and why it failed: welfare policy and workers' politics from Brezhnev to Yeltsin* (Vol. 86): Harvard University Press.
- Cook, L. J. (2013). *Postcommunist welfare states: Reform politics in Russia and Eastern Europe*. Cornell University Press.
- Cornwall, A., & Gaventa, J. (2000). From users and choosers to makers and shapers repositioning participation in social policy1. *IDS Bulletin*, 31(4), 50-62.
- Council, G. O. o. t. S. (2000). *Opinions on Accelerating the Process of Social Welfare Socialization*. Retrieved from <http://shfl.mca.gov.cn/article/zcfg/200809/20080900019761.shtml>.
- Council, S. (1997). *Decision on Establishing a Unified System of Basic Pension Insurance for Enterprise Employees* (State Council [1997] No.26). Retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/ztl/nmg/content_412509.htm.
- Council, S. (2000). *The Notice of Issuing the Pilot Program of Urban Social Security System* (State Council [2000] No.42). Retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/xxgk/pub/govpublic/mrlm/201011/t20101112_62507.html.
- Council, S. (2002). *New Rural Collaborative Health Insurance Scheme*.
- Council, S. (2005). *Decision on perfecting basic system of pension insurance for enterprise employees* (State Council [2005] No.38). Retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2005-12/14/content_127311.htm.

- Council, S. (2009). *New Rural Old-age Social Insurance Plan (State Council [2009] No. 32)* Retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2009-09/04/content_1409216.htm.
- Council, S. (2014). *Urban-Rural Residents Basic Old-age Social Insurance Scheme (State Council [2014] No. 8)*. Retrieved from http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2014-02/26/content_2621907.htm.
- Cox, R. H. (2001). The social construction of an imperative: why welfare reform happened in Denmark and the Netherlands but not in Germany. *World politics*, 53(3), 463-498.
- Daldal, A. (2014). Power and ideology in Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci: A comparative analysis. *Review of History and Political Science*, 2(2), 149-167.
- Dean, M. (2010). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society*: Sage publications.
- Denisova, I., Eller, M., Frye, T., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2012). Everyone hates privatization, but why? Survey evidence from 28 post-communist countries. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 40(1), 44-61.
- Di Tella, R., Galiani, S., & Schargrodsky, E. (2012). Reality versus Propaganda in the Formation of Beliefs about Privatization. *Journal of Public Economics*, 96(5-6), 553-567.
- Dimitrov, M. K. (2013). Understanding communist collapse and resilience. *Why Communism did not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*, 3-39.
- Distelhorst, G., & Hou, Y. (2014). Ingroup bias in official behavior: A national field experiment in China. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 9(2), 203-230.
- Donnelly, J. (1981). Recent trends in UN human rights activity: Description and polemic. *International Organization*, 35(4), 633-655.
- Donovan, M. C. (2001). *Taking aim: Target populations and the wars on AIDS and drugs*: Georgetown University Press.
- Douglas, M. (1986). *How institutions think*: Syracuse University Press.
- Duara, P. (1987). State involution: a study of local finances in north China, 1911–1935. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29(1), 132-161.
- Duara, P. (1991). *Culture, power, and the state: rural North China, 1900-1942*: Stanford University Press.
- Durkheim, E., Catlin, G. E. G., Mueller, J. H., & Solovay, S. A. (1938). *The rules of sociological method* (Vol. 8): Free Press New York.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A systems analysis of political life*: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

- Easton, D. (1975). A re-assessment of the concept of political support. *British Journal of Political Science*, 5(4), 435-457.
- Edmond, C. (2013). Information manipulation, coordination, and regime change. *Review of Economic Studies*, 80(4), 1422-1458.
- Edwards, A. L. (1957). *The social desirability variable in personality assessment and research*. Ft Worth, TX, US: Dryden Press.
- Egorov, G., Guriev, S., & Sonin, K. (2009). Why resource-poor dictators allow freer media: A theory and evidence from panel data. *American political science Review*, 103(4), 645-668.
- Egorov, G., & Sonin, K. (2011). Dictators and their viziers: Endogenizing the loyalty–competence trade-off. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 9(5), 903-930.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Agency theory: An assessment and review. *Academy of management review*, 14(1), 57-74.
- Ekman, J., & Linde, J. (2005). Communist nostalgia and the consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 21(3), 354-374.
- Ensafi, R., Winter, P., Mueen, A., & Crandall, J. R. (2015). Analyzing the Great Firewall of China over space and time. *Proceedings on privacy enhancing technologies*, 2015(1), 61-76.
- Epstein, A. B. (1997). *Village elections in China: experimenting with democracy*. Paper presented at the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress, ed. China's Economic Future: Challenges to US Policy. Armonk: ME Sharpe.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Eyal, G., Szelenyi, I., Szelényi, I., & Townsley, E. R. (1998). *Making capitalism without capitalists: Class formation and elite struggles in post-communist Central Europe*. Verso.
- Fan, X., & Fu, W. (2009). The New Scheme of Rural Compulsory Education: Effectiveness, Problem, and Solution. *Journal of Huazhong Normal University*, 4.
- Fan, Y. (2015). The centre decides and the local pays: Mandates and politics in local government financial management in China. *Local Government Studies*, 41(4), 516-533.
- Ferge, Z. (1997). The changed welfare paradigm: the individualization of the social. *Social Policy & Administration*, 31(1), 20-44.
- Ferge, Z. (2001). Welfare and 'ill-fare' systems in Central-Eastern Europe *Globalization and*

- European welfare states* (pp. 127-152): Springer.
- Festinger, L. (1962). *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (Vol. 2): Stanford university press.
- Fisher, R. A. (1960). The design of experiments. *The design of experiments*.(7th Ed).
- Fishkin, J. S., He, B., Luskin, R. C., & Siu, A. (2010). Deliberative democracy in an unlikely place: Deliberative polling in China. *British Journal of Political Science*, 40(2), 435-448.
- Flora, P. (2017). *Development of welfare states in Europe and America*: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.
- Foucault, M. (2009). *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78* (M. Senellart Ed.): Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M., Davidson, A. I., & Burchell, G. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*: Springer.
- Frank, R. H. (1996). The Political Economy of Preference Falsification: Timur Kuran's Private Truths, Public Lies. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 34(1), 115.
- Frazier, M. W. (2010). *Socialist insecurity: Pensions and the politics of uneven development in China*: Cornell University Press Ithaca, NY.
- Freeman, R. E. (2010). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*: Cambridge university press.
- Frye, T., Gehlbach, S., Marquardt, K. L., & Reuter, O. J. (2017). Is Putin's popularity real? *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 33(1), 1-15.
- Fuchs, D. (2007). The political culture paradigm *The Oxford handbook of political behavior*.
- Gallagher, M., & Hanson, J. K. (2009). Coalitions, carrots, and sticks: economic inequality and authoritarian states. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 42(4), 667-672.
- Gallagher, M. E. (2011). *Contagious capitalism: Globalization and the politics of labor in China*: Princeton University Press.
- Gao, Q. (2006). The social benefit system in urban China: Reforms and trends from 1988 to 2002. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 6(1), 31-67.
- Gao, Q., Yang, S., & Li, S. (2013). The Chinese welfare state in transition: 1988–2007. *Journal of Social Policy*, 42(4), 743-762.
- Garnaut, R., Song, L., & Fang, C. (2018). *China's 40 years of reform and development: 1978–2018*: ANU Press.

- Geddes, B., & Zaller, J. (1989). Sources of popular support for authoritarian regimes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 319-347.
- Geertz, C. (1963). *Agricultural involution: the process of ecological change in Indonesia*: Univ of California Press.
- Gehlbach, S., & Keefer, P. (2011). Investment without democracy: Ruling-party institutionalization and credible commitment in autocracies. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 39(2), 123-139.
- Gentzkow, M. (2006). Television and voter turnout. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(3), 931-972.
- Gerber, A. S., & Green, D. P. (2012). *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*: WW Norton.
- Giddens, A. (1981). *A contemporary critique of historical materialism: the nation-state and violence*: Univ of California Press.
- Gilley, B., & Holbig, H. (2009). The debate on party legitimacy in China: a mixed quantitative/qualitative analysis. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(59), 339-358.
- Glasberg, D. S., & Shannon, D. (2010). *Political sociology: Oppression, resistance, and the state*: SAGE Publications.
- Glass, J., Bengtson, V. L., & Dunham, C. C. (1986). Attitude similarity in three-generation families: Socialization, status inheritance, or reciprocal influence? *American Sociological Review*, 685-698.
- Glynn, A. N. (2013). What can we learn with statistical truth serum? Design and analysis of the list experiment. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 77(S1), 159-172.
- Goffman, E. (1978). *The presentation of self in everyday life*: Harmondsworth London.
- Goffman, E. (2017). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*: Routledge.
- Goode, E., & Ben-Yehuda, N. (1994). Moral panics: Culture, politics, and social construction. *Annual review of sociology*, 20(1), 149-171.
- Gorski, P. S. (1993). The Protestant ethic revisited: Disciplinary revolution and state formation in Holland and Prussia. *American Journal of Sociology*, 99(2), 265-316.
- Gough, I. (2001). Globalization and regional welfare regimes: The East Asian case. *Global Social Policy*, 1(2), 163-189.

- Gramsci, A., Hoare, Q., & Nowell-Smith, G. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*: Lawrence and Wishart Limited.
- Gregory, P. R., Schröder, P. J., & Sonin, K. (2006). Dictators, Repression and the Median Citizen: An 'Eliminations Model' of Stalin's 'Terror' (Data from the NKVD Archives).
- Gries, P. H. (2004). *China's new nationalism: Pride, politics, and diplomacy*: Univ of California Press.
- Grimes, M. (2008). Consent, political trust and compliance: Rejoinder to Kaina's remarks on 'Organizing consent'. *European Journal of Political Research*, 47(4), 522-535.
- Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B. M. (2013). Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts. *Political analysis*, 21(3), 267-297.
- Grün, B., Hornik, K., & Grün, M. B. (2018). Package 'topicmodels'.
- Gu, E. X. (1999). From permanent employment to massive lay-offs: the political economy of 'transitional unemployment' in urban China (1993–8). *Economy and Society*, 28(2), 281-299.
- Gu, E. X. (2001). Dismantling the Chinese mini-welfare state?: Marketization and the politics of institutional transformation, 1979–1999. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 34(1), 91-111.
- Guo, B. (2003). Political legitimacy and China's transition. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 8(1-2), 1-25.
- Guriev, S., & Treisman, D. (2015). *How modern dictators survive: An informational theory of the new authoritarianism*. Retrieved from
- Guthrie, D. (2012). *China and globalization: The social, economic and political transformation of Chinese society*: Routledge.
- Habermas, J. (1975). *Legitimation crisis* (Vol. 519): Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1976). Problems of legitimation in late capitalism. *Critical sociology*, 363-387.
- Habermas, J. (1994). Three normative models of democracy. *Constellations*, 1(1), 1-10.
- Hacker, J. S. (2002). *The divided welfare state: The battle over public and private social benefits in the United States*: Cambridge University Press.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2008). *Development, democracy, and welfare states: Latin America, East Asia, and eastern Europe*: Princeton University Press.
- Hahn, J. W., & Logvinenko, I. (2008). Generational differences in Russian attitudes towards democracy and the economy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60(8), 1345-1369.

- Hainmueller, J. (2012). Entropy balancing for causal effects: A multivariate reweighting method to produce balanced samples in observational studies. *Political analysis*, 20(1), 25-46.
- Hainmueller, J., Hopkins, D. J., & Yamamoto, T. (2014). Causal inference in conjoint analysis: Understanding multidimensional choices via stated preference experiments. *Political analysis*, 22(1), 1-30.
- Hale, H. E., & Colton, T. J. (2017). Who Defects? Unpacking a Defection Cascade from Russia's Dominant Party 2008–12. *American political science Review*, 111(2), 322-337.
- Hall, P. A. (2001). The evolution of economic policy. *Developments in French politics*, 2, 172-191.
- Hamilton, G. G., Biggart, N. W., Reagan, R., & Brown, J. (1984). *Governor Reagan, Governor Brown. A sociology of executive power*. Columbia Univ P XI.
- Han, R. (2015). Defending the authoritarian regime online: china's "voluntary fifty-cent army". *The China Quarterly*, 224, 1006-1025.
- He, B., & Warren, M. E. (2011). Authoritarian deliberation: The deliberative turn in Chinese political development. *Perspectives on Politics*, 9(2), 269-289.
- Heilmann, S. (2008a). From local experiments to national policy: the origins of China's distinctive policy process. *The China Journal*(59), 1-30.
- Heilmann, S. (2008b). Policy experimentation in China's economic rise. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 43(1), 1-26.
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (2010). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. Random House.
- Heyns, B. (2005). Emerging inequalities in central and Eastern Europe. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 31, 163-197.
- Hinings, C. R., Tolbert, P. S., Greenwood, R., & Oliver, C. (2008). Organizational institutionalism and sociology: A reflection. *Royston Greenwood, Kerstin Sablin Anderson, Christine Oliver and Roy Suddaby, The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism*, Sage, London, 473-492.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states* (Vol. 25): Harvard university press.
- Holbig, H. (2008). Ideological reform and political legitimacy in China: Challenges in the post-Jiang era *Regime legitimacy in contemporary China* (pp. 27-48): Routledge.

- Holbig, H., & Gilley, B. (2010). Reclaiming legitimacy in China. *Politics & policy*, 38(3), 395-422.
- Hopkins, D. J., & King, G. (2010). A method of automated nonparametric content analysis for social science. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(1), 229-247.
- Howard, M. M., & Howard, M. M. (2003). *The weakness of civil society in post-communist Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Howard, R. (1983). The Full-Belly Thesis: Should Economic Rights Take Priority over Civil and Political Rights-Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 5, 467.
- Huang, H. (2013). Signal left, turn right: central rhetoric and local reform in China. *Political Research Quarterly*, 66(2), 292-305.
- Huang, H. (2015). Propaganda as signaling. *Comparative Politics*, 47(4), 419-444.
- Huang, H. (2017). A war of (mis) information: The political effects of rumors and rumor rebuttals in an authoritarian country. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47(2), 283-311.
- Huang, H. (2018). The pathology of hard propaganda. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(3), 1034-1038.
- Huang, P. C. (1990). *The peasant family and rural development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350-1988*: Stanford University Press.
- Huang, P. C. (2012). Profit-Making State Firms and China's Development Experience: "State Capitalism" or "Socialist Market Economy"? *Modern China*, 38(6), 591-629.
- Huang, X. (2014). *Social protection under authoritarianism: Politics and policy of social health insurance in China*. Columbia University.
- Huang, Y. (2001). Internal and external reforms: experiences and lessons from China. *Cato J.*, 21, 43.
- Huntington, S. P. (2006). *Political order in changing societies*. Yale University Press.
- Hynes, B. O. D., & Hayes, N. (2011). Who benefits from early childcare subsidy design in Ireland? *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 19(3), 277-288.
- Iacus, S. M., King, G., & Porro, G. (2012). Causal inference without balance checking: Coarsened exact matching. *Political analysis*, 20(1), 1-24.
- Im, D.-K., & Meng, T. (2015). The policy-opinion Nexus: the impact of social protection programs on welfare policy preferences in China. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 28(2), 241-268.
- Imai, K., Keele, L., Tingley, D., & Yamamoto, T. (2011). Unpacking the black box of causality:

- Learning about causal mechanisms from experimental and observational studies. *American political science Review*, 105(4), 765-789.
- Imai, K., Keele, L., & Yamamoto, T. (2010). Identification, inference and sensitivity analysis for causal mediation effects. *Statistical science*, 51-71.
- Imbens, G. W., & Lemieux, T. (2008). Regression discontinuity designs: A guide to practice. *Journal of econometrics*, 142(2), 615-635.
- Inglehart, R. (2018). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*: Princeton University Press.
- J. O'Gorman, H. (1986). The discovery of pluralistic ignorance: An ironic lesson. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 22(4), 333-347.
- Jackson, M. V., & Evans, G. (2017). Rebuilding walls: Market transition and social mobility in the post-socialist societies of Europe. *Sociological Science*, 4, 54-79.
- Jefferson, G. H., & Rawski, T. G. (1994). Enterprise reform in Chinese industry. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 8(2), 47-70.
- Jennings, M. K. (1996). Political knowledge over time and across generations. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 60(2), 228-252.
- Jiang, J., & Yang, D. L. (2016). Lying or believing? Measuring preference falsification from a political purge in China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 49(5), 600-634.
- Johansson, A., & Vinthagen, S. (2016). Dimensions of everyday resistance: An analytical framework. *Critical sociology*, 42(3), 417-435.
- Kamenica, E., & Gentzkow, M. (2011). Bayesian persuasion. *American Economic Review*, 101(6), 2590-2615.
- Karshenas, M., & Moghadam, V. M. (2006). *Social Policy in the Middle East: Economic, Political and Gender Dynamics*. United Kingdom: Houndsmills; Palgrave Macmillan.
- Keefer, P., & Khemani, S. (2011). *Mass media and public services: The effects of radio access on public education in Benin*. The World Bank.
- Kelly, D. (2006). Citizen movements and China's public intellectuals in the Hu-Wen era. *Pacific Affairs*, 79(2), 183-204.
- Kennedy, J. J. (2009). Maintaining popular support for the Chinese Communist Party: the influence of education and the state-controlled media. *Political Studies*, 57(3), 517-536.
- Kiser, E. (1999). Comparing varieties of agency theory in economics, political science, and

- sociology: An illustration from state policy implementation. *Sociological Theory*, 17(2), 146-170.
- Kohli, A., Shue, V., & Migdal, J. S. (1994). *State power and social forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
- Kornai, J. (1992). *The socialist system: The political economy of communism*. Oxford University Press.
- Kricheli, R., Livne, Y., & Magaloni, B. (2011). *Taking to the streets: Theory and evidence on protests under authoritarianism*. Paper presented at the APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper.
- Kuran, T. (1991). Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European revolution of 1989. *World politics*, 44(1), 7-48.
- Kuran, T. (1997). *Private truths, public lies: The social consequences of preference falsification*. Harvard University Press.
- Lane, C. (1984). Legitimacy and power in the Soviet Union through socialist ritual. *British Journal of Political Science*, 14(2), 207-217.
- Lane, D. (2007). Post-state socialism: a diversity of capitalisms? *Varieties of capitalism in post-communist countries* (pp. 13-39): Springer.
- Lawrence, E., Stoker, R., & Wolman, H. (2013). The effects of beneficiary targeting on public support for social policies. *Policy Studies Journal*, 41(2), 199-216.
- Lazer, D., Rubineau, B., Chetkovich, C., Katz, N., & Neblo, M. A. (2008). Networks and political attitudes: Structure, influence, and co-evolution.
- Le Bon, G. (1897). *The crowd: A study of the popular mind*. Fischer.
- Lee, C. K., & Zhang, Y. (2013). The power of instability: Unraveling the microfoundations of bargained authoritarianism in China. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(6), 1475-1508.
- Lee, M.-k. (2000). *Chinese occupational welfare in market transition*. Springer.
- Lessenich, S. (2010). Constructing the socialized self: Mobilization and control in the “active society”. In *Governmentality* (pp. 312-328). Routledge.
- Leung, J. C., & Nann, R. C. (1995). *Authority and benevolence: Social welfare in China*. Chinese University Press.
- Leung, J. C., & Wong, H. S. (1999). The emergence of a community-based social assistance programme in urban China. *Social Policy & Administration*, 33(1), 39-54.

- Leung, J. C., & Xu, Y. (2015). *China's social welfare: The third turning point*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Levi, M. (1997). *Consent, dissent, and patriotism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Li, B., & Zhong, Y. (2009). How did China's transitions impact people's welfare benefits in the reform era? *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(62), 813-829.
- Li, J. (2019). Package 'tmcn'.
- Li, J., & Ge, K. (2010). Review of Pension Insurance Individual Account Studies *Social Security Studies*(2), 21-26.
- Li, L. (2010). Rights consciousness and rules consciousness in contemporary China. *The China Journal*(64), 47-68.
- Li, L., & O'Brien, K. J. (2006). *Rightful resistance in rural China*. Cambridge University Press.
- Li, P., & Zhang, Y. (1999). Social cost of state-owned enterprises: Investigation on 508 enterprises in 10 Chinese cities. *Social Sciences in China*, 5(8).
- Li, Z., & Wang, H. (2009). Return Rate and Replacement Rate of Individual Account in Basic Pension Insurance. *Journal of Public Management*, 6(4), 45-51.
- Lin, D., & Ding, Y. (2007). New Pension Policy: Replacement Rate Comparison of New-Old Pension Insurance Policies. *Population and Economy*(1), 69-74.
- Linz, J. J. (1988). Legitimacy of democracy and the socioeconomic system. *Comparing pluralist democracies*, 65-113.
- Linz, J. J., Greenstein, F. I., & Polsby, N. W. (1975). *Handbook of Political Science* (pp. 174-411): Addison-Wesley Reading MA.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American political science Review*, 53(1), 69-105.
- Lipset, S. M. (1994). *The state of American sociology*. Paper presented at the Sociological Forum.
- Lipset, S. M. (1995). The social requisites of democracy revisited *Einigung und Zerfall: Deutschland und Europa nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts* (pp. 287-314): Springer.
- Lipset, S. M., & Man, P. (1960). The social bases of politics. *Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press*.
- Lipsmeyer, C. S. (2000). Reading between the welfare lines: Politics and policy structure in post-communist Europe. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52(7), 1191-1211.

- Liu, T., & Sun, L. (2016). Pension reform in China. *Journal of aging & social policy*, 28(1), 15-28.
- Lohmann, S. (1993). A signaling model of informative and manipulative political action. *American political science Review*, 87(2), 319-333.
- Lohmann, S. (1994). The dynamics of informational cascades: The Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91. *World politics*, 47(1), 42-101.
- Lord, C., & Beetham, D. (2001). Legitimizing the EU: Is there a Post-parliamentary Basis for its Legitimation? *JCMS: Journal of common market studies*, 39(3), 443-462.
- Lorentzen, P. (2014). China's strategic censorship. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2), 402-414.
- Lorentzen, P. L. (2013). Regularizing rioting: Permitting public protest in an authoritarian regime. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 8(2), 127-158.
- Lorentzen, P. L., & Scoggins, S. E. (2011). Rising Rights Consciousness: Undermining or Undergirding China's Stability? *Available at SSRN 1722352*.
- Lü, X. (2014). Social policy and regime legitimacy: the effects of education reform in China. *American political science Review*, 108(2), 423-437.
- Lu, X., & Perry, E. J. (1997). *Danwei: The changing Chinese workplace in historical and comparative perspective*. Me Sharpe.
- Lucas, C., Nielsen, R. A., Roberts, M. E., Stewart, B. M., Storer, A., & Tingley, D. (2015). Computer-assisted text analysis for comparative politics. *Political analysis*, 23(2), 254-277.
- Lust-Okar, E. (2006). Elections under authoritarianism: Preliminary lessons from Jordan. *Democratization*, 13(3), 456-471.
- Magaloni, B. (2006). *Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico* (Vol. 296): Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
- Mahoney, J., & Rueschemeyer, D. (2003). *Comparative historical analysis in the social sciences*: Cambridge University Press.
- Manion, M. (1996). The electoral connection in the Chinese countryside. *American political science Review*, 90(4), 736-748.
- Manza, J., & Brooks, C. (2012). How sociology lost public opinion: A genealogy of a missing concept in the study of the political. *Sociological Theory*, 30(2), 89-113.
- Mares, I., & Carnes, M. E. (2009). Social policy in developing countries. *Annual Review of Political*

Science, 12, 93-113.

- Marshall, T. H. (1964). Class, citizenship and social development. *New York, 19642*.
- Mashaw, J. L. (2006). Accountability and institutional design: Some thoughts on the grammar of governance. *Public Law Working Paper*(116), 115-156.
- Mattingly, Daniel C. (2019). *The Art of Political Control in China*. Cambridge University Press.
- Maynard-Moody, S. W., Musheno, M., & Musheno, M. C. (2003). *Cops, teachers, counselors: Stories from the front lines of public service*. University of Michigan Press.
- McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212-1241.
- McMillan, J., & Zoido, P. (2004). How to subvert democracy: Montesinos in Peru. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18(4), 69-92.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mei, C., & Liu, Z. (2014). Experiment-based policy making or conscious policy design? The case of urban housing reform in China. *Policy Sciences*, 47(3), 321-337.
- Meng, T., & Zhu, X. (2015). Quality of Redistribution: Improving Political Trust through Providing Redistributive Schemes in China. *Working Paper*.
- Meyer, D. S., & Staggenborg, S. (1996). Movements, countermovements, and the structure of political opportunity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 101(6), 1628-1660.
- Miller, A. H., Hesli, V. L., & Reisinger, W. M. (1994). Reassessing mass support for political and economic change in the former USSR. *American political science Review*, 88(2), 399-411.
- Montinola, G., Qian, Y., & Weingast, B. R. (1995). Federalism, Chinese style: the political basis for economic success in China. *World politics*, 48(1), 50-81.
- Moore, B. (1966). *Social origins of democracy and dictatorship*. Boston: Beacon.
- Morgan, S. L., & Harding, D. J. (2006). Matching estimators of causal effects: Prospects and pitfalls in theory and practice. *Sociological methods & research*, 35(1), 3-60.
- Munro, N. (2006). Russia's persistent communist legacy: nostalgia, reaction, and reactionary expectations. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 22(4), 289-313.
- Murphey, R. (2013). *The fading of the Maoist vision: city and country in China's development*. Routledge.
- Myerson, R. B. (2008). The autocrat's credibility problem and foundations of the constitutional

- state. *American political science Review*, 102(1), 125-139.
- Nannestad, P., & Paldam, M. (1994). The VP-function: A survey of the literature on vote and popularity functions after 25 years. *Public Choice*, 79(3-4), 213-245.
- Nathan, A. (2003). China's resilient authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1), 6-17.
- Naughton, B., & Tsai, K. S. (2015). *State capitalism, institutional adaptation, and the Chinese miracle*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nechemias, C. R. (1980). Welfare in the Soviet Union: Health Care, Housing, and Personal Consumption. *Public policy and administration in the Soviet Union*, 172-206.
- Nederhof, A. J. (1985). Methods of coping with social desirability bias: A review. *European journal of social psychology*, 15(3), 263-280.
- Nee, V. (1989). A theory of market transition: From redistribution to markets in state socialism. *American Sociological Review*, 663-681.
- Nee, V. (1991). Social inequalities in reforming state socialism: between redistribution and markets in China. *American Sociological Review*, 267-282.
- Nee, V. (1996). The emergence of a market society: Changing mechanisms of stratification in China. *American Journal of Sociology*, 101(4), 908-949.
- Nee, V. (2000). The role of the state in making a market economy. *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics (JITE)/ Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, 64-88.
- Ngok, K. (2013). Shaping social policy in the reform era in China. *Handbook on east Asian social policy*, 105-128.
- Ngok, K.-I. (2010). Social assistance policy and its impact on social development in China: The case of the Minimum Living Standard Scheme (MLSS). *China Journal of Social Work*, 3(1), 35-52.
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). *The spiral of silence: Public opinion, our social skin*. University of Chicago Press.
- Nullmeier, F., & Kaufmann, F.-X. (2010). Post-War Welfare State Development—The Temporal Perspective *The Oxford Handbook of the welfare state*.
- Nuti, M. (2000). Belarus: A command economy without central planning. *Russian & East European Finance and Trade*, 36(4), 45-79.
- Nuti, M. (2007). Belarus: Prototype for Market Socialism? *The Transformation of State Socialism* (pp.

221-232): Springer.

- OECD, O. f. E. C. a. D. (2005). *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Annual Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/about/34711139.pdf>
- Offe, C. (1987). II. Democracy against the welfare state? Structural foundations of neoconservative political opportunities. *Political theory*, 15(4), 501-537.
- Oi, J. C., & Walder, A. G. (1999). *Property rights and economic reform in China*. Stanford University Press.
- Paik, W., & Lee, K. (2012). I Want To Be Expropriated!: the politics of xiaochanquanfang land development in suburban China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21(74), 261-279.
- Paluckiene, J., Taljūnaitė, M., Blom, R., & Melin, H. (2000). Post-socialist welfare state and gender: a comparative study in the Baltic States. *Streaming Towards Social Stability, Social Studies*, 4, 95-109.
- Pei, M. (1996). Microfoundations of state-socialism and patterns of economic transformation. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 29(2), 131-145.
- Pepinsky, T. (2007). Autocracy, elections, and fiscal policy: evidence from Malaysia. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 42(1-2), 136-163.
- Perry, E. J. (1999). Crime, corruption, and contention. *HARVARD CONTEMPORARY CHINA SERIES*, 308-332.
- Perry, E. J. (2007). Studying Chinese politics: farewell to revolution? *The China Journal*(57), 1-22.
- Perry, E. J. (2017). Higher Education and Authoritarian Resilience: The Case of China, Past and Present.
- Perry, E. J., & Heilmann, S. (2011). Embracing uncertainty: Guerrilla policy style and adaptive governance in China. *Mao's Invisible Hand: The political foundations of adaptive governance in China*.
- Pierson, P. (1994). *Dismantling the welfare state?: Reagan, Thatcher and the politics of retrenchment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pierson, P. (2001). Post-industrial pressures on the mature welfare states. *The new politics of the welfare state*, 1, 80-105.
- Plant, R., & Jones, D. (1991). *Modern political thought*. Blackwell Oxford.
- Polanyi, K., & MacIver, R. M. (1944). *The great transformation*: Beacon press Boston.

- Pozen, R. C. (2013). *Tackling the Chinese pension system*. Paulson Institute Chicago.
- Qian, Y. (2002). How reform worked in China.
- Qiu, G., & Wen, Z. (2007). Critical Adjustment of Rural Migrant Policy in China: towards New Paradigm. *Chinese Public Policy Review*, 11.
- Quick, K. S., & Bryson, J. M. (2016). Public participation *Handbook on theories of governance*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Ratigan, K. (2017). Disaggregating the developing welfare state: Provincial social policy regimes in China. *World Development*, 98, 467-484.
- Riedmüller, B. (2008). *Private pensions versus social inclusion?: non-state provision for citizens at risk in Europe*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Rimlinger, G. V. (1971). *Welfare policy and industrialization in Europe, America and Russia*. Wiley New York.
- Ringen, S., & Ngok, K. (2017). What kind of welfare state is emerging in China? *Towards Universal Health Care in Emerging Economies* (pp. 213-237): Springer.
- Roberts, M. E. (2018). *Censored: distraction and diversion inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton University Press.
- Roberts, M. E., Stewart, B. M., & Tingley, D. (2014). stm: R package for structural topic models. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 10(2), 1-40.
- Roberts, M. E., Stewart, B. M., & Tingley, D. (2016). Navigating the local modes of big data. *Computational Social Science*, 51.
- Roberts, N. (2004). Public deliberation in an age of direct citizen participation. *The American review of public administration*, 34(4), 315-353.
- Rona-Tas, A. (1994). The first shall be last? Entrepreneurship and communist cadres in the transition from socialism. *American Journal of Sociology*, 100(1), 40-69.
- Rose, R. (2007). The Democracy Barometers (Part I): Learning to Support New Regimes in Europe. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(3), 111-125.
- Rose, R., & Carnaghan, E. (1995). Generational Effects on Attitudes to Communist Regimes: a comparative analysis. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 11(1), 28-56.
- Rose, R., Mishler, W., & Haerpfer, C. (1997). Social capital in civic and stressful societies. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 32(3), 85-111.

- Rose, R., Mishler, W., & Munro, N. (2006). *Russia transformed: Developing popular support for a new regime*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rudra, N. (2008). *Globalization and the Race to the Bottom in Developing Countries*. Retrieved from
- Scharping, T. (2013). *Birth Control in China 1949-2000: Population policy and demographic development*. Routledge.
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American political science Review*, 87(2), 334-347.
- Schneider, A., & Sidney, M. (2009). What is next for policy design and social construction theory? 1. *Policy Studies Journal*, 37(1), 103-119.
- Schneider, A. L., Ingram, H., & Deleon, P. (2014). Democratic policy design: Social construction of target populations. *Theories of the policy process*, 3, 105-149.
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. M. (2019). Social Constructions, Anticipatory Feedback Strategies, and Deceptive Public Policy. *Policy Studies Journal*, 47(2), 206-236.
- Schuman, H., & Rieger, C. (1992). Historical analogies, generational effects, and attitudes toward war. *American Sociological Review*, 315-326.
- Scott, J. C. (2008). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. Yale University Press.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers college press.
- Selden, M., & You, L. (1997). The reform of social welfare in China. *World Development*, 25(10), 1657-1668.
- Shen, X., & Truex, R. (2018). In Search of Preference Falsification. *Working Paper*.
- Shi, S. J., & Mok, K. H. (2012). Pension privatisation in Greater China: Institutional patterns and policy outcomes. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21, S30-S45.
- Shi, T. (1997). *Political participation in Beijing*. Harvard University Press.
- Shi, T. (2001). Cultural values and political trust: a comparison of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. *Comparative Politics*, 401-419.
- Shi, T. (2014). *The cultural logic of politics in mainland China and Taiwan*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shin, D. C., & Sin, T.-c. (2012). *Confucianism and democratization in East Asia*. Cambridge University Press.

- Shirk, S. L. (2011). *Changing media, changing China*. Oxford University Press.
- Shue, H. (1996). *Basic rights: Subsistence, affluence, and US foreign policy*. Princeton University Press.
- Siebert, F., Siebert, F. T., Peterson, T. B., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press: The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. University of Illinois press.
- Simon, J. (2014). *The new censorship: inside the global battle for media freedom*. Columbia University Press.
- Smoke, R. (1994). On the importance of policy legitimacy. *Political Psychology*, 97-110.
- Song, S., & Chu, G. S. F. (1997). Social security reform in China: The case of old-age insurance. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 15(2), 85-93.
- Song, Y. (2014). What should economists know about the current Chinese hukou system? *China Economic Review*, 29, 200-212.
- Stark, D. (1991). Path dependence and privatization strategies in East Central Europe. *East European politics and societies*, 6(1), 17-54.
- Stockmann, D. (2009). One size doesn't fit all: Measuring news reception East and West. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 2(2), 140-157.
- Stockmann, D. (2013). *Media commercialization and authoritarian rule in China*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stockmann, D., & Gallagher, M. E. (2011). Remote control: How the media sustain authoritarian rule in China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 44(4), 436-467.
- Streeten, P. (1980). Basic needs and human rights. *World Development*, 8(2), 107-111.
- Su, Z., & Meng, T. (2016). Selective responsiveness: Online public demands and government responsiveness in authoritarian China. *Social science research*, 59, 52-67.
- Sun, L. (2004). *Transformation and Fracture: the Transition of Social Structure in China after 1978* [Zhuanxing Yu Duanlie]. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press.
- Sun, L. (2005). Social Transformation: New Issues in Developmental Sociology [Shehui zhuanxing: Fazhan Shehuixue de Xin Yiti]. *Sociological Research*(1), 1-24.
- Sun, L. (2006). *Gaming [Bo Yi]*. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press.
- Svallfors, S. (2007). *The political sociology of the welfare state: institutions, social cleavages, and orientations*:

- Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Svallfors, S. (2010). Policy feedback, generational replacement, and attitudes to state intervention: Eastern and Western Germany, 1990–2006. *European Political Science Review*, 2(1), 119-135.
- Svolik, M. W. (2012). *The politics of authoritarian rule*: Cambridge University Press.
- Szelenyi, I. (1978). Social inequalities in state socialist redistributive economies. *International journal of comparative sociology*, 19(1-2), 63-87.
- Szelenyi, I., & Kostello, E. (1996). The market transition debate: Toward a synthesis? *American Journal of Sociology*, 101(4), 1082-1096.
- Szelenyi, I., & Szelenyi, B. (1994). Why socialism failed: Toward a theory of system breakdown—Causes of disintegration of East European state socialism. *Theory and Society*, 23(2), 211-231.
- Tang, W. (2005). *Public opinion and political change in China*: Stanford University Press.
- Tang, W. (2016). *Populist authoritarianism: Chinese political culture and regime sustainability*: Oxford University Press.
- Tannenberg, M. (2017). The autocratic trust bias: Politically sensitive survey items and self-censorship. *V-Dem Working Paper*, 49.
- Thistlethwaite, D. L., & Campbell, D. T. (1960). Regression-discontinuity analysis: An alternative to the ex post facto experiment. *Journal of Educational psychology*, 51(6), 309.
- Thompson, M. R. (2002). Totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes in transitions and non-transitions from communism. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 3(1), 79-106.
- Tilly, C. (2017). Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1990 *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change* (pp. 140-154): Routledge.
- Titmuss, R. (1974). The social division of welfare: some reflections on the search for equity.
- Tolbert, P., & Zucker, L. (1996). The institutionalization of institutional theory. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W. R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of organization studies* (pp. 175–190): London: Sage.
- Tong, Y., & Lei, S. (2010). Large-scale mass incidents and government responses in China. *International Journal of China Studies*, 1(2), 487-508.
- Truex, R. (2016). Bias and Trust in Authoritarian Media. *Working Paper*.
- Tsai, K. S. (2013). China's political economy and political science. *Perspectives on Politics*, 11(3),

860-871.

- Tsang, S. (2009). Consultative Leninism: China's new political framework. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(62), 865-880.
- Tu, W., & Du, W. (1996). *Confucian traditions in East Asian modernity: Moral education and economic culture in Japan and the four mini-dragons*: Harvard University Press.
- Vinthagen, S., & Johansson, A. (2013). Everyday resistance: Exploration of a concept and its theories. *Resistance Studies Magazine*, 1(1), 1-46.
- Walder, A. G. (1995). China's transitional economy: interpreting its significance. *The China Quarterly*, 144, 963-979.
- Wallace, S. J., Zepeda-Millán, C., & Jones-Correa, M. (2014). Spatial and temporal proximity: Examining the effects of protests on political attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2), 433-448.
- Wang, D., & Chai, Y. (2009). The jobs–housing relationship and commuting in Beijing, China: the legacy of Danwei. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 17(1), 30-38.
- Wang, L., Beland, D., & Zhang, S. (2014). Pension fairness in China. *China Economic Review*, 28, 25-36.
- Wang, X., & Wan Wart, M. (2007). When public participation in administration leads to trust: An empirical assessment of managers' perceptions. *Public administration review*, 67(2), 265-278.
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology* (Vol. 1): Univ of California Press.
- Weber, M. (2017). *Methodology of social sciences*: Routledge.
- Wedeen, L. (1997). *Ambiguities of domination: Politics, rhetoric, and symbols in contemporary Syria*: University of Chicago Press.
- Weingast, B. R. (1995). The economic role of political institutions: Market-preserving federalism and economic development. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, 1-31.
- White, S. (1986). Economic performance and communist legitimacy. *World politics*, 38(3), 462-482.
- Whyte, M. K. (2012). China's post-socialist inequality. *Current history*, 111(746), 229-234.
- Wilensky, H. L. (1974). *The welfare state and equality: Structural and ideological roots of public expenditures* (Vol. 140): Univ of California Press.

- Winship, C., & Morgan, S. L. (1999). The estimation of causal effects from observational data. *Annual review of sociology*, 25(1), 659-706.
- Wintrobe, R. (1990). The tinpot and the totalitarian: An economic theory of dictatorship. *American political science Review*, 84(3), 849-872.
- Wintrobe, R. (2007). Dictatorship: analytical approaches. *C. Boix and S. Stokes*.
- Wong, L. (2005). *Marginalization and social welfare in China*: Routledge.
- Wong, L., & Ngok, K. (2006). Social policy between plan and market: Xiagang (off-duty employment) and the policy of the re-employment service centres in China. *Social Policy & Administration*, 40(2), 158-173.
- Xiang, B. (2010). Ordinary People's State Theory. *Open Times*, 10, 117-132.
- Xie, Y. (2016). Understanding inequality in China. *Chinese journal of sociology*, 2(3), 327-347.
- Xie, Y., Lai, Q., & Wu, X. (2009). Danwei and social inequality in contemporary urban China. *Research in the Sociology of Work*, 19, 283.
- Yan, X. (2017). *How is China maintain stable? Observation and thoughts from fieldwork [Zhongguo Heyi Wending: Laizi Tianye de Guancha yu Sikao]*. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
- Yang, Y., Wang, W., & Zhang, M. (2010). Operational Safty of Social Insurance Fund: Experience from Fully funding the individual accounts. *Chinese Public Administration*, 5, 61-66.
- Yep, R. (2004). Can "Tax-for-Fee" reform reduce rural tension in China? The process, progress and limitations. *The China Quarterly*, 177, 42-70.
- Ying, X. (2003). Body and the power in rural daily life. In Z. Huang (Ed.), *China rural study*. Beijing: Commercial Press.
- Young, K. G. (2008). The minimum core of economic and social rights: a concept in search of content. *Yale J. Int'l L.*, 33, 113.
- Yu, J. (2011). Resettlement Conflict in Social Stability Maintenance Viewpoint. *China Party Cadre Forum*(1), 20-21.
- Zhao, D. (2001). China's Prolonged Stability and Political Future: Same political system, different policies and methods. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 10(28), 427-444.
- Zhao, D. (2009). The mandate of heaven and performance legitimation in historical and

- contemporary China. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(3), 416-433.
- Zheng, G. (2016). *Evaluation of china's social protection policies*. Retrieved from <https://www.euchinasprp.eu/images/documents/Component1Cn/2017-assessment-report/EvalSSCn.pdf>
- Zheng, Q. (2015). *Identity Acceptance and Production Politics: Research on Labour Relations in Changes of State-Owned Enterprises*. Beijing: Beijing Book Co. Inc.
- Zhi, Q., & Pearson, M. M. (2017). China's Hybrid Adaptive Bureaucracy: The Case of the 863 Program for Science and Technology. *Governance*, 30(3), 407-424.
- Zhou, X. (2011). Authoritarian State and Effective Governance: The Institutional Logic of State Governance in Contemporary China. *Open Times*, 10, 67-85.
- Zhu, J., Lu, J., & Shi, T. (2013). When grapevine news meets mass media: Different information sources and popular perceptions of government corruption in mainland China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(8), 920-946.
- Zhu, X., & Zhao, H. (2018a). Experimentalist governance with interactive central–local relations: Making new pension policies in China. *Policy Studies Journal*.
- Zhu, X., & Zhao, H. (2018b). Recognition of innovation and diffusion of welfare policy: Alleviating urban poverty in Chinese cities during fiscal recentralization. *Governance*, 31(4), 721-739.

Appendix A Data Explanation and Model Validations

Appendix A presents explanations on additional data, variables, case lists and so on for the main content of the empirical chapters and provides more statistical results for cross-validation.

A1. Additional data for Chapter 1⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Data source: CEIC data (<https://www.ceicdata.com/en>)

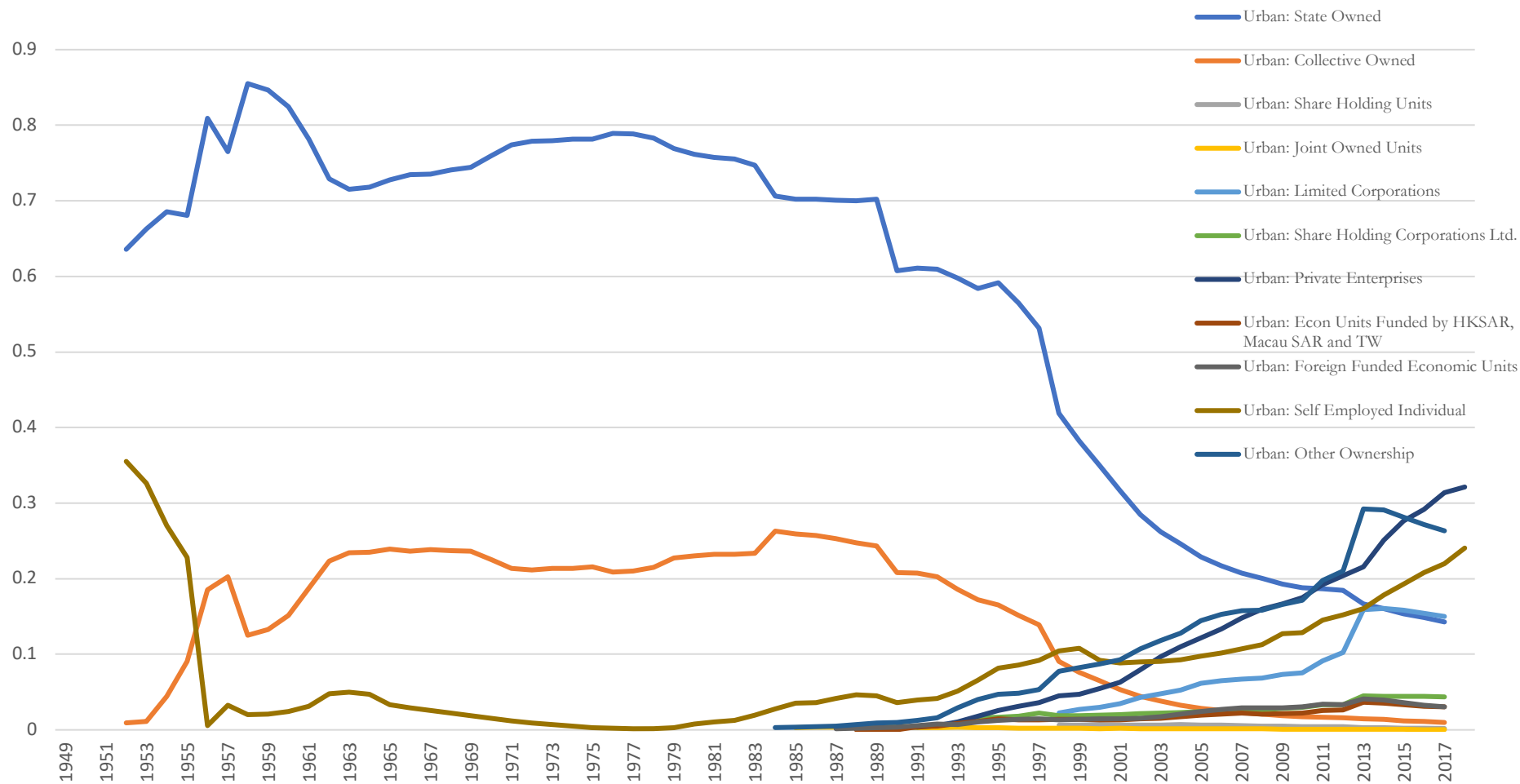


Figure A17. Urban Labour Type

A2. Statistical data in Chapter 3

The statistical data about pension schemes in Chapter 3 were collected from the China Labour Statistical Yearbooks, Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbooks, National Statistical Bureau Dataset and other datasets. The China Labour Statistical Yearbook is issued by the National Bureau of Statistics (Department of Population and Employment Statistics) and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China (Department of Planning and Financial Affairs). The Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbook is issued by the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China (Budget Department). The National Statistical Bureau Dataset is an online dataset provided by the National Bureau of Statistics through (<http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/>). In the table below I present a codebook for the variables used to picture the coverage, generosity and funding sources of different pension schemes.

Table A21. Codebook of pension schemes comparison and statistical data

Comparison category	Variable name	Variable label	Variable type	Data source (Cross-validated)
Coverage	Total Employees (eligible participants)	Number of eligible people (employee plus retiree)	continuous	Local Fiscal Statistical Yearbooks (Manually calculated)
	Persons Participated at the Yearend	Number of participants of pension scheme	continuous	China Labour Statistical Yearbooks
	Coverage rate	Participated/Eligible participants	continuous	Manually calculated
	Residents Number	Population of Residents (by Pension scheme recipient's type)	continuous	National Statistical Bureau Dataset
Generosity	Revenue and expenses of Pension fund	Revenue and expenses of Pension fund	continuous	China Labour Statistical Yearbooks
	Benefit (per person)	Pension benefit per person (yuan)	continuous	China Labour Statistical Yearbooks (Manually calculated)
	Increase Rate	Increase rate each year of pension benefit (per person per year)	continuous	Manually calculated
	Salary	Employee Salary (weighted by employee numbers)	continuous	China Labour Statistical Yearbooks (Manually calculated)
	Replacement rate	Pension benefit/Average Salary	continuous	Manually calculated
Funding source	Government	Funding source including government	binary	Policy documents
	Enterprise	Funding source including enterprise	binary	Policy documents
	Individual	Funding source including individual	binary	Policy documents

A3. Textual data in Chapter 3

Corpus descriptive statistics

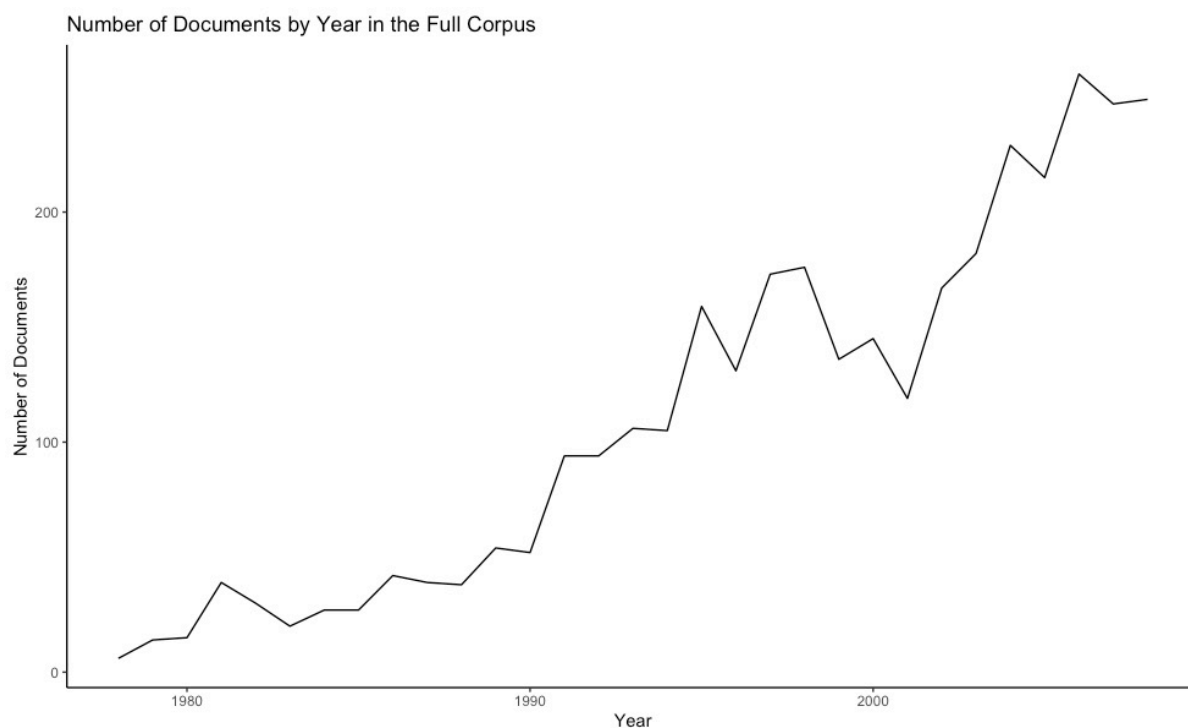


Figure A18. Number of Documents in the Full Corpus

Validation of Topics: optimal K

The text data include official news data from the People’s Daily dataset supplemented by data from the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CNKI database) and the Wisenews dataset. To find the optimal number of topics that can be drawn from the corpus using unsupervised models, I present the validations from `topicmodels` and `stm` respectively (with different pre-processings of the text), including a 5 fold cross-validation of perplexity. The results from `topicmodels` indicate a k range around 100 to 140, while the results from perplexity and `stm` package indicate a k range from 30 to 60. In my main analysis in Chapter 3, I use the k number of 30 since it’s relatively manageable.

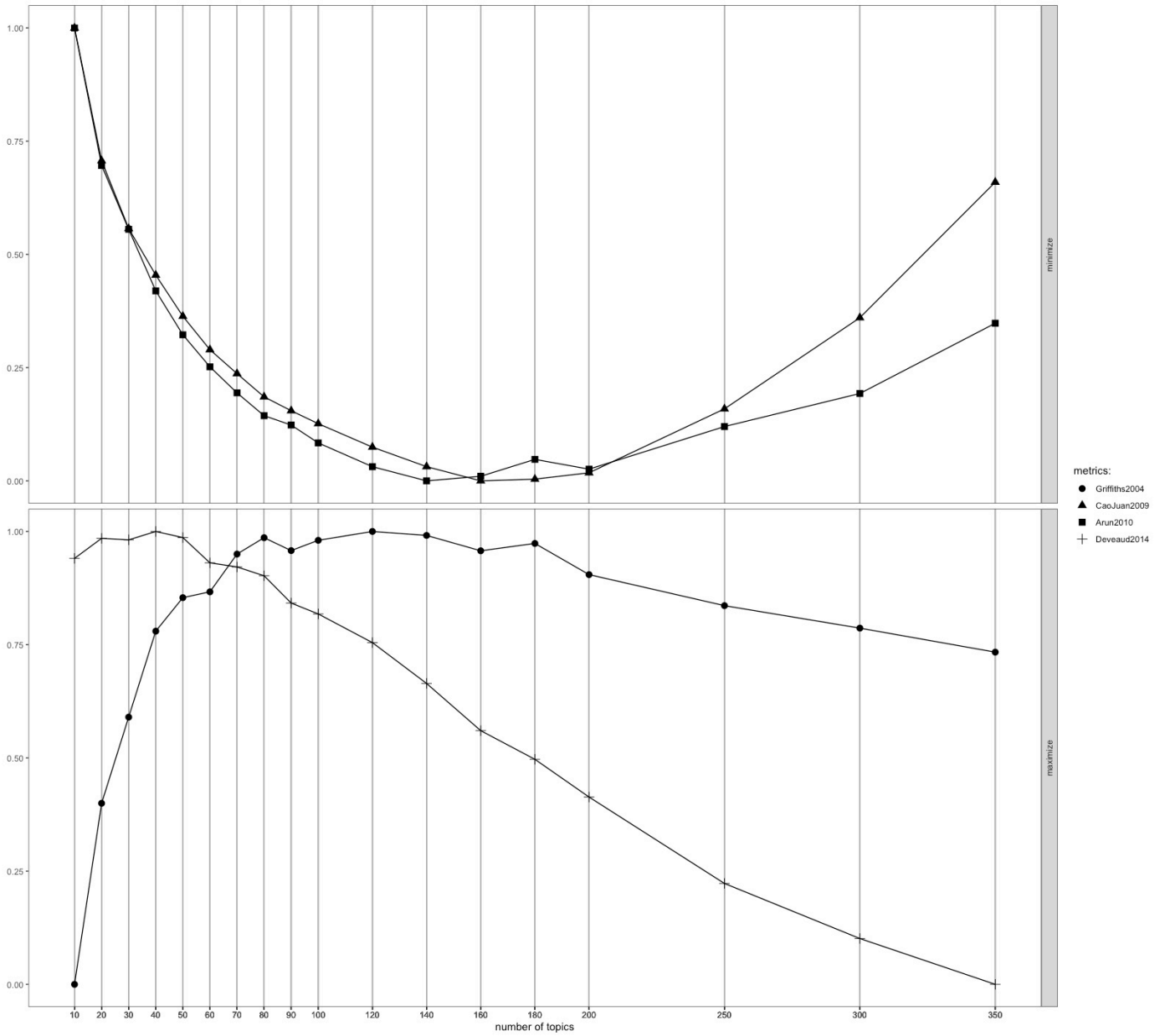


Figure A19. Optimal Topic Number (`FindTopicsNumber` in `topicmodels` package, segwords version 1)

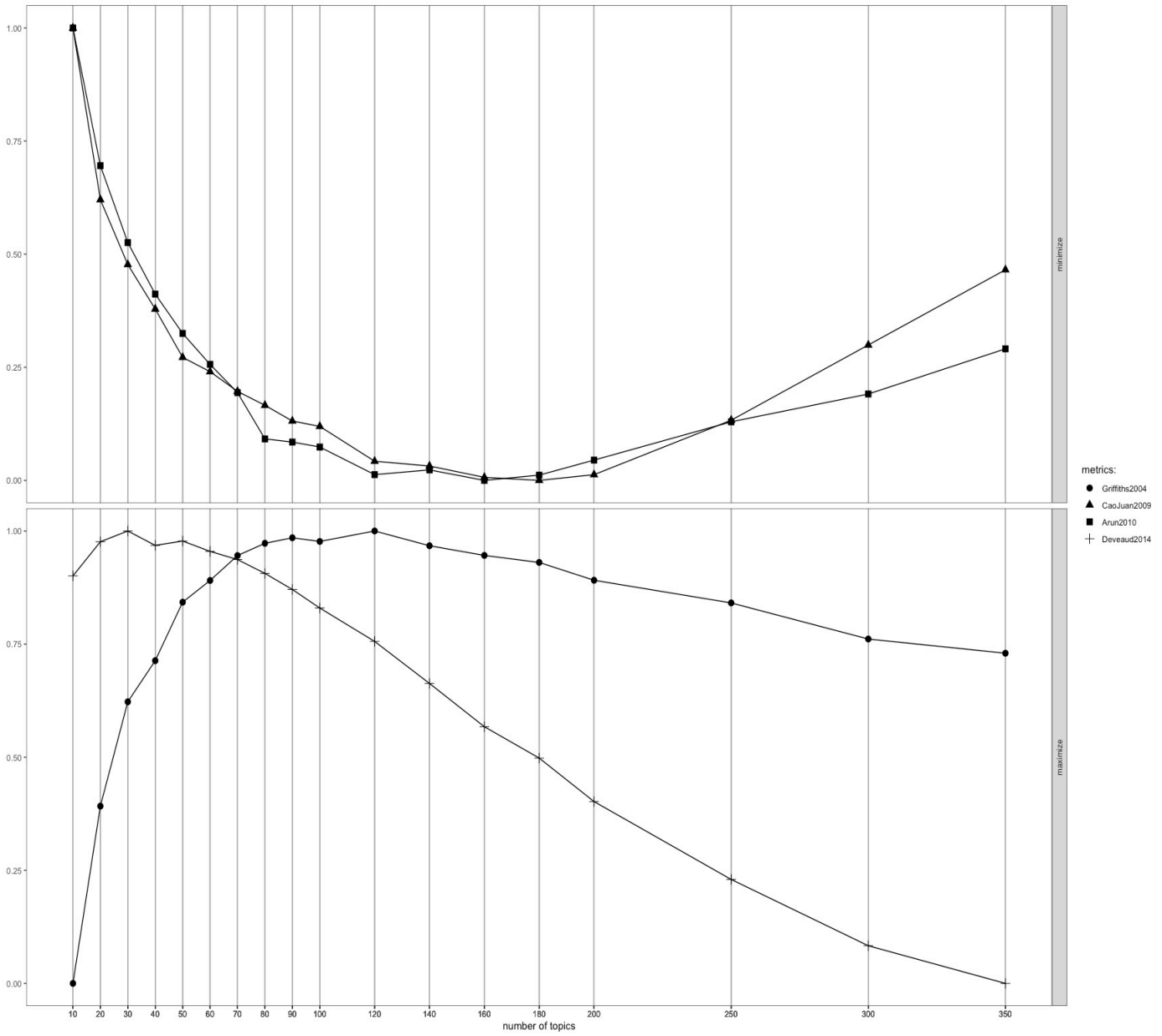


Figure A20. Optimal Topic Number (`FindTopicsNumber` in `topicmodels` package, `segwords` version 2)

5-fold cross-validation of topic modelling

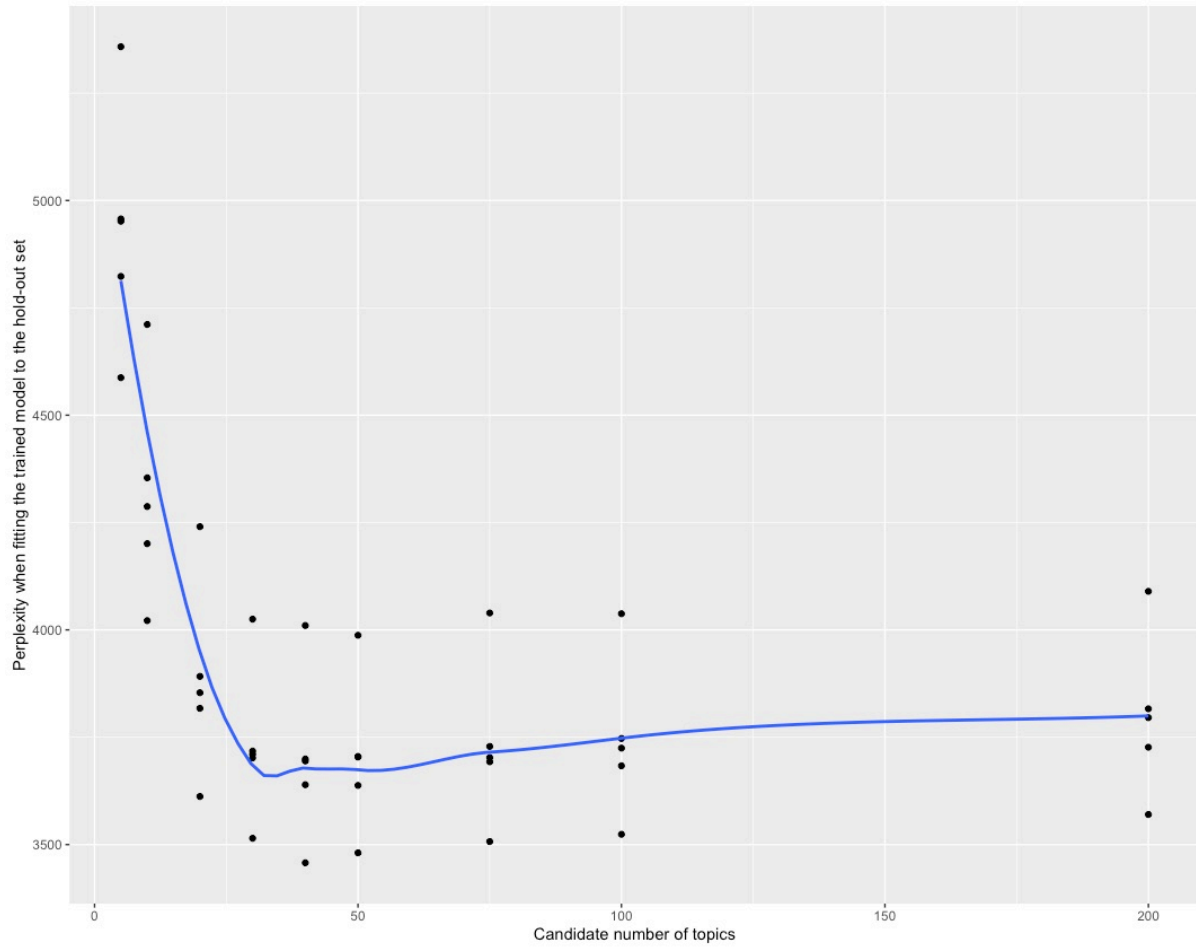


Figure A21. Optimal Topic Number using Perplexity (5-fold cross-validation)

Diagnostic Values by Number of Topics

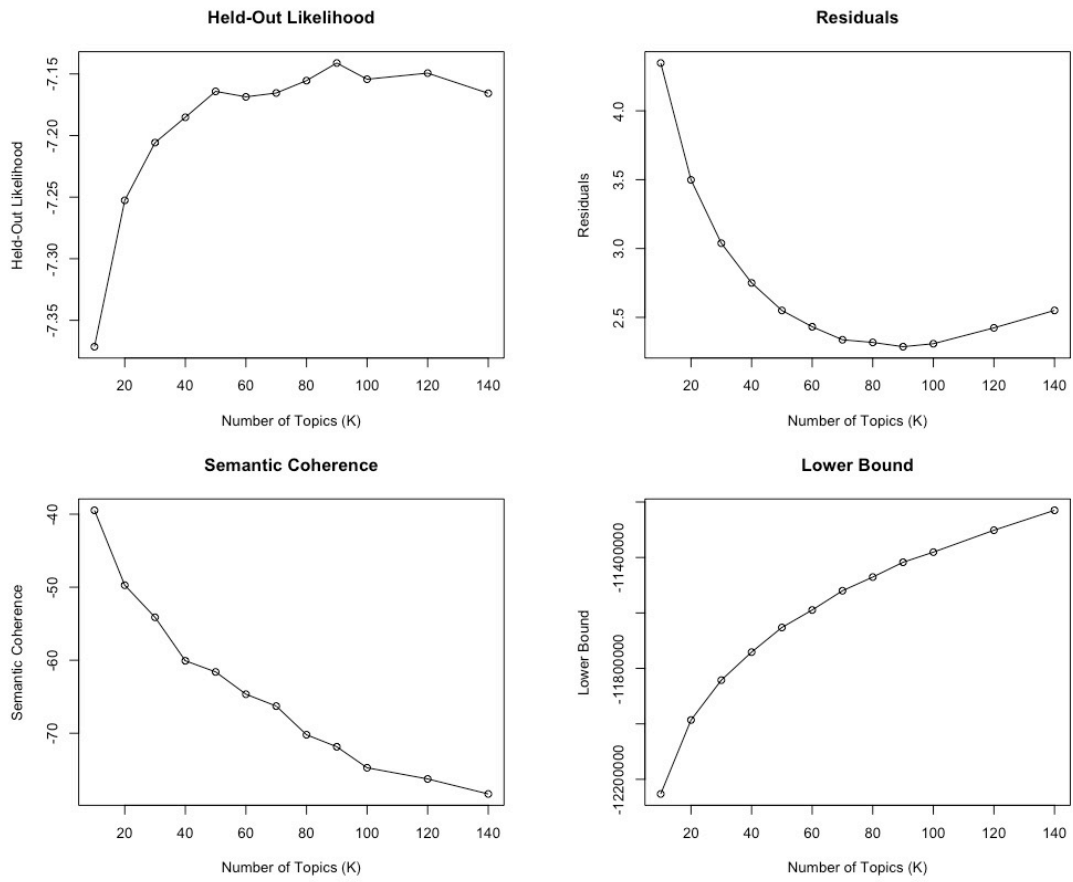


Figure A22. Optimal Topic Number (`searchK` in `STM` package, `segwords` version 1)

Diagnostic Values by Number of Topics

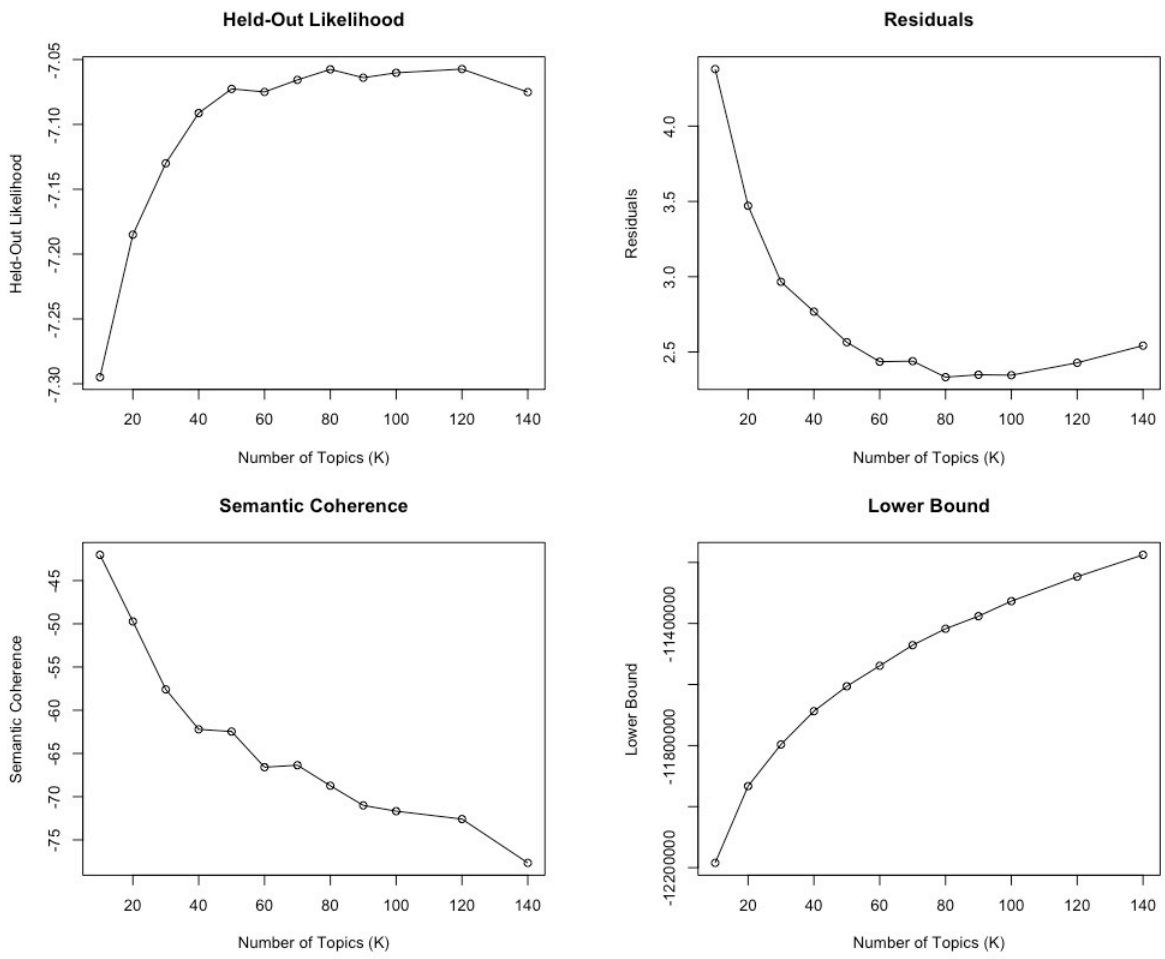


Figure A23. Optimal Topic Number (`searchK` in `STM` package, `segwords` version 2)

Validation of Topics: topic content

In this section, I first show all the topics generated by the STM package with topic number $K=30$.

Table A22. Topics with keywords (STM package, $K=30$)

<p>Topic 1 “Global Issue” Top Words: Highest Prob: day, month, meeting, hold, problem, government FREX: hold, Soviet Union, contact, Stan Lift: Judge, Baghdad, US Army, discharge, agreement, news Score: president, China-Portugal, parliament, date, Ukraine, Soviet Union</p>	<p>Topic 2 “Commercial Insurance” Top Words: Highest Prob: insurance, company, invest, bank, market, China FREX: client, life, annuity, life insurance, company, business Lift: be clever, actuary, collusion Score: insurance, life insurance, company, life, annuity, client, bank</p>
<p>Topic 3 “HK-Macao” Top Words: Highest Prob: Macao, administration, district, special, representative, law, Hong Kong FREX: Macao, legislation, motion, administrator, member of the standing committee, review, conference/meeting Lift: call out the votes, politician, offspring, blood line, roundabout Score: Hong Kong, Macao, administration, administrator, One country two system, motion, legislation</p>	<p>Topic 4 “SOE Reform” Top Words: Highest Prob: enterprise, reform, state-owned, market, economy, operation, management FREX: state-owned, amalgamation, shares, transfer, bankrupt, enterprise, assets Lift: final fight, bad debt, strategy Score: enterprise, state-owned, reform, market, operation, assets, amalgamation</p>
<p>Topic 5 “Old-age Care” Top Words: Highest Prob: old, old people, society (social), disabled, elderly care, age, service FREX: old people, disabled, old age, care, recover Lift: few children Score: old people, old age, disabled, age, old, home-based, care</p>	<p>Topic 6 “Rural Development” Top Words: Highest Prob: development, rural area, construction, enhance, promote, society, speed up FREX: promote, speed up, grain, enlarge, continue, strength Lift: function, law department, exaggerate, indigenous Score: rural area, promote, speed up, strength, construction, perfection, agriculture</p>
<p>Topic 7 “Community Care” Top Words: Highest Prob: old people, life, family, difficulty, model worker, society FREX: model worker, visit, (Wen) Jiabao, supermarket, philanthropic, street level Lift: spare time, carefully care, filial daughter, depressed, filial Score: old people, work model, children, Wen) Jiabao, street level, community</p>	<p>Topic 8 “Rural Officials” Top Words: Highest Prob: village, officials, county, rural area, city, Yuan, Party FREX: Party branch, Party member, officials, village, town, committee secretary, county Lift: shorts, Xichang, village commune Score: village, officials, rural area, county, Party branch, Party member, town</p>
<p>Topic 9 “Laid-off Workers” Top Words: Highest Prob: employment, employee, laid off, enterprise, labour, insurance, staff</p>	<p>Topic 10 “Europe/US/Russia” Top Words: Highest Prob: employment, employee, laid off, enterprise, labour, insurance, staff</p>

<p>FREX: laid off, employment, unemployment, Liaoning, assure, positions, difficult</p> <p>Lift: apathetic, bureaus, bring</p> <p>Score: employment, laid off, employee, unemployment, state-owned, enterprise, insurance (protection)</p>	<p>FREX: laid off, employment, unemployment, Liaoning, assure, positions, difficult</p> <p>Lift: apathetic, bureaus, bring</p> <p>Score: employment, laid off, employee, unemployment, state-owned, enterprise, insurance (protection)</p>
<p>Topic 11 “Rural Residents” Top Words: Highest Prob: village, Yuan, 10,000, villager, home, town, district</p> <p>FREX: Nanling, whole village, Shaoxing, village</p> <p>Lift: loyal and filial, large and bright, orange tree, songs, green</p> <p>Score: village, villager, whole village, Nanling</p>	<p>Topic 12 “Overseas Chinese” Top Words: Highest Prob: regulation, teacher, should, Chinese residing abroad, state, education, organization</p> <p>FREX: crew, Chinese residing abroad, returned overseas national, family, teacher, ship</p> <p>Lift: academic group, family, short, bequeath, crew</p> <p>Score: crew, family, returned overseas national, Chinese residing abroad, teacher</p>
<p>Topic 13 “Auditing Supervision” Top Words: Highest Prob: management, department, work, supervise, construction, audit, problem</p> <p>FREX: audit, migration, check, supervision</p> <p>Lift: officials and merchants collusion, take care, code, Wushan, Fengjie</p> <p>Score: audit, migration, supervision, law enforcement, management, examine</p>	<p>Topic 14 “Labour/Contracts” Top Words: Highest Prob: labour, contract, work unit, employ, regulation, work, salary</p> <p>FREX: contract, employ, labour, issue (laws), trade union</p> <p>Lift: take advantage of others’ misfortunes, doubtful (unsure), start (calculation), show permits, case, day-month-year</p> <p>Score: labour, contract, employ, set up, work unit</p>
<p>Topic 15 “State Budget” Top Words: Highest Prob: finance, Yuan, a hundred million, central (government), tax, budget, revenue</p> <p>FREX: budget, finance, expense, tax, central (government), tax revenue, national debt</p> <p>Lift: input VAT, pay, deduct, output VAT, Break-even, Wire transfer, stamp duty</p> <p>Score: finance, a hundred million, budget, Yuan, tax, expense, central (government)</p>	<p>Topic 16 “Birth Control” Top Words: Highest Prob: reproduction, plan, population, giving birth, work, women, development</p> <p>FREX: reproduction, women, plan, female, population, couple</p> <p>Lift: still, early marriage, boys, contraception, pregnancy, as low as</p> <p>Score: reproduction, population, women, plan, contraception, couple, giving birth</p>
<p>Topic 17 “Family” Top Words: Highest Prob: one, in, old, money, month, two, no</p> <p>FREX: Yongshun, father</p> <p>Lift: one side, never die, Spruce, school students and teachers, ten bucks</p> <p>Score: son, child, daughter, elder, father</p>	<p>Topic 18 “China” Top Words: Highest Prob: China, in, one, worker, culture, work, now</p> <p>FREX: sports games, performance, art, professor, giants</p> <p>Lift: serious and reserve, sampling, historical study, noisy, reputation, bullet</p> <p>Score: sports game, China, giants, workers, performance</p>
<p>Topic 19 “EE Pension Plan” Top Words: Highest Prob: insurance, elder-care (social security), social (society), enterprise, protection, employees, fees</p>	<p>Topic 20 “Economic Reform” Top Words: Highest Prob: economy, development, reform, market, society (social), job, state</p>

<p>FREX: elder-care (social security), pay, insurance, trust, participate, social coordination, account</p> <p>Lift: rest of the life, transgression, account division, current, employed</p> <p>Score: insurance, elder-care (social security), pay, employee, society (social), protection, enterprise</p>	<p>FREX: macro, control, current, price, rectify</p> <p>Lift: international market demand, victory, soft landing, signs, Keqiang, braveness, nothingness</p> <p>Score: economy, macro, reform, currency, finance, development, market</p>
<p>Topic 21 “Soldier/Social Service” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: army, Yuan, civil service, excel, 10,000, work, province</p> <p>FREX: soldier, support, military personnel, ex-serviceman, disaster (affected) area, Shantou, civil service</p> <p>Lift: new soldier, military district, storm, 25,000, patrol and defense, immediately, hide</p> <p>Score: police, soldier, civil service, off-service, support, army</p>	<p>Topic 22 “Growth” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: a hundred million, growth, ten thousand, Yuan, ten thousand people, whole country, point</p> <p>FREX: yearend, ton, whole year, compare, hectare, percent, output</p> <p>Lift: ten thousand boxes</p> <p>Score: growth, ton, a hundred million, yearend, whole year, Yuan, ten thousand</p>
<p>Topic 23 “Institution Reform” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: society (social), development, protection, institution(system), economy, reform, construction</p> <p>FREX: harmony, distribution, public, society (social), institution (system), ideology, fairness</p> <p>Lift: missing parts, variables, overstep, should</p> <p>Score: society (social), protection, institution(system), reform, economy, ideology, market, harmony</p>	<p>Topic 24 “Tech/Talents” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: technology, talents, development, innovation, industry, enterprise, high</p> <p>FREX: talents, develop, technology, scientific research, skills, technology, industry</p> <p>Lift: new knowledge, ornaments, wood shavings, Shekou, dissolve, goods in stock, unique skill</p> <p>Score: talents, industry, skills, innovation, develop, technology, market</p>
<p>Topic 25 “Rural Migrants” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: peasant, rural area, worker, urban-rural, agriculture, city</p> <p>FREX: peasant, lose land, urban-rural, land, migrant, city</p> <p>Lift: Dujiangyan, deep water, whole scale, Pujiang, Xinyang</p> <p>Score: peasant, rural area, urban-rural, lose land, agriculture, worker, rural</p>	<p>Topic 26 “Develop/Party” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: development, construction, society, Party, economy, new, persist in</p> <p>FREX: view, persist in, characteristic, Hu Jintao, thoughts, ecology, comfortable (life)</p> <p>Lift: key knot, explore, not afraid of difficult</p> <p>Score: development, construction, Party, ecology, innovation, principle, Hu Jintao</p>
<p>Topic 27 “Income/Production” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: production, income, economy, ten thousand, development, equal, labour</p> <p>FREX: Kunshan, a thousand, two hundred, commune, one hundred, reclaim (wasteland)</p> <p>Lift: 1958, village, nine hundred, spice, dry land</p> <p>Score: Kunshan, commune member, commune, one hundred, output value, income</p>	<p>Topic 28 “Courts/Cases” Top Words:</p> <p>Highest Prob: official, work, organization, case, court, Hong Kong</p> <p>FREX: trial, court, judge, police, people’s court, public service, case</p> <p>Lift: salary, innocent, sensitivity, fair judge, court, overseas business, embezzled funds</p> <p>Score: trail, judge, court, people’s court, public affairs, Hong Kong, supervision</p>

<p>Topic 29 “Retired/Pension fee” Top Words: Highest Pro: retire, employee, yuan, fees, salary, enterprise FREX: factory director, factory, own, working years, surrender insurance, retire Lift: rumors Score: retirement, factory, employee, yuan, salary, fee, pension</p>	<p>Topic 30 “Letter/Visits” Top Words Highest Prob: people (general public), municipality (city), problem, appeal/visit, solve, government, work FREX: appeal/visit, Langfang, mayor, municipal communist party committee, letters, provincial communist party committee, municipal government Lift: notice in advance, flight, website, posts Score: Langfang, people (general public), municipal communist party committee, appeal/visit, municipality (city), provincial communist party committee, municipal government</p>
---	---

To further validate the topics generated from the original text, I also present the topics generated with the package `topicmodel`, while these topics were generated using an estimated LDA model, for example the Gibbs Sampling model. It is considered that the topics in Table A23 roughly correspond with all the topics identified in Table A22 above.

Table A23. Topics with keywords (`topicmodel` package, K=30, terms=15)

<p>Topic 1 difficulty, life, disable, people, service, government, household, help, housing, family, district, difficult, poverty, social assistant, residents</p>
<p>Topic 2 development, construction, enhance, service, promote, economy, rural area, -ism, speed up, society, improve, perfection, agriculture, enhance, policy</p>
<p>Topic 3 village, Yuan, ten thousand, villager, household, township, village, town, factory, in, top, income, mountain, mu[unit of area, equal to 0.0667 hectare], plant</p>
<p>Topic 4 insurance, company, industry, insur-, -rance, China, market, service, employee, in, business, insure, old-age, types, develop</p>
<p>Topic 5 law, labour, law, represent, supervision, whole country, People’s Congress, problem, congress committee member, department, situation, in, audit, state, supervision/inspection</p>
<p>Topic 6 work, day, meeting, month, central government, state council, whole country, problem/issue, point out, important, Party, committee member, report, new, premier</p>
<p>Topic 7 health care, hygiene, doctor/medicine, hospital, illness/sick, hospital, Shenzhen, fee, service, staff, Shanghai, medicine, room, month, protect</p>

Topic 8

bank, invest, fund, management, finance, commune, loan, fee/charge, institution, funding/money, money, individual, amount, bank, saving

Topic 9

project/engineering, wood, district, construct, protect, eco system, ten thousand, region, water, tree, resource, environment, migrant, conduct, bureau

Topic 10

in/China, China, people, work model, one, group, one person, love, study, spirit, model, hope, one individual, learn, day

Topic 11

control, birth, talents, education, work, give birth, technology, population, teacher, school, high, state, career/public institution, staff, in/China

Topic 12

old, elderly, elderly care, population, age, society, family, old people, old age, life, women, development, service, -ish, years

Topic 13

increase, billion, ten thousand, Yuan, increase, point, country, percent, ten thousand people, year-round, ton, invest, price, production, yearend

Topic 14

society, social protection, institution, insurance, basic, health care, care, establish, system, elderly care, life, coverage, township/city, perfection/perfect, our country

Topic 15

insurance, old age care, employees, fee/pension, retirement, enterprise, fee/charge, society, pay, individual, staff, basic, fund, coordination, salary

Topic 16

money, old, in, one, old people, do, buy/purchase, nowadays, two, life, children, no, have not, car, home/family

Topic 17

farmer, country side/rural area, industry, agriculture/rural, agriculture, urban-rural, land, city, city, township, -nization (urbanization), recruit, migrants, three

Topic 18

reform, economy, market, institution, system, management/administration, establish, mechanism, development, society, -ish, government, deepen, perfect, system

Topic 19

development, economy, district/zone, -ify, new, industry, industry, city, market, high, municipality, explore, achieve, construction, technology

Topic 20

finance, Yuan, a hundred million, center/central (government), tax, income/revenue, fund/capital, budget, expenditure, increase, local, policy, arrange, support, project

Topic 21

enterprise, state-owned, employees, operation, system, production, factory, assets, company, middle/in, benefits/profits, collective, bankruptcy, business/industry, conglomerate

Topic 22

district, Macao, administrative, special, Hong Kong, government, problem, staff, public service, committee member, law, basic, people, group, committee

Topic 23

labour, work unit, contract, regulation, employment, should, department, salary, line, work, according to the law, law, overseas Chinese, work

Topic 24

Zhang, journalist, no/have not, one, business/things, month, Wang, Liu, money, in, vice, Chen

Topic 25

Society, development, principle, construction, Party, people, China, economy, insist/persist, harmony, general public, new, political, ideology/thoughts, important

Topic 26

employment, labour, employee, laid-off, staff, unemployment, work, service, enterprise, occupation, work/staff/worker, power, training, position

Topic 27

cadre/official, village, general public, Party, county, organization, work, leader, party member, grassroots, secretary, city/ municipality, level, rural area, committee

Topic 28

municipality, Yuan, ten thousand, province, whole, county, this year, month, reach, whole city, last year, current, household, name, protection/insure

Topic 29

government, economy, month, US, country, day/Japan, president, dollar, pension, Russia, China, Russia

Topic 30

problem/issue, economy, our country, one, income, in/China, should, state, solve, need/necessary, level, development, no, cannot, -ish

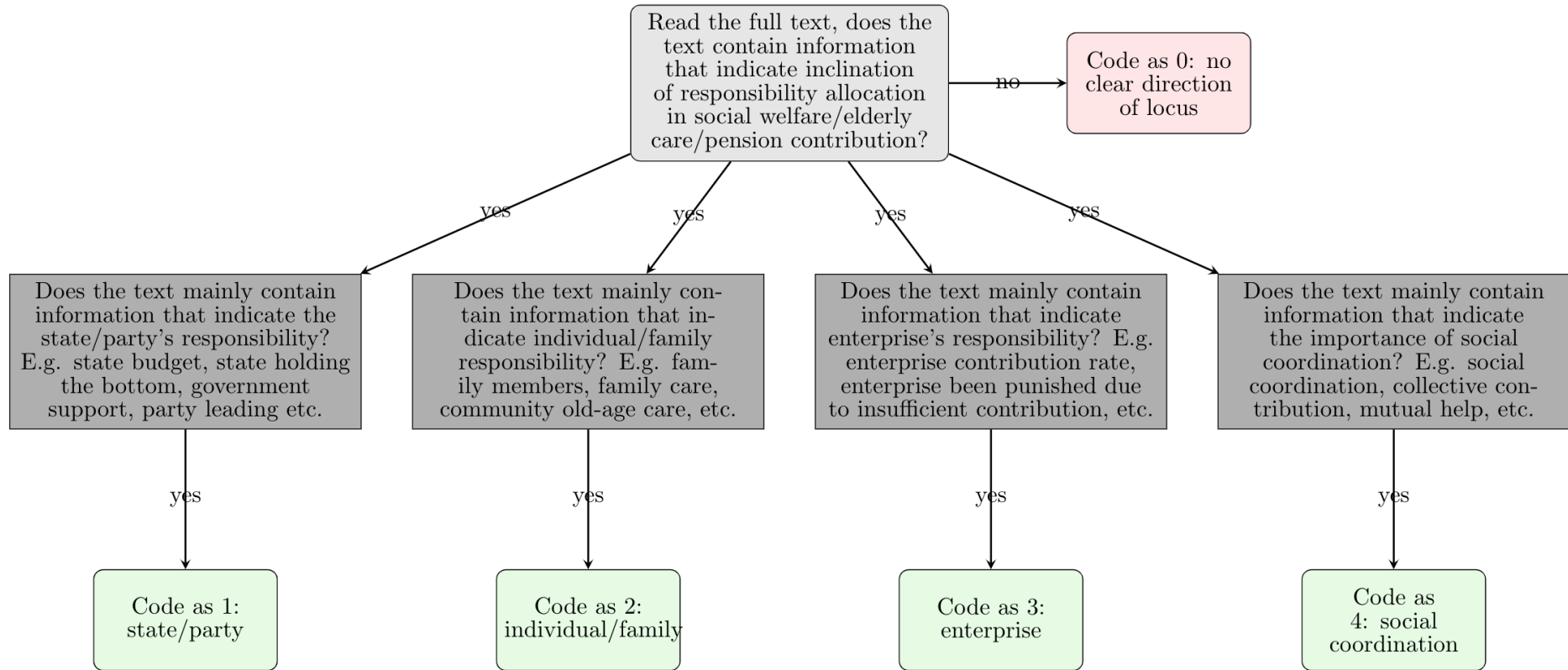
Hand coding: flowchart and second coder

To classify the documents into different key categories, I use both supervised models and human coder. In Figure A24 below, I presented the flowchart for coding category “Locus of Responsibility” (the other classifications such as Praise/Denounce are quite intuitive). In addition to myself, I also asked a second coder (trained PhD student) to code the 400 randomly selected documents in order to validate the stability, reproducibility, accuracy of the labelled dataset. The table below presents the Cohen's Kappa for 2 coders. It can be seen that the coding of Responsibility and Praise is performed less satisfied compare to other categories.

Table A24. Coding Validation

	Mean_Coder 1	Mean_Coder 2	%-Agree	Cohen's K (unweighted)
Responsibility	0.6	0.52	86.8	0.675
Praise	0.17	0.16	91.2	0.684
Denounce	0.047	0.048	98.5	0.834
National Situations	0.05	0.0675	97.2	0.752
Foreign Experience	0.0675	0.05	97.8	0.757

Figure A24. Flowchart of Hand Coding



Validation of classifiers

To select the best classifier, in this section, I present the comparison of estimation performance with different classifiers (Naïve Bayes, Lasso Regression, Support Vector Machines, Random Forest) using the full corpus. From the superficial number of precision, recall and F1, the models seem to perform decently. However, as shown in the balanced accuracy, the models cannot provide predictions that is distinguishable from a random guess. The reason for the high precision & recall can be attributed to the large number of negative events, as shown in the two example confusion matrices below. Therefore, the supervised models perform less satisfactory than expected. It can be the issue with the definitions of classifications since many of them are difficult to identify from the text, especially the responsibility allocation. Considering the normally rigid format of Chinese official news reports, it's the subtle tone and usage of phrases that distinguishes the various categories. As explained in the main text, my analysis about the classified text is based on a combination of SVM classification and hand coding of the full corpus.

Responsibility classification (test set) using Naïve Bayes model:

		Reference				
		0	1	2	3	4
Prediction	0	400	14	7	7	3
	1	66	25	2	4	0
	2	69	4	26	8	9
	3	33	0	0	4	1
	4	5	0	0	0	2

Foreign experience classification (test set) using Naïve Bayes model:

		Reference	
		0	1
Prediction	0	623	3
	1	49	14

Table A25. Performance of Supervised Models

		Responsibility	Praise	Denounce	National Situations	Foreign Experience
Performance	Models ⁶⁶					
Precision	Naïve Bayes	0.93	0.95	0.98	0.99	0.99
	Lasso Regression	0.84	0.89	0.99	0.97	0.96
	Support Vector Machines	0.81	0.88	0.98	0.98	0.99
	Random Forest	—	0.88	0.98	0.97	0.98
Recall	Naïve Bayes	0.7	0.69	0.95	0.91	0.93
	Lasso Regression	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99
	Support Vector Machines	0.97	0.89	0.99	0.99	0.99
	Random Forest	—	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.99
Accuracy	Naïve Bayes	0.66	0.69	0.93	0.95	0.92
	Lasso Regression	0.83	0.89	0.98	0.97	0.95
	Support Vector Machines	0.50~0.54 ⁶⁷ (balanced)	0.5 ⁶⁸ (balanced)	0.56 (balanced)	0.65 (balanced)	0.72 (balanced)
	Random Forest	— ⁶⁹	0.5 ⁷⁰ (balanced)	0.5 (balanced)	0.5 (balanced)	0.5 (balanced)
F1	Naïve Bayes	0.8	0.8	0.97	0.95	0.96
	Lasso Regression	0.91	0.94	0.99	0.99	0.98
	Support Vector Machines	0.88	0.88	0.99	0.98	0.99
	Random Forest	—	0.94	0.99	0.98	0.99

⁶⁶ Naïve Bayes and Lasso Regression models are performed using `quanteda` package, Support Vector Machines and Random Forest models are performed using `caret` package.

⁶⁷ Using `svmLinear` with 5 fold cross-validations and 3 repeats, range is for balanced accuracy for all the classes.

⁶⁸ Using `svmLinearWeights2`, same with other binary classifications.

⁶⁹ Not performed due to computing power constraints.

⁷⁰ Using `ranger` method (from `caTools`) for binary classifications.

Additional results: Topic with covariates

In the following table, I present the statistical result including “denounce” as the covariate in the topic proportion model.

Table A26. Topic proportion by multiple covariates (“denounce”)

	Topic 19	Topic 9	Topic 25	Topic 2
Government/Party	0.058** (0.014)	0.075*** (0.013)	0.022* (0.011)	-0.022* (0.009)
Individual/Family	0.148*** (0.016)	-0.001 (0.011)	-0.012 (0.009)	0.106*** (0.014)
Enterprise	0.151*** (0.025)	0.021 (0.016)	-0.011 (0.016)	0.017 (0.019)
Social coordination	0.307*** (0.034)	0.032 (0.02)	-0.011 (0.016)	-0.017 (0.016)
Denounce	0.059 (0.045)	-0.019 (0.027)	0.019 (0.026)	-0.006 (0.026)
National condition	-0.016 (0.022)	-0.022 (0.015)	0.007 (0.014)	-0.029* (0.014)
Foreign experience	-0.013 (0.021)	-0.033* (0.014)	-0.025* (0.012)	-0.007 (0.014)
Government/Party*	-0.143 (0.14)	-0.092 (0.099)	-0.074 (0.086)	-0.000 (0.093)
Individual/Family*	-0.214 (0.195)	0.000 (0.137)	-0.084 (0.169)	-0.101 (0.13)
Enterprise* Denounce	-0.039 (0.073)	0.02 (0.049)	-0.038 (0.041)	-0.028 (0.047)
Social coordination*	-0.208 (0.242)	-0.023 (0.142)	-0.048 (0.12)	0.035 (0.132)

Note: *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001. In all the models, the mode of uncertainty is set as “Global”.

A4. Additional statistics for Chapter 4

Table A27. Descriptive statistics of the main demographic variables

Variable	Years of Survey	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Urban/rural	2004	2708	0.534	0.4998	0	1
	2009	2572	0.488	0.4999	0	1
Gender	2004	2708	0.476	0.4995	0	1
	2009	2572	0.522	0.4996	0	1
Age	2004	2708	41.486	13.112	18	70
	2009	2572	44.245	13.726	18	70
Minority	2004	2703	0.094	0.288	0	1
	2009	2543	0.087	0.282	0	1
CCP Member	2004	2708	0.075	0.263	0	1
	2009	2515	0.077	0.267	0	1
Education Year	2004	2689	7.333	4.696	0	22
	2009	2431	7.323	4.692	0	22
Income	2004	2428	14630.26	40448.03	0	1500000
	2009	1832	23423.17	28633.99	250	250000
Income (log)	2004	2403	8.924	1.152	4.605	14.221
	2009	1832	9.453	1.240	5.521	12.429

A5. Interview data for Chapter 5

Table A28. Case list⁷¹

Case	Age range	Gender	Ethnicity	Education level	Occupation	Place	Non/Local	Time
1	Post 1985	Female	Han	Postgraduate	Student	Shanghai	Non-local	2019.6
2	Post 1985	Female	Han	College	Government	Chengdu	Local	2019.6
3	Post 1980	Female	Minority	College	Public sector	Shanghai	Non-local	2019.6
4	Post 1980	Female	Han	College	Public sector	Nanjing	Non-local	2019.6
5	Post 1980	Male	Han	College	SOE; Government	Beijing	Non-local	2019.6
6	Post 1990	Female	Minority	Postgraduate	Private Enterprise	Beijing	Non-local	2018.11
7	Post 1995	Male	Han	High school	Private Enterprise	Suzhou	Non-local	2019.6
8	Post 1995	Male	Han	Postgraduate	Private Enterprise	Beijing	Non-local	2019.6
9	Post 1980	Male	Han	Postgraduate	SOE	Beijing	Non-local	2019.6
10	Post 1985	Female	Han	Postgraduate	New media	Beijing	Non-local	2019.6
11	Post 1985	Female	Han	Postgraduate	Foreign Enterprise	Beijing	Non-local	2019.6
12	Post 1950	Male	Han	College	Retired (Private sector)	Shanghai	Local	2019.6
13	Post 1980	Male	Han	College	Commercial Media	Beijing	Non-local	2019.6
14	Post 1990	Male	Han	Postgraduate	Student	London	Non-local	2019.6
15	Post 2000	Female	Han	High school	Student	Xi'an	Local	2019.6
16	Post 1950	Male	Han	Junior High school	Retired (SOE)	Tianjin	Local	2018.11
17	Post 1950	Female	Han	High school	Retired (SOE)	Tianjin	Local	2018.11
18	Post 1950	Male	Han	College	Retired (Public sector)	Jilin	Local	2018.11
19	Post 1970	Male	Han (Hong Kong)	PhD	Higher Education	Beijing	Non-local	2018.12
20	Post 1970	Male	Han	PhD	Higher Education	Beijing	Non-local	2018.12
21	Post 1960	Female	Han	High school	Public sector	Yuncheng	Local	2018.11
22	Post 1960	Male	Han	College	Government	Yuncheng	Local	2018.11
23	Post 1990	Female	Han	College	Finance sector	Beijing	Non-local	2018.12
24	Post 1990	Male	Han	College	Unemployed	Beijing	Non-local	2018.12
25	Post 1990	Female	Han	Postgraduate	SOE	Beijing	Non-local	Observation
26	Post 1960	Male	Han	PhD	Higher Education	Overseas	Non-local	Observation
27	Post 1980	Female	Han	PhD	Higher Education	Overseas	Non-local	2019.6

⁷¹ The list is for both the interviews and some of observation cases.

A6. Survey Experiment Design of Chapter 5

Survey experiment design

Many studies use list experiment, endorsement experiment and conjoint experiment to reveal respondents' true attitudes to sensitive questions. People are likely to conceal or refuse to give their true opinion when directly asked in a survey. A survey experiment is useful because it measures the sensitive item by indirect questions. For instance, list experiment combines random experiment with the item count technique, asking the respondents—who are randomly assigned into either a treatment group or a control group—to report the numbers of items they agree on rather than asking them specifically about each item. Therefore, the respondent enjoys greater freedom and privacy and presumably is more likely to report true preferences. To estimate the treatment effect or affirmative answers to the sensitive item, if certain assumptions hold then simple mean difference will do the work, though scholars have adopted more complicated approaches (Blair & Imai, 2012; Imai, Keele, Tingley, & Yamamoto, 2011). Endorsement experiment uses another type of clue: subtle changes of the question, where treatment stimuli are embedded in the wording. Respondents are randomly assigned to groups (treatment, control, or placebo) and are asked to rate or report their agreements with the issue. For instance, in the control group, respondents are asked to rate their support of a specific policy and in the treatment group, this policy is endorsed by a certain actor. The difference between the respondents' outcome across groups (again, when the randomization assumption holds) can be regarded as evidence of support for the specific actor (Blair, Imai, & Lyall, 2014). Normally researchers use a set of parallel policies as cross-validation. Conjoint experiment is frequently used to address the compound treatment effects—in which the treatment that is of interest has various components or factors. It normally asks the respondent to “choose from or rate hypothetical profiles that combine multiple attributes, enabling researchers to estimate the relative influence of each attribute value on the resulting choice or rating” (Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto, 2014, p. 2). The unit treatment effect can be identified directly as the difference between the two potential outcomes under those two sets of profiles; and the average marginal component effect (AMCE)—the marginal effect of certain attributes averaged over the joint distribution of the remaining attributes—can be nonparametrically identified as a function of the conditional expectations of the observed outcomes under certain assumptions (Hainmueller et al., 2014). In Figure A25, I describe the research design of investigating falsified compliance (at different levels) and the respective identification strategies that I proposed for the survey experiment.

		Institutional difference	Difference in compliance	Identification strategy
Falsified Compliance	Legitimacy of Representatives of the State	Local Government	Agreements on social facts descriptions; Pay for a regular request; Pay for a nationalist request;	Endorsement experiment
		Central Government		
		CCP		
		Xi Jinping		
	Legitimacy of controversial policies of welfare reform			List experiment
	Legitimacy of official news			List experiment

Figure A25. Survey experiment design on falsified compliance

The design of the questionnaire consisted of three subsections that corresponded with the hypotheses above: falsification, mechanism and potential actions⁷². The section of falsification covered questions about the respondents' general political support for authorities at different levels (endorsement experiment questions Q1, Q6 and Q8), attitude to specific political issues (such as lifting the limit number of terms that a top leader can serve) and official propaganda using list experiment question Q2 and Q5 in turn. Both the control items in Q2 and Q5 used a negative correlation design to minimize the potential floor and cell effect (Glynn, 2013). In measuring actions and action preferences, I used a list experiment in Q10 to see if the respondent had ever done such things as petitioning, appealing and so on; and in Q11 I asked if the respondent would rather move to another country (if this were possible).

The subsection of mechanism measures the coercion and pressure from the authority using the respondents' perception of the government's capacity to tackle social unrest (Q9c). I also measured the degree of powerlessness felt when facing politics (Q9a) to serve as the index of inner political efficacy and government accountability (Q14e) as the index of external political efficacy. Some other related mechanisms were also investigated, such as the intention to put pressure on others (Q9b) (Kuran, 1997) and pluralistic ignorance (Q9d). In Q7, I used a simple (3*2*2) conjoint experiment to measure the awareness of political rewards for loyalty. Given a scenario of recruiting party members, the respondents were asked which of two candidates would they select if they were the secretary of the local branch of the party. Each candidate's profile had four attributes: age, family background, occupation, performance history on critical political events. The age was a random number between 35 and 45, typical for a non-student applicant. The levels of family background included workers, farmers and cadres (officials). The

⁷² The content of this survey is richer than the hypotheses in this chapter and could be developed in separate papers in the future. The full questionnaire is shown in the appendix.

occupation of the candidate in this question did not exhaust all the possibilities in normal social survey, but focused on 2 levels that were of interest in my research in this chapter, namely cadre and enterprise employee. The final attribute was the candidate's historical political performance, which consisted of two levels. One was the expression of positive loyalty: the candidate "positively supported and implemented the basic line, guiding principles and policy issued by the party and kept in line with the centre ideologically and politically"; the other one was a neutral statement: the candidate "have a clean record of political history".

All the statements in the control items, the attitude-related questions in Q9 and the control items in the list experiments used the wording or modified wording from existing questionnaires such as the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS), World Value Survey (WVS) and China General Social Survey (CGSS). I also included in the questionnaire a scattering of reversed statements to keep a check on the quality of the returned answers. In order to avoid the possibility of design effect, I presented the questions in an order that fitted the framed cover story of "a study that explores netizens' cognitive style and political attitudes regarding the latest news". The survey distribution was designed to take the form of blocks of scenarios, resulting in (4*3) 12 groups (four groups—Xi, Party, Local Government, None—for the endorsement experiment questions Q1, Q6, Q8; and three groups—control, treatment and placebo—for the list experiment questions Q2, Q5, Q10). The planned total sample was to be 3600, 300 samples each group, in order to achieve reliable power of the survey. During the implementation of the survey, the items of each question would be randomly disposed to avoid contamination from sequences.

Questionnaire

Preface:

Thank you for your interest in our research. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked some questions about your opinions on several latest news and lifestyle issues, then some questions about yourself. There are 20 questions in this questionnaire and your participation will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time by closing your browser window. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your data will be deleted and not used for analysis. You will be paid 10RMB for completing the survey. If you do not complete the survey, or we feel that you completed it in an unsatisfactory way (i.e., if you do not follow the instructions in the survey), you will not be compensated.

Your responses to all the questions are completely confidential. There is no item in the survey that asks for identifiable information. Participation in this study imposes no risks or benefits of which we are aware. If you have questions, comments or concerns about the survey, you may contact the research associate Yan Wang (Tsinghua University) at ywangsocio@outlook.com. If you agree to participate in this research, please click to see the questions.

- Q0. Have you done surveys on this platform before? (Never; 1-3 times; More than 3 times)

I. I know news

- Q1. [*Group 1*: President Xi suggested in his one of his visiting recently; *Group 2*: CCP calls for; *Group 3*: One city leader calls for; *Group 4*: None] we need to experience a process of downgrade What's the maximum cost you would like to pay for a success of China in the trade war with US?

I would like to pay nothing for this;

1% deduction from income (salary, bonus, extra cash and so on); 5% deduction from income;

10% deduction from income;

15% deduction from income;

Anything!

• Q2. Please take a look at this list of statements and tell me how many you generally support:

People with little or no education should not have as much say in politics as highly educated people;

People receive state aid if they are unemployed;

Individual's ability is important for his/her career;

The government should collect information broadly from the public before issuing a policy;

for treatment group We should abandon the term regulations if a political leader is doing a good job

for placebo group The national congress represented the interest of majority

for control group **None**

Support: 0 1 2 3 4 [5]

• Q3. On average, how often do you use the internet (through weibo, wechat, headline, newsapp etc.) to obtain information and maintain social network?

5 hrs or more every day

2-5 hrs every day

1-2 hrs every day

Do not use internet to obtain information and maintain social network

• Q4. There are many popular words created by netizens online, which groups of popular words can you recognize? (Here I only show the category of the wording, not the exact Chinese words; control words are generally relating to entertainment news)

Group 1: Control; Control; Control

Group 2: Problem about social justice; Control; Control

Group 3: Control; Problem about government accountability; Control

Group 4: Control; Factional strife from anti-corruption campaign; Control

• Q5. Please take a look at this list of statements and tell me for how many you think is (are) true:

Policy reform is a complicate process and normal people can't understand;

Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate;

Rural immigrants contributed a lot to the urban development so they should be treated equally with their urban counterparts;

No matter born in eastern coast or western part of China, as long as contribute same efforts, Xiao Li's probability of success is the same.

for treatment group Official propaganda is intentionally constructed to cultivate people

for placebo group Should allow the media speak for certain social class or interest group

for control group **None**

True: 0 1 2 3 4 [5]

• Q6: **Group 1: President Xi; Group 2: CCP calls for; Group 3: One city leader calls for; Group 4: None** is considering raising funding for solving the severe environmental problems by issuing environmental tax on individuals, what's the maximum acceptable tax rate for you?

I would like to pay nothing for this;

1% deduction from income (salary, bonus, extra cash and so on); 5% deduction from income;

10% deduction from income;

15% deduction from income;

Anything!

• Q6a: Due to the process of aging, the issue of how to take care of the elderly and who should take the responsibility is getting more attentions nowadays. Someone suggest that, increasing the governmental fiscal support for the basic pension insurance program is the most efficient way of dealing with the elderly problem, do you agree with this statement? We would like to know if you are reading the questions on this survey. If you are reading carefully, please ignore this question, do not select any answer below, and click "next" to proceed with the survey.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

II. I have attitudes

• Q7. If you are party branch secretary of your unit, and two of your colleagues are applying for party membership. Please read the description of their profiles, which of the two would you personally approve to be an applicant (candidate)?

Factor	Levels
Age	Random whole number between 35-45
Family background	Worker; Peasants; Cadre
Occupation	Cadre; Enterprise employee
Political performance history	Positively support and implement the basic line, guiding principle and policy issued by the party, keep in line with the central ideologically and politically; Have a clean record of political history

• Q8. *G1*: Under the lead of CCP; *G2*: Under the lead of Xi; *G3*: Under the government of local authorities; *G4*: None, how much do these following statement match your impression in recent years?

- a. Education promoted social mobility is slowing down;
- b. Economy performance worse in recent years;
- c. People still may fall into poverty because of illness;

d. Dual track of pension system still exists

• Q9: Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

a. People like me do not have any influence over what the government does.

b. If some teachers suspected of spreading false (politically incorrect) ideas, should send someone to the class to check.

c. The government is capable of tackling any political unrest.

d. Most people in our society are aware of the social, political and economic problems but prefer not to discuss in public.

• Q10: Please take a look at the following list of common activities that people engage to deal with daily problems. How many of the activities did you engage in any of these activities listed previously?

Kidnapped by aliens;

Comment or forward posts about political issues online;

for treatment group File an appeal or sign a petition, request gov information publicity, or write to the mayor;

for placebo group Handle administrative affairs at Local Administrative Service Centre;

for control group **None**

Distributing gifts (yourself or with your family) to relatives in spring festival;

Seeing a public hospital doctor in the past 12 months;

Engaged: 0 1 2 3 4 [5].

• Q11: Given the chance, how willing would you be to live in another country? (Very willing; Willing; Not willing; Not willing at all; Don't understand the question; Can't choose; Decline to answer)

III. About Me

• Q12: Demographic factors: respondent's age, gender, education, **occupational type**, marital condition, CCP membership, income group, ethnic group (minority or not), **time of starting your job**.

• Q13: Have you been abroad or not? (Many times; once; never but plan to go; never and no willingness to go)

• Q14: Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

a. I have a great deal of trust in our political system.

b. I am very proud to be a citizen of the PRC.

c. I believe that most people in the society can be trusted.

d. Most people in our society have high political support regarding the system.

e. Our government is accountable regarding people's requests.

f. The economic situation of our country will be better a few years from now.

g. The economic situation of my family will be better a few years from now.

Appendix B Data Replication

Appendix B presents a brief explanation of the statistical methods used in the empirical chapters and instructions on the replication file for Chapters 3 and 4 (code and data).

B1. Text analysis (Chapter 3)

As explained in the main content, I use quantitative text analysis (QTA) to show the persuasive efforts of the government when intentionally producing truth and knowledge about pension benefits, social fairness and the allocation of responsibility. The QTA part of my research included two subsections: an unsupervised Structural Topic Model to identify the main topics in the text relating to pension reforms and supervised methods to label each document with categories that were of interest to my research. The main software used here was Rstudio (version 1.1.447) and the main QTA packages including Rwordseg, tmcn, stm, topicmodel (all available on <https://cran.r-project.org/>). Helpful literature for further understanding the method can be found in Hopkins and King, 2010; Grimmer and Stewart, 2013; Lucas et al., 2015; and Roberts, Stewart & Tingley, 2014.

I provided code and data files necessary to replicate some of the main results reported in Chapter 3. Due to the large amount of original data, I share the DTMs and metadata. Since text segment and software simulation can be different each time, it may not be possible to replicate the exact results reported in the chapter, but as long as the replication uses the same version of the packages, the results should be similar. It should be noted that the original data are in Chinese, and therefore the direct results (such as the generated topics) are also in Chinese. *QTA1904_layout.R* & *QTA2002_revision.R* replicates all of the results in the chapter and *analysis.RData* contains the data necessary for the analysis.

Table B29. Codebook for Chapter 3

Variable name	Variable Label and Measurement
X	Document number
Title	Title of the document
Author	Author of the document
Date	Date of the document
Year	Year
Month	Month
Day	Day
Year_Month	Year-month
Edition_name	Edition name of the document
Column	Column of the document
Text	Full text of the document
Responsibility	Identified welfare responsibility of the document (categorical variable), “no clear direction of locus”=0, “state/party”=1, “individual/family”=2, “enterprise”=3, “social coordination”=4
National.condition	Whether the document emphasis national condition (Yes=1)
Foreign.experience	Whether the document emphasis foreign experience (Yes=1)
Praise	Whether the sentiment is positive (Yes=1)
Denounce	Whether the sentiment is negative (Yes=1)

B2. Causal inference (Chapter 4)

In Chapter 4, I use Difference in Differences when examining the causal relationship between the trajectory of welfare reform from state socialism to shared responsibility and individual changes of perception. The idea of causal inference here is that the causal effect of a treatment on some outcome can be assessed. The causal effect of the treatment on the outcome for unit i is the difference between its two potential outcomes: an observed outcome in a treated situation and an unobserved outcome in a control situation (i.e. something counterfactual). However, in practice, it is impossible to observe the values of Y_{1i} and Y_{0i} on the same unit i . Therefore, in empirical studies, scholars rely on statistical solutions to the fundamental problem of causal inference (Winship & Morgan, 1999). Commonly used approaches include randomized experiments (e.g., Fisher, 1960; Gerber & Green, 2012); matching and weighting on covariates (e.g., Hainmueller, 2012; Iacus, King, & Porro, 2012; Morgan & Harding, 2006); difference-in-differences (e.g., Ashenfelter, 1978); a synthetic control method (Abadie & Gardeazabal, 2003); instrumental variables (e.g., Angrist, Imbens, & Rubin, 1996); causal mediation analysis (Imai, Keele, & Yamamoto, 2010); and regression discontinuity design (Imbens & Lemieux, 2008; Thistlethwaite & Campbell, 1960).

The difference-in-differences method was developed from the “simple difference estimator”, which used the post-treatment outcome (Y_{1t}) minus the pre-treatment outcome (Y_{0t}) for the treatment group. However, due to the existence of the time factor, the $Y_{1t} - Y_{0t}$ estimator is not actually the treatment effect. Therefore, the DID approach takes advantage of the control group, which did not receive any treatment of intervention, such as a policy/programme. If the assumption of a parallel trend holds, the estimator $(\bar{y}_{\text{treat, after}} - \bar{y}_{\text{treat, before}}) - (\bar{y}_{\text{control, after}} - \bar{y}_{\text{control, before}})$ can be treated as the treatment effect of intervention. In the following figure I present a graphic illustration⁷³ of the DID setup.

⁷³ From class material, lecturer David Hendry, MY457, “Causal Inference for Experimental and Observational Studies”, Methodology Department, LSE.

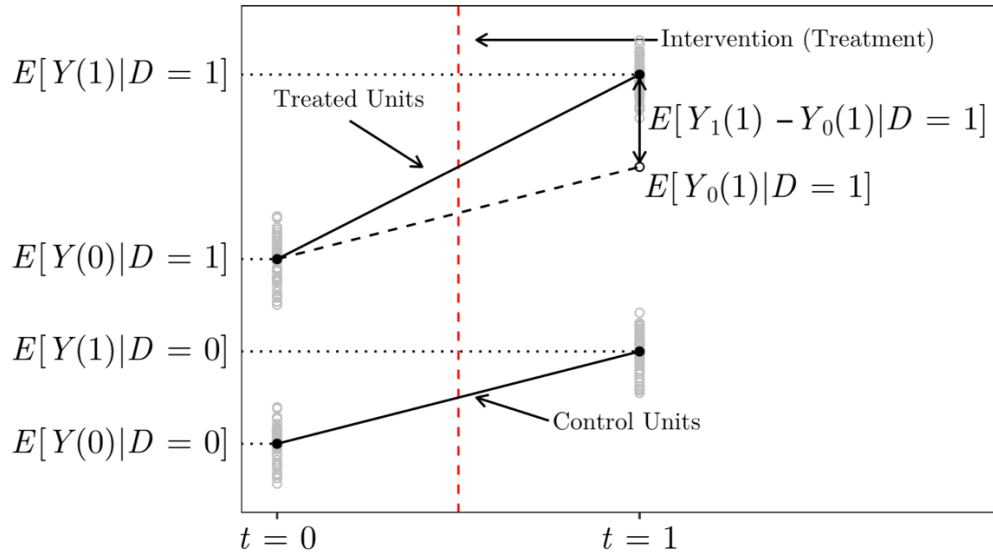


Figure B26. Simplest Difference-in-Differences Setup

We signed a confidentiality agreement to use the survey data (with Martin Whyte) and therefore cannot post the original data. Instead I share the code (*Pension.pilot1904.R*) used to generate the results in the chapter. The relevant codebook (individual level and provincial level) is presented in the table below.

Table B30. Codebook for Chapter 4

Variable name	Variable Label and Measurement
Urban	Hukou registration (Urban=1)
Gender	Gender (Male=1)
Age	Age
Minority	Minority ethnic group (Minority=1)
CCP_member	Member of CCP (Member=1)
Edu_year	Years of education
Age_grp	Age group
Edu_grp	Education levels
Income_log	Annual income of the household (log value)
Unit_Enterprise	Occupational variation (Enterprise employees=1)
Unit_Governmental Employee	Occupational variation (Governmental employees=1)
Old-age dependency (oldcare_n)	Numbers of old-age person the family need to take care
Treated	Provinces being treated or controlled (treated=1)
Duration	Years each province being treated
Wave	Provinces in different waves of experiment
Post	Survey year (year 2009=1)
Province_n	Province code, 22 provinces in total
Respon_old	Locus of responsibility regarding old-age caring (attitudinal preference, individual responsibility=5)
Respon_med	Locus of responsibility regarding health caring (attitudinal preference, individual responsibility=5)
Respon_edu	Locus of responsibility regarding compulsory education (attitudinal preference, individual responsibility=5)
Respon_job	Locus of responsibility regarding employment (attitudinal preference, individual responsibility=5)
Trust_central	Political trust for central government (most trust=4)
Trust_province	Political trust for provincial government (most trust=4)
Trust_local	Political trust for prefectural/city government (most trust=4)
Province name	Province name
province_n	Province code
Year_Prov	Year-province panel
All news	All article number
Related_news	Identified article number relates to Pension insurance/old-age social insurance
Related_news_ratio	Ratio of Identified article number relates to Pension insurance/old-age social insurance compare to all articles
Accumulated Related_news_ratio (3 years)	Related News (2002+2003+2004)/All News (2002+2003+2004) Related News (2007+2008+2009)/All News (2007+2008+2009)
Accumulated Related_news_ratio (5 years)	Related News (2000+2001+2002+2003+2004)/All News (2000+2001+2002+2003+2004) Related News (2005+2006+2007+2008+2009)/All News (2005+2006+2007+2008+2009)

Directly related news	Identified article number relates to Fully funding the individual accounts pilot policy
Direvly related news_ratio	Ratio of Identified article relates to Fully funding the individual accounts pilot policy compare to all articles
Accumulated Directly Related_news_ratio (3 years)	Directly Related news (2002+2003+2004)/All news (2002+2003+2004) Directly Related news (2007+2008+2009)/All news (2007+2008+2009)
Accumulated Directly Related_news_ratio (5 years)	Directly Related News (2000+2001+2002+2003+2004)/All News (2000+2001+2002+2003+2004) Directly Related News (2005+2006+2007+2008+2009)/All News (2005+2006+2007+2008+2009)
Wave	Wave of pilot policy
Municipal_n	Number of municipalities of certain province
County_n	Number of counties of certain province
GDP_total	Province GDP (Yuan)
GDP_per capita	Province GDP per capita (Yuan)
GDP_index	Province GDP Index (previous year=100)
Residents_n	Yearend population of certain province (10 thousand)
Urban_residents	Urban population of certain province (10 thousand)
Rural_residents	Rural population of certain province (10 thousand)
Population growth rate	Population growth rate (‰)
Population	Population (census)
Old_population	Population of people above 65 (census)
ODR_cens	Old-age dependency rate (census)
Urban_employees	Urban employee population (10 thousand)
Fin_budgetary revenue	Local Fiscal general budgetary revenue (hundred million)
Fin_revenue	Local Fiscal revenue (hundred million)
Fin_specific purpose revenue	Local Fiscal specific purpose revenue (hundred million)
Fin_non-tax revenue	Local non-tax revenue (hundred million)
Fin_general budgetary expenditure	Local Fiscal general budgetary expenditure (hundred million)
Fin_general public service expenditure	Local Fiscal general public service expenditure (hundred million)
Fin_social security and employment expenditure	Local Fiscal social security and employment expenditure (hundred million)
Fin_health and medical expenditure	Local Fiscal health and medical expenditure (hundred million)
Saving_deposit	Saving deposit (hundred million)
Ur_employee participants	Urban employee participants for Old-age social insurance (10 thousand)
Ur_in service employee participants	Urban in service employee participants for Old-age social insurance (10 thousand)
Ur_retired employee participants	Urban retired employee participants for Old-age social insurance (10 thousand)
Pension_revenue	Basic Pension Insurance Funds revenue (10 thousands Yuan)
Pension_expen	Basic Pension Insurance Funds expenditure (10 thousands Yuan)
Pension_balance	Basic Pension Insurance Funds balance (10 thousands Yuan)

