POLICY PROCESS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
IN CHINESE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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**POLICY PROCESS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
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Do Chinese citizens participate in their local policy process? Scholars from different standpoints see the answer differently. Conventional wisdoms believe that determined by the China's single party authoritarian rule, there are limited channels for citizens to participate and the power of their participation is also restricted to merely their economic interests, which can never reach the ultimate outcome of Western-style political democratization. However, in this study, the author identifies two important variables – citizen participation and accountability structural change – that are crucial to the changes of Chinese local policy processes from agenda setting to policymaking and to implementation, which in turn alter the direction of Chinese political reform.

The author examines the impact of these two variables on the policy change in Chinese local government from four aspects: formal and routine government policy processes, citizen-driven collective resistance to unpopular policies, government efforts to reform formal policy processes, and coproduction of local social welfare services between grassroots government and NGOs. The author concludes that regardless of some scholars' pessimism toward Chinese political changes, there are clear signs of gradual movement from the traditional authoritarian accountability structure toward a more participatory policy process. Although no straightforward Western-style democratic political institutions are being established, Chinese local government is marching toward a direction of citizen-driven policy process and downward accountability structure.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

When I was sitting in my father's reading room in my hometown—a middle-sized city in China with a population over 3 million (yes, that is a middle-sized city in China)—to read books and prepare my dissertation topics, I always felt frustrated in the very late night when I smelled an unpleasant and stinky odor. Since I had been away from home for long, I did not know what the bas smell was and where it came from. Then, I asked my parents. They seemed already used to it and told me that this came from a nearby MSG[1] factory, which had produced this smell for many years. I, then, googled the information about this MSG factory and found out that as early as in 2005 the air pollution produced by this factory's stinky smoke has caused huge crises.

In March 2006, the first Internet post complaining about the MSG factory pollution case was posted on the China Environment Protection website (www.ep.net.cn). In this post, a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) member, representing over 100,000 local residents who were affected by the pollution, sought help from this website. The CCP member reported that in early 2005 local residents were gravely affected by the heavy smelly smoke and tried to report the problem to the local government by visiting the Bureau of Letters and Visits (BLV)—a bureau specially created in all levels of Chinese government for citizens to report their complaints.

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[1] Monosodium Glutamate is a season widely used in Chinese food and cooking. Although the US Food and Drug Administration does not find it is harmful to human being. The real side effect of using it in food is still controversial (See report on The Europe Food Information Council at: http://www.eufic.org/article/en/artid/monosodium-glutamate/).

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However, their efforts to receive local government support ended in vain. Thus, in April 2005, approximately 400 local residents had to choose a "peaceful demonstration" to block the road for the factory's transportation. Once again, their activities were suppressed by local government and it was reported that several local residents who were involved in the "violence" were taken into custody by the police. Nevertheless, local citizens' strikes were not totally useless. In July 2005, local government officials publicly accused the factory managers and ordered them to improve their pollution control facilities.[2]

Unfortunately, that was only the first strike and since then, the scale and frequency of struggles between local citizens and the MSG factory have escalated. From 2006 to 2009, local residents constantly posted their unhappy experiences and complaints in various BBS websites, local government official websites, and environmental protection agencies' websites. However, these activities attracted not too much government attention until an influential local newspaper reported the pollution on December 14, 2007.[3] Two weeks after this report, this province's deputy governor ordered the city government and environmental protection agency to "improve the environment and rectify the order."[4]

In April 2008, the first GoogleEarth satellite image of this MSG factory's smoking chimney was posted online. Modern technology became an effective tool to show evidence of this

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[2] Information retrieved online on August 1, 2010 at: http://www.xmems.org.cn/cgi-bin/jbts/doc.cgi?id=901.

[3] Zhang, H. P. (December 14, 2007). "Heavy Pollution in Baoji City, Clean Water River Becomes White Water River," *Huashang Newspaper*, retrieved online on August 1, 2010 at: http://news.hsw.cn/system/2007/12/14/005720010.shtml.

[4] Zhang, H. P. (December 28, 2007). "Follow up Report on Clean Water River Becomes White Water River: Deputy Governor Orders to Improve," *Huashang Newspaper*, retrieved online on August 1, 2010 at: http://news.hsw.cn/system/2007/12/28/005745520.shtml.

pollution case. Local newspapers soon picked up this image and reported the pollution again four months after the deputy governor's order.[5]

What did local government do in the meantime? Based on the city's Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) report released in April 2009, since 2006 the factory constantly invested a large amount of money to improve technology and to reduce the pollution. The factory also contracted the pollution control project out to Xi'an Jiaotong University, the elite higher educational institution in the region. After a series of experiments throughout the year of 2008 and the early 2009, the factory managers positively declared that the smoke and smell was expected to evanesce and the problem was expected to be finally solved in September 2009 after the last pollution control equipment was installed. Meanwhile, local city government also established a special task group to supervise the pollution control and invest more money to address the problem. One interesting observation in this report was the agency's claim that "the organic waste water and major pollutants in the smoke have basically reached the national emission control standard," and the ingredients in the smoke that produced the smell "are not in the list of the emission control standard."[6]

Unfortunately, it is already the latter half of the year in 2010 and the smell is still detectable even miles away from the factory. The only change may be the smell only occurs late at night, instead of in the daytime. Why is this factory so arrogant that it dares to ignore the local citizens' complaint? Why is the local government so ineffective in safeguarding local environment and

[5] Zhang, H. P. (April 26, 2008). "Internet Post: Satellite Image Appears Baoji Factory's Chimney," *Huashang Newspaper*, retrieved online on August 1, 2010 at: http://www.hsw.cn/news/2008-04/26/content_6933320.htm.

[6] Li, F. (July 22, 2009). "The Expectation under the 'Fu Feng' Cloud," personal blog, retrieved online on August 1, 2010 at: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_510fd9490100eq51.html.

citizens' health and in responding to the public concerns? Several Internet users' comments may help disclose part of the problem in this case:

> The previous CCP member complained in his post: "this factory is a huge investment project brought by the city government and this is the exact factory that chunked out by a costal provincial government due to its uncontrollable pollution! Now among the local residents there is a saying that 'complaints are all useless because this is a governmental project.' The public are unsatisfied and people lose their trust to the government and the Party. I am so frustrated and angry that economic development has to suffer from the cost of degrading environment? The so-called investment is more important than people's lives? ... Is there someone that can really do something to it?" (see cp.net.cn website).

Talking about the government responsibility in this case and who can do something to it, the user ID "ddizzi" told his/her vivid experience:

> "Today I called the Mayor's Hotline: 12345. A public employee picked up the phone. He told me that there were complaints about this case before. Recently such a voice was reduced and they thought there were improvements made in the past. I told him that the situation was even worse. Then, he kicked the ball to the local EPA. I called the EPA. When the lady in the other end heard that it was the Mayor's Hotline directed the phone call, she was so pissed. She complained that it should be the mayor himself who was responsible for such a pollution case. Then, she directed my call to the Office of Complaint in her agency. The Office of Complaint said they could only report my complaints to the Office of Legal Services and they did not know what that office is going to handle this issue. Well, it seems no one can do anything to it. What we can do is only to enjoy the free smell!" (Quote from the post in tianya.cn).[7]

User ID "tqbj" seems to be an insider in the government, his post is worth noting here:

> "I am a public employee. When I pass by the nearby region [of the MSG factory], I can also smell that strange smoke. However, that factory does pay handsome taxes each year. Last year I went to the factory for some tasks. The factory manager introduced to me that the smell was harmless to people and already

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[7] Unfortunately the original post in the tianya.cn website was no longer accessible. But the webpage can still be obtained from Baidu cache address at:
http://cache.baidu.com/c?m=9f65cb4a8c8507ed4fece763105392230e54f72567848c5e2cc3933fc23846071037b9ef7a62575bceb4213b47f8151af7f032772a0227b791df883d9ce1d477719c6269304a895662d00edccf5155b037e35efeae69f0cafa25e3abc5a3da4324c944040a9781fc4d7010dd1f87034293b19838022f11ad9e35&p=86759a44dc941afc57edc1314a08&user=baidu, retrieved on August 1, 2010.

passed the EPA's examination. But as a local resident, I also agree with all your opinions and I do support everybody here" (Quote from the post in tianya.cn).

After I did all this online research about this case, I, again, was sitting in front of the desk in my father's reading room and thought what I could do to help in this case? If I were in Pittsburgh, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the US, where I did my Ph.D. studies, I probably could search online and find the information of the district congressional representative and call him/her to complain. This might or might not be a solution to the problem, but at least I could have someone who listens to my complaint. I certainly did not know who the local district representative was in the People's Congress in my hometown in China. Even if my parents knew the person's name and voted for him/her, I was sure there was no way for them to find this person's phone number or any way to communicate with him/her. I knew my parents had not participated in the local congressional election for ages, neither had I. It was also widely known that the People's Congress in China was no more than a "rubber stamp."

Exploring the Chinese Internet-based communication tools, such as Weibo, Wechat, or Renren.com (Chinese style Facebook), we can easily see popular figures, business leaders, university professors, common citizens, or even government-sponsored public media posting notes and pictures about various kinds of social and economic problems similar to those I have experienced in my hometown. These scenarios raise a serious question that is worth further exploring in this volume: do Chinese citizens participate in their local policy process?

2.0 CHAPTER TWO:

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CHINA

The question on whether a Chinese local citizen participates in policy process is not new and, in fact, is not a debatable one any more. Most scholars, politicians, opinion leaders, and even grassroots citizens believe that local citizens are involved in policy processes—at least in the policy discussion stage, which might influence policies. Hence, the question shifts its direction to *how and how much* local citizens get themselves involved in the policy process to influence local policies. Why is it important to explore this particular research question? First and most importantly, as shown in the introductory chapter, we know Chinese people now have various channels to express their concerns and complaints about local policies. If their voices are louder enough, local government officials will respond. But to what extend can these voices be heard? So far besides studies about "collective resistances," almost no systematic research touches upon this question.

Second, the format of citizen participation is not evolving in the direction that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) designed or expected (Perry & Selden, 2000; Saich, 2004) and, moreover, the complicated Chinese economic reform has brought various forms of socio-political paradoxes, contradictions, and problems (Goldman & MacFarquhar, 1999) and severely weakens the "institutional" means of political control in terms of government sanctioned organizations, like the All China Federation of Trade Union (ACFTU) and the All

China Women's Federation (ACWF) (A. Chan, 1993). Therefore, all kinds of interest groups, associations, societies, and even individuals form powerful socio-political corporations and coalitions to counter against the single-party authoritarian rule at the local level (Mertha, 2009). These powerful interest groups become main forces to support and even encourage citizen participation in local policies. But how do citizens interact with interest groups and how they join together to influence policies are questions need further examination.

Third, scholars in the field of Chinese politics have different views about the emergence of Chinese social groups and their impact toward local policies. Some Chinese scholars celebrate the emergence of the Western style non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society (Jia, 2008). Nevertheless, many Western Sinologists also recognize the Chinese democratic changes occurred in the recent decades, such as direct village election (O'Brien & Li, 1999b) and democratic election of township government head (Jakobson, 2004) and the Party secretary (S. Wang & Yao, 2007). These changes indicate that the village farmers' participation in their daily political affairs has been more institutionalized and the Chinese government gradually losses its control on social groups, such as NGOs and organized interest groups. But many scholars have research interests in the unstable and uncertain nature of collective protests and organized contentions occurred in almost every corner of Chinese rural administrative units (Cai, 2010; Perry, 2008). Furthermore, some see the government initiated policy innovations and improvements that enable and encourage citizen participation in all levels of policy process (K. Yu, 2009).

Further, these diversified structural discrepancies are not strange in a huge developing economy as China. But besides observing the changes only in the participatory or the citizens' side, it is important for us to examine the changes made inside the Chinese government,

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especially in the local level, where the interactions between central and local actors occur. To evaluate behavioral and institutional changes, Polski and Ostrom (1999) provides at least six variables: economic efficiency, fiscal equivalence, redistributional equity, accountability, conformance to general morality, and adaptability. Among these variables, accountability stands out to be a pertinent one to evaluate changes made inside the local Chinese government, because most of the local policy changes in China involve a trade-off selection between economic development and social stability. I call this situation "*Chinese local officials' accountability dilemma*," in which Chinese local government officials are stuck, because, as key conditions for them to be promoted to higher political positions, they must maintain both high-speed economic growth and a "harmonious local society" (also see in H. S. Chan & Gao, 2008). Here the "harmonious local society" refers to no large-scale citizens' revolt against local government policies. This "dilemma" can further be translated to the changes of local government officials' accountability structure: either accountable to their political masters to keep economic momentum, or accountable to their citizens with more concerns on living environment and conditions, or ideally to both.

Therefore, to understand *how and how much Chinese citizens participate in their local policy process*, it is important for us to examine both the concepts of citizen participation and accountability in order to obtain a full picture of involvement from both citizens' and government officials' sides. In the following section, I will assess these concepts in both the Western and Chinese literature and also to evaluate their interactions to generate a workable model to try to answer the research questions of this study.

2.1 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Since "citizen participation" consists of two fundamental terms in the political studies – "citizen" and "participation" – the literature of citizen participation is large and complex, with a long history comparable to that of the theory of democracy (Roberts, 2004). In order to limit the discussion in this study, I will focus more on identifying the meaning of participation. This is not to say that the definition of citizen is unimportant. On the contrary, I want to extend the concept to the broadest scope to bestow the ethical and sociological meaning to it, instead of merely legal and constitutional definition. As Dimock says, "it is like John Dewey's idea of community, Ernest Baker's concept of duty, and Walter Lippmann's emphasis on civility all rolled into one" (Dimock, 1990, p. 21). Frederickson (1991) also suggests four required conditions for a general theory of the public: the constitution, the virtuous citizen, responsiveness to collective and non-collective publics, and benevolence and love of others. Hence, in this study, the meaning and scope of citizen does not only mean the individual person, who has all the legal rights defined in the Constitution and laws. It also refers to voluntary groups and community organizations from grassroots to international and across country levels, and also all "the public" under the theory of Frederickson in the field of public administration.

2.1.1   Types of Participation

The broadest definition of citizenship leaves the meaning of "citizen participation" to the clarification of participation in this study. In this study, I will explain participation in two pairs of categories: indirect participation and direct participation, as well as demand and support in systems analysis. In the history of democratic and non-democratic development of societies,

citizens participate in political affairs mainly through indirect means, which refers to the voting of representatives to participate in the policy process on their behalf. Even until today, this remains the major means of political practice in modern states. Nevertheless, in representative democracies, there are certain advantages:

> "It protects citizens from the dangers of direct involvement. It buffers them from uninformed public opinion, it prevents the tyranny of the majority, and it serves as a check on corruption. It also meets the needs of a complex, postindustrial society that requires technical, political, and administrative expertise to function" (Roberts, 2004, p. 316).

Of course, we now know that the indirect participation does not necessarily serve all the expected functions as it is designed to. The traditionally less represented social and ethnic groups have scholars calling for a revitalization of "new public administration" to tie public managers with the "citizenry" (Frederickson, 1980, 1982). Moreover, facing gradually less efficient government, practitioners and scholars seek solutions, such as entrepreneurial style New Public Management to change relations between citizens and their representative government into a business-like management, where citizens actively demand public services (Hood, 1995), or the "New Public Service," with which the public servants become the real "servants" to "help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests" (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000, p. 549).

But regardless how one considers citizens' participation in the policy process, as voters, clients, interest groups, customers/consumers, volunteers/co-producers, or even co-learners (Roberts, 2004), citizens began to participate in a more direct fashion as opposed to that in earlier representative-style political structure. Scholars, suggest in the era of New Governance the public managers should acquire managerial skills as – or, from the other angle, citizens could participate through – negotiating, persuading, collaborating, and enabling (Salamon, 2002). At this point, citizens do not simply vote for their favorite politicians, but are actively involved in all

public affairs, as Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary (2005) note "it is crucially about the process that public managers, citizens, and stakeholders use in determining what shape policy, its implementation, and its enforcement will take" (Bingham et al., 2005, p. 548). These practical and theoretical changes all indicate the evolvement of direct citizen participation, which is a prevailing political trend even in the "authoritarian" China. I will turn to this literature at a later point.

In the early development of the theory of citizen direct participation, Arnstein (1969) distinguishes citizens as "haves" and "have-nots" and describes participation as "the redistribution of power" to empower "have-nots" – the socially and politically underrepresented, especially the racial minorities in the period her paper was published. Her definition of participation contrasts the traditional indirect citizen involvement in the legal and formal political structure and refers to the organization and involvement of the group of people who do not have political capacity to determine policy in their favor (Arnstein, 1969). Arnestein's definition and her eight rungs of the ladder of participation open the door for the discussion of direct citizen participation, which has attracted attention and debate since then.

The literature of direct participation goes to various different directions. Scholars examine the roots of philosophical thinking and conclude that citizen participation enables highest human capacity for human development (Pateman, 1970; Warner, 2001). Citizen participation nurtures education for the common sense of democracy, which becomes a virtuous cycle for the political development (Oldfield, 1990). Citizen participation is also the legitimization for the government decisions and policies (Salisbury, 1975). Among all the thoughts about the citizen's direct participation, the school of coproduction theory stands out to highlight the practical function of citizens' direct involvement in the policy process. Elinor

Ostrom (1996) defines the coproduction as "the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not 'in' the same organization" (Ostrom, 1996, p. 1073). Whitaker identifies three types of coproduction: "(1) citizens requesting assistance from public agents; (2) citizens providing assistance to public agents; and (3) citizens and agents interacting to adjust each other's service expectations and actions" (Whitaker, 1980, p. 242).

The concept of coproduction has been expanded to not only individuals, but also the third sector (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). The practices are also fine tuned to three more specific distinctions: co-governance, referring to the involvement of planning and service delivery processes; co-management, referring to collaboration with the state to produce public service; and the traditional co-production, where citizens produce their own services with their governments (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006).

The practices of the direct participation in the Western society, especially in the US, are also richly documented. They can be traced back from as early as the Ecclesia of Athens in the ancient Greek city-states, to the Middle Ages of urban artisans' associations to manage public affairs, and to the building of Magna Carta in 1215 in Virginia and New England colonial settlements (Roberts, 2004). In the modern times, the 1954 Urban Renewal Act, the War on Poverty in the 1960s, the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, and the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 – to name a few – all clearly describe and encourage citizen direct participation on government policies and programs (Day, 1997).

The debates of advantages and disadvantages of indirect and direct citizen participation are widely seen in the literature (Dahl, 1994; Innes & Booher, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004;

Roberts, 2004). However, it is not the goal of this study to identify their differences. Nevertheless, it is important for me to shift the goal from means of participation to directions of participation, namely the demand and support in the input side of political systems (Easton, 1965). Activists of direct citizen participation believe that citizens' engagement in policy processes is always better than doing nothing, because "with citizen participation, formulated policies might be more realistically grounded in citizen preferences, the public might become more sympathetic evaluators of the tough decisions that government administrators have to make, and the improved support from the public might create a less divisive, combative populace to govern and regulate" (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 55). Thus, citizen participation plays a key role in supervising government policies and making sure that they do not go wrong.

However, citizen participation does not necessarily play a single role of supervision or demand. To support or to co-produce, as has been discussed above, are also important functions of citizen participation. Easton has detailed analysis in his classic book *Systems Analysis of Political Life* (Easton, 1965). In searching for a general theory in political science, Easton (1965) created a comprehensive diagram of "dynamic response model of a political system" (Easton, 1965, p. 30). In his system analysis, demands and support are consisted of his two forms of inputs in the political system. As compared to the demands side, Easton describes "[a political system] is [also] a means through which the resources and energies of society are mobilized and oriented to the pursuit of goals… the description is particularly helpful in highlighting the need for marshaling the support of the members if the systems is to be able to act at all" (Easton, 1965, p. 153). He explicitly points out that authorities in any political systems must gather enough support to make the systems function. As in indirect citizen participation, it is crucial for the authorities to gather enough citizens' support to win the election, to pass a bill, and to achieve

goals using less coercive forces. Therefore, as one major function in the political system, I include citizens' support in both direct and indirect participation as part of citizen participation in my analysis in this study. Easton's general theory of systems is so influential in many aspects in the political theories, which I shall return to when I discuss the literature of policy process in Chapter 2.

2.1.2   Citizen Participation in China

Till this point, the scope of citizen participation in this study can be clearly defined and limited to both indirect and direct participation and from both demand and support sides. So how do these definitions and limitations imply to the Chinese case?   Since 1978, China has experienced tremendous economic development. In the recent two decades, with the economic prosperity come social and political reforms and disturbances, which are involved with more grassroots citizen participation both from indirect form and direct form and both from demands side and support side. In this study, I differentiate Chinese local citizen participation into formal participation and informal participation.

The formal participation in this study can be categorized into two types: participation through legal means and participation involving personal relations, legal or illegal. Legal participation, as its name indicates, involves all citizens' activities that are legalized by laws and regulations promulgated by all legislative bodies in China. Jia (2008) acknowledges that:

> "all activities that aim at influencing public policy and public lives belong to the scope of public participation. Voting, election, referendum, association, petition, assembly, protest, demonstration, procession, protest, publication, mobilization, connection, prosecution, dialogue, discussion, negotiation, persuasion, hearing, and appeal. With today's information and internet technology, some new forms of citizen participation are evolving, such as televised debate, internet forum, internet organization, and text messages" (Jia, 2008, p. 4).

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X. Chen (2009) is more practical in terms of defining the citizens' formal participation in the Chinese context. He quotes the Chinese Communist Party's communiqué issued in 2000 that formally introduces the issue of "citizen's orderly participation" (p.212). He explains that the "orderly participation" at that point refers to the promotion of scientific, democratic, enlarged decision making processes, which encourages citizens to participate in the decision making process with regulated and rational methods (J. Chen, 2009, p. 212). Hence, his definition of "orderly participation" becomes

> "on the premise of acknowledging the existing institution, in order to promote socio-economic and political development, to enhance the governing capability for public affairs and performance, to protect citizens' legal rights and public interests, citizens are involved in various regulated, institutionalized, legalized political activities. The activities include interest expression and preservation and they are directed, organized, orderly, voluntary-based, rational, and appropriate political participation" (p.214).

Compared with Jia's definition, Chen's is more precise and politically more careful. His definition is in line with the theme of "Chinese characteristics," which explicitly illustrate the constraints of the Chinese way of formal citizen participation. However, the formal participation activities offered by both authors are over the limit of our study, which is the citizen participation in the local policy process. On this particular participation activity, J. Chen (2009); B. Liu and Zhu (2000) provide a more precise discussion. Two points they present are pertinent to our discussion here: (1) except for the party and local government, other political organs, such as local people's congress, local people's consultative council, and local disciplinary examination committee[8], do not have a clear role in the policy process; and (2) in the local level government

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[8] An internal supervision agency that is responsible for checking malfeasance and corruption charges inside all levels of Chinese government.

policy process, citizen participation is limited to a relatively low level, which is because of the weak political involvement and function of both local people's congress and social organizations.

B. Liu and Zhu (2000) are much more pessimistic than Jia (2008) and J. Chen (2009) in terms of defining formal citizen participation. S. Wang (2006) illustrates six agenda setting strategies practices by the Chinese government, particularly at the central level. In his six strategies of agenda setting, there are not many formal ways for citizen participation, besides the politically dictated mobilization, such as family planning policy, and purposefully influencing public opinions through either emergency issues, such as SARS-driven medical reform, or technology-based public media and forums. His six strategies support Liu and Zhu's observation of limited citizen participation in the policy process, but also lack a detailed test in cases. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of citizen participation, addressing the issue of 'how much do Chinese citizens participate in local policy process,' is needed.

Besides these formal participatory methods, Chinese citizens actually practice their political rights on shaping local policies through more direct non-institutional or informal means, known as the "mass disturbances" or collective resistance as Cai (2010) named it. The "mass disturbances" are considered by some Chinese scholars and journalists to be a social outcome of economic inequality during the reform era. It is widely acknowledged that there exists an unbalanced development structure between economy and society. Consequently, some Chinese scholars conclude that China now marches into an era of social conflict explosion Z. Liu (2009). However, this argument has not yet been empirically tested.

These mass disturbances are certainly illegal, and hence, non-institutional. Nevertheless, the number of such disturbances surges enormously in the recent decade. Z. Liu (2009) provides

the rough number of social disturbance cases: "in 1993, there are 8,700 cases; to 2005, the number rises to 87,000; and in 2006 it surpasses 90,000"[9] (p.1). Most social conflicts do not have a political revolution or regime change goal, but simply aim to hold their local government officials accountable to their developmental policies and responsible for mistakes made from those policies.

As mentioned earlier, China as a single party-state does not fully grant its citizens indirect democratic participatory means, such as election of their local leaders or representatives in local People's Congress. Consequently, Chinese grassroots citizens do not have effective methods to hold their local authority accountable via indirect participatory means. Urban elites and opinion leaders, along with some scholars, believe that more direct citizen participation, regardless of its format or from demand or supply sides, leads to more democratic local governance (Cai, 2010; Lang, 2009). Hence, the "mass disturbances" are the way to more democratic governance.

However, local government officials see this style direct participation as "social instable factors" (*shehui buwending yinsu*) and each year spend a large amount of public money on "maintaining social stability" (L. Sun, Shen, & Guo, 2010). According to a report by L. Sun et al. (2010), a group of sociologists at Tsinghua University, the public money spent on maintaining social stability is growing gradually each year. Their data shows that "according to estimation, the City of Guangzhou's social stability expenses are as high as 4.4 billion RMB [approximately 647 million USD] in 2007. This number is much larger than the social employment insurance budget of 3.52 billion RMB [517 million USD] spent that year in the city" (p.3) This report further discloses that "according to the statistics, China's interior security budget in 2010 reaches

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[9] He does not provide the specific source of where he receives this data. But similar numbers can be found in the latest *Blue Book of Chinese Society*, published by the Institute of Sociology in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

514 billion RMB [75.59 billion USD]" (p.3). They claim that the number is comparable to the nation's military expenses.

Chinese government considers such non-institutional and violent participation as serious public affairs and requires local governments to take actions to lower the risk of large-scale social disturbances. Scholars, with Western background, normally attribute this authoritarian reaction by the Chinese government as their lack of political legitimacy as a single ruling party in the nation(Cai, 2010; Goldman & MacFarquhar, 1999; Shi, 1997). Some Chinese leading political scientists and sociologists, however, do not consider this as an issue (L. Sun et al., 2010; K. Yu, 2010a).

At the local level (excluding the village administration, which is important but not a focus of this study[10]), Shi (1997), Cai (2010) and L. Sun et al. (2010) emphasize three different perspectives to evaluate informal citizen participation in the political and social affairs. Shi's pioneer study about political participation in Beijing (Shi, 1997) was based on a large survey conducted in the late 1980s before the Student Movement. His survey data shows that Chinese citizens' local political participation behavior is different from the "standard model[11]" with two fundamental political tools for participation—interest aggregation and group-based activities. To him, due to the Chinese special authoritarian institutional structure, Chinese citizens cannot get involved in the policy formulation stage, where the standard model takes effect. Thus, when in the policy implementation process, citizens' behaviors are changed to compete for already

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[10] This study focuses on provincial, municipal, and county levels, which will be further elaborated in the latter part and the next chapter.

[11] Drew from Verba, Nie, and Kim's *Participation and Political Equality* (1978), Shi explains the "standard model" as "interest aggregation is a necessary condition for people to effectively articulate their interests and that group and group-based activities are major political resources in any society" (p.20). These two variables are important to analyzing political participation and will be further examined in the following sections.

allocated limited resources. Consequently, citizens are less likely to share interests with peer groups to strive for scarce resources. The collective organizations and activities can rarely be seen. He also points out that due to this limited power to collaborate to influence policy formulation, citizen participation is usually local and cannot have a large social impact.

Under this political and institutional structure, Chinese local citizens normally utilize three methods to shape local policy in their favor. First of all, because policies issued by the central government are ambiguous at best, and leave large space for local authorities to interpret, citizens can work together with their local political leaders to implement the part of the policy that is beneficial to them and procrastinate other parts. Second, citizens can extract external support to balance the power at their local level. Citizens can, for example, extend their social networks to connect to the above level government to add pressures to the local authority to influence policy. Third, resource-rich citizens can also utilize their resources in one area to compensate other parts where they are resource-poor. The example of this relationship is the so-called "patron-clientelism," rent seeking, or, simply, bribery.

Chinese society and state-society relations have changed significantly in the decade after (Shi, 1997) published his work. In recent years Chinese grassroots people gradually have discovered a "new" participatory format to influence local policy, even at the formulation stage. Drastically distinctive from what Shi observes is that the new participation activities are both group-based and large scale and trying to change the policy itself, instead of redistributing already allocated resources, which are converging toward the classic "standard model." These activities are, as mentioned above, "mass disturbance incidents" (*quntixing shijian*).

Besides sporadic writings in edited books and journals, (Cai, 2002, 2007, 2008; Gang, 2007; X. Guo, 2001; Jennings, 1997; Lewis & Litai, 2003; Perry & Selden, 2003), Yongshun Cai

(2010) conducted a comprehensive research on over 260 mass disturbance cases and published a ground-breaking piece entitled "Collective Resistance in China: Why Popular Protest Succeed or Fail." In this volume through numerous cases and extended fieldwork, Cai (2010) tries to draw a conclusion of finding crucial explaining variables of why certain collective resistances succeed and why some of them fail.

Using cost and benefit analysis, Cai (2010) analyzes the causes of success and failure through dialectic perspectives. From the citizens' point of view, the successful protests all lay appropriate amount of pressure on their local officials, whereas at the local government standpoint, as long as the economic costs and the risks of concessions are low, officials would be happy to let violent citizens enjoy a satisfactory solution. However, if the expected economic and political costs are high and risks of losing their political future are foreseeable, local officials would be more likely to choose suppression, such as "… (2) concessions with discipline (i.e., citizens' demands are met, but some or all participants are punished); (3) tolerance (i.e., citizens' demands are ignored, but the government also tolerates their resistance); and (4) repression (i.e., citizens' demands are ignored, and some or all participants are punished)" (P.5). [12]

Moreover, Cai (2010) also differentiates the two participation methods—institutional and non-institutional. For institutional and non-violent collective activities, the citizens' keys to successful petition to achieve their policy goals are forcefulness of resistance, intervention from the above, and extra support from within the state through personal networks. As for the "drastic and non-institutionalized modes of action," Cai (2010) lists three fundamental criteria for successful outcomes, which are "a large number of participants," "media coverage," and/or "serious casualties" (p.189). Besides these three factors, the group-difference may also lead to

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[12] The first choice is "concessions (i.e., citizen demands are met)" Fielding (1982).

distinctive results. As the author illustrated, the workers' organized protests are more effective for State-Owned Enterprise employees, but less powerful for urban collective enterprise workers.

Immediately after Cai's book was published, Tsinghua sociologists reported their research findings especially on the citizens' behaviors and government officials' rationalities for maintaining social stability Cai (2010). The significant contribution made by this report is that it explicitly maps out a vicious cycle between government stability maintenance policy and the ever-growing unstable activities mushroomed in the Chinese society. This finding echoes Cai (2010) argument about Chinese government tolerance of the unstable factor that "a big disturbance lead[s] to a big solution" (p.193). Hence, the vicious cycle starts from citizens' unfair treatment during the economic development period with no appropriate channels to express their economic needs. Then, they initiate collective activities or violence to strive for their own rights. On the other hand, social stability has been a key criterion for local officials to get promoted and a psychological shadow for the central government to worry about due to the impact caused by the 1989 student movement and political turmoil in East Europe at that time. Therefore, maintaining social stability becomes an "overwhelming goal" for all levels of government (L. Sun et al., 2010, p. 14). When these two lines clash, local government tends to spend more money on appeasing angry petitioners, which, consequently, becomes the incentives for more and larger scale unstable protests.

Reviewing all the above three studies, we find similarities: (1) they all point out limitations on government capability in the policy process; (2) both Shi (1997) and Cai (2010) recognize the power games among upper-level government, its subordinate, and grassroots government; (3) they also confirm the important functions of personal relations, networks, and resources allocation mechanisms; and (4) Cai (2010) and L. Sun et al. (2010) illustrate the

vicious cycle. However, the differences and limitations of the three models are more significant. First, the recent decades have seen tremendous changes in Chinese socio-political structure since Shi conducted his survey research in the late 1980s, a period which D. Zhao (2011) defines as the "second phase" of "the development of collective action in Post-Mao China" (p.161). Hence, citizens cannot only organize group-based activities, but also shape policymaking or even change already formulated policies. Second, spending public money to appease mass disturbances is not the only method Chinese government utilizes to address such a social problem. Focus merely on the vicious cycle will largely reduce the dynamic nature of such social disturbances. Although institutionalization, legalization, and democratization may be solutions, in theory, to such a vicious cycle, they may not address the right questions and may not necessarily bring effective outcomes, such as eliminating social disturbances (Keane, 2009).

Third, to analyze such a dynamic and sophisticated socio-political issue that involves multiple players, such as citizens' collective resistance to public policies, from only one perspective – that of the collective organizations – can hardly reach the core of the problem. In the cases of collective resistance, the incentives, rationalities (or irrationalities), and behaviors of both citizens and government officials consist of the full dynamic interactions. All three studies simply ignore, or are unable to study, the behavioral structures in government, which limit their findings on citizens. Consequently, the solutions given by these models are either hard to realize, such as institutionalization, legalization, and democratization slogans, or impractical, such as institutional building before the transition. This is exactly the reason (Cai, 2010) concludes his book by stating:

> "Given that local governments are mostly responsible for handling social
> conflicts in the society, future research needs to analyze the factors that
> lead to local governments' varied responses to popular contention or efforts
> in building and strengthening conflict-resolution institutions to understand

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the relationship between popular resistance and political development in China" (p.199).

2.1.3 Citizen Participation in This Study

Based on the review of citizen participation literature in the West and in China, I set the limit of the concept of citizen participation in this study into two aspects: formal participation and informal participation. The "formal participation" is the way of citizen participation defined and written in laws and regulations. Therefore, it is the indirect participation. The "informal participation" refers to, on the contrary, the participatory ways that are not defined by government regulations. In the Chinese case, it means citizens' collective actions and some forms of NGOs' participation.

It is actually hard, in some cases, to separate the formal participation from the informal one, such as the NGOs' participation in policy process in China. There are changing trends from initial not regulated, to later illegal, and to the current partly legal and partly illegal stage (Simon, 2013). Moreover, there are also situations that citizens are "invited" by the government to participate in the policy process. But regardless of all various forms, as long as there is a formal regulation to legalize citizens' participation, we consider it a "formal participation" and vice versa.

This limitation of the concept of participation in this study does not distinguish the differences between demand and support sides in the political systems. We consider both sides are parts of participation. Therefore, in this study, citizen participation means all the non-government involvement in the policy process. It can be individual and/or social groups, such as NGOs or collective resistant groups, and it can also be activities to demand for services from citizens or to support government policies.

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As explained earlier, to evaluate local governments' responses and their behavior changes, accountability is an appropriate variable, which I shall review in the following section.

2.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

Although the concept of accountability is as old as government itself (G. Peters, 2002), it is still hard to identify a "unified" definition of the term. In fact, it is even considered as "an ever expanding concept" (Mulgan, 2000). This is, indeed, consistent with the dynamic political nature of the concept itself. Scholars recognize accountability as the outcome or "hallmark of modern democratic governance" (Bovens, 2007) and "we can't have enough of it" (Pollitt, 2003, p. 89). On the other hand, the accountability is "politically culture-bonded" to the democratic political processes and it guarantees the democratic political process (Smith, 1991, p. 96)(Smith, 1991; p.96). Thus, the accountability and democracy become mutually reinforcing, which may not be easily seen in the non-democratic society, like traditional China (Harris, 1988). But is it still the case that accountability is solely seen in the western democracies? This question is key to the analysis of my study. However, before we can reach that far, it is important to clarify the concept of accountability itself – in a more controllable manner – to establish the analytical framework for the study. I will start the discussion with the types of accountability from the literature.

2.2.1 Types of Accountability

Considering accountability as a set of dichotomies starts from the classic debate between Friedrich (1940) and Finer (1941). Friedrich (1940) started this by arguing that professionalism

was the essential for achieving bureaucratic responsibility. Recognizing that administrators were involved in both policy formulating and policy execution, Friedrich believed that only through professionalism and "craftsmanship," administrators could be held effectively accountable to citizens for their specialized knowledge as well as technical skills (p.191). He identified two types of responsibility: personal and functional, which were used to guide actions that were either bounded by orders and recommendations (personal) or by function and professional standards (functional). Obviously, he pointed out, these two would conflict in reality and attentions were needed for both. In facing more and more complex problems, professionalism appeared to be a better way to achieve responsibility.

British scholar Finer (1941), on the other hand, was not as pessimistic as Friedrich. He argued that external control were still the most appropriate means to prevent administrators to abuse their political and bureaucratic powers. He was in the same camp as the traditional public administration scholars, who believed that democratic responsibility should be in a linear relationship that bureaucrats should be subordinate to their political masters who were ultimately responsible to their constituencies and citizens. Consequently, he advocated for three steps for accountability: "mastership of the public," control by institutions (elected body), and enforcement of public wants. Finer contended that external control became the most powerful and effective tool to prevent abuse of power by administrators.

The dichotomous relations of responsibility in the classic debate lie in the internal personal professionalism and the external control. This dichotomy s further elaborated by Mosher (1968) in his terms of objective responsibility and subjective responsibility. Objective responsibility was, as in Finer's claim, formal institutional control, where as subjective responsibility was, as Friedrich believed, individual moral. Apparently, these two dimensions

were sometimes jointly functions in order to make public administrators more accountable to the public.

The similar vocabularies like internal and external dichotomy are explicit and implicit accountability by Spiro (1969), formal and informal, retrospective and prospective, top-down and bottom-up, centralized and devolved, etc. (Thompson, 1980). Regardless of what language scholars using, the fundamental elements for administrators to be accountable are through either control or ethics, or both.

Besides dichotomous relations, scholars extend the two-way distinctions into four-way typologies to analyze and categorize accountability situations, problems, and environments. When discussing the dimensions of responsibility and bureaucratic problems, (G. Peters, 2002) considers the differences of actors and actions. He clarifies the institutional actor and individual actor to practice either excessively or too little. Through this identification of these bureaucratic difficulties, he offers a series of tools and instruments, such as organizational methods, market and external control, groups and public pressures, political means of control, as well as normative restrains, to address these problems.

Romzek and Dubnick (1987) and Romzek and Ingraham (2000) establish an explicit framework of four types of accountability. These four types are distinguished by the source of control—internal and external—and the degree of control—high and low. When the stringent internal control takes place, it is the form of the bureaucratic or hierarchical accountability, which refers to a tight supervision and limited autonomy for discretion for administrators. When the internal control is loose, it requires public servants' professional and individual norms of appropriate practice. On the other hand, when the external control is stringent, legal accountability is functioning, where controls are largely relied on laws and regulations. If the

external control is loose, it requires administrators to be responsive to their political masters or other key external stakeholders.

In the similar direction of analysis, Smith (1991) concludes works from Gilbert (1959), Kernaghan (1978), and Goldring and Thynne (1987) to illustrate the bureaucratic accountability mechanisms (See Table 1). These mechanisms exhaust the political, social, and ethical methods to hold bureaucracies or bureaucrats accountable.

Table 1. Bureaucratic Accountability Mechanisms

	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
FORMAL	Hierarchy Rules and Regulations Budgets Personnel management Performance evaluation Auditing Program monitoring Code of conduct	Legislative review Advisory committees Judicial action Ombudsman Review tribunals Evaluation research Freedom of information
INFORMAL	Personal ethics Professionalism Representative bureaucracy Commitment Anticipated reactions from superiors	Public comment Interest group pressure Peer review Media scrutiny Political parties Politicians and officials at other levels of government

Source: Smith, T. B. (1991), The Comparative Analysis of Bureaucratic Accountability, *Asian Journal of Public Administration* Vol.13 No.1 (June 1991): 93-104.

Kevin Kearns (Kearns, 1994, 1996, 2003) frames his typology of accountability through the interactions of standards of accountability—explicit and implicit—and organizational response—tactical or reactive and strategic or proactive. As explained the words themselves, explicit accountability refers to the "laws, administrative regulations, bureaucratic checks and balances, or contractual obligations to other organizations," whereas implicit standard refers to "ill-defined and, perhaps, shifting notions of what constitutes responsible or appropriate behavior," which, as he stresses, "are rooted in professional norms and social values, beliefs, and assumptions about the public interest, the public trust, and how … organizational behavior

should be explained" (Kearns, 1996, pp. 66-67). His typology, though similar to Romzek's, does take the accountability of non-government actors (NGOs) and other voluntary organizations into consideration. According to him NGOs could negotiate with the stakeholders for better results when the standards are implicit, while responses are tactical. On the other end when goals are explicit but strategies are voluntary, the leaders in NGOs to educate their donors for emerging public needs.

These typologies move one step, at least, further than the traditional dichotomous debates for their distinctions of different situations that a public administrator or a NGO leader may encounter and offer them strategies to achieve accountability and responsiveness in various situations. However, the classic elements of internal moral and external control are still fundamental in terms of identifying the correct positions of accountability. Moreover, as all the above authors stressed, a government agency or a NGO normally is not only facing one types of accountability at a time and "there is often a shift in emphasis and priority among the different types of accountability" (Romzek & Ingraham, 2000, p. 242).

2.2.2   Defining Accountability

The traditional debates of accountability on the dichotomous practices or under different typological situations are both trying to address two fundamental questions: *do government officials – public servants and bureaucrats – do what they are supposed to do*; and *do political systems have ways – formal or informal – to make sure officials do what they are supposed to do*. These questions unveil two most important features of accountability: "responsibility" and "responsiveness" (Bovens, 2007; Ferejohn, 1999; Mulgan, 2000). Cooper (2012) focuses on the audience and target of public accountability: answerability to someone, and obligation,

responsible for something. This simplification is further strengthened by Behn's (2001) analogies of "accountability holders" and "accountability holdees." The interactions, connections, and communications between the two consist of the full image of democratic accountability.

Moreover, Bovens (2007) offers a broader definition: "accountability can be defined as a social relationship in which an actor feels an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct to some significant other" (p. 184). Like Behn (2001), he distinguishes the players involved in the accountability practices in two sides: "actors or *accountor*, can be either an individual or an agency" and "the significant other" – "the *accountability forum or* the *accountee*" (p. 184). Then, he elaborates his definition of such social relationship in the following three aspects:

> "First of all, the actor must feel obliged to inform the forum about his conduct, by providing various sorts of data about the performance of tasks, about outcomes, or about procedures… Secondly, the information can prompt the forum to interrogate the actor and to question the adequacy of the information or the legitimacy of the conduct… Thirdly, the forum usually passes judgment on the conduct of the actor" (p. 184－185).

In the explanations, he identifies three features of accountability: the actor to inform the forum, the forum to interrogate the actor, and the forum to make judgment. But it seems to me that his identification of the three features restricts his analysis only to the responsiveness side of accountability and overlooks the importance of what the officials are supposed to do in the first place. Moreover, Kevin Kearns (1996) provides us with a more comprehensive and even "broader" definition of the term, which includes five key "guiding principles" as to serve public trust, to reflect stakeholders' demands and expectations, to be a part of organization's strategic environment, to practice tactical (reactive) or strategic (proactive) actions, and to monitor the standards of accountability (Kearns, 2003, p. 584).

However, to make the scope of this study manageable, I will use "responsibility" and "responsiveness" as two features in defining accountability. Therefore, accountability in this study refers to two aspects: *government officials are responsible for their job duties and are responsive to internal and external scrutiny*. If applying to the definition to the Chinese local level government officials in making policies to manage local public affairs, we need to check: whether local government officials make relevant policies addressing the needs of their duties and their citizens' demands, on the one hand; and whether they are held responsible by the "accountability forum" – their political bosses as well as their citizens – for what they do or have done, on the other hand. Therefore, these two sides will be evaluated as measurements for accountability of Chinese local officials.

Before I can move to the literature about accountability concept in the Chinese context, one issue still deserves clarification. The debates of accountability in the literature are far more than the types and definitions. The classic studies on accountability dilemma (Behn, 2001), accountability paradox (Dubnick, 2003), too much control experiment (Adelberg & Batson, 1978; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999), the distinctions between vertical and horizontal accountabilities (Bouckaert & Pollitt, 2000; Broadbent, Dietrich, & Laughlin, 2002; Lane, 2000), or even the 360-degree accountability (Behn, 2001) are all important issues in the accountability literature. However, they are not pertinent to this particular study and, therefore, are not discussed in details here.

2.2.3 Accountability in Chinese Politics

Now, I shall return back to the previous question: Is the accountability concept applicable to the non-democratic countries, like China? The answer is definitely positive. Actually, there are

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ample studies touched upon certain aspects of the broader concept of accountability in the writings about China after the economic reform. For example, Gold (1985) discusses the changing personal relationships after the Cultural Revolution, describing that the changes bring the ruthless CCP's rule—without any accountability—to the more accountable institution and structure. Dicks (1989) also acknowledges the improvement made by the Chinese government in legal system reform to try to establish accountability mechanisms by creating the State Audit in 1982 and the Ministry of Supervision in 1986. However, Seymour (1989) utilizes many examples and cases to illustrate the problems of the Party cadres' overpowering to the law and unequal treatment before law between the Party cadres and the common people, which make the public accountability a scarce commodity. This phenomenon is caused by the misconception of the relation between policy and law among the central leaders and the misconduct of the Party cadres at the local level.

Susan Shirk (1993) offers an insightful view of central-provincial accountability structure, which she terms as "reciprocal accountability." This reciprocity relation refers that although the central Party committee determines the provincial party leaders, who also serve as members in the important central Party committee to select the Party leaders. Therefore, they are "accountable" to each other in an "interdependence" relationship depicted by Burns (1994). Lianjiang Li and Kevin O'Brien in a series of studies on Chinese villagers and rural political structure (Burns, 1994; L. Li, 2004; L. Li & O'Brien, 1996; O'Brien, 1994, 1996; O'Brien & Li, 1999a, 2000) unveils the worsening mass-elite relations at the rural level and social stratifications among villagers, which explain the various forms of accountability to different types villagers. However, several authors recognize the important role of village direct election

of chairs and committee members, although the political and social consequences are rather mixed (Lawrence, 1994; Pastor & Tan, 2000; Su & Yang, 2005).

Quantitative research is seen in the topic of accountability in China in the new Century. Scholars find evidence of informal accountability mechanisms, such as solidary groups in rural region, can effectively hold rural village heads accountable (Tsai, 2007); democratic accountability is statistically significant to enhance Chinese people's life satisfaction (Cheung & Leung, 2007); and the turnover rate of local county leaders is determined by the economic accountability or the revenue growth (Gang, 2007).

Besides the Western scholars' writing on Chinese accountability at all levels and across all political aspects, their Chinese counterparts also offer their perspectives on accountability, which are comparable to the Western theories discussed above. However, Chinese scholars and practitioners focus tremendous attention on categorizing the formats, actors, and methods of Chinese accountability mechanisms. X. Zhang (2005) identifies the accountability targets—big bosses rather than lower ranking public employees—and the format of punishment, legal accountability and political accountability. J. Huang and Wang (2009) extends the previous classification and identifies clearly the external and internal accountability actors, subjects for accountability, and types of responsibility, which in some sense similar to Smith's table of Bureaucratic Accountability Mechanisms, shown earlier. His classification is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of Accountability Mechanisms in China

Accountability	Agencies and Types
External (Accountability Holders)	Local People's Congress
	Media

	Public and Civil Society
Internal (Accountability Holders)	Higher Level Government
	Local Discipline Inspection Commission
Subjects (Accountability Holdees)	Party Cadres
	Administrative Officials
	Upper-Level Officials
	Related Bureau Chiefs or Agency Directors
Types of Responsibility	Political Responsibility
	Ethical Responsibility
	Administrative Responsibility
	Legal Responsibility

Source: Huang, J. R. and Wang, Y. (2009) "Building Accountability in Chinese Local Government: Problems and Countermeasures," *Journal of Jiangsu Administration Institute*, Issue 45, No. 3, 2009.

Chinese scholars' efforts in explaining and analyzing accountability mechanisms have been recognized and practiced by the Chinese central government. Chinese leaders frequently express their decisiveness in establishing a formal accountability system (Gang, 2007). In July 2009 the *Provisional Regulation of Executing Accountability System to the Party and Administrative Officials*, as an administrative regulation, was formally issued by the General Office of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council. This regulation is a breakthrough of government's effort to hold its officials accountable, although its functions and practices are still questionable (H. S. Chan & Gao, 2009). But it does cover many concerns that have been mentioned in the previous literature. However, as articulated in the regulation, the accountability mechanisms are largely relied on the internal

agencies listed in Table 2. The external accountability holders are still in a weak position. But is it really true that external forces do not have power to hold their local officials accountable? If there is any possibility to make local officials responsible and responsive, how can they do?

2.3 ACCOUNTABILITY

How does citizens' increasing participation eventually affect the accountability structural change during the Chinese local level policy process? This is a question that combines both citizen participation and accountability and is rarely discussed in the literature, especially if we include a much broader definition of citizen participation with direct and indirect means and if we consider the government officials behavior changes before and after the citizen participation affecting the accountability structural changes. To address this literature gap is important because the directions that citizen participation in grassroots politics determines the future of the state and society relation and eventually reshape the political development path for the state government. Are Chinese local citizens powerful enough to hold their local government accountable and eventually change policies that affect their livelihood? Will Chinese local government change its accountability structure to be responsive to their citizens and be responsible for what they do? To answer these questions, we need to identify how these two variables interact with each other.

Prior to examining the interactions, I need to firstly connect these two variables to the research question: *how and how much* do local citizens involve in the policy process to influence local policies. In this research question, the dependent variable is the changes of local policies. Clearly, citizen participation is one major explanatory variable to address this question. I have also explained that in order to address this question from a more comprehensive perspective, we

need to know the behavior changes of local government officials, which I use accountability structure change as a proxy, as explained above. That makes the second independent variable of this study. Since citizen participation and officials' behavioral changes can happen in any phase in the policy process, I, therefore, consider policy process as a control variable, which I shall further elaborate in the following chapter. After these clarifications, we now turn to the discussion of the interaction between our two independent variables.

In the previous literature analyses, we know that citizens' participation may or may not change government officials' behaviors leading the changes of accountability structure. However, do these two variables correlate to each other? This is the multicollinearity problem in the statistical methodology and it could severely damage the power of quantitative analysis in a regression test with multiple predictor variables. However, this is not a matter in the case-oriented qualitative study. Ragin (1989) explains "[I]n the typical case-oriented comparative study, by contrast, the dialogue between concept formation and data analysis is very different because the methods are holistic in nature and attend to combinations of conditions" (p.166).

Thus, with combination of individual citizens and interest groups as one changing variable on one side and accountability mechanism as the other, we can easily form a typology to demonstrate how the interactions of the two variables affect policies. Table 3 illustrates four quadrants that represent four possible interactions. The first quadrant (I) represents formal policy process, which includes limited involvements of interest groups and citizens and "to the top" accountability structure. This is the basic daily policy process practiced by most Chinese local governments. In Quadrant II, interest groups and citizens are fully involved, but they are in conflict with local policy agendas, which are dictated by the officials only loyal to the upper

level government. Thus, it forms the mass disturbances. Quadrant III represents government sponsored policy innovation, in which local government tries to be more accountable to their citizens and invites limited number of citizens and interest groups to participate in the policy process. However, the last quadrant (IV) is largely hypothetical in the Chinese reality, though it is actually what is written in many Chinese laws, where government officials should be accountable to their citizens and all policy processes are open to the public scrutiny.

Table 3. Changes of Independent Variables

| | | Citizens/Interest Groups | |
		Formal Participation	Informal Participation
Accountability Mechanism	To the Top	(I) Conventional Closed and Covert Policy Process (Formal Policy Process)	(II) Citizen-Driven Closed but Overt Policy Process (Mass Disturbances)
	To the Bottom	(III) Government-Driven Open but Covert Policy Process (Government Innovation)	(IV) Democratic Open and Overt Policy Process (*Pro Forma* Policy Process)

2.4 METHODOLOGY OF CASES STUDY

In seeking the answer to the research question, different scholars have their respective methodologies. Shi, Tianjian conducted survey questionnaires to randomly selected households in eight urban districts in Beijing in the late 1980s (Shi, 1997). His rigorous arguments on the validity and reliability of his survey data are intriguing. The conclusion drawn from his analyses are accurate and precise at the period of time when he did his survey. However, since the early 1990s, the collective resistance, especially marked by urban State-Owned Enterprise (SOE)

laid-off workers (Lee, 2000) and rural farmers who were suffered from land expropriation (X. Guo, 2001), has gradually evolved into a major strategy for the "weak" to struggle for voices in the local policy process. This socio-political structural change totally alters the institutional environment that existed when Shi did his research.

Therefore, Yongshun Cai (2010) gathered information for 266 collective resistance cases and conducted thorough analyses for various types of such group-based political activities. On the other hand, Tsinghua sociologists rooted their research in the rich experiences, valuable official data, and strict logical analyses on one aspect—social stability maintenance expenses—of the rather complicated socio-political issue. However, all three studies do not offer an internal examination of government officials' behaviors during the policy process and with consideration of citizens' involvement.

In this study I am going to focus on eight cases. Although the number of cases is not significant, the selection of these cases fulfills the requirements of significant variation and representation. City X and Chongqing located in West China with prefecture-level City X in northwest and provincial level Chongqing in southwest; Shenzhen, Xiamen, Hangzhou, and Ningbo are all sub-provincial level, which are located in the east along the seacoast; City Z is a county level government; and the country's capital Beijing serves as a representative for the northern administrative culture. The detailed case attributes are shown in Table 4. In the table we can see that the eight cases cover most levels of local administrative governments[13] and most

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[13] China local government levels in this study include: provincial level, sub-provincial level, prefecture-level, and county-level. Rural level governments, such as townships and villages (*Xiang* and *Zheng*), below the county-level are excluded in this study, although they are equally important in the topics discussed. Detailed explanation can be found in Chapter 2.

geographic regions [14] . The involved government agencies also vary across different administrative functions, from the Party Committee and municipal government to NGOs and community service centers.

Table 4. Attributes of Seven Cases

Local Government	Administrative Level	Government Agency	Case Content	Case Type	Methodology
City X, Northwest China	Prefecture-level City	Industry and Information Bureau	Policymaking Process	Formal Policy Process	Participant Observation and Interview
Chongqing Municipality	Provincial-level Municipality	Jiulongpo District Government	*Dingzihu* Case	Mass disturbance	Content Analysis
Xiamen Fujian Province	Sub-Provincial level City	City Government	PX Case	Mass disturbance	Content Analysis
City Z, Southeast China	County-level City	Bureau of Letters and Visits	193 BLV mass disturbance cases	Mass disturbance	Content Analysis
Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province	Sub-provincial level City	City Government	Citizen's Participation in Policy Process	Government Innovation	Content Analysis
Shanghai City	Provincial level City	Changshou Street, Putuo Districts	NGOs and Community Service	Government Innovation	Content Analysis
Beijing City	Provincial level City	Lugu District	NGOs and Community Service	Government Innovation	Content Analysis
Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province	Sub-Provincial level City	Haishu District	NGOs and Community Service	Government Innovation	Content Analysis

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[14] Geographic regions are defined by the Regions and Names Bureau (*quhua diming si*) in the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Conducting research in China, especially in the field of political science or public administration, is drastically different than in the US, where I receive my formal methodological training. Still heavily influenced by the ideological differences, it is not feasible to apply standard methodology or utilize the dogmatized rules written in the handbook of research methodology. The survey methodology, for example, although it may seem more scientific in the field of political science, is never a reliable method to conduct research inside Chinese government.[15] Due to the ideological conflicts and the political culture of social relations and personal networks (M. M. Yang, 1994), public employees in Chinese local government (and also in the upper level government) are not willing to formally answer interview questions. Even if they have no choice but to answer those questions,[16] the difference effect or acquiescence effect will emerge (Bernard, 2012). The officials will choose the words they think interviewers are willing to hear and also contain no harmful information in the content to affect their political future. Therefore, to conduct formally structured interviews or to send out survey questionnaires does not necessarily incur reliable information in this circumstance.

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[15] I am not saying that conducting survey methodology is not feasible at all. Tianjian Shi (1997) and Pierre Landry (2008) and many other scholars all did reliable survey studies in China. However, no study, yet, has successfully used survey methodology to conduct research on Chinese government officials by non-Chinese-based scholars or institutions.

[16] Two years ago I researched the impact of public service training and networks on administrative promotion. I prepared a survey questionnaire for government officials who participated in one training course offered by the local Communist Party School. The first effort to send out the questionnaire yielded no response at all. Later, I invited a professor at the Party school to join in my research to work on the survey. She told me that even she would not be able to obtain useful answers from her students, because those local officials were all sensitive to those questions. However, she did discover a way to force her students to fill in the questionnaire. She went to look for her former colleague, who was working in the Organization Department in the local Communist Party Committee (CPC). Her colleague used his power to issue a CPC ordinance to make the questionnaire a required paperwork. Even with this ordinance, we only received 43 valid answers out of total 60 questionnaires distributed.

To collect politically related sensitive materials and conduct such research in China, S. Yan (2004) tells her vivid story of such an experience in China. When she was doing research in China about political corruption, she wrote:

> "Things went smoothly until one morning I went to the local branch of the CCP's Disciplinary Inspection Commission (DIC), the party's main instrument against corruption. On learning of my research interests, two officials in the documents office were warm and supportive, allowing me to photocopy materials and purchase their publications. Encouraged by their openness and friendliness, I left my business card with them. … They sent me off warmly and promised to answer any further questions I might have. … Returning to my parents' residence, I found the two DIC officials anxiously waiting for me. They wanted me to return all their materials to them, worrying that if something like the Henry Wu incident were to happen, they—not I—would be in serious trouble. In fact, they had arrived at my parents' place soon after I had left their office, even calling the DIC office on my parents' college campus to make sure there was nothing in my family's background that would produce a treacherous daughter" (p.xii).

Consequently, the major methodological design in this research is the case studies. Two specific methods are used to accomplish the research goals: participatory observation and content analysis. The participatory observation or participant observation is largely used in the anthropological studies. It is an ideal tool to receive true information about Chinese local government, which is normally not open to public scrutiny. Besides case studies, content analysis and meta-analysis on available literature, as well as unstructured interviews are also used throughout this paper. Detailed description of methodologies will be further elaborated in Appendix One.

2.5 DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

In the following chapter, I will identify the range of "Chinese local government" used in this study and then review the theories of policy process to set a stage for the cases. Then, in Chapter 3, I examine closely the City X's formal policy process to set the stage of the status quo. In the formal participation process, local government officials control the procedures, which are largely covert (as shown in quadrant I of Table 3). The detailed dynamics behind the policy results are rarely accessible to the general public. Conflict of economic interests among various powerful interest groups becomes the sole players of the policy game.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss two mass disturbance cases and one city's longitudinal records of citizens' collective actions in order to demonstrate the informal ways of citizen participation in shaping local policies, especially cumbering the "normal" policy implementation process. In the chapter, the questions of why Chinese local citizens choose to riot to achieve their political goal or to protect their economic interests, and how Chinese local government responds, are the research foci. The analyses of mass disturbance cases show that citizen participation in such a format significantly alters the conventional accountability structure, which leads to the government officials' behavioral change and the way the policy is finally implemented (as shown in Quadrant II in Table 3).

The government-initiated innovation in Hangzhou City is a unique case in China's political and administrative reform history, which deserves a thorough chapter-long analysis. In the Hangzhou Case in Chapter 5, government plays a key role and tries to institutionalize the "Open Policy Process" to include more citizen participation in the regular formal policy process. Why supposedly authoritarian Chinese local government is giving out its monopolistic power to the general public is a question we are trying to answer in the chapter. The NGO-sponsored

community reform offers a different angle of local government innovation, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Driven formally or informally, some Chinese local governments begin to realize the importance of citizens' involvement in local policy process in recent years. Hence, they initiate reforms to encourage more citizens to participate. Therefore, it is a perfect demonstration in the Quadrant III in Table 3 and it is important to evaluate local citizens' and politicians' behavioral change and discover how and why they decide to change their behavior to have wider citizen participation in local government.

In the concluding chapter a discussion about the possibility and potential for Chinese local government reform to move into the Fourth Quadrant will be proposed. Questions, such as whether China's local policy process will move into a more democratic formal institution, will be examined.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLICY PROCESS

Prior to any detailed case analysis, it is important to identify the boundaries and concepts of this study. The scopes and definitions of local government and policy process are clarified and how Chinese local citizens participate in such process is discussed. The political and geographic limit of this study is at the local level, which normally refers to all levels of government below the central. In China the concept of local government is as murky as that in the US. However, the difference is that, unlike the US that has drastically different local administrative formats, Chinese local structure is strict linear, but with multiple and complicated administrative structures.

3.1 LOCAL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN CHINA

According to F. Wang (2006), contemporary China's local hierarchical structure has three different styles. Figure 1 draws the hierarchical tree of this complicated administrative system. In this figure, we see there are overall five levels in the Chinese administrative hierarchy under the Central Government.[17] They are: provincial level, sub-provincial level, prefecture level, county level, and township and village level (*Xiang and Zheng*).

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[17] Here and throughout this study, the administrative structure refers to the local governments in the Mainland China, excluding the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions, and Taiwan.

In this figure, the 15 sub-provincial level cities, including 10 selected provincial capitals and five so-called "cities with independent planning status." These cities enjoy a vice-provincial administrative level—politically the city's party secretaries and mayors have equal political ranking as a vice provincial governor, whereas their political affairs are still under the control of the provincial government. However, the five cities with independent planning status have their own unique economic authority. They do not need to submit their local taxes to the provincial government. Financially, they report directly to the central government.

However, even this map cannot include all the different hierarchical styles in the Chinese local government. For instance, the Yangling Special Agricultural Zone in Shaanxi Province is a very special case. It was purposefully created to help boost the country's agricultural research and development. Since 1997, this special zone's political administration has been extracted from its upper level Xianyang prefecture-level city to be directly under the control of Shaanxi Province and the other 19 central-level ministries. Thus, it is a prefecture-level administrative zone. However, based on the information shown on the Administrative Districts and Regions website, there is no prefecture-level county in the formal administrative structure besides the countries and autonomous counties within the boarder of the four municipalities directly under the control of the State Council. Hence, the Yangling special zone is nominally still under the administrative structure of Xianyang City.
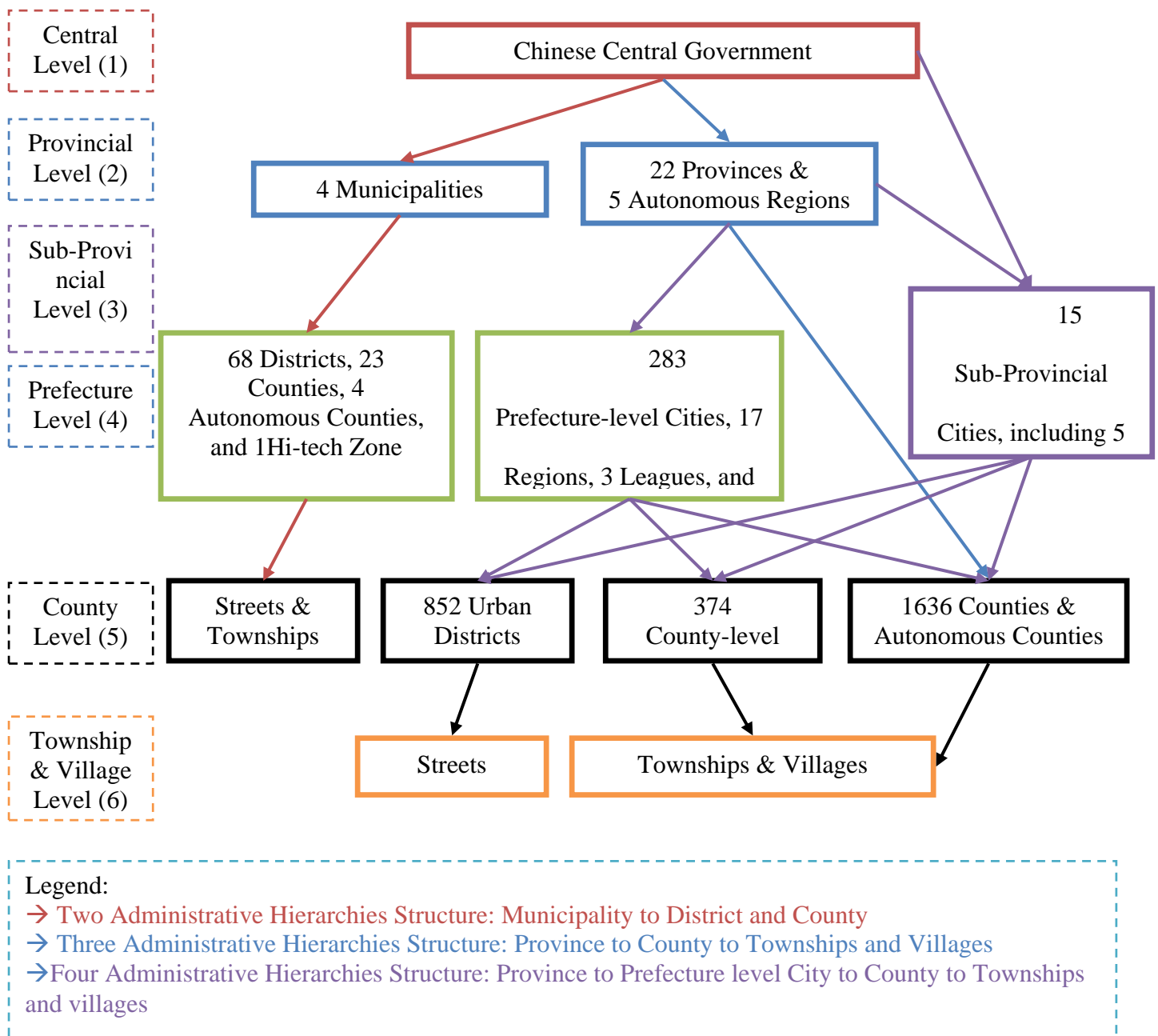
Figure 1. Chinese Government Hierarchical Structure[18]

The complicated structure of Chinese local government hierarchies leaves many administrative problems for lower level government officials. They frequently blame the upper level government for leaving heavy political and administrative burdens to them, but they do not have enough economic and financial power to carry out those responsibilities (X. Liu & Li, 2005). Besides financial burdens, local governments under the provincial level and above the township and village level are also in a relatively "weak" administrative position. Here "weak" does not mean local governments are politically weak, which was never the case in the period that Tianjian Shi (1997) conducted his study. It means its interconnected position between the upper level policymakers and the grassroots policy receivers is weak.

In contemporary China, especially in the 21st Century, city and county governments not only have the direct contact with grassroots citizens, but also are the front lines to fulfill the development goals set by the upper provincial level government and also the central government. Actually, all middle level governments seem to face this difficult situation and even the provincial level governments are wedged in between the conflicts of central control and local interests (Goodman, 1986, 1997). This phenomenon is explained by Snoek (1966) as "normative integration of role set," which he explains as:

> "the greater the diversity of organizational positions occupied by the individual's day-to-day associates, the greater the likelihood that his associates will hold conflicting goals, values, and role expectations. The person whose work role is characterized by such a diversity of orientations among his role senders is more apt to experience difficulty in integrating their role expectations" (p.371).

In this sense and based on the complicated connections in Figure 1, we would expect the prefecture level city governments and county level governments are, among all levels of Chinese local governments, the ones with the largest administrative constraints and most likely to conflict

with other role players or to become the crying waitress (Whyte, 1946). This is indeed the reason we limit our study in these particular levels.

3.2 POLICY PROCESS

3.2.1   Public Policy

Defining "public policy" in "clear and unambiguous terms" is, as Cochran, Mayer, Carr, Cayer, and McKenzie (2011) depicted, not an easy job. However, although the wordings are various, the main themes of definitions provided by policy scholars are, nevertheless, similar – all about government making decisions on citizens. Thomas Dye's (Dye, 1992) arguably best-known and simplest definition of public policy is "Anything a government chooses to do or not to do" (p.2). Following this direction, Hill and Ham (1997) argues, "In the last resort, public policy is whatever the controllers of the state institutions decide to do" (p.16). These definitions give predominant role of government and their actions.

Moreover, Cochran et al. (2011) define the term as "an intentional course of action followed by a government institution or official for resolving an issue of public concern" (p.2). In this definition, the authors limit the goal of public policy to "resolving an issue of public concern," which can be further elaborated by Jenkins's term of "a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specific situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve" (Jenkins, 1978, p. 98). Jenkins (1978) restricts the scope of public policy to decisions that political actors can accomplish. It is B. G. Peters (2012) who adds

citizens into the conception: "Stated most simply, public policy is the sum of government activities whether pursued directly or through agents, as those activities have an influence on the lives of citizens" (p.4). Therefore, based on the above definitions, I synthesize the meaning of public policy utilized in this study as: *government (agents or officials) makes decisions (do or not to do) on the lives of citizens.*

3.2.2   Public Policy Process

The definition of public policy utilizes in this study unveils three terms: government, decision and citizens. Although based on the definition, the government is the decision maker and citizens are decision receivers; the actual relations between the government and citizens over policies are much more complicated. Therefore, we can draw a preliminary conclusion that *public policy process is the interaction process between government and citizens over the decisions that actually affect both actors.* However, as policy study has already moved from normative direction to positivism as a "science" and further to the post-positivism (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 1995), the theories of policy process are also developed by different schools of study with various focuses. Since my study is about the policy process and its interactions with government as well as citizens, it is important to review the following most important theoretical models or frameworks[19] in the literature of policy study.

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[19] Ostrom (1999) distinguishes the models, theories, and frameworks as three different levels of analytical foundations. She identifies that "Frameworks provide a metatheoretical language that can be used to compare theories," whereas "theories enable the analyst to specify which elements of the framework are particularly relevant to certain kinds of questions and to make general working assumptions about these elements" (p.40). However, models, as perceived by Ostrom (1999), "make precise assumptions about a limited set of parameters and variables" (p.40). However, in this study, these concepts are used interchangeably and the differences of the analytical scopes, though important, are not particularly differentiated.

3.2.2.1 The Stages Model of Policy Process

Birkland (2001) offers a simple and rather linear policy process. In his model, there are six standard stages of policy process: issue emergence, agenda setting, alternative selection, enactment, implementation, and evaluation. From evaluation to the next level issue emergence, these stages form a circle of the Stage Model (See Birkland, 2001, p. 26). This straightforward model becomes the fundamental analytical framework for textbooks and many research works in the field of policy studies. However, as we can see from other research findings, this model is normative at best and cannot truthfully reflect the policy process both in practice as well as in theory. As Birkland (2001) notes, "Critics point out that a policy idea may not reach every stage… Others argue that one cannot separate the implementation of a policy from its evaluation, because evaluation happens continuously as a policy is implemented. These critics suggest that the stages model does not constitute a workable theory of how the policy process works" (p.26). Nevertheless, this model does explicitly illustrate six major policy stages that this study uses as the structure of policy analysis.

3.2.2.2 The System Model

Easton's system analysis model is one of the most important theories in the literature of politics and policy studies. Although Easton's research focuses are on political systems as a whole and as a general theory, his input-output model is the simplest, yet most generalizable, model for policy process (Easton, 1965). In this model, he considers demands and supports from various actors or political activities, such as election results, public opinion, communications to elected officials, media coverage, and personal experiences of decision makers, as inputs into the political system to eventually yield decisions and actions, such as laws and regulations, as outputs (Easton, 1965). One important contributions of this model is its highlight of the environment, which both

impacts and is influenced by the policies. Easton (1965) identifies two parts of this environment: the intra-societal and the extra-societal, which refer to the internal economic, cultural, and social structures and the external international systems.

Although this is a generalizable model and there are detailed analyses about contents and functions of inputs and outputs, the model is frequently criticized as lacking explanations of the political system in between the inputs and outputs and how the inputs are processed to become outputs (Birkland, 2001). Consequently, Easton's political system becomes "the black box," we all know the inputs can be translated to outputs, but the processing activities and behavior changes are simply unclear.

3.2.2.3 The Streams Model

Kingdon (2003) "policy streams" approach draws ideas from Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) "garbage cans" model, in which problems, solutions, and ideas are thrown into "garbage cans" and after "a relatively complicated intermeshing of elements," the decisions or choices are made "only when the shifting combinations of problems, solutions and decision makers happen to make action possible" (p.16). Kingdon (2003) organizes the "garbage" in the policy process into problem, policies, and politics streams. The problem stream consists of attributes contributing to real world problems and their further development; the policy process refers to the alternatives and solutions proposed by researchers, advocates and experts; and the politics stream includes political conditions, such as elections and/or legislative leadership contests, and public opinions.

According to Kingdon (2003), these three streams exist together and run parallel without interactions, until "a window of opportunity" is triggered by some events. Opening the "window of opportunity" may or may not cause a policy change, although two or more streams interact. The policy can be changed if a financially and technologically feasible proposal is raised and the

decision makers find it favorable. However, as Sabatier (1991) suggests, Kingdon's approach largely focuses on agenda-setting and policy formulation stages. If it is to be promoted to the entire policy process, such as in policy implementation process, bureaucracies, courts, and intergovernmental dimension are other factors needed more attentions.

3.2.2.4 Punctuated Equilibrium

Borrowed from evolutionary biology, Baumgartner and Jones (2010) use the term of "punctuated equilibrium" to describe the sudden change of policies after long-time stability. To Baumgartner and Jones, public policy shift is not an incremental process. Once the policy is set, it maintains in a relatively stable position for some time, until the understanding of the problems is changed or the emergence of groups possessing different interests against the existing policies.

One of the key contributions of the punctuated equilibrium theory is its identification of the policy monopoly, which indicates a rather closed system consisting of only the most important players relating to the policy. Baumgartner and Jones (2010) list two characteristics about policy monopolies: "First, a definable institutional structure is responsible for policymaking, and that structure limits access to the policy process. Second, a powerful supporting idea is associated with the institution" (p.7). Once the monopoly players determine the agenda or make the policy, what else they need to do is to persuade others that "their policy, program, or industry represents the solution to one of these long-standing policy problems" (Baumgartner & Jones, 2010, p. 7).

The most effective ways to destroy the policy monopoly are through media attention and/or via courts or other government agencies to engage policy debates. Media attention usually brings negative image of certain existing policies, which attracts public concerns to effectively

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undermine the policy process. This is actually one of the major reasons leading to the policy equilibrium to be punctuated.

3.2.2.5 Advocacy Coalition Framework

Sabatier (Sabatier, 1988, 1991) and his colleagues (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999) propose the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) for the analysis and understanding of policy process and policy changes. Instead of considering policy process as streams or monopoly controls, they expand the scope of interactions of policy subsystems into coalitions of advocates. In this policy analytical framework, the policy process is influenced by both a set of stable parameters, such as constitutional structure, social values and the distribution of natural resources, and external (system) events, which is similar to Easton's (Easton, 1965) environment, including changes in socio-economic conditions, public opinions, systemic governing coalition, policy decision, and impacts from other subsystems. Here, it is worth noting that the subsystem Sabatier uses refers to not only the traditional "iron triangles" of administrative agencies, legislative committees and interest groups, but also two "categories of actors: (1) journalists, researchers, and policy analysts, who play important roles in the generation, dissemination, and evaluation of policy ideas…, and (2) actors at all levels of government active in policy formulation and implementation" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999, p. 119). Moreover, the ACF model involves broader groups of participants in the policy process, who form coalitions based on shared core values and policy beliefs.

But how do those coalitions work to change policies? This is one major contribution of ACF to the policy study. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) identify two major policy change processes: "the replacement of one dominant coalition by another" and "the minority coalition increases in importance and attempts to take advantage of an opportunity afforded by an external

perturbation" (p.148). As they describe, the minority coalition will use any tactic to gather votes, such as "developing short-term coalitions of convenience with a variety of other groups" (p.149). Besides these two processes of policy change, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) also recognize a more obvious, but frequently neglected, one: "all major coalitions view a continuation of the current situation as unacceptable" (p.149). The ACF gives significant consideration into the interactions of values and preferences held by different individuals and interest groups. The conflicts and compromise of these interest groups lead to the changes of policies. Hence, to study the value and behavior changes of individuals, interest groups, or the subsystem involved in a certain policy becomes the key to understand the policy (change) process (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

3.2.2.6 Institutional Analysis and Development Framework

Ostrom and her colleagues (Ostrom, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1996, 1999; Ostrom, Gardner, & Walker, 1994) develop the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, which focuses on the impact of the institutional rules on the actors' behaviors in the policy process. In the IAD framework, Ostrom (1999) starts her analysis from the action arena, which consists of action situations – participants, positions, outcomes, action-outcome linkages, the control that participants exercise, information, and the costs and benefits assigned to outcomes – and actors – an individual or a corporate actor (p.42). Ostrom (1999) considers the seven variables of action situations as "analytic concept" that helps analysts "isolate immediate structure affecting a process of interest to the analyst for the purpose of explaining regularities in human actions and results, and potentially to reform them" (p.43). To her, these seven variables are commonly used to describe the structure of the situation for any case or policy.

For the actor, an individual or a corporate actor, Ostrom (1999) also identifies four variables that need to be considered by analysts: the *resources* that an actor possesses, the *values and ideologies* that an actor believes in during the action process, the *knowledge contingencies and information* that an actor used to direct his/her action, and the *selection* of action by an actor. Based on the action situations and actors' behaviors in the action arena, analysts are able to make strong or weak predictions of outcomes and also evaluate the outcomes. Ostrom (1999) also notes that the actions and actors in the action arena should be considered as dependent variables, which are affected by the changes of rules-in-use (individuals use to guide their actions, as opposed to rule-in-form), attributes of physical and material world ("What actions are physically possible, what outcomes can be produced, how actions are linked to outcomes, and what is contained in the actors' information sets are affected by the world being acted upon in a situation"), and attributes of the community ("the norms of behavior generally accepted in the community, the level of common understanding that potential participants share about the structure of particular types of action arenas, the extent of homogeneity in the preferences of those living in a community, and the distribution of resources among those affected") (pp.49-57).

The focus of institutional choice of the IAD framework is one of the major contributions of the model. The differences in attributes and rules influence actors and action situations leading to various action results and outcomes. With certain evaluative criteria, such as the accountability variable we describe in Chapter I and use throughout this study, the feedbacks will in turn affect the attributes.

3.2.3   Policy Process in China

Although the theories of policy process have been discussed and studied in the West for many decades, the studies of Chinese policy process seem to have its unique path. It is not difficult to understand the uniqueness of literature in Chinese policy process, given the fact of the authoritarian nature of Chinese politics. Unique as it is, Chinese literature can never be separated from the world literature of policy process. When discussing public policy, Sinologists from both in and out of China all use, at least, the Stage Model to separate policy processes. Systems, collective behaviors and choices, advocacy coalitions, and among other theories are frequently seen as analytical frameworks to understand Chinese policy process. These theories are certainly the guiding models for this study.

With the nature of centralized political control, the literature of policy process in China is profuse at the central government level, where the authoritarian rule lies in, and can be traced back to the mid-1980s (Lampton, 1987; K. Lieberthal & Lampton, 1992; K. Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988). However, at the local level scholars normally treat government as no more than an authoritative branch that, although possessing certain power to negotiate and bargain for better information and more resources, mainly just implements economic development policies made by the Center. K. Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988) explicitly point out that the central-provincial and interagency relations are "negotiations, bargains, and deals" combined with "competition and rivalry" (p.339). However, they claim, "the ambiguity and the looseness in the system… may be a deliberate tactic of the Center to build a broad coalition in support of its policies" (p.340).

Shi (1997) points out that due to the authoritative political structure—political documentation strategy, hierarchical relationships, and ban on group-based activities—Chinese

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citizens normally choose to insert personal interest in the policy implementation process, which

can be realized in the following three ways:

> "First, since government policy is hardly monopolistic, there is always space for
> citizens to maneuver. People in China may find that certain government policies
> support their own requests and ask government officials to 'faithfully' implement
> them. … Second, participations may 'borrow' political power from someone else
> to change the balance of power between themselves and the bureaucrats they are
> dealing with. … Finally, participants may also manage to turn the hierarchical
> relationship between themselves and bureaucrats into an exchange—they can use
> what they have in exchange for what they want from government officials"
> (pp.17-18).

However, decades after the economic reform gradually penetrated into all corners of

Chinese political and social spheres, scholars begin to recognize the local discretionary authority

over their own economic policies and social affairs. Toni Saich (2004) states, quoting Montinola,

Qian, and Weingast (1995) analysis, that "Local governments have primary control over

behavior, policy and economic outcomes with each autonomous in its own sphere of authority"

(Saich, 2004, p. 170). Heilmann (2008) examines the Communists' revolutionary experiences

with experimentation and the contemporary Chinese policy process and discovers that the

complicated central-local relations plays a key role in today's policy process in China. He states:

"It is experimentation under hierarchy, that is, the volatile yet productive combination of

decentralized experimentation with ad hoc central inference, resulting in the selective integration

of local experiences into national policy-making, that is the key to understanding China's policy

process" (p.29).

Further, based on K. G. Lieberthal (1992) "fragmented authoritarianism" model, Mertha

(2009) developed a 2.0 version by adding more actors and participants in the policy arena.

According to the fragmented authoritarianism model, although policies are made at the center,

local implementation agencies actually shape the outcomes by incorporating their own interests.

However, the original model includes only limited participants in the policy process, whereas Mertha (2009) expands the actors involved to "officials only peripherally connected to the policy in question, the media, non-governmental organizations and individual activists" (p.996). The local participants gradually enlarge their powers in the policy process.

While the Western Sinologists are busy development theoretical models, their Chinese counterparts try to draw descriptive policy process maps based on formal regulations and government practices. Based on Hu (1998), Shen (2008) and G. Zhu (2002), the central level government policy making process can be illustrate as the following figure.
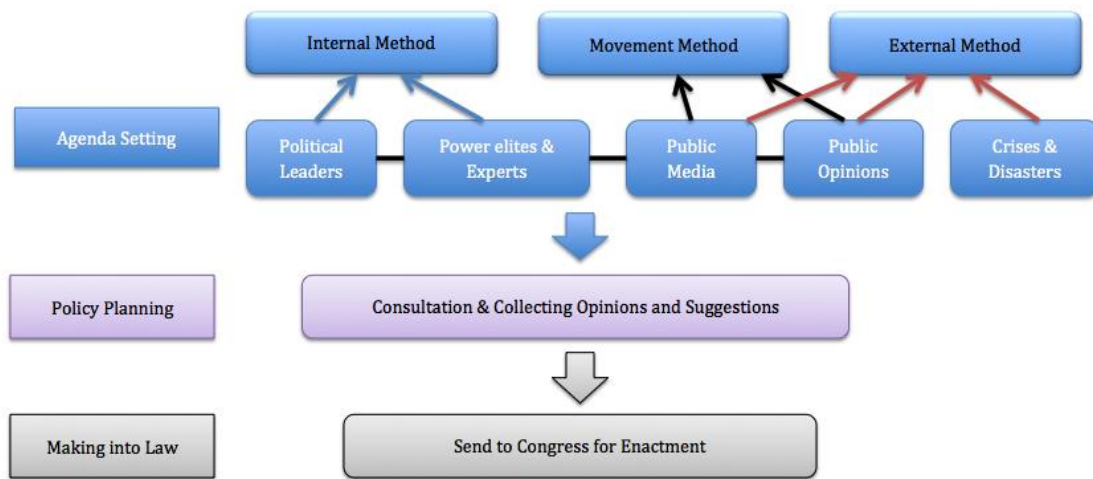
Figure 2. Policy Process at Central and Local Level[20]

In Figure 2, policy process in China has three major steps: agenda setting, policy planning, and making into law. This is certainly the simplistic procedural structure like the Stage Model illustrated above. Nevertheless, it does depict the fundamental policy process that all levels of Chinese government practice. Among all the stages in the policy process, the most complicated one, involving many different interest groups, is the agenda setting one. In this step,

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[20] Notes: Incorporated from Hu (1998); Shen (2008).

from top political leaders and intellectuals as well as experts to the public media and general public, even crises and natural disasters can help propose relevant agendas. It seems that in the formal process, there are sufficient ways for the general public to participate in shaping the policies to change people's lives. However, in fact, there is no clear path indicated in any formal law or government organizational documents about how a regular citizen should participate in any central or local policy process. The public agenda is a rather gray area.

According to Shen (2008), in order to make such public agendas, three conditions need to be met: (1) the problems must be widespread in the society and very noticeable; (2) many citizens believe there is a need for formal action; and (3) the public believes a problem belongs to a certain government agency and needs its immediate attention. Therefore, in order for the general public's opinions to become policies, they have to form a certain political leverage to make the top leaders or the elites know. After all, the government agendas from top political leaders and powerful elites and experts are still the major source for policies (Hu, 1998) and there is no direct citizen participation in the formal policy agenda setting stage, at least in Arnstein (1969) definition of citizen participation (see Chapter 1).

Hu (1998) categorizes these five sources of agenda setting into three broader categories: the internal or government agenda setting (from top political leaders and powerful elites and experts, blue lines in Figure 7), external or public agenda setting (from general public, public media and crises, red lines in Figure 7), and movement agenda setting (initiated by the government or elites and called on the public to participate, dark lines in Figure 7). Nevertheless, S. Wang (2006) proposes a more complex six-model structure as shown in Table 5. S. Wang (2006) concludes that these six models can interact with each other and they are still practicing in today's policy process. Moreover, "the Close-door Model and Movement Model are fading away;

Internal Reference Model becomes normal procedure; Appeal Model and Strength Borrowing Model are seen occasionally; and External Pressure Model is more frequently seen" (S. Wang, 2006, p. 99).

Table 5. Models of Public Policy Agenda Setting

		Policy Proposed by		
		Policymaker	Think tank	Public
Degree of Citizen Participation	Low	I. Close-door Model	III. Internal Reference Model	V. Appeal Model
	High	II. Movement Model	IV. Strength Borrowing Model	VI. External Pressure Model

Note: Wang, S. G. (2006) Policy Agenda Setting Patterns in China, *China Social Science*, 2006 (5), pp. 86-99.

After the agenda is set, the policy process moves into the general consultation and public opinion collection stage. In this stage, government policymakers select relevant agencies and organizations or even individual persons to review the policy agenda and propose suggestions and opinions. Previously, for many policies, especially from the internal or government agenda-setting model, the policy consultation process does not need to go through general public. The situation has changed after the enactment of the "*Regulation of the People's Republic of China on the Disclosure of Government Information*" in May 2008. This regulation specifies the detailed scope of information difference levels of government should make available to the public. The scope covers the wide range of policy issues in almost all areas (Y. Sun, 2009). However, the implementation and practice of this law yields not a perfectly satisfactory result, as scholars suggest that Chinese government agencies still frequently refuse to disclose information requested by citizens and organizations and Chinese courts are reluctant to accept lawsuits regarding such charges, which are partly contributed to China's single party authoritarian political structure (Horsley, 2007, 2010). Moreover, there are also at least five supporting

administrative procedures – "publicizing to the general public, training of government staff, public oversight, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, and Web site and e-government development" – need to be implemented before the law can fully be functional (Piotrowski, Zhang, Lin, & Yu, 2009). Nevertheless, there are reports showing the wide utilization of this regulation by the Chinese citizens (Horsley, 2010) and Chinese central government tries their efforts to further deepen this regulation (Horsley, 2014), which are clear signs of growing participation in public affairs.

The last formal policy procedure is to enact the final version of the policy into law or regulations. However, the legitimization process is never a serious step in the entire process. Although there is a set of complicated legislative procedures in this step, "it is merely for the purpose of formality and the general public do not care about this" (Hu, 1998, p. 251). The reason for such an "unimportant" procedure is because "the legitimacy of policy issued is largely determined by the legitimization of the CCP's leading position. Since there is no other ruling parties in China, it is not that significant to create another procedure to legalize the policies promoted by the ruling party" (Hu, 1998, p. 251 note 1). For the same reason, this study does not give too much attention in this step.

Besides the above studies about the central level policy making process, B. Liu and Zhu (2000) explicitly illustrate the detailed process of policymaking and implementation at the local level. Chinese local governments have systematized policymaking and implementation processes as codified by certain local government organic laws. Normally, as described by B. Liu and Zhu (2000, p. 9), they have four steps: proposing policy issues, informing in advance the internal meeting content, discussing policy issues in formal meetings, and finalizing policy for implementation. Traditionally, these four steps, or at least the latter three steps, occur mostly

inside the government bureaus and do not involve external participation. However, the situation changes in recent years, which will be further elaborated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. Since the major policy functions for Chinese local governments are to implement policies determined by the upper level government, the first, and maybe the most important, channel for local governments to collect policy information is from the directives and polices coming from the upper level governments (*fangzhen* and *zhengce,* which will be explained later in this chapter).

Besides, when dealing with their local issues, local government officials gather information from important local bureaus that either directly connect to the citizens, such as the Bureau of Letters and Visits, or offer policy related research, such as Office of Government Research (or Research and Development Center) (*Zhengfu Diaoyan Shi*). Nevertheless, local bureaucrats also conduct surveys and research of the fieldwork in their subordinating authorities. Formal and informal discussions and exchanging ideas are still the important method for receiving information.

The decision making process inside local government is through negotiation and deliberation normally prior to the policy discussion meeting. That is, before the formal meeting to discuss a particular issue, the city or county's party secretary usually has already had close communication with the policy initiator and an agreement of the policy issue has already been discussed. B. Liu and Zhu (2000) comment that through this process "the decision can be made smoothly [in the policy meeting]" (p.13). However, they also admit that there are occasions that agreement cannot be reached among the participants of the policy meeting, usually the Standing Committee members of the local Central Communist Party, which consist of party secretary, government head, deputy secretaries and deputy heads. Since the rule for local decision-making is collectivism and majority rule, voting is practiced when facing conflicts. But if the voting and

majority rule cannot solve the conflict, the upper level government may get involved in appeasing the conflict. Thus, B. Liu and Zhu (2000) conclude that the "two strong men"—both the party secretary and government head—structure causes instable policy process, whereas the "one strong one weak" style is easier to form a political center and, hence, easier for making decisions (p.14).

For policy implementation process, B. Liu and Zhu (2000) identify three types: vertical and linear implementation process from local level to the grassroots, horizontal process with local government officials supervising the implementation, and leader's group style for implementation of policies across different bureaus. The local government instead of local party committee is responsible for the policy implementation and the rule for this process is the chief's responsibility, for which the designated government or bureau chiefs have the authority to determine the implementing procedures and are held responsible for the outcome.

3.2.4   Theoretical Gaps

Although we see more Chinese researchers begin to utilize frameworks and models developed by the Western scholars in policy research, there is still a large gap between the two groups. Therefore, can certain policy models be tested under the Chinese situation, where political democracy is not a condition for the function and practice of those models? Moreover, with citizen participation and involvement of all interest and social groups, such as professional associations and NGOs, in all areas in the political systems, what is exactly the policy process Chinese in local government? In this study, we shall make an initial attempt to address these questions and try to bridge these gaps.

3.3 PLURALISM VS. CORPORATISM

After recognizing the participation of individual citizens and/or interests groups in China's policy process, we shall connect them to two important theories relating to such group-based activities in policy process. Besides the previous models discussed in the Western literature in the field of policy studies, the political theories of interest groups are also important frameworks that might be applicable to the Chinese situation, which could be a useful contribution of this study. First of all, the social and economic interests represented by various interest groups and individuals in the society seem like the interest groups defined in the American pluralism theory. Of course, the Chinese groups are far from what Dahl (1961) describes: "a system dominated by many different sets of leaders, each having access to a different combination of political resources" (p.86), simply because it lacks the fundamental condition of such a system—"creed of democracy." Although the pluralistic political structure in China has been discussed for decades (Harding, 1998; Kennedy, 2005) and (Perry, 1994) even considers this particular political theory (with "various brands") that "enlivened the second generation studies [of the Chinese politics]" (p.704), it is never considered a major comparative tool to analyze the Chinese state and society relations.

On the contrary, the theory of corporatism is more embraced by the Western and Chinese scholars when defining the Chinese broader political structure. Starting from Oi (1992) seminal article "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China," in which she firstly coined the term "local state corporatism" to explain the gaining of local fiscal power, numerous scholars have been debating: (1) whether China is a corporatist state; and (2) how much can this imported theory explain the political reality in this strong authoritarian government. Obviously, different scholars see the outcome differently. A. Chan (1993) utilizes

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the case of All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACTFU) and its corporatist role of bridging

the interests between all levels of governments and grassroots workers to conclude that "state

corporatism ... provides a more accurate description of what has been emerging there" (Unger &

Chan, 1995, p. 39). These two authors also discovered that "China in this sense approaches state

corporatism from the opposite direction as the East Asian NIEs [newly industrialized economies]:

not as a mechanism for yet further strengthening the state's grip over the economy and over

society, but rather the reverse, a mechanism through which the state's grip could be loosened"

(Unger & Chan, 1995, p. 38).

Unlike Unger, Chan and some scholars' opportunistic passion toward corporatism

theory's explanatory power, others offer a revised "Chinese version" of the original theory,

which largely attributes to Philippe C. Schmitter (1974). Sociologist Nan Lin (1995) reviews the

case of a wealthy village—Daqiuzhuang Village—in rural Tianjin municipality and redefines

Chinese "local corporatism" as:

> "*Local corporatism is defined as an institutional arrangement that consists of a hierarchically ordered set of organizations, a central authority, a functional unity, with local (territorial and network) imperatives and the duality of internal (coordination)-external (competitiveness) dependence*" (p.340) [emphasis by original author].

Lin believes his reduced version of the definition of local corporatism better catches the theme of

the real situation in China, especially in the more economically developed rural areas.

With the time elapse, scholars in the most recent decade gradually shifted the earlier

passion toward the corporatism theory and began to question its eligibility to illustrate a more

complicated political structure and more dynamic political changes happening in countries like

China. Dickson (2000) points out sharply that "the real story will not be about the rise of

corporatism but about more fundamental political change in China" (p.538). In the end of his

theoretical argumentation, he warns "while noting the positive trends of cooptation and corporatism, we should not lose sight of the negative consequences for the CCP and the implications for the political system as a whole" (p.540). Yep (2000), after field research in rural Huantai County in Shandong Province, draws even more pessimistic conclusions that the relationship between local state and social organizations "is not corporatist" (p.564). Moreover, he puts forward three possible "analytical errors" when applying corporatist theory to explain social reality: overstating the significance of social power, understating dynamic state-social relations, and hiding the real strengths of social interest.

Any political theory has its limit of explanatory capacity, and so does the concept of corporatism. After all, the Chinese local fiscal system has been reformed several times after 1992; the ACFTU shifts its goal of operation after almost each term of administration in China's central government; and, most ironically, Daqiuzhuang's village head—Yu Zuomin—was captured and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for the charges of murderer, bribery, and many other crimes in 1993, even before Lin published his article in 1995. Daqiuzhuang was restructured socially and politically and almost collapsed economically afterwards. Although those cases are failed, the corporatist ideas and practices survive and can still be seen in many local policy processes. State dominated social interest groups still play crucial roles in the local political system.

The compromise of interests among stakeholders (local government, associations, interest groups, and other parties) is also the major policymaking method in local Chinese government. Since individual grassroots citizens do not form any politically powerful interest groups (and there is no formal way for them to form such a group), local policies are largely made by powerful political, economic, and/or social elite groups (government approved associations and

social groups) that can, by all means, get involved in the policymaking process. While informally, grassroots citizens and rural farmers can also play their political games with local government by non-conventional collective actions, such as "protests, demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, group complaints and so on" (O'Brien & Stern, 2007, p. 12).

3.4 CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ROLE

When discussing Chinese public policy and administrative issues, it is always crucial to state explicitly the role of the Party and the complicated relations between the local Communist Party Committee and the local government stand out as an important political and policy issue. Yep (2000) find that the local party and government's policymaking and implementation authority is actually granted by the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC). In the CCPCC's Thirteenth National Congress report, five major responsibilities and authorities that the local party contains are (1) to implement Central and upper level party committee's directions; (2) to supervise the State Council (SC, the central government) and upper level government's ordinances to be implemented by the local government; (3) to make policies addressing major local issues; (4) to recommend and promote key personals to local government agencies; and (5) to mediate and facilitate activities sponsored by local organizations (B. Liu & Zhu, 2000, p. 3).

With the local Party Committee holding the dominant power in making local policies, local government, the executive branch, bears the major implementation responsibility. B. Liu and Zhu (2000) use the *Working Regulation of People's Government of Ningjing County, Gansu Province,* as an example to illustrate the local government policy implementation and policymaking functions. Besides the major policy implementation role, local government does

enjoy the authority of "making and executing county's economic and social development agendas, plans, and local financial budgetary proposals" (B. Liu & Zhu, 2000, p. 4). It seems that the local party and government possess certain authority, granted by the central and upper level government, on policymaking and implementation. This policy authority is largely restricted to the local economic development issues and social affairs and is subject to the central and upper level government's scrutiny and supervision. That is, no local policies can overrun the state directives (*fangzhen*) and policies (*zhengce*).

In the Western literature, politics and political ideologies are also an important variable in the policy analytical models, such as the political stream in Kingdon's Stream Metaphor, policy monopoly in the Punctuated Equilibrium model, and the external events in ACF. However, it is entirely a different issue in the Chinese policy environment. In China the bureaucratic system and the CCP dominated political system are, in fact, integral in the policy process and should be considered as a single unit of analysis in this study, despite B. Liu and Zhu (2000) distinctions of their roles.

S. Liu (2005) describes this integral relationship in his article "The Bureaucracy Administration Integrated by the CCP" that "the Communist Party's organizational behavior has been infiltrated into the Chinese bureaucratic system through various integrative means. This infiltration and integration deeply affect the organizational structures, functions, and behaviors of Chinese bureaucracy" (S. Liu, 2005, p. 40). Nevertheless, the personal charismatic characters of the Party members, mostly leaders, in all levels and the complicated interpersonal relations make this linear hierarchical policy process and political control difficult to realize. S. Liu (2005) describes that "many important national political policies are not easily made. Many policies cannot reach any consistency, compromise, or conclusion without harsh debates from different

opinion holders inside the Party and sometimes even through political struggles among different factions in the Party" (p.41).

Although scholars constantly observe the less political role of the party in the early stage of the economic reform era (Baum & Shevchenko, 1999),   there is no way to conclude that the party is losing its political control in administration and public policy, especially after the above discussion about the local policy process. In the mid-1980s Deng Xiaoping decided to separate the Party's dominance over public policies, which provides ways for government to pursue the economic development goals. This decision was documented in the Thirteenth CCP National Congress in 1987. However, the differentiation efforts were gradually diminished after the Tiananmen movement in 1989 (Jia, 2008; K. Lieberthal, 2004). Burns (1994) compares the Chinese *nomenklatura* changes in 1984 and 1990 and concludes that the CCP quickly reverted Zhao Ziyang's[21] party reform strategies, trying to strengthen the party rule after 1989. Although later in 2002 after the CCP's Sixteenth National Congress, capitalists and other non-political elite groups are allowed to join the CCP, the CCP still possesses the decisive power over Chinese economic, political, and social policies (K. Lieberthal, 2004).

However, these analyses of the party and government relations are chiefly restricted to the central level. For the local government, the relationships are more complicated. One municipal level bureau's deputy director explains to me the detailed party and administrative office's relations when we are having a private dinner together. He says:

> "There is no doubt that the party controls the government at the municipal government level. That is to say that the city's Party Committee Secretary is the top leader in the city's political hierarchy followed by the city's mayor. However, within the municipal government in each individual bureau, the bureau's party secretary is not the chief. Contrary to the municipal government, the bureau's director has the determinant power in the office. This is because although the

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[21] He was the former Chinese Premier and the CCP Secretary General who was sacked after 1989.

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party leads the government, but within the government the party is not dominate the specific practice of daily administrative affairs. What you heard about the CCP's immanence in all public affairs in local government is not that accurate, although we [the director and deputy directors] are all the party members" [Zhao interview, April 2010].

When asking about the party's function in the bureau, he explains that

"The relations are linear for upper and lower levels. We follow the rules from the vice mayor who are supervising us. He [the vice mayor] follows the rules from the mayor, who in turn follows the guidance from the city's party committee secretary. However, inside our bureau, the party secretary only takes a position as a vice director, same level as mine. But he does have a special function to report to the party secretary. That is to say as long as we obey the principles set up by the city party secretary and mayor, we can make policies and implement them by our [bureau director's] own style and no need to be approved by the bureau's party secretary" [Zhao interview, April 2010].

The deputy director's explanation explicitly shows the complicated relationships between the party and the administration inside local government. The party is, of course, still holding the political controlling position, especially at the agenda setting stage. But in terms of practice inside the government, the party's function does recede. When I had a chance to talk to the bureau's party secretary, he also showed me the similar political structure in the bureau. When asking him about some specific policy and his opinions, he said cautiously that: "in general, we respect the director's rule in managing the daily affairs. As the party secretary in the bureau, I am responsible for supervising the ideological directions and make sure the bureau's duties are in the right political direction" [Zhao interview, April 2010]. These interview results echo Shi (1997) observation, where he also recognizes that although the party's role is diminishing along with the more comprehensive economic reform, the powers of party leaders "have not been completely eliminated. Party organizations are still one of the major power centers within each organization" (p.55).

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Although conflicts and different opinions may still occur inside the local government between the party line and the administration line, it is still not correct to consider them as separable units. Regardless of who controls whom, the party still leads—or even *is*—the local government. Consequently, in this study I consider the policy environment as one integral part with the party holding the dominant policymaking role and the government assisting it at the local level, whereas the government, especially each bureau in the local government, carries the major implementation position.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Although the policy process has been studied in the Western literature for decades, scholars in the area of Chinese politics have their own paths to comprehend the rather authoritarian policy process in China. However, the theoretical and analytical frameworks provided by the Western scholars are gradually more applicable under the Chinese context as Chinese policy process is moving toward a direction from centralized and closed activities to more decentralized and open interactions. Therefore, we will see the models in the Western policy studies discussed above are implemented in the Chinese cases examined in the following chapters.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR:

FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN CHINESE LOCAL POLICY PROCESS

In Chapter 2, we have asked questions: can certain policy models be tested under the Chinese situation, where political democracy is not a condition for the function and practice of those models; and with citizen participation and involvement of all interest and social groups, such as professional associations and NGOs, in all areas in the political systems, what is exactly the policy process Chinese in local government? These questions are intriguing in terms of the explanatory power of the well-developed models in policy studies (discussed in Chapter 2) to assess Chinese cases. If some of the models can be used to explain the Chinese case, then we might have a better tool to examine our research question: how and how much does Chinese citizen participation in policy process change government officials' behavior and alter local policies? In this chapter, we try to use a formal local policymaking process case to address these questions.

4.1 THE CASE STUDY

The previous studies give predominant focus in the agenda setting or proposing policy issue stage, yet there is limited record and analysis on the policymaking process. Once agenda is set, it is government's responsibility to formulate practical and applicable policy terms. Scholars

mention the "local experiments to national policies," which is a unique policymaking process used by the Chinese central level government (Heilmann, 2008). But this process is normally practiced for large-scale national level policies, such as "city controls adjacent counties" policy and the later "counties separate from city" policy. At local level, it is impractical to use such process to handle day-to-day policy issues. Therefore, a close examination of how local government makes policies is needed.

The purpose of the following case study is to unveil the basic policymaking process practiced in local Chinese government and also to establish a starting point for further analysis. The question of how and how much citizen participation is involved in the *formal and legal* day-to-day policy process is answered in this particular case study. Hence, from the purpose, this chapter is descriptive to *infer the concept* of citizen participation in Chinese local government agencies and, if possible, to *develop theoretical implications* to the formal Chinese local policy process.

According to the laws and regulations described in the literature in Chapter 2, we should expect equal representation of all parties – government agencies, interest groups, and the general public – in the policy process. But from the early discussion, we know the powers over policy are never the same from different parties, at least in the central level government policy. Moreover, if opinions from groups or individuals involved are equally examined and reflected in the policy process, then there is a pluralistic sign or, maybe, even the sign of civil society in the local politics; if the opinions are not equally evaluated, the local government still dominates the policy process, so the process is more state corporatism (A. Chan, 1993; Oi, 1992); and if there is no opinion considered during the policy process, it is indeed a totalitarian structure.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the author spent about five months working in a local government as an intern in a city government located in a western province in China. During this working experience, the author participated in several local policy processes that were mainly initiated and handled by the Bureau of Industry and Information Technology (BIIT). In this chapter, I select a specific policy that I have followed through, from the very beginning to the very end, to analyze the dynamic nature and behavioral interactions among different stakeholders in this policy process. The reason I selected this policy as a case in my study is because it contains the widest range of stakeholders as compared to all other policies that I have involved. The stakeholders joined in this policy include different levels of local government bureaus, a large State-Owned Enterprise (SOE), and a professional association, which was registered to the local authority as a NGO. Before getting into the detailed case, I shall start from a brief introduction of this case.

4.1.1   Case Description

The City C is located in an economically less developed western province in China. However, it is a major industrial city in the country with many heavy industrial factories built in this city since the 1960s, when Chairman Mao decided to move Chinese major industries from the coastal regions to the "third-front constructions" in inner China.[22] Therefore, heavy industries are the major economic development sources for this city. The gross industrial production of the 12

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[22] As compared to the "first industrial front" in China's eastern coastal regions and Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the second-front of the middle provinces, such as Anhui and Jiangxi, the "third-front" refers to altogether 13 provinces in China's central and western regions. These provinces include western China provinces: Sichuan (including Chongqing Municipality), Guizhou, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai; and central and southern China provinces: Shanxi, Henan, Yunnan, Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong, and Guangxi (based on the article: The Conflicts in the Process of Making the Third-Front Construction Policy in 1964 by Chen, Donglin, August 10, 2009; retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://news.qq.com/a/20090810/001982.htm).

largest heavy industries in 2011 reached two thirds of the city's total GDP.[23] Hence, the BIIT, administrative and supervisory agency over all industries, becomes one of the most important offices inside the municipal government.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, it is extremely difficult to get an internship opportunity inside the Chinese government, especially for people like the author who has a lot of working and living experience in the United States, unless there exists a strong tie inside the Chinese government. Fortunately, the author's strong personal connections inside China's political arena do make the impossible mission possible. Introduced by the author's friend, the city's vice mayor assigned me this valuable internship opportunity.

This internship opportunity enabled the author to practice the participant observation method to trace the whole process of local policy making. During this process, I chose to use a hybrid methodology of combining covert and overt participant observation (detailed explanation see Chapter 1). While I was interning in the office, some of the bureau leaders, who supported me, knew my research goal and purpose. However, most of the public employees in this bureau did not know my purpose. There are two reasons for this choice. First, the officials who knew my intention did not want me to air the information in office, because it is always safer to keep low-key in office. Second, the "Hawthorne effect" might change officials' behavior if they knew they were being watched. Therefore, the hybrid method is a safer and more precise research technique that is more pertinent for doing research in China.

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[23] The data are based on the city's *2011 Government Report*.

4.1.2   Case Analyses

The policy that I am going to analyze in this study was a detailed development guidance plan for a certain industry—I use industry "X" in this text—to the year of 2020. The agenda setting procedure for this policy was rather simple. In early 2010, local government received a macro-level regional industrial development plan initiated by the State Council and the provincial government. The development plan they had was too general to have any practical means locally. Hence, it is the BIIT's responsibility to specify the regional plan to fit the local context. *Thus, the agenda-setting step in this particular policy is from top political leaders and it is the close-door model with no citizen participation.*

Since there is not much trouble setting the policy goal, most efforts in making this policy lies in the process of planning. Comparing to other national level policies, which normally need three months to complete (G. Zhu, 2002), this policy planning and formation process is rather quick—the process for making the policy of "X Industry Development Plan for the Year 2020" (hereinafter "development plan") has only lasted for around 20 days. But because heavy industries are major economic development sources in this city, the city government does spend a lot of efforts on planning them and tries to use their ways to support them. A brief policy process is listed in the following Table:

Table 6. Policy Process of Case A

Time	Content
Day 1	In City C's BIIT caucus, the Bureau Chief assigned the policy agenda to make "X Industry Development Plan for the Year 2020," along with the other four industrial development plans. A deputy bureau chief was responsible for the duty. BIIT's Industrial Surveillance Office (ISO) staff was to assist making this policy. The author was also asked to participate in the policy making process as an intern.
Day 2	The T Corporation, X industry's leading and the largest SOE in the city, and

	the X Industry Association, an NGO that connected to over 160 small and private X industry's companies, received the government document to prepare for a development report and wait for the policy making team to conduct research.
Day 3	The deputy chief led a research team to visit T Group to discuss the possible development plan. T Group hosted the meeting, which was headed by its deputy chief manager and several production and planning office heads. Along with the government research team came the general secretary X Industry Association, which represented local private X industry companies. After the meeting, the research team got a copy of a well-prepared "2020 X Industry Development Plan" written by T Group staff.
Day 4	Commissioned by the BIIT's deputy chief, the author went to the X Industry Association for research. In the Association's headquarters, a large but rather hollow office, the author had a detailed conversation with the Association's general secretary about the development plan and policy. After the meeting, the author received a copy of "X Industry Development Report" and "The Development Blue Book of Private Companies in the X Industry."
Day 6	The author finished a draft research report for the development plan policy and handed it to the ISO head for his review. The draft also copied to BIIT's bureau chief and the Association's general secretary.
Day 10	The author received more government documents and materials as references for an updated version. The ISO head discussed the problems and possible improvements of the first draft with the author.
Day 11	The author finished the second report, submitted it to the ISO head, and copied it to BIIT bureau chief. On the same day, the bureau chief replied to the report by stating: "the direction of thoughts is correct; the content needs to be enriched; and the development procedures should be more applicable."
Day 14	The ISO head asked the author to process some documentary and word processing work related to the development plan.
Day 18	The ISO head finished the final report and submitted it to the deputy chief for his review, before it was submitted to the BIIT bureau chief for final revision.

The duration of making such a policy is very short—only lasts for less than 20 days. However, after reviewing a total of 15 issues of "Weekly Work Agenda" from February 2009 to

March 2010,[24] which explicitly record the main duties and tasks that all six bureau leaders are responsible for, this kind of policymaking work only takes up about 7 percent of all their duties (see Figure 3). Therefore, we cannot make a superficial conclusion that the reason for this kind of task being accomplished so quickly is due to their skillfulness and familiarity of such a policy process. During the policy research process, the author also noticed that none of the government officials involved in the policy process are specialists in this industry. Consequently, the major task for these officials to accomplish is actually the consultation during the policy planning process and the ability to mix the reports submitted by both the SOE and the Association.
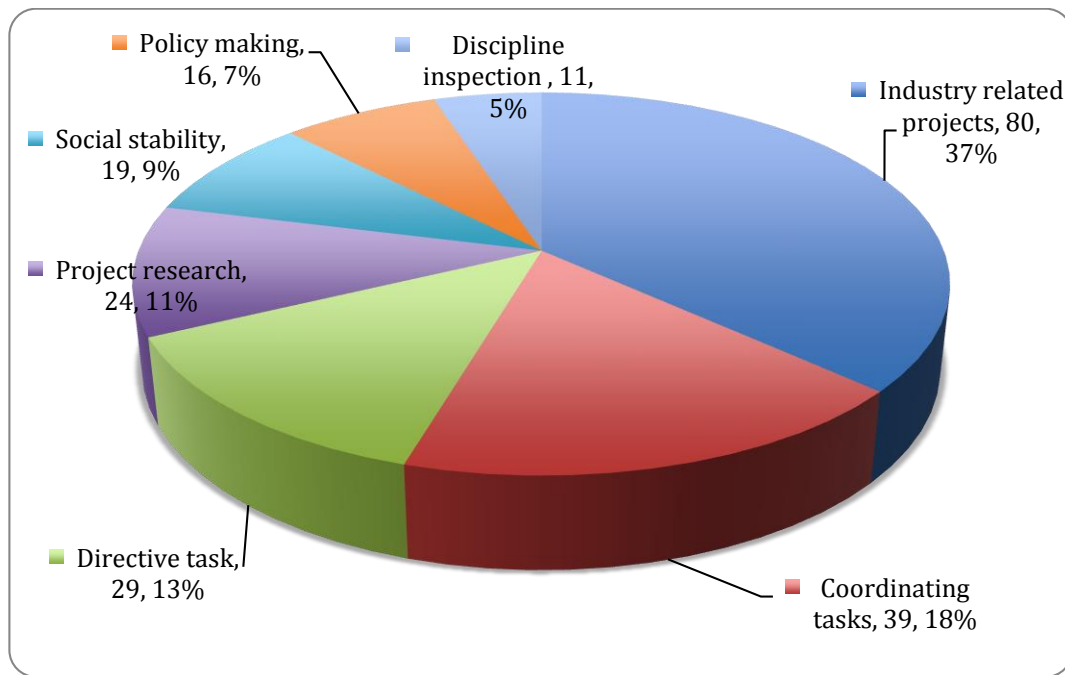
Figure 3. Job Categories for BIIT Weekly Work Agenda Record [25]

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[24] Although it was called "Weekly Work Agenda," the report was not regularly issued each week. It was normally concluded and reported after each bureau caucus held almost one a month.

[25] Note: In these 15 issues, there were altogether 218 tasks that were assigned to one bureau chief, three deputy bureau chiefs, one discipline inspection team head, and one chief engineer. Based on the content of each task, the author distinguishes them into seven categories: Industry related projects (having a designated receiver and a specific industrial task, such as assist A company to finish moving factories), Coordinating tasks (coordinating duties handled by other bureaus, such as coordinating provincial People's Congress to complete industry survey), Directive task (normally refers to the general tasks that the bureau chief is supervising), Project research (work

In order to answer the question and understand the propositions raised above, we need an effective research tool to evaluate the causal chains between independent variable—in this case the accountability structural change and the power of interest groups—and the variance of dependent variable—the outcome of public policy. In this single within-case analysis, we cannot think of a better tool than the process-tracing. George and Bennett (2005) state that

> "Process-tracing is an indispensible tool for theory testing and theory development not only because it generates numerous observations within a case, but because these observations must be linked in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case. It is the very lack of independence among these observations that makes them a powerful tool for inference" (p.207).

Mahoney (2003) synthesizes Skocpol's renowned work on state and social revolutions and highlights her narrative analysis of complicated explanation of the breakdown of the French state in 1789 (Skocpol, 1979). He then draws a causal linkage figures with over 37 actors and linkages. Gerring (2007) attributes this narrative analysis or what Skocpol and others called "conjunctural causation" as process-tracing and declares "process-tracing is akin to detective work" (p.173). In this study we are using process-tracing or narrative analysis to be the tools for analyses.

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related research and analysis, such as analyzing the first quarter industry's operation), Social stability (maintaining social stability tasks that are related to this bureau), Policy making (making policies that related to the bureau's authority, such as making City C's Energy Development Plan), and Discipline inspection (the discipline inspection team head's tasks).

4.1.2.1 Narrative Analysis of local policy process

There are altogether four participants involved in this policy process: local government (BIIT), a large SOE (T Group), a third sector (X Industry Association), and the participant observer (the author). Hence, a simple policy process-racing graph is shown in Figure 4:
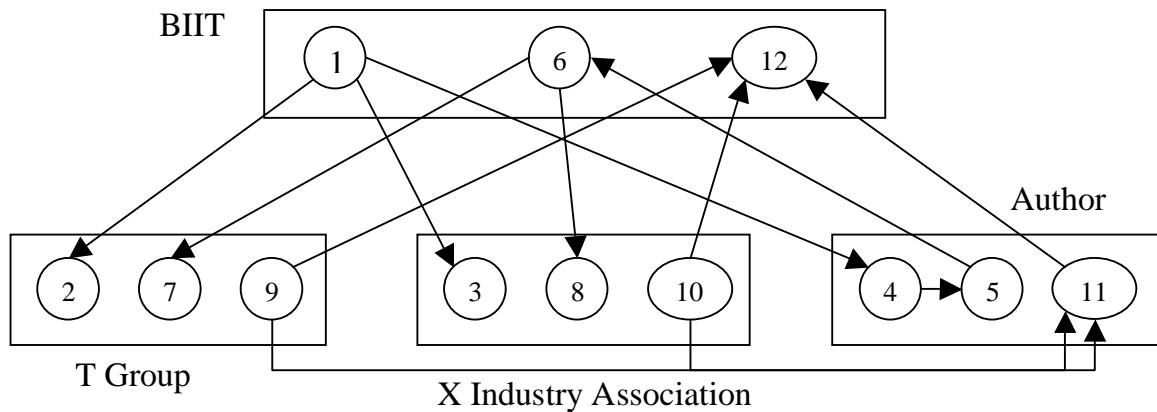
Notes: numbers in the graph represent:

BIIT in C city		T Group		X Industry Association		The Author	
①	Agenda setting	②	Receive government documents	③	Receive government documents	④	Invited to participate in the policy process
⑥	Conduct research	⑦	Hold reception meeting for government research team	⑧	Meet with the author for policy research	⑤	Initial research in relation to the development plan
⑫	Revise and finish final draft	⑨	Hand in their development plan	⑩	Hand in two documents	⑪	Finish the first draft

Figure 4. Process-tracing Graph

The causal linkage graph is similar to what has been described in Table 6 and I will not further elaborate it. From this causal tracing, we can see that there is no any sign for individual citizens to participate. However, a single large SOE and an NGO declaring its representation for

most private factories are powerful interests groups that invited by the local government to contribute their opinions toward the policy. But it is doubtful that over 400 private factories in the city ever notice there is such a policy.

In order to discover the effectiveness of the policy and who is more influential in writing up the policy, a content analysis of all documents submitted for final review and the difference between them with the final policy would be a more pertinent method.

4.1.2.2 Content analysis of policy documents

If we only look at this case through the above simple process-tracing steps, we could easily ignore the complicated social networks and dynamic power relations among local government, SOEs, and the third sectors. Thus, this content analysis would enable us to map out the power relations of each actor in shaping the final policy. The documents that we are going to analyze include reports mentioned in step 9, 10, and 11, that is, the reports submitted by the T Group, X Association, and the author to the BIIT. The purposes of analyzing these reports are not only to examine the goal and internal relations between these reports, but also to compare how much these reports influence the final policy.

1. T Group's Report

As a Province-owned large SOE[26], T Group has rich resources in terms of dealing with government related business. The report they submitted was very formal. Even the font size, text

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[26] T Group is a Provincial and Ministry Level government (省部级企业), which means it is under the supervision of provincial level bureaus. The head of the SOE used to enjoy an political ranking as vice bureau level

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format, cover page, and the table of contents were exactly the same structure as those in a formal government document. The report contained the following sections: introduction, the current status of the X industry, advantages and problems, future development challenges and opportunities, X industry development directions and goals, X industry development strategies and procedures, and conditions for achieving the goals. The report had a total length of 42 pages and over 21,000 words.

In general, this report was written in professional administrative documentary language, and the content was professional and concise. When discussing the X industry's current problems and challenges, the report was filled with data and examples, which made this version very explicit and easy to understand, but with minimum lexicon and jargons. However, as a report written by the SOE, it, of course, only stood in the position of their respective interests and only expressed their own perspectives on development issues. In this lengthy report, one could hardly find any discussion or concerns regarding the X industry's private companies, which include around 400 large or small factories in this city.

2.   X Association's Report

The X Association is actually organized and sponsored purely by the local X industry's private companies. Since the X industry's T SOE is so powerful and large (in terms of productivity), the formation of such an X Association aims primarily to counter against the monopolistic political and economic power of T Group. Consequently, it is not hard to realize that the leading company—the T Group—is not a member in the X Association. As a result, the

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(副局级). Since the reform of SOEs, they do not formally have the rank, but they are still considered as such rank officials.

report handed in by the X Association has nothing to do with the T Group either and talks only about the local private industry's development plan.

Comparing to the T Group, X Association did not purposefully prepare a formal development plan for BIIT's project. Instead, they submitted several documents relating to the development of local private business in this industry and had detailed introduction and discussion of problems and challenges facing these smaller factories. In one of the documents named "The Bluebook of the Development of Private Companies in the X Industry," they also utilized multiple chapters to illustrate their history and elaborate their future development strategies. This lengthy report had also 48 pages with over 17,000 words.

3. My Report

Initially, the BIIT Chief who invited the author to be involved in this project was hoping that the author could provide a more objective perspective in this policy making process as an outsider and with more sophisticated knowledge and techniques. Hence, the author performed a very unique role: neither a government insider, nor an acquaintance in this industry. It is because of this unique role and with this special permission from the BIIT Chief, I was able to obtain large quantities of internal documents and related materials that were valuable for making neutral and objective policy recommendations.

After a weeklong research in this issue and going along with government research teams as well as in-depth consultation and interview with relevant people, I drafted a report with 21 pages and nearly 10,000 words. The reason that my report was much shorter than the previous two was that I eliminated the historical review of the industry and only focused on the problems, especially the development conflicts between local SOE and private enterprises. The emphasis of my report was on how to differentiate the development strategies between the two kinds of

enterprises, how to extend the industrial chain of production, and how local government should encourage the leading SOE to compete in the international market and facilitate private companies to fill in the domestic demands. I underlined in my report that: local government should (1) attract more well-trained technicians and engineers through more compelling benefits to improve technological and managerial development for the T Group as well as other larger private enterprises; (2) encourage export; (3) stimulate private enterprises' reinvestment and expansion of production; and (4) develop a larger domestic market.

By comparison, we can conclude that, frankly, the previous two reports are more professional in their respective fields. Also, they are more practical and pertinent to local real situations. However, they are both partial to their own interests and lack a comprehensive outlook of the entire industry in the city. On the other hand, although the author's report gave a sufficient concern to the balance of development in each sector, it is rather ideal and impractical. Certain suggestions and development ideas are far beyond the real political and economic ability that such a local government can handle. Hence, the final burden of writing-up a more balanced and practical report is left in the shoulder of BIIT officials.

4. BIIT final report

No matter how we assess the final version of the policy report written by the BIIT's ISO head, from content to text format, from font size and choice to the structure, it is obvious that it was fundamentally based on the T Group's report, with only some revisions and insertions. According to the Microsoft Word software's comparison documents function, we can find the final report only mended 64 places in the original T Group's report and changed a total of 1022 words. Almost all these revised parts are related to private companies so as to even the interests

in both the SOE and private sectors. This report distinctively demonstrates that the future development goal is still to focus on facilitating the growth of the leading SOE.

Through the above content analysis, we know that the final policy considers primarily the interests of the large SOE, as opposed to many private companies. If there are no changes in the future, it is very likely that the terms in the policy that affect the interests of private businesses will eventually become obstacles for future development. Although the documents from all parties involved are reviewed, it is rather clear that they are not equally weighted. Hence, the pluralistic argument is not the case in the Chinese local politics.

One more thing we could be sure is that the difference in economic, social, and political power embedded in each organization is the driving force to determine the power of influence toward such a policy. Therefore, if we import these power relations into the causal linkage graph utilized earlier, we might be able to generate a totally different map of this policy process.

4.1.2.3 The in-depth process-tracing analysis

After a series of analyses for this policy process, we find its power structure is much more complicated than its superficial institutional procedures. In order to identify these profound relationships, we decide to differentiate the entire policy process into three steps to trace the process: Agenda-setting step, Policy research step, and Policy write-up step.

At the beginning, the reason the BIIT received this policy task was because the City C government just issued a quantitative industrial development goal, which was to raise three folds of total industry output in the year 2020.[27] Nevertheless, X industry was the second most

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[27] Date from the City C's "2009 National Economic and Social Development Statistical Report."

important one among the five major supporting industries in the city's economy. In 2010, the industrial chain of production related to X industry takes one third of local GDP. Thus, the boost of X industry becomes, without doubt, main momentum to stimulate local economy. After receiving the task from the city government, BIIT held a caucus meeting to set the policy agenda of making the "development plan," which was assigned to a deputy chief of the bureau with the assistance from the ISO in the bureau. Almost right after the meeting, BIIT sent the official document of such a policy task to the T Group, the X Association, as well as the author to prepare for consultation and field research.

The entire research process lasted for about 10 days, which included two steps: consultation step to the T Group headed by the deputy chief and the interview step to the X Association's General Secretary conducted by the author. First of all, from the order of the research process we could comprehend that BIIT in the City C's government cared more about T Group's opinions in this policy. The behaviors that BIIT had toward the T Group—mainly by paying personal visit to consult—were distinctively different from those toward the X Association, which were calling-in at any time. Certainly, the different behaviors came from the previously mentioned economic, social, and political power disparities.

T Group was established in the 1960s. With the development over half a century, T Group gradually became the real leader of the industry in China and was successfully incorporated into a stock company to attract more market investment. T Group was a provincial level SOE, which means the leadership appointment was controlled by the provincial government, as opposed to the local level.[28] Moreover, the political rank of such a provincial

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[28] Chinese SOEs personnel reform has been practiced for several times since the early 1980s. Although after the year 2000, there are a series of policies passed targeting the SOEs' leadership change rules, which was trying to abolish the honeymoon relationship between SOEs and local political authorities, the SOE's top leaders' appointment rights still controlled by the upper level government (please see E. H. Zhu, Guihong (2004), *SOEs*

level SOE is the same or even higher than the local government bureau chief, according to the size and level of SOE. Although from the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ Century, China's SOEs have experienced a set of reforms and the SOEs' leaders have no longer enjoyed political titles and ranks, the old SOEs' administrative system that existed for over half a century left prolonged impact. This is the exact reason that when the BIIT deputy chief paid a visit to T Group for policy research, one of their associate managers hosted the meeting. They are nominally in the same administrative rank.

The provincial level SOEs' complicated relationships with local city level government are even more dynamic. The large provincial level enterprises in the City C have all been built during the "Third-Front Development" era and, in turn, have all suffered through the late 1990s' SOEs reform difficulties. The still-existing large SOEs are all profit-making enterprises such as the T Group, which are the primary contributors to local GDP. Consequently, local government has to try to get along with these SOEs (not vice versa) and tries its best to assist their development, such as granting loans, allocating lands for factory building, as well as other socio-economic demands. If these demands are not met, these SOEs will threat local government to move to somewhere else. Since all cities and countries are competing with each other for businesses and factories after the Chinese economic reform in the late 1970s, such threats are normally very powerful.

There is a vivid case happened during the period that I was interning in the local government. One other major SOE in the city threatened the local government to move to another place, if their demands for a piece of land to build their factories were not met. It was said that two years ago, the SOE had received a big project. Thus, they applied to the city

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Leadership Institutional Reform and Reflections). Hence, the top leaders in large provincial level SOEs used to have similar political rankings similar to their government counterparts.

government for a piece of land in the industry development zone area to expand their factories for this big project. However, after two years, due to all kinds of administrative disturbances and housing relocation problems, their factory was not even laid its foundation. The delay of building such factories enraged the SOE's leaders. Therefore, they decided to move to some other places. Consequently, their threats shocked the top political leaders in the city government. Since this was a leading SOE in the city, their relocation would no doubt affect local GDP. They, then, hosted high-level meetings to supervise and push this case. Not long after, the problem was solved.

Compared to the large SOE, X Association is more local and more "private," because it is financially supported purely by over 160 local private enterprises in the industry through membership fees. The X Association has a love-hate relationship with T Group. Mostly, local private enterprises' owners are all former employers in T Group, who have managed to establish their own businesses since the 1980s. Several large private enterprises have evolved with close connections to the T Group, as well as its networks. Other hundreds of smaller factories have survived by processing smaller projects that are left out by those big factories. Therefore, the T Group, on the one hand, takes as much market as possible to squeeze out these private competitors. On the other hand, it also needs these smaller enterprises to handle certain small projects that it is not willing to spare efforts on. Interestingly, even the X Association's Secretary General was a former employee in the T Group. As what he introduced to the author, his whole family, including his parents, was all employees in the T Group. Later, he had some conflicting ideas with T Group's leaders, so he decided to resign from his post and start this NGO.

Because the X Association's Secretary General is a professional in this field, when the first time the local government research team went to the T Group for consultation, they brought

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him together in the team. Even as an outsider, we could easily feel the strained environment when the host side saw the Secretary General was sitting in our group. Throughout the meeting, the associate manager, who hosted the meeting, mentioned in multiple times the dominant position of their group and indicated that they did not have any intention to join in the X Association. The Secretary General, as a "betrayer and outsider," did not speak a word during the entire meeting and he seemed to be a little embarrassed. The meeting lasted for about one and half hours, besides a formal report submitted by the T Group, no other progress was made.

After observing these sensitive relations, I thought it was important to get to know more about the X Association and believed that I would obtain more complete knowledge about the situation in the X industry in the city. Thus, with the support from the BIIT Chief, I conducted an in-depth research in the X Association. From the conversation with X Association Secretary General, I realized that although the T Group was the leading company in the region (or even in the country), the rest 300 to 400 hundred private enterprises produced half of the X industry's total production in the City C. However, according to the Secretary General, T Group used to plot unfair competition to squeeze out many small private enterprises. For instance, prior to the economic crisis, T Group shared many of its small projects to small factories. In order to win those projects, the small factories had to spend large amount of money on equipment. However, as soon as these small projects finished, T Group suspended further connections with them. Consequently, these small factories could not make their ends meet during the financial crisis and, in turn, face the danger of bankruptcy. Obviously, to him, this way of competition was not sustainable to local economy and led to a huge waste of resources.

Contrary to the SOE, X Association has intimate relationships with local government bureaus. Some BIIT's officials vividly described the relations between them as "their own sons,"

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since they were directly under the local government authority, although local government did not really control those private business. The reason for them to have closer relationships is that local private business needs government support for more policy advantages and economic benefits. However, it is surprising that from the local government perspective, they do not trust their "own sons" at all, or at least not trust as highly as the SOEs. It is because these small factories are all in different qualities and extremely hard to control. Some of those small factories have problems running their companies, so that they can barely gain any financial and administrative support from local banks and government. Some other companies do not have a developmental goal to invest on reproduction after making profits. Moreover, there are even business owners who delay the payment of salaries to employees, which causes further social problems [Zhao interview, March 2010]. Therefore, local government can hardly rely on those private businesses to boost economy. Hence, a vicious cycle evolves: local government does not trust private business; thus, local business cannot obtain loans from state-owned banks; and consequently, the environment for private businesses is unfriendly. Although there are a dozen member companies in the X Association have an annual total production over 100 million yuan (US$15.9 million), these few well managed enterprises can hardly change the stigma brought by those poorly managed small companies.

Due to the existence of such a distrust relationship, although the X Association represents over 160 local private businesses, it can hardly comparable to the T Group and can never behave like the T Group to threat local government. But in dealing with local government, X Association's Secretary General demonstrates his outstanding talents. When reading the reports submitted by the X Association, I found several documents were prepared for the Bureau of Science and Technology (BST) in the city government. Through further research, I realized

that the city's X industry was actually managed and supervised jointly by BST and the High-Tech Industrial Development Zone (HIDZ), but not the BIIT. Later, I discovered that the Secretary General had close ties with the BST officials. Hence, it was clear that the X Association did not focus too much on BIIT's policy process.

Understanding this background, I found one puzzle: since BIIT did not have direct authority over X industry, why the Secretary General still actively assisted us in finishing this policy? I asked him about this puzzle and his response was: it was important for private business to establish close ties with government bureaus, no matter which one. Furthermore, he disclosed to the author that he was working on an application for a piece of land to create an X industry high-tech zone in order to move important private companies into the high-tech zone. In this case, he could manage this high-tech zone all by himself, which can effectively block off local administrative problems. His explanation to this plan was that to organize all private small factories together would help create a more effective and efficient production network and utilize resources more appropriately. More importantly, many private enterprises all experienced unfair treatment by local administrative agencies, such as inappropriate fines and other unclear charges.

He gave me a detailed example about this case: one enterprise had leased a piece of land for factories. All administrative processes were legal and clear. However, not long after, another government agency declared that the land used by the company belonged to national farmland zone, which could be used for nothing but farming. Consequently, the company must move and pay a fine for their business activity. When this company brought out official documents that it signed with other agency about leasing the land, the court and the other agency declared those were invalid. Facing this embarrassing situation, the Secretary General believed that once his development zone idea was approved, all the companies that were moved to the place would

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enjoy a certain degree of autonomy from local administrative control. He explicitly stated that: "at that time, we could close our doors to bar them (local administrative agencies) out" [Zhao interview, March 2010].

Now, the Secretary General was hoping to establish more close ties with government bureaus by complying with their all requests, in order to have more people inside the government to speak for them and to, eventually, realize his own development goal. The Secretary General's plan could, in the long run, bring enormous power and benefits for his association and could one day make his association a challenging competitor to the T Group. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult for him to achieve his goal, simply because of his identity as a NGO secretary general. Actually to the best of my knowledge, until the day that this paper was written, the city government did not formally approve his plan at all. The private enterprises' and NGOs' development progress is much harder than that of SOEs. Therefore, it is not surprising that when the author asked the Secretary General whether he would take the advantage of benefits listed in the draft development plan, he answered with scorn: "of course, not" [Zhao interview, March 2010].

After the above in-depth analysis of economic, social, and political power relations among all stakeholders involved in this policy, we revise our process-tracing graph to fit the more dynamic situations of this policy process (see Figure 5).
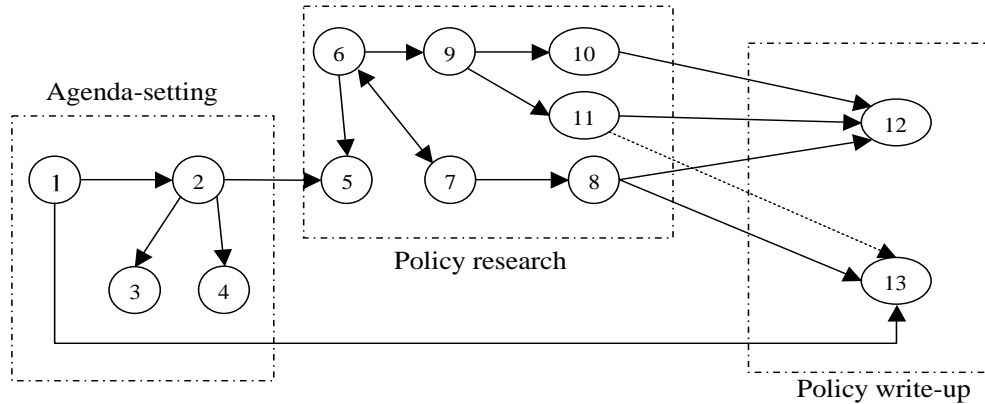
Notes: numbers in the graph represent:

Agenda-setting Step		Policy Research Step			Policy Write-up	
①	Policy agenda set by the city government	⑤	Research in T Group	⑥	X Association Secretary General join in the research team	⑫	The author finish the first draft of report based on T Group's report and X Association's research
②	BIIT caucus finalize policy goal	⑦	Observable conflict between T Group and X Association	⑨	Author interview the X Association		
③	Inform T Group to prepare for government research	⑧	T Group submit report	⑩	X Association Secretary General disclosed his purpose	⑬	ISO head finish the final report based on T Group's report
④	Invite the author to join in the policy process			⑪	X Association submit report and documents to		

Figure 5. In-depth Process-Tracing Graph

In comparison to the previous process-tracing graph, we insert more behavioral and power structure into the policy process. From this process map, we can discover that the final and official version of "Development Plan" report (process 13) is primarily based on the T Group's report (process 8), which is inconsistent with the previous content analysis, and the requirement given by the upper level government (process 1), whereas the private enterprises

only take minimum functions (process 11). This is far from the author's draft report (process 12), which is drawn both from the NGO side (process 10 and 11) and the SOE side (process 8) and is more balanced for future development. However, it is undeniable that the ISO's version (process 13) is more practical and stable for local economic growth as a whole. After all, the SOE is the main source for economic growth. At this point, the output of this formal policy process is influenced differently by various interest groups possessing their respective political and economic powers and, most importantly, the formal policy process is relatively closed and covert − besides these inside interests groups, no individual groups or persons could be informed and get involved in the process.

4.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

From the above analyses, we can draw the following conclusions: (1) due to economic and political power imbalances, the power of each involved interest group is hierarchically ordered. (2) The policy output is always consistent with the top-down political, as well as economic, accountability line. After all, local government officials' accountability to the upper level government in fulfilling the economic development goal is one of the two most important assessment criteria for local officials' political future.[29] (3) All participating interest groups, weak or strong, have their unique purposes, especially those in weaker positions. (4) Broader sense of individual citizen participation is limited and impractical. In fact, no matter whether this policy has anything to do with citizens and how much it relates to X industry employees, all

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[29] The other one is to maintain the social stability.

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policy participants represent only the elite leadership group. The policy process is not transparent to broader constituencies at all.

Based on these conclusions, I draw the following implications. First of all, the entire policy process leaves the observant participant a feeling of and implication of Kingdon's Streams Model, in which the problem stream (the need for such a policy), policy stream (research and proposals submitted by all parties), and political stream (differences of economic and political power of each participant) interact in the window of opportunity or are thrown into a garbage can (because there is no clear reasoning of why the final report is written) before the final policy is made. This policy is certainly not made after a "sudden change with a long-time stability" and, although there are conflicts in the policy process, there is definitely no "significant consideration into the interactions of values and preferences held by different individuals and interest groups. But there do exist monopolistic powers in the policy process, which I shall discuss later. Hence, other models do not apply in this formal and closed local policy process analysis. I think it is because the variable of democracy is not particularly significant in the Streams Model, where it is key for other interest groups' values and ideas to be equally evaluated in the policy process in other policy models.

Second, the format of Chinese local policy process is genuinely reflected the Schmitter's definition of corporatism:

> "a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports" (Schmitter, 1974).

In this case, we see the policymaking process is firmly controlled by the local government. Hence, the format of Chinese local corporatism is, as many scholars observed, still the state corporatism. Under this policy structure, the general public or even the industrial practitioners and workers are strictly excluded from the policymaking process. The T Group, X Association, and the participant observer become the "singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated" interest representatives. Nevertheless, other similar policies, such as 2020 Food Industrial Development Plan, Supporting Local Large Enterprises Development Plan, and Development Strategies for New Energy Industries, made by the agency and observed by the author, all follow the similar policymaking path: limited number of "interest groups" are invited for policy research, before the policymaking agency finalizes the policy terms.

Third, the formation of such a state corporatist structure also comes from the government officials' "to the top" accountability structure, which means that local officials only be responsible and responsive to their upper level government. Throughout the policy process, there is no way for grassroots citizens or the industrial practitioners to get involved in shaping any terms in the policy. It is rather "easier" for local officials to keep citizens out of the policymaking process and this is the sole reason that the local policymaking process is so quick that a long-term industrial development plan only needs 18 days to make. When asked "why do not involve more SOE or private business employees in this policy process," the local government officials answered straightforwardly: this is nothing to do with them [Zhao interview, March 2010]. This answer explicitly shows that the citizens' interests are downplayed, if not ignored.

Last, but not the least, local government agencies, along with the elite leadership groups, are the monopolistic power in the policy process. As long as the policy made by this monopolistic power does not affect the interest of the general public, the policy can sustain. Unfortunately, the consequences of such an "elite control" policy process and the outcomes of such policies frequently affect the livelihood of common citizens. Hence, we have seen the so-called "social disturbances" outburst in the recent two decades in China. Some scholars and politicians view these socially violent mass activities as crises or political conflicts. But on the contrary, I consider these behaviors as a unique way for Chinese grassroots citizens to strive for more influence in the local policy process. When citizens are united to form powerful interest groups to publicly against certain policies, local government officials' accountability structure drastically changes. The officials have to be responsive to local citizens for their concerns, because if the situation of "social disturbances" gets worse, they will be held responsible for breaking the "maintaining the social stability" political promotion assessment criterion. The consequence is as serious as losing local officials' political future, temporarily or permanently.

Once the power of the policy monopoly is break, the window of opportunity opens, and some of the variables of the action situations change, the policy has to be changed. This change is primarily caused by the citizen participation and the alternation of local officials' accountability structure. The detailed illustration of this more effective citizen participation will be depicted and analyzed in the following chapter.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: INFORMAL PARTICIPATION AND THE MASS DISTURBANCE[30]

Since Perry (1994) defines the third wave of political theoretical development in Chinese studies as the state-society relations, more and more scholars begin to pay attention to popular protest or social disturbances occurred since the early 1990s (Cai, 2010). However, as mentioned earlier almost all such studies take the protest as the unit of analysis and, therefore, examining the implications of such violent activities to Chinese political reform. This is not the goal and method of this study. Instead, we use policies and policy process as the unit of analysis and evaluate how the mass participated social crises shape and reshape policies.

In the literature of collective resistance in China, O'Brien and Li (2006) point out that local mass disturbances can effectively affect the policy implementation in terms of raising the attention from the above level and even the central government about the policy violation by the local authority. Since the upper level government controls the local cadre's promotion and no social disturbances and disasters is one of the key factors to determine local officials political performance, local citizens catch this leverage to actually shift the accountability structure from "to the top" to "to the bottom" by creating troubles to local officials.

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[30] Part of this chapter is drawn from a paper entitled "Democracy with Adjectives?: Understanding Contemporary Chinese Governance," co-authored with Professor B. Guy Peters.

Besides policy implementation, Cai (2010) utilizes five types of cases to examine the power of social protest toward policy adjustment. The five types are: non-agricultural use of farmland, peasants' financial burdens, retrenchment of SOE workers, retrenchment of urban collective enterprises (CE) workers, and housing demolition. His analysis discovers two factors that may have determining force to policy adjustment: "cost incurred by the government in making new policies" and "the forcefulness of resistance" (p.182). Therefore, the overall cost and the scale of political impact are crucial for the disturbances-driven policy adjustment. It is important to mention that the policy adjustment that Cai refers to is primarily the central level policy change.

To seek central level policy change is never the goal of individual citizens who participate in collective resistances. On the contrary, they mostly seek for short-term benefits or try to cover their losses in the cases they protest against. Although many protest cases are not policy-related or not even government-related[31], there are certain number of collective actions by local citizens to strive for policy change. But do these collective resistance serve the purpose of *direct participation* to eventually hold local government officials accountable to the citizens and change policies?

In order to answer this question, we use content analysis method to analyze three cases: Chongqing Dingzihu Case—to test Cai's conclusion on popular resistance and policy adjustment; Xiamen PX Case—to examine how citizens' collective action eventually alters the local policymaking and implementation; and a comprehensive study on City Z's "Social Stability Maintenance Report" from January 2007 to September 2009—detailed records of 193 local collective resistance or potential cases—to unveil the local government tactics, strategies and

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[31] Many local protest cases are private economic related, which will be explained in the latter part of this chapter.

reactions towards such informal participation and to examine whether there is a change in accountability structure.

5.1 CASE ONE: CHONGQING DINGZIHU

5.1.1   Case description

Literally, *Dingzihu* means "a nail house" or "recalcitrant," as L. Li and O'Brien (1996) translated it. It is a rather new term created in the Chinese economic reform era. The *Modern Chinese Dictionary* defines it as: "during the process of urban development, when government needs to expropriate private houses, the house owner takes the advantage to bargain and refuses to move." The dictionary uses negative tones to describe this group of house owners. This is not only denoted from the literal meaning of the word itself, but more vividly reflected the political and social conditions for this group of citizens. In Communist China the State owns all lands and no individual citizens have property rights to land, even if they have their private houses on it. Therefore, when government needs the land for the purpose of economic development, which is considered as "public interest," the government has the authority to confiscate the land with appropriate compensation to the property owners based on a series of laws and regulations including *The Chinese Constitution.*

This development strategy is not unique in China and the concept of "eminent domain" in Anglo-Saxon law is similar. The only difference between China and Anglo-Saxon tradition is, of course, the ownership status. However, in China this situation began to change in 2003. Cai (2010) discovers "at the end of 2003, the central authority issued new policies that not only

revised the criteria for compensation and thereby raised this amount for homeowners; the authority also regulated the procedures for compulsory demolition" (p.170). The most striking change, nevertheless, happened in 2004, when the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) voted to amend the *Chinese Constitution* and for the first time declared that private property is sacred and inviolable and "The state protects the right of citizens to own lawfully earned income, savings, houses and other lawful property" (Article 13, *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*). Three years later the NPC adopted the *Real Right Law*, which defines the equal rights of public and private properties. This is, of course, drastically different from the "old" Communist era, in which the public (or the State and Collectivities) had dominant power over the private properties and rights.

Just a few months before the *Real Right Law* was signed by the Chinese President, a woman—Wu Ping—in the city of Chongqing decided to challenge the local authority and powerful real estate developers to defend her and her husband's old house that was inherited from their parents. Although this case lasted for a little more than half a year, the story really began from over a decade before. In 1993 right after the couple renovated their double-floor house for their home-run restaurant, they received an official announcement about a local development plan. In this plan their house would be demolished for a business center and shopping department. However, despite the anxiety of this couple and their neighbors, the local government did nothing for the following 11 years. In August 2004, however, local district government issued a similar announcement of development plan with moving requirements to local household owners. However, the difference this time was the detailed demolition and renovation plan for local buildings and the compensation programs for household owners.

For private homes the real estate developers offered rather handsome compensation, whereas for small business owners, like this couple, the money and exchange of property offers were far less than the skyrocketing price of their properties after the land was developed. The conflict of interests began with the couple's refusal to accept the compensation and move and ended with formal clashes between the couple and the local authority. In September 2006 the first negotiation process began. In February 2007 a picture of the couple's house being isolated in the middle of construction building site was posted on popular Chinese discussion forums in the Internet. Very soon this picture attracted wide attention from both Internet forum users and media journalists worldwide. Since then, her case was widely known and she was nicknamed by Chinese bloggers as "the coolest *Dingzihu* ever in the Chinese history." This nickname expressed both Chinese people's cynicism about to the unbalanced power positions between Wu Ping couple on one side and the developers and local government on the other side; and also their support to the couple and anger to the local government. Because the previous negotiations were unsuccessful, on March 19, 2007 a local collegiate court organized a formal hearing on this case. Regardless how Wu Ping argued in the court, the local court issued a verdict after the hearing ruling that Wu Ping couple had to move out the house in three days. Otherwise, the law enforcement agency would execute the verdict by demolishing their house by force on March 23, 2007.

The verdict was soon spread throughout the Internet. At that time, in an Internet poll, over 80% of the internet users supported the Wu Ping couple, but only 30% believe that this case would be solved in a satisfactory way and 40% believed the government would enforce the law to demolish the house. However, it was exactly because of the extreme exposure of this case to the public and media, Chongqing local government did not do anything on March 23, 2007. In

the following week, local court mediated several times for a compromising deal. However, when the Wu Ping couple and the developers finally reached a deal on March 27, local government turned down the deal because of "unfairness to the previously moved out house owners." They were also afraid that this conclusion would eventually cause more troubles in their future development plans. In the same day the *New York Times* and London based *Financial Times* reported this case, making this case internationally known. Under pressure of domestic and international public opinions, the final agreement was reached by all parties on April 2, 2007. In the final deal the money compensation was not significant, but the developers exchanged a same-size business office in a more prosperous region in the city.

5.1.2   Case analysis

In Cai's conclusion, due to housing demolition case's relatively low cost and relatively forceful resistance, the policy adjustment in response to such cases is fast (Cai, 2010, see Table 8.8 in p182). However, in the Chongqing *Dingzihu* case, the local reaction toward Wu Ping couples is not fast at all and the managerial skill of local officials is rather clumsy. But it is exactly because of this particular case raises wide attention and wins support from public opinions that local government is constrained of taking forceful action, even with court's verdict. Hence, public opinion is still the most important factor to determine the policy adjustment, even at the local level. Moreover, to local government official, it is not easy for them to back down when facing such last tough homeowners, if all other residents have already accepted the compensation and moved already. The chain reaction and consequence could be very costly. This is the reason Chongqing local government refused to compromise in March 2007. Therefore, in this case, we cannot draw a conclusion that citizen's action with collective participation of public media and

people across the country does not necessarily alter policy outcome. However, with the involvement of a third party—the private developer, the situation is rather complicated. The closed-door deal between the developer and Wu Ping couples and also the final compensation plan offered by the developer successfully solved the deadlock between Wu Ping couples and local government through a satisfactory deal for the couple, which also saved local government's face.

Since this Chongqing case, local governments in many other places change their strategies. If the homeowner becomes *Dingzihu*, it is very likely his or her house would be kept intact while the planned construction would be built bypass the house and make it a "lonely island". From 2007, such "lonely island" cases have been frequently seen in news reports in Henan 2008[32], again Chongqing and[33] even Beijing in 2009[34], and Suzhou[35] and Guangzhou[36] in 2013. Take the Suzhou case for example. The Zhuang poor family has retained their shabby house in a corner of a luxury villa area since 2006. For the past six years, local officials and developers tried to reach an agreement with them, but all failed due to their huge compensation demand. Although their case was publicized by local media, somehow they did not attract enough attention and did not arouse sympathetic public support. It seems as long as there is no forceful action by local government toward *Dongzihu* and the rights of *Dingzihu* are preserved, public opinions do not always go with them. Local authorities learn to handle these troubles more rationally and legally. This is also hard to conclude that local government has changed its

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[32] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://pic.people.com.cn/GB/1098/6749965.html

[33] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://news.163.com/09/0204/19/51B61VJ400011229_2.html

[34] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://house.people.com.cn/GB/13519691.html

[35] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://nj.focus.cn/news/2013-07-14/3615116.html

[36] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://www.zsnews.cn/news/2013/02/08/2361231.shtml

accountability structure. *Dingzhihu* is just individual case, while most other local residents choose to cooperate with local government's development plan and move with compensation deal they reach with local government. Therefore, for cases only affect small number of individuals, local government normally does not change its original development policy and it learns very quickly to maintain a balanced accountability structure to both high level government as well as citizens who are affected by the development policy.

5.2 CASE TWO: XIAMEN PX CASE

5.2.1   Case description

According to H. Zhu (May 28, 2007) report, PX stands for "paraxylene, which is a raw material used in chemical production." The city of Xiamen attracted an investment project, which was alleged to worth 10.8 billion yuan (approximately US$1.5 billion) and would bring over 80 billion yuan's (approximately US$11.5 billion) profit to the city's annual GDP. This project was called "Haicang PX project." Haicang is a district of Xiamen. Based on the information in the district's official website, this district has a population density of 1.13 people per square meter. However, the chemically insecure PX project was exactly planned to be built in this populous region, in which two school campuses and over 100,000 population were living around five kilometers radius area.

The project was initiated in 2004. At that time local environmental protection agency's official journal published an article that alarmed the potential environmental hazard and social problems that this project might encounter. But this project was still smoothly approved by the

higher level government agencies and started the construction in the late 2006. In March 2007

during the NPC and CPPCC sessions' period,[37] a local CPPCC member, Professor Zhao Yufen,

formally brought a bill with over 105 PCC members' endorsement to suggest transplanting the

factory location to a safer region. Unfortunately, this bill was ignored by local authority and

related agencies. On the contrary, local government accelerated the speed to construct the

chemical factory.

The consequences of such ignorance were severe. The experts' appeal was soon learnt

and carried on by the media and local elite intellectuals. A local freelancer Lian Yue and several

large national newspapers open special coverage series to report this case. In Lian Yue's

personal blog, one audience left a message saying "Thank you, Lian Yue. Because during that

early summer filled with deception and menace, it is you who tore off their masks and

encouraged us not to be afraid. To protect our own home is our inherent responsibility." It is

worth mentioning that Lian Yue's personal blog was forced to close and had to change to

different blog providers due to the political pressure from the local government. Meanwhile,

local residents also created chat rooms and groups through the Chinese internet chatting software

QQ. This became one of the major sources to gather public opinions among the younger

generation.

In the late May of 2007, millions of Xiamen residents received and forwarded one cell

phone text message. The content of this message was to call for a peaceful demonstration and

rally in front of the municipal government building. In response to a simple text message, on

June 1, 2007, Xiamen local residents walked outside and marched together to the local

government building. The US-based *Washington Post* reported this demonstration in an article

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[37] Chinese People's Congress and Political Consultative Committee open their plenary sessions once a year, normally in March.

entitled "Text Messages Giving Voice to Chinese, Opponents of Chemical Factory Found Way around Censors." According to this report around 8,000 to 10,000 people participated in the demonstration in the first day. The report also mentioned one interesting phenomenon during the demonstration: "Citizen journalists carrying cellphones sent text messages about the action to bloggers in Guangzhou and other cities, who then posted real-time reports for the entire country to see."[38]

Local government reactions to those public opinions were from ignorance and censorship to halt their early decision and construction, and to open discussions with local citizens. Although their actions were rather sluggish—the formal public hearing was not held until almost half a year later, the result of the negotiations between local residents and the government was phenomenal in the Chinese history. In the end of the case, the original chemical factory plan was totally abandoned by the city government. Instead, the factory was moved to a remote peninsular hundreds of miles from any large city. This case might not be the first of this kind, but it was symbolic in terms of its successful result and utilizing advanced technological means to achieve democratic ends. Local residents united together to create a strong wave of public opinions and finally won the war against local authority.

5.2.2 Case analysis

The significance of this case lies in the power of collective action to alter totally the policy outcome. As a fast developing city, Xiamen craved for the sources of economic prosperity. With

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[38] See Cody (June 28, 200), "Text Messages Giving Voice to Chinese, Opponents of Chemical Factory Found Way around Censors," *Washington Post*. Retrieved online:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/27/AR2007062702962.html.

a project bringing multibillion contributions toward local GDP, any government official would take a blind eye on the opposing voices. However, when the balance between economic prosperity and social stability was broken, the cost of mass disturbances easily outweighs the benefits of growth. If there is no such a hazardous side effect, the policy process is closed to any citizens' involvement. Had Professor Zhao Yufen, as an insider, not submitted the bill and disclosed the information to the general public, there would be very hard for the general public to be aware.

Ironically, only a month after Professor Zhao submitted her bill to local NPC, on April 4, 2007 the Chinese central government formally issued the "*Regulation of the People's Republic of China on the Disclosure of Government Information*," which became effective a year later. The Legislative Office of the State Council read and explained the regulation on April 24, 2007 that the regulation "better protects the general public's basic legal rights on acquiring public information and utilizing it" (Legal Office April 24, 2007). Along with the regulation and the case of Xiamen XP plant, Chinese local government gradually picks up new strategies in treating similar cases later on. In July 2012, citizens from Shifang in Sichuan Province protested against the establishment of a local copper plant, being afraid of its poisonous pollution[39]. The three-day large-scale protest ended up with an official promise of the cancellation of the plant project and later the removal of the local Party Secretary. In 2011, the northeastern coastal city Dalian also intended to introduce such a PX factory in the city. But due to the citizens' panic about its environmental security, the factory had to relocated to an isolated island in 2012[40]. The similar

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[39] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shifang_protest

[40] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://news.southcn.com/china/px/node_263492.htm

cases also happened in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province[41]; Kunming, Yunnan Province[42]; Zhanjiang,

Guangdong[43] Province; and so on[44].

Only in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, local government cracked down twice—in 2008 and

in May 2013—the citizens' efforts to fight against local PX factory. Although Chengdu city

officials publicly announce that the factory's acceptance check for production will open to the

public scrutiny, local citizens seem not have any faith in their words[45]. Interestingly, Chinese

local government officials also develop sneaky tactics to prevent people getting involved in such

potentially hazardous economic development plans. Although the "*Regulation of the People's*

Republic of China on the Disclosure of Government Information" requires such economic

development policies to be publicized for public opinions prior to its formal enactment, some

local government tends to secretly publish sensitive policies online for a short period of time

hoping it would not raise any public concerns. For example, in the late June 2013, Jiangmen City

government secretly published a notice on its official website, disclosing its plan on a Uranium

development factory. Prior to the 10-day publication period, there is no any information

disclosed about the factory. However, the published information was quickly raised concerns

from citizens both in the city and in Hong Kong, which is only about 96km away from the

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[41] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at:
http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012%E5%B9%B4%E5%AE%81%E6%B3%A2%E5%B8%82%E9%95%87%E6%B5%B7%E5%8C%BA%E5%8F%8D%E5%AF%B9PX%E9%A1%B9%E7%9B%AE%E4%BA%8B%E4%BB%B6

[42] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://news.163.com/13/0526/02/8VP2AOUQ00014AED.html

[43] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at:
http://www.jxnews.com.cn/jxcomment/system/2009/08/12/011180686.shtml

[44] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at: http://news.southcn.com/china/px/node_263492.htm

[45] Retrieved online on March 11, 2011 at:
http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013%E5%B9%B4%E6%88%90%E9%83%BD%E5%B8%82%E5%8F%8D%E5%AF%B9PX%E9%A1%B9%E7%9B%AE%E4%BA%8B%E4%BB%B6

location. In July 14, Jiangmen city government had to issue an official statement permanently postpone the industrial development plan (Y. Chen, 2013)[46]. All these cases clearly demonstrate that local citizens' collective action can effectively hold their local government accountable to them.

5.3 CASE THREE: Z CITY'S SOCIAL STABILITY MAINTENANCE OFFICE'S REPORTS[47]

5.3.1 Case description

The Social Stability Maintenance Office (SSMO) is not a government office listed in any local government official website. It is directly controlled by the Party Committee, like the Office of Propaganda and Office of Organization. However, in most places, the local SSMO is the same office as the Bureau of Letters and Visits (BLV), which is the so-called "one set of staff and two name plates." This is the exact office in all levels of government to handle social protests and mass disturbances. City Z's SSMO keeps good record of monthly report of regional disturbance cases. The author collected, with permission, reports from January 2007 to September 2009. The brief screening of the reports shows that there are altogether 193 local mass disturbances, including the potential ones.

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[46] Retrieved online on August 18, 2013 at: http://news.takungpao.com/mainland/topnews/2013-07/17593.

[47] These reports are collected during an invited research by the local government in late 2009. For the purpose of confidentiality, the names involved will not be disclosed in this study.

Prior to the detailed analysis of these reports, it is important to know the basic economic, social and political structure of this city. This is a very important industrial city in China's southeast coast with a total population of close to 3 million in 2006. However, among the 3 million people living in the city, only 350,000 hold local residency (*hukou*). That means the majority of the local citizens are migrant workers. It is obvious that the city's major industry is manufacturing. In 2012, there are around 2000 middle to large size factories located in the city. Hence, this is an economically wealthy, but socially complicated area. Indeed, from Figure 6, we know that among all the 193 cases occurred in 33 months, a large majority is business and economic related problems (a total of 60% of all cases).
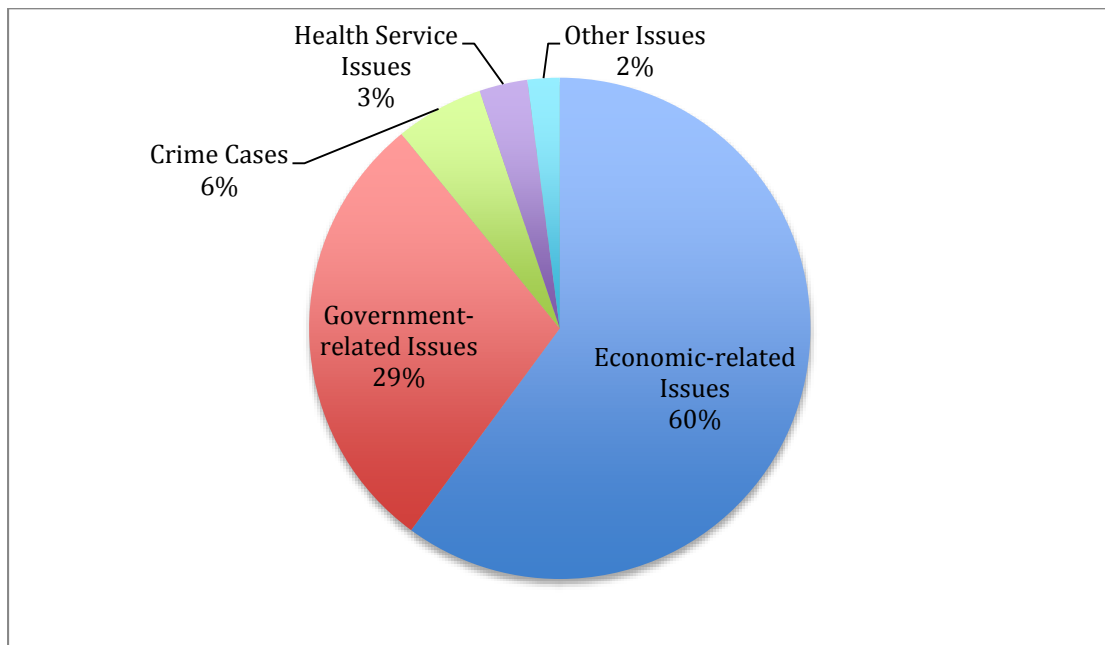

Figure 6. Types of Socially Unstable Cases[48]

In fact, most of the economic-related issues are business and civil disputes that should not be dealt with by the local government. However, the function of local BLV actually becomes a

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[48] *Source:* City Z's SSMO Monthly Reports from January 2007 to September 2009, altogether 193 local social disturbance cases.

de facto justice department. Instead of resolving problems with legal weapons through courts, Chinese citizens tend to achieve more preferable goal via visiting BLV, ideally with a group of more than 30 people because it will be then considered as a "mass disturbance" to grant enough attention. Due to the limitation of this study, the economic-related cases are not the interest for analysis. We now turn to our attention to the government-related issues. For the 33 months, there are only 55 policy- or government-related mass disturbances. The government-related case refers to government or government owned enterprises are directly involved in the cause of disturbances. We further categorize these cases into eight subcategories: public service, land use, social security, economic management, political reform, housing demolition, public safety, and infrastructure. Figure 7 shows the scale of each subcategory.
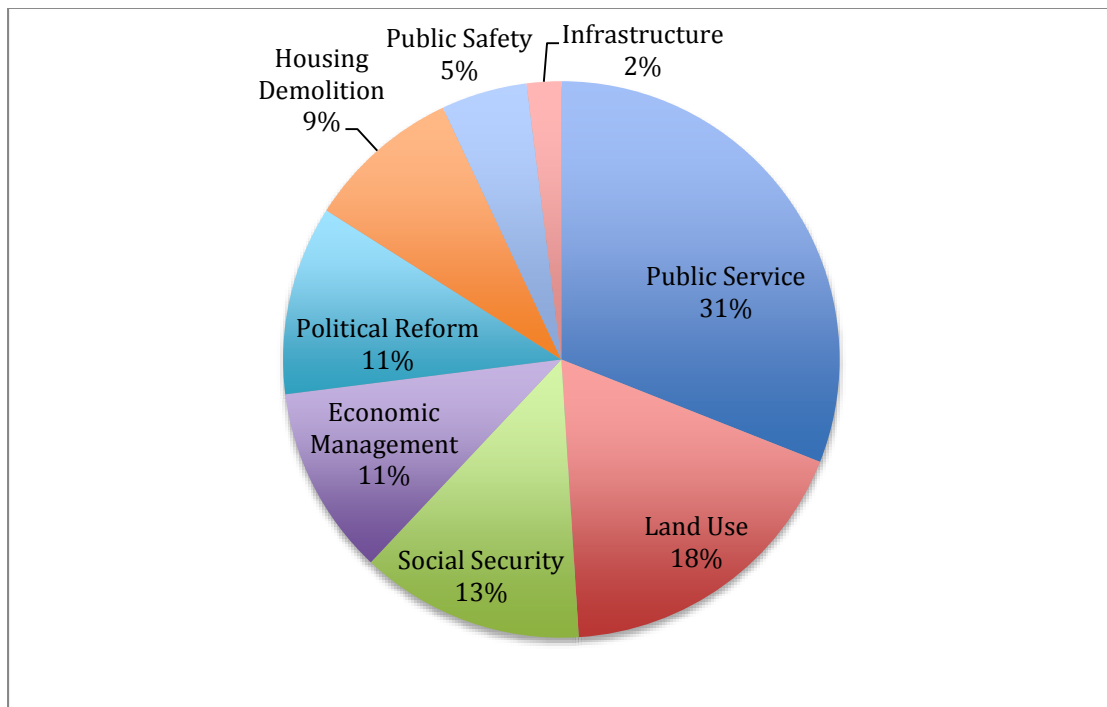

Figure 7. Percentile of Eight Subcategories of Government-related Disturbances [49]

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[49] *Source:* City Z's SSMO Monthly Reports from January 2007 to September 2009, altogether 193 local social disturbance cases.

In Figure 7, we can see that local residents are mostly dissatisfied with local government ability to provide comfortable public services. Most of such collective protests are against environmental or health related public facilities. For instance, over 200 residents living in one community frequently gathered to protest an adjacent waste-processing plant, accusing the plant creating heavy pollution by simply burning the wastes. This group of people announced altogether seven demands and requests including using provincial standard to disposal waste, economic compensation, waiving their garbage disposal fees, offering free annual physical check, and even solving the local residents' children's employment problems. Since China's land property is not privatized, complicated and unclear land use issue is another major problem for local citizens' collective action. Besides, veterans and earlier retired workers, along with other socially disadvantaged groups are frequently gathered to strive for their own interests. Government reform policies, such as privatize local sanitation workers, and economic management policies, such as increasing the number of local taxies, all affected the traditional state employees or powerful social groups (green taxi group[50]) economic profits.

5.3.2   Case analysis

In this particular case, local officials reactions toward these mass disturbances are fast and responsive. Besides the precise and complete record of all cases, the local SSMO is also establishing a large network of around a thousand part-time detectives and agents scattering in almost every street to report to the office the first hand information about any potential collective

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[50] Local taxi driver's positions are mostly monopolized by two clan groups. There is rather limited opportunity for outsiders to freely join in the market and it is easy for these two groups join together causing serious social problems. However, they actually formed powerful driver's union-like bargaining informal organizations, gaining political leverage against local authority.

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actions to happen. This is the reason that SSMO and BLV officials show up in almost all mass gathering events timely. In the reported 33 months, there is no sever crisis happened in the populous and busy city.

From a careful review of the 193 cases, we realize that the SSMO and BLV in the City Z are mostly practicing the function of local civil court to make judgment on private business disputes. Beginning from 2008 due to the sign of economic crisis, many manufacturing firms began to go bankruptcy. Thus, among the 116 economic-related disputes, most of the stories are searching for the missing bosses of bankrupted factories. The unpaid and underdeveloped migrant workers find nowhere to complaint, but to turn to local government for compensation. It is of course that local SSMO and BLV are unhappy to take the court's place, but since the traditionally weak position of courts in Chinese administrative system and because of its slow processing speed, the local government just cannot afford to wait for its rule.

Regardless of economic-related or government-related, the SSMO and BLV have the capability and power to solve most of the collective activities efficiently and effectively. Although there is no written record of how they eventually manage to appease the angry citizens, the large amount of "Social Stability Maintenance Fund"[51] disclosed in L. Sun et al. (2010) report addresses this question perfectly. In the interview and conversation with City Z's SSMO officials, they said although they have many other ways to try to hold someone accountable for those economic problems, such as fine the property owners of the bankrupted factory if the boss

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[51] Guangdong Provincial SSMO Director Chen Wenmin denouced the name of SSM Fund, saying there is no such budget listed in the public budgetary plan. Instead, it is called "Security Fund." Money utlized in maintaining social stability were drawn from such Fund. (Nandu newspaper, June 27, 2013). However, Tsinghua Professor Sun Liping still kept the SSM Fund in his 2010 report. Here I refer to the public money used in maintaining social stability, regardless how it calls.

is missing, they always have sufficient fund as last but most efficient straw to control the situation.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

First of all, Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is an applicable model to explain this case. Under relative stable parameters (in this case the local government officials' dilemma explained in Chapter 1) and external events, different coalitions (local government and collective resistant groups) in the policy subsystem conflict and negotiate until governmental authorities to make final decisions. Although Cai (2010) identifies many failure cases of such collective activities and the results of such mass disturbances are complex, ACF is a powerful analytical tool to capture the interactions between coalition groups in the political subsystem.

Second, Sun's worry about the vicious cycles, mentioned in Chapter 1, actually becomes the effective weapon that local citizens utilize to gain political and economic leverage in claiming for better compensation if they feel offended, as long as they can effectively organize collective resistances. Although the Chinese local political system itself causes such a vicious cycle, the existence of such conflicts and resolutions is pushing the local political style from the state controlled corporatism to more society oriented societal corporatism. Although it is still farfetched to call Chinese local political struggle between collective protesters a societal corporatism, for such collective groups are not permanent, it indeed fits the distinctions that Schmitter (1974) identifies. The Chinese local collective groups: (1) have limited number, which is established by "political cartels" designed by existing participants to exclude newcomers; (2) are singular in terms of the outcome of spontaneous co-optation of competitive elimination is by

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surviving associations (as in the Xiamen PX case); (3) are compulsory de factor through social pressure and provision of essential service (as in all the PX cases); (4) are noncompetitive which are the internal oligarchic tendencies or external, treaty-like, voluntary agreements among associations (as in Xiamen PX case); (5) are hierarchically ordered due to the outcome of intrinsic processes of bureaucratic extension and consolidation (consider growing number of participants and the leadership in the case against waste-disposing plant pollution in a City Z's community); (6) are certainly functionally differentiated as each case is local and problem based, which is also the reason for the feature of (8) representational monopoly and (9) the control of leadership selection, if necessary, and interest articulation; and similarly (7) are recognized by the state and local government simply because of a matter of political necessity imposed from below upon public officials (Schmitter, 1974, pp. 103-104).

Gradually, Chinese local officials become more responsive to citizens' request for policy change, as citizens are more educated and informed about the public and private events occurred around them. But with cases only affecting a few individuals, the collective actions have limited power to make any changes even with the attention from audiences from all over the country. Nevertheless, if local government policy affects the interests of a large number of citizens, the power of social resistance could be huge, which can effectively hold local officials accountable to their constituencies.

In recent years the behavior and performance of officials inside Chinese local government also improve significantly. In the SSMO and BLV offices in the City Z, we see well educated, energetic, and young public servants are designing policies and strategies to more efficiently address social problems. The modern technologies, such as the Internet based network and geographic information system, have already play a key role in communication and connection.

Although we agree with what Fewsmith (2013) observes that there is still no clear sign of institutionalization of policy reform, the signs of change and improvement in managerial and communication skills all indicate a progress toward further local political reform. In order to make this argument more plausible, we now turn our angle to see more local government driven political reforms to include more citizens to participate in the policy process.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INNOVATION I --

GOVERNMENT INITIATED "OPEN POLICY PROCESS" TO CITIZENS

Keping Yu, the Director of the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics (CCCPE) and the founder of the Chinese Local Government Innovation Award (CLGIA) program, once stated in a media interview that: "Actually fewer, not more, people outside China hold a positive perspective to our political reform. Foreigners' understandings to our past achievements are partial, not comprehensive. Many of them still believe we made huge economic progress, but almost no progress made politically. Of course, I have different opinions and I think we also made significant political improvement" (Jiang & Wang, 2005). Yu's statement may be correct in terms that the Western sinologists, especially political scientists, focus predominantly on the Chinese political democratization—the Western style, which is exactly the point that is hard to reach politically in the foreseeable future in China.[52]

Besides the collective mass disturbances, the institutional changes and political/administrative innovations from inside Chinese local governments have become widely seen in Chinese newspapers and journal articles. The study of Chinese local innovation is driven by the biannual CLGIA program hosted by the CCCPE, the Center for Chinese Government Innovation at Peking University, and Center for Comparative Studies of Political Parties, Party

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[52] We have to admit that there are numerous studies discussing Chinese grassroots level democratization—political election in villages (L. Li, 2004; O'Brien & Li, 2000). However, there is no sign for such democratization process to be pushed up the county and the above political levels.

School of the Central Committee of PRC. Although Keping Yu constantly claims that the award program is "academically independent and politically neutral," there is still heavy political influence from both the Central Party School and the CCCPE, which is based in the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, a research branch of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee.

Till 2012, the biannual CLGIA program has been successfully organized for six terms and has honored 114 government innovation programs, including 60 award winners and 64 finalists. These awards are selected from over 1500 applications from almost all provinces in the Mainland China. Since then, the study of Chinese local government innovation cases has become an area of research in Chinese social sciences disciplines, such as political science, public administration, and sociology. After reviewing around 100 case studies and numerous case analyses, we find that most analyses concentrate their attentions in developing the incentives or driving forces for local government to choose to innovate politically, which is considered not a safe action under the Chinese political environment and culture that honors stability (see X. Chen & Yang, 2009; He, 2007; Wu, Ma, & Yang, 2007; Jirong Yan, 2006; X. Yang & Chen, 2010). Another group of scholars have started to conclude the categories and types of innovations that Chinese local government initiated, hoping to either discover the inherent rationalities of reform types (see X. Chen, 2008; W. Wang, 2005) or propose a possible trend of local government reform directions (see K. Yu, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010b).

Almost all the analyses of local government innovation have taken the position or perspective on the local government side. Questions, such as why government initiates such an innovation or what the outcomes and performances of government innovation are, are frequently seen. However, so far, there is no study that connects the local government innovation and

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citizen participation together. *Does citizen participation play a key role in local government innovation?* This is a rather important research question because it not only directly connects the Chinese democratization process with local government innovation, but also offers a different perception of institutionalized citizen participation in the policy process. Based on the literature and analyses in previous chapters, we would expect to find minimum citizen participation in such a process to affect policies, if there are no social disturbances forcing political innovation. Therefore, the policy changes are made purely from the local government itself and it is local officials' own intention to be accountable to their constituencies.

6.1 INCENTIVES OR DRIVING FORCES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT INNOVATION

In past studies of Chinese local government innovation incentives or driving forces, scholars mainly recognize two key factors: political and economic needs and local emergencies and problems. After analyzing 133 local government innovation cases, X. Chen (2008) concludes that over 61.7 percent of cases in her sample show that government innovations are caused by political or administrative crises and emergencies, such as "financial crisis, management and performance crisis, trust crisis, and appeasing the social conflicts" (p.320). In her data, there are also 33.8 percent of cases showing that it is local government's own incentives to initiate reforms and changes. She attributes these self-incentives to local government officials' personal interests for better political performances and/or the competition pressure coming from other regions.

X. Yang (2008) develops a typology extending the comparison between crisis and development needs by adding local government officials' attitudes, either actively or passively.

In his typology, the four quadrants represent: (1) emergency-active type: innovations are driven by crises, but are handled actively; (2) emergency-passive type: innovations are driven by crises, but are handled passively directed by the upper level authority; (3) development-active type: local government responds to social and economic needs actively and promptly; and (4) development-passive type: local government responds to social and economic needs passively under public opinions or social pressures. Table 7 demonstrates his typology. X. Chen (2008) admits that the third type – the development-active type – is the goal for local government innovation.

Table 7. Local Government Innovation Types

	Active	**Passive**
Emergency	emergency-active type	emergency-passive type
Development	development-active type	development-passive type

Sources: Yang, X. D. (2008), Ten Questions on Chinese Local Government Innovation, *Journal of Public Management*. Vol. 5, No. 1, pp.16-26 [in Chinese].

With all these explanations of causes for local government innovations, Wu and his colleagues (Wu et al., 2007) conclude that "Government innovations are always driven by the interaction of factors both internal and external to the organization. The incentives for innovation not only exist in the objective institutional environment, but also caused by the subjective internal political needs" (p.47). Zhou (2003) also recognizes that in the local government application reports, the most frequently talked buzzword is all kinds of "pressures." Some even claim that their innovative ideas are "forced by pressures" (Zhou, 2003). Therefore, it seems that it can reach an agreement on the driving forces of local government innovation: internal political promotional needs and external economic and social pressures.

Since the "emergency types" in Table 7 are similar to social problems or disturbances driven policy innovation, which we have discussed in the previous chapter, in this chapter we

focus on the "development types," which are primarily government-initiated policy changes. Whether the government innovation is active or passive is theoretically important to understand the role of government leaders and other outside forces, besides the violent collective resistance. Based on China's political status quo and the authoritarian structure, it is hard to imagine why and how Chinese local government would be willing to invite citizens to join in the policy process, on which they have almost monopolistic power as illustrated in the first chapter. Hence, we would expect that local government officials are forced by the outside pressure to make such changes. Although there are indeed more "development passive" cases in relation to citizen participation, there is one significant "active" case that no one finds any sign of external pressure (or there is no pressure on collective actions violent or nonviolent) existing.

6.2 HANGZHOU OPEN POLICY PROCESS TO THE PUBLIC[53]

Hangzhou is one of the most developed cities in China, with a GDP per capita over US $10 thousand dollars. Nevertheless, its political development is also significant comparing to the city's economic performance. However, the economic performance does not necessarily correlate with the political change, since Hangzhou's GPD per capita only ranks number six in the nation. Actually, there is no any significant economic indicator, such as local revenue, residents' disposable income, or added values of three industrials, in Hangzhou City ranking top the list. When we study the Hangzhou case, we cannot see any severe social disturbances or significant problems. What we can see is a systematic process that opens the city government

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[53] Sources of this case are drawn from news reports and government documents that available online.

policy process—all major policies' making, implementation, and evaluation processes—to the general public. We will begin our analysis from the timeline of Hangzhou innovation case.

6.2.1 Innovation Timeline

1. In May 1999, Hangzhou city government issued an ordinance called "The Notice on the Completion of the City's Major Economic and Social Development Issues' Decision-making Process." In this ordinance, the city government articulated that: "When in the decision-making process of major economic and social development issues, government should listen to the opinions from the general public and all sectors in the society. Meanwhile, government should also seek suggestions from the Standing Committees of the city's People's Congress (PC) and Political Consultative Conference (PCC), and the general members of PC and PCC."

2. In June 1999, Hangzhou city became the nation's first government that offered Mayor's hotline number of 12345 to the public. Gradually, the city established a comprehensive communication system between local residents and government including methods of telephone, email, and cell phone text messages. The Mayor's hotline had designated bureau officials to receive phone calls, answer citizens' questions, and report to the mayor. It was reported that there were over 400 phone calls to the hotline daily. Besides, the city government also sponsored "online reception hall" services. Each month certain government officials went online and chat with citizens on local public affairs.

3. In 2000, Hangzhou city government created a citizen-evaluate-government system called "Satisfied or Not." If the citizens' evaluation scores were lower than a certain

passing level, the government agency would receive performance warnings. The agency with the lowest score would be labeled as "Not Satisfied," which would, in turn, receive punishment from city government. If the agency received "Not Satisfied" label for consecutive three years, the agency's officials would be dismissed. From 2000 to 2007, the government agencies that were included in this performance evaluation system were increased from 54 to 114 covering almost all city bureaus, offices, and agencies.

4. In June 2000, Hangzhou city created a "Citizens' Suggestions Collection Office" and opened up an online "Suggestions and Advice" column. In the end of each year, citizens who provided the suggestions and advice that were admitted were eligible for the selection of "Outstanding Citizen's Advice" award.

5. From March 2002, Hangzhou city government started to collect public issues and problems that citizens considered important to be solved. Based on thousands of citizens' suggestions, government officials arranged their annual administrative agenda and emergent issues.

6. In July 2002, Hangzhou government opened a government effective and efficient performance supervision hotline: 96666. This hotline was mainly used to receive complaints on government officials' and public employees' working efficiency and effectiveness, as well as their working attitudes toward local citizens. The punishment to the public employees who received citizens' complaints was serious and severe.

7. In the updated version of the ordinance "The Notice on the Completion of the City's Major Economic and Social Development Issues' Decision-making Process" issued in 2003, the city government identified the detailed policy process: Agenda

setting—Research and analysis—Draft a proposal—Organize discussions—Seek

advice—Government decision-making—Implementation and evaluation. In this

particular ordinance, the city government highlighted the importance of taking advice

from experts and specialists. City government also established several advisory

committees in various different areas of public affairs.

8. In real practice, city government created a "three asks and four rights" mechanism,

which means "ask advice from the citizens, ask needs from citizens, and ask situations

from citizens; grant citizens with supervision rights, selection rights, participation rights,

and rights to know." In 2004 in a systematic street renovation project that involved 258

communities and 1.53 million citizens, city government received 4492 suggestions and

advice, among which 3420 were taken and put into practice.

9. Based on the changing social needs, in 2007 the city government once again updated the

1999 ordinance. The newly updated version further specified the policy processes and

added one special term that "Based on the related regulations and topic content,

determine the participants from the city government. Also, invite members from city

government's advisory committee, city Party's committee, PC and PCC Standing

Committees, city's court, procuratorate, military brigade, central branch of the Central

Bank, city's Trade Union, Youth League, Women's Federation, Association of Industry

and Commerce, and all other democratic parties to participate in the meeting to discuss

major issues. If necessary, invite local Congresspersons, PCC members, specialists and

scholars, and general public to participate." Under the rules in this ordinance and series

others, on December 12, 2007, 35 grassroots party members audited the Third Plenary of

the Tenth CCP Hangzhou Committee Meeting. The city's Party Secretary and Mayor met the representatives and discussed local public affairs with them.

10. On November 4, 2007, six local Congresspersons audited city government Standing Committee meeting. Soon after that, city government institutionalized the congressperson-audit-government-meeting-system.

11. In the late 2007 and early 2008, Hangzhou government issued several ordinances to require government agencies to open up their information to the public except for the "national secrets or information that affects citizens' safety." Hangzhou government publicly announces that "Information open to the public is the city government's basic principle; only exceptional cases are allowed not to open to the public scrutiny."

12. Starting from November 2008, Hangzhou municipal government began to write up "Hangzhou People's Government Regulation on Open Policymaking Procedures (Draft)". On December 20, 2008 after the Regulation was revised for six times already, Hangzhou Government invited experts and scholars from national research institutes, such as Central Party School, Chinese Translation and Compilation Bureau, and Chinese Public Administration Association, and top universities, such as Peking University, Renmin University of China, Chinese Social Science Academy, and Zhejiang University, to host a high level conference to discuss the Regulation. In January 2009, the Regulation was issued, in which detailed policy open types and procedures and citizen participation methods are formally institutionalized.

13. In January 2010, Hangzhou's Open Policy Process Case won the Fifth Chinese Local

     Government Innovation Award, due to its contribution on "[scientification] and

     democratization of policy process and promotion of citizens participation."

Hangzhou's policy process innovation with more public involvement receives great success. From 2007 to 2009, Hangzhou government invited over 238 local members of the People's Congress and People's Consultative Conference, experts and citizens to join in the government policymaking sessions; 110 citizens were connected through real-time Internet conference to discuss local policies with mayor and high ranking officials; over 385 thousand hits recorded in the government official website's policy discussion forum and BBS to post citizens' opinions about policies. Government reports made significant adjustment based on these citizens' suggestions.

6.2.2   Causes of the Policy Change

It has been over a decade since Hangzhou government decided to open its policy for citizens' scrutiny. There are numerous studies, evaluations, and reviews published in Chinese newspapers and academic journals. Based on the available documents, three reasons can be concluded in the Hangzhou case: determined and charismatic leadership, actively responded citizens, and friendly social environment. In the Hangzhou case, although leadership position is not highlighted in the documents, we still can find hints in this perspective. Hangzhou is the first city ever in China to establish 12345 Mayor's hotline. Although Mayor him- or herself rarely picks up the phones, without their acceptance and support, there would be no incentive to make this effort at all.

Moreover, Hangzhou municipal government has changed and updated three times the ordinance of "The Notice on the Completion of the City's Major Economic and Social Development Issues' Decision-making Process," which indicates that local officials[54] all understand the importance of institutionalizing the existing citizen's participation mechanisms in the policy process. The reason that this innovation can last for over ten years, evolve into a rather mature and successful case, and even institutionalize into formal government regulations should attribute to the firm and determined support from local government officials.

Hangzhou citizens are actively involved in democratizing the policy process. They are so actively participated in all government-offered accountability mechanisms, such as making phone calls to the Mayor's hotline and posting suggestions and advice to the government online forum. These interactions further enhance the grassroots' connection to local officials, which will make local officials believe their efforts are not in vain. For the social environment, Zhejiang Province is traditionally friendly to citizens' activities and organizations, especially the guilds and business/industrial associations (Zhou, 2010). With organized and institutionalized participation in various social groups, citizens' rights in the province are well protected. This is especially the case to the Hangzhou City (X. Yu, 2010).

Since 2000 in order to create a better economic and social environment for business investors and improve services, Hangzhou government began to send out surveys to citizens, scholars, and retired cadres to evaluate public services. The representatives from local citizens and enterprises are randomly selected to fill in evaluation forms. From 2000 to 2009, altogether 10 evaluations were done with the number of participants increase from 6000 to 15000. The citizens' representatives were 4000 in 2000, 6300 in 2011, and over 10000 after 2003. From

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[54] From the first version issued in 1999 to the last one in 2007, there were three terms of government changed in Hangzhou city government.

2007 over 1000 migrant workers, who did not have a local residency and largely underrepresented in China's massive urban development, were selected to participate the evaluation process. Since the surveys are all done by local government branches, the turn over rate is about 99% and the number of suggestions increase from 6000 to 11000 (X. Yu, 2010).

6.2.3 Achievements of "Open Policy Process"

From 2000 to 2002, based on the survey questionnaires and opinions collected from citizens and representatives, Hangzhou government concluded seven most difficult problems: (1) living and employment problem for poor residents, (2) working attitude problem of public servants, (3) housing reform related problem, (4) heavy traffic related travel and parking problem, (5) city sanitation related dirty, massy, and bad problem, (6) high medication price causing difficult health service problem, and (7) difficult school enrollment and quality school education problem (X. Yu, 2010). Since then, Hangzhou government started a series action to address these tough problems. The survey-conducted office sorted out all collected opinions and suggestions and delivered to the relevant government offices. In 2003, there were 12 offices published their working schedules and plans on Hangzhou local newspaper to collect more opinions from the citizens as well as open for the public supervision. In 2009, there were 92 related public agencies publicizing their working and reform plans on newspapers (X. Yu, 2010).

To address "living and employment problem for the poor", Hangzhou government improved its "Hangzhou City Basic Pension and Social Security Regulation" to broaden the social welfare coverage and promote active employment policies to reduce family unemployment rate. Before 2009, the urban recorded unemployment rate dropped to 3.23%, lower than previous years. The city government also enhanced sanitation work and hired over

10000 sanitation workers to clean the every corner of the streets. One of the policies for the city government to reform its education system was to created so-called education groups: encouraging better-equipped and better-quality schools to merge with other schools to share resources and make improvements. Thus, over 51 education groups were created and 188 high, middle, and primary schools were practiced under such "education group" style. Consequently, over 55% of compulsory education (K to 9th grade) is covered by good quality education groups; the number reaches 80% in the urban region (six urban districts).

Figure 8 shows the most satisfied outcomes of policy changes and most concerned problems in the year of 2009. From the figure, we see most of the survey results are consistent, especially the sanitation related problem, which is the most satisfied change with the lowest concern for problem in 2009. In the figure, we also see two inconsistent survey results: health service problem, with high satisfactory rate while still high concern, and school and education problem, with low satisfied rate and low concern. These fluctuations need further evaluation.
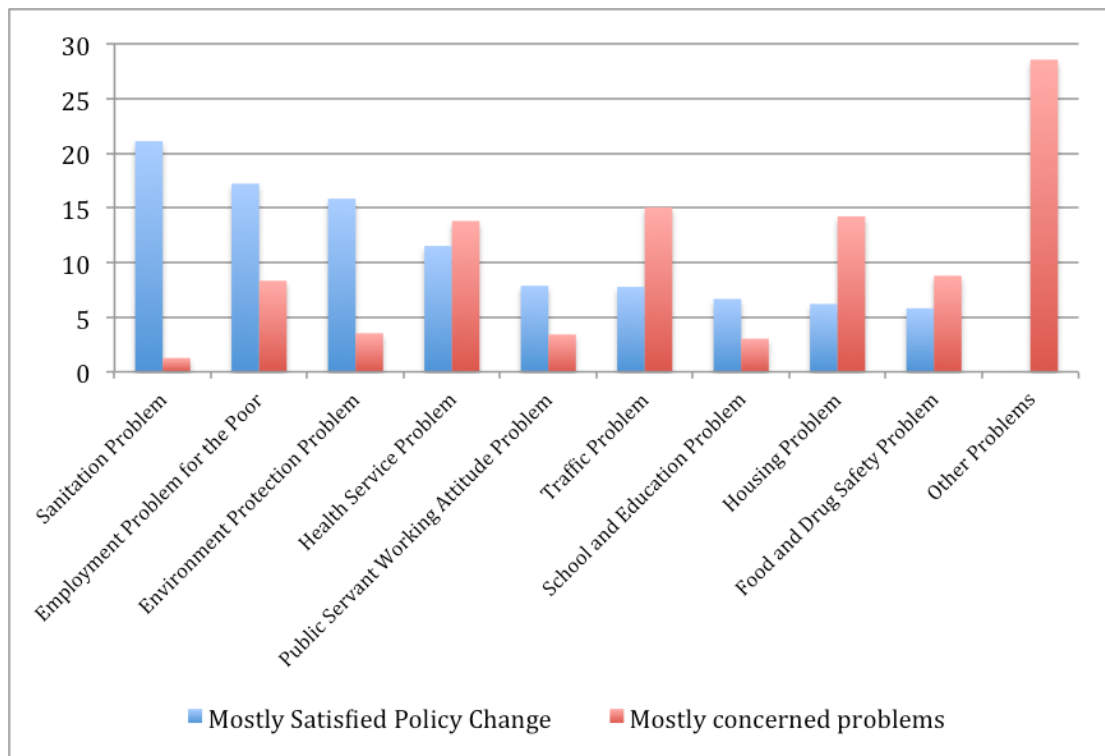
Figure 8. Most Satisfied and Concerned Problems in 2009[55]

6.2.4   Achievements of "Open Policy Process"

Nevertheless, the Hangzhou "Open Policy Process" innovation is not without problems and concerns. A group of scholars and researchers in Hangzhou City Communist Party School conducted a thorough research in the case and concluded several problems and suggestions in 2009, which we synthesize here. The first problem is preparation work for "Open Policymaking Session" is not sufficient. The research group discovers (1) the proposed policy proposals by government agencies may have conflicts with existing laws and regulations; (2) there are the discrepancies between the policy proposals and official presenters indicating a lack of communication inside the government bureaucracies; and (3) the initial policy proposals are not well prepared and are frequently subject to the citizen participants' questions.

The second broader problem the research group raised is the low level of citizens' involvement, including the limited number of registered participants and online forum and BBS posts, and the less enthusiasm and fewer interactions in the public policy meetings. The reasons for these outcomes are (1) the registration process is only restricted to the official website and media, which are not wildly publicized; (2) the required high technology skills excludes many citizens, who are not familiar with such skills; (3) policy related professional knowledge are hard for normal citizens to comprehend; (4) some citizens are still distrust government's actions and still considering these "political show"; (5) the selected participants in the meeting are

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[55] Note: The figure is reconstructed from data provided in Yu, Xuda (2010)'s article "Citizen Participation and the Settlement of the Problems in People's Livelihood: A Case Study of Hangzhou", published in *Zhejiang Social Science*, 2010, Issue 9, pp.34-51.

unprepared for the discussion topics, which lowers the discussion quality; and (6) the public expectation is too high for such a policy meeting, causing the decline of the enthusiasm for further public involvement.

Besides there are more serious problems in public meeting management, which significantly reduce the quality of the designed purpose for such a public meeting. First of all, the pre-meeting information publication system needs to be more comprehensive and accessible. In 2009, the public meeting notice would be posted only five days ahead of schedule and the meeting agenda would only post online three days prior to the meeting time. Thus, it is definitely too short for the complicated process of citizen participants' selection, pre-meeting preparation, and effective participation. Further the disclosed information regarding meeting agenda is also limited with rather narrow publication channels. The call for participants notices are only posted on the government official website, official Hangzhou.com.cn, and Hangzhou Daily newspaper, which are all not popular website for people to be aware.

More importantly, the selection process for citizen participants is also problematic. The formal selection procedures are (1) citizens' registration on government official website, (2) random selection from registered names, and (3) informing meeting agenda to the selected participants (Y. Wang, 2011). But in reality and real practice, the citizen participants are categorized based on their living districts after registration, while the online participants are selected by the policy proposing government agencies. It is obvious that there is some leeway for government agencies to screen the selected participants (An, Ke, Shao, Ye, & Li, 2009).

6.3 CONCLUSION

From the above case description, we can see that in the beginning there was no clear sign of social disturbances to trigger the change of local officials' accountability structure, which was to invite citizens to be participated in the daily policy processes. Hence, it is local government officials' intention to alter the accountability structure. So we discover that there is a possibility for Chinese local government to make policies to encourage citizens to participate. Hangzhou municipal government pioneers the Chinese democratizing efforts for public service provision and policymaking process. For the past more than a decade practicing and improving, it is gradually institutionalized and serves as a role model for other regional government to learn and mimic. Now the "12345 Mayor's Hotline" becomes a regular local government administrative function that all cities and lower level governments provide to their citizens, although the effectiveness and outcome of real practices may vary due to the lack of a supervision system or local officials' support just as the case we illustrate in the introductory chapter.

Moreover, on November 6, 2012 the government of Haikou City—the provincial capital of China's southern insular Hainan Province—officially invited citizens to join in city's board of mayors meeting. In February 2013, Sichuan provincial government announced that all local level governments in the province should invite local residents to participate government policy process. The official announcement said: for city and county level governments, each year there should be more than five citizen participation cases; while in provincial level offices and agencies, there should be more than 2-3 cases each year. One of the CCP's leading newspapers Guangming Daily published an article on August 10, 2013 echoing Sichuan's official action and setting a supportive tone for such political and administrative change.

Also in this case, we find an interesting discrepancy among scholars who study the Hangzhou case on their observations of the function and involvement of local NGOs. Two researchers from China Development and Research Fund, a high level NGO style research fund associated with the State Council's Development Research Center, published their study indicating that local NGOs play certain role in promoting policy change (S. Zhao & Zhao, 2010). They use Hangzhou Education Promotion Association and the Hangzhou Trade Union as examples to show their efforts in the policy process. However, concluded in the Hangzhou Party School study group's research, there is minimal involvement of social associations and interest groups. In the final suggestion section, the study group suggests:

> "attracting industrial and professional association and social organizations to participate in the public meeting. Because these associations and organizations are familiar with the industry, profession, and social class; and they can also represent the common interests of their group, so that they can be privileged and influential. In order to make sure that the government officials can hear more professional opinions and suggestions and to help officials to receive more comprehensive information, the government should consider inviting relevant representatives from professional associations and social groups to express their ideas" (An et al., 2009, p. 14).

From a more comprehensive review of the literature, we can safely draw the conclusion that NGOs do not play a role in this case. It is a purely government-driven and individual citizens involved process. It is not clear whether it is intentional for Hangzhou government top officials to exclude social groups in the policy process, but it is clear that the NGOs' involvement would make the "Open Policy Process" more effective as suggested by the Party School's study group. But do NGOs involve in any type of government innovation case? The answer is positive and we shall turn to it in the following chapter.

7.0 CHAPTER SEVEN: PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INNOVATION II -- FRIENDSHIP RELATIONS BETWEEN LOCAL COMMUNITY AND NGOS

Civil society as the third sector, apart from the public and private, receives great interests by scholars and practitioners in recent decades (Edwards, 2009). Although China is considered to be an authoritarian state, the development of civic organizations can also be dated back to as early as the end of the Cultural Revolution (M. Wang, 2008). In fact, Karla Simon (2013) pushes the date of the existence of Chinese civil laws and charity form of civil society organizations back to the early empirical dynastic age about two thousand years ago.

Like all the political phenomena and theories discussed in earlier chapters, researchers about Chinese civil society also diverge into two directions: optimistic about the NGO/CSO's function and effectiveness in Chinese politics and pessimistic about that (J. Yu & Guo, 2012). Regardless of where the development direction is, Chinese government has a strong intention and real action to control all CSOs in the country through comprehensive registration and supervision systems (Simon, 2013; M. Wang, 2008). At the local level there are interesting interactions between the government offices and various forms of CSOs in both the policymaking and, mostly, policy implementing stages (Teets, 2011, 2013; J. Yu & Zhou, 2013). Researchers, both in and out of China, who study grassroots level CSOs, reach a large degree of consensus on the existence of certain level local participation, voluntary or not (X. Chen, 2009; Teets, 2013; J. Yu & Guo, 2012; Zhou, 2010).

However, Chinese scholars diverge with their Western counterparts on whether there are accountability structural changes at that level. Teets (2011) after field research in Shanghai NGO-based migrant schools concludes that Chinese style contracting out social welfare services to NGOs "obscures accountability and transparency of government services, creating an imperative for the modernization of the Chinese regulatory system" (p.82). She further creates a term "consultative authoritarian" to vividly illustrate the relationship between Chinese local government and grassroots NGOs, as Chinese government gradually relying more on NGOs to deliver services, but enhancing its control for the sake of political and social stability. However, these are not the problems in Chinese scholars' eyes. Zhou (2010) also concludes, basing on Shanghai Changshou Street Community NGO Service Center Case that we will further elaborate in the following section, that "local NGOs all consider that their benefits received from the NGO Service Center basically come from local government; and to some extend this can improve the authority and recognition of local government to local NGOs and community residents. This is not necessarily a bad thing" (p.5).

The conflict of views represents different angles and positions each party stands, as well as different definitions of key concepts. Hence, with clearly defined concept of accountability in this study, it is important for us to reexamine whether there are changes after NGOs begin replacing government to provide welfare services to local residents. In the next section, we choose three cases about interactions between NGOs and local governments from the winner cases of the CLGIA. The purpose of selecting these cases is to answer the questions of (1) whether Chinese street level government reform and policy to include service providing NGOs changes the accountability structure from upward vertical to downward and more horizontal style, and (2) who supervise these NGOs for their performance and accountability during the service

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providing process. These are a question constantly asked by researchers studying civil societies in the West democracies (Considine, 2002).

7.1 CASE ONE: SHANGHAI CHANGSHOU STREET COMMUNITY NGOS SERVICE CENTER

Changshou Road is a busy street in northwest Shanghai's Putuo District. Changshou Street (local government) covers an area of 3.98 square kilometers. In the late 1990s, economic reform brought huge social change to this place that hosted many bankrupted SOEs. Hence, laid-off SOE workers needed help, such as technical and professional training for reemployment, to make a living. Besides, among the approximately 100,000 residents in the Street with permanent residency (*Hukou*), one-fifth are retired workers and senior citizens. Social welfare services for the elderly—senior homes, rehabilitation centers, or medical services—were in large demand. Facing all these problems, local government officials had two choices: increasing the size of their local government to take care of all the troubles or outsourcing community services to CSOs.

In 2002, the metropolitan government publicly announced that local government should give way to social forces in terms of social resource allocation. The former Mayor Liangyu Chen declared in a report that government should play a role of supervisor or referee, instead of service provider. Besides political support, Shanghai government was also pushing a social campaign called "social groups enter into communities," which encouraged CSOs to provide social welfare related services to local residents. Hence, Changshou Street officials organized

over 30 CSOs[56] and prepared handouts and information boards to meet local citizens during a holiday break. In the public meeting event, the participating organizations formed a "joint committee" and decided to meet regularly to serve the local people.

With such a political-friendly environment and social preparedness of the joint committee, in August 2008 Changshou Street formally decided to create the first "NGOs Service Center" (hereinafter the Center). According to the Center's founding director Mr. Kening Miu, "the Center comes from the needs of community and it is created from bottom-up" (Meng, 2009). But Zhou (2010) describes that "the Center's office space, major staff's salaries, and daily operational expenses are all covered by the Street government. Even the Director Miu himself was selected and appointed by the Street initially" (p.7). Moreover, although this Center is registered as an NGO, the Center performs only the duties ordered by the Street government and becomes an extension of street-level government to connect, sponsor, and supervise various NGOs and even for-profit local social service providers.

Based on the Center's official introduction, charter, and missions, we know the functions of it are:

(1)   To help register small local NGOs.

Since 1989 and after the Student Movement in Beijing, Chinese central government began to tighten the control of CSOs and required all such organizations to register to the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Although the political control had loosened after the early 1990s, when

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[56] Actually, according to Meng Qian's report Hu (1998); Shen (2008), some of the participating organizations were not not-for-profit organizations, such as "Shenxin Senior Homes", which was created by a laid-off factory worker as a for-profit private service providing company.

China pushed further for economic development, the late 1990s' Falun Gong[57] problem once again pushed the central government to strengthen the rules toward CSOs (Howell, 2012). In October 1998, the Ministry of Civil Affairs revised the "Regulations Concerning the Registration and Supervision of Social Organizations" forcing all NGOs to re-register with government and clarifying the limitations and restrictions of NGOs practice Zhou (2010). Therefore, the process and cost for very small NGOs to register become huge, if not unaffordable. However, these small NGOs and other private businesses offering social welfare related business (such as the Shenxin Senior Homes mentioned earlier) are still evolving and practicing. Hence, the Center creates a "Citizens' Activities and Organizations Information Management System" and connects the system to the municipal level Social Organization Management Bureau (SOMB)—official agency to control and regulate local NGOs. Through this system, the Center and local SOMB can effectively supervise the so-called "three-unclear"—unclear participants, unclear activities, and unclear locations—social activities (Zhou, 2010).

(2)   The Center also connects to the registered CSOs helping local SOMB to manage.

Prior to the creation of the Center, the SOMB can barely effectively administer the grassroots registered CSOs, because it is merely the registration office and the related government agencies lack interest to supervise, while the street-level government does not have authority to control. As the government medium agency with public fund to support NGOs, the Center quickly becomes a hub to attract various NGOs to interact.

From the structure and functions of the Center, it is easy to admit that it is not a citizen initiated civil society organization at all. It can only be termed as a Governmental Non-profit

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[57] Falungong was a religious based organization and a fundamentalist sect, which was banned in 1999 after its political action against Chinese government.

Organizations or GONGO. Many Chinese scholars and journalists also notice that the Center also serves a function of assisting local NGOs to establish the organizations' Communist Party Committee. The Director Miu serves as the Chairperson of the Center's Party Committee. Therefore, through the Center the Party also extends its hands to the local NGOs. The creation of the Center in Changshou Street quickly attracts wide attention and receives recognition by the Shanghai municipal government. Few months after its inception, Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs decided to promote the Center as a role model for all street level governments. Till 2010, altogether 59 NGOs Service Centers were created in the city.

7.2 CASE TWO: SELF-ELECTION BASED BEIJING LUGU COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE CONVENTION

Beijing, as the capital of the country, encountered massive expansion and enormous economic development at the turn of the new millennium. Babaoshan Street in Shijingshan District in Beijing also saw a large increase in population, both local permanent residents with Hukou and migrant residents. Therefore, the district government decided to split the Babaoshan Street into two local governments. On April 7, 2003, the new Lugu Community was formally created with about 7 square kilometers in size, around 40,000 households, and a population of approximately 80,000 including 20,000 migrant residents. Of course, this Community is nothing close to the familiar definition of community with much smaller geographical size and population. It is a new form of street-level government, which is created for the purposes of streamlining local government as well as providing better services.

The old street level government, as we explained earlier, is the grassroots level government with a structure of full functioning offices. The new Lugu Community is created in a totally different format. The administrative structure is consisted of three parts: Community Party Work Committee (CPWC), Community Administrative Affairs Center (CAAC), and Community Representative Convention (CRC). The CPWC, as the local level Party Committee extension, takes the leadership position in administration. It supervises all local public affairs and the other two branches. The CAAC is the administrative branch, which is responsible for public related daily affairs. Nevertheless, the CRC is a rather new and innovative local branch, which is defined as publicly elected community self-management agency.

Although the grassroots level democracy of direct election for village heads and even district directors occurred in decades earlier (O'Brien, 2001; O'Brien & Li, 1999b), there is limited influence for significant institutional and political change (Fewsmith, 2013). Although the purpose of creating the public election based CRC is not to seek any political democratization, it eventually becomes institutionalized. According to local news reports, the number of permanent public servants in Lugu Community is reduced to 39, compared to the similar street level government of 90. There are only 6 bureau level officials, almost 40% less than other local street governments (B. Zhang, 2006).

Prior to the first CRC, which was held on October 12, 2003, local residents directly elected 160 community representatives. Together with 40 representatives of all levels of People's Congress and 33 representatives from large enterprises in the community, there were altogether 233 representatives participated in the first CRC. Among the 233 representatives, there were 71.2% Communist Party members, 4.5% from ethnic minority groups, 42.5% female representatives, 1 representative for disabled people, and 2 for migrant residents (B. Zhang, 2007). It seems that 2

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representatives for over 20000 migrant residents are less representative. But these are only for the new migrants. According to the regulation, anyone who lives longer than 1 year in the community is eligible for representative nomination; and who lives longer than 3 years can compete for the position in the Standing Committee for the CRC.

In the first CRC session, the 233 representatives elected 37 CRC Standing Committee members. Among them, 1 director and 4 associate directors were elected, and 6 professional work teams were established, which were responsible for community service and social welfare, security and mediation, community health service and family planning, community cultural, education, and sports, community environment and property management, and community construction and development. The plenary convention of all 233 members was held once every year and the Standing Committee meeting was scheduled to meet every three months. The CRC Charter, also passed in the first session, illustrates that the community representatives supervise local government agencies' work, examine and evaluate the practice and results of CRC agenda and resolution, and offer criticisms and suggestions to the CRC Standing Committee. The charter also says the CRC represents the community to undertake the social affairs that local government no longer governs.

Initially, local residents are suspicious about the practicability and effectiveness of such a CRC and consider it as another faked "face project"—local government utilizes to please their political bosses for promotions. However, after the CRC representatives solve several local issues, citizens begin to see its benefits. In the summer of 2003, the CAAC decided to construct several public projects aiming to serve the local interests and make local residents living more conveniently. One of the projects was to reconstruct 6 neighborhood committees, clean trash dump sites, and create more public space for citizens' activity rooms. The CAAC officials then invited

designers, mediated with local property management companies, and completed all required administrative approval from district government. However, when they publicized the project and demonstrated the designed sketch to the public, the response from local residents really shocked them.

Only after three days, the CAAC received a dozen complaint letters. Some of them demanded for green grass in the space, while others thought that it was a good idea to have an activity room. They quarreled so fiercely that they even warned to visit the BLV in the district government. The CAAC's good intention of serving the public could turn into a social disaster! Facing this situation, CAAC officers had to visit all of the 260 households to ask for their views and opinions. However, since the opinions were so dispersed, it seemed there was no way for them to reach any consensus. On October 23, 2003, about a fortnight after the first CRC session was held, 23 elected community representatives organized a focused discussion meeting to solve this issue. The residents who were affected by the reconstruction work were all invited to participate. After discussions and mediations with the involvement of CRC representatives, local residents finally reached an agreement: making it a green grass in the next spring.

Seeing the effectiveness of such consultative meetings, the Community offices decided to change the meeting from every 3 months to every month. For the first three years, the CRC meeting and the Standing Committee meeting finalized 51 such community related issues and local residents satisfactory rate reach 99% (B. Zhang, 2006). Besides the consultative function of CRC, in April 2004 Lugu Community also registered a social organization—Lugo Community Voluntary Committee—aiming to provide local public welfare services. Till 2006 there were over 520 registered volunteers in the committee. The major tasks for the committee is to taking care of the seniors and disabled, protecting the environment and public security, helping each other,

stopping uncivilized activities, maintaining the social moral, and preserving the public facilities (B. Zhang, 2006).

Besides the successful side, two researchers after field studies conclude that the streamlining purpose of Lugu Community reform is not quite successful (J. Li & Wang, 2012). There are altogether 368 administrative functions for the street-level government. After the structural reform in Lugo Community, only 28 administrative functions have been sourcing out to the CRC and other social organizations. Even the 28 functions are not entirely handled by the non-governmental means. There are still 18 of them substituted by the government-funded institutes (*Shiye Danwei*[58]). According to J. Li and Wang (2012), "the CAAC still is the *de facto* administrative office to control all the street level public affairs. Its workload and performance evaluation process by the upper level government do not change much. Many of the social functions are merely 'changing from the left hand to the right hand'" (p.33). That is to say the fundamental accountability structure in the Lugu Community does not have a significant change. Moreover, a Lugu Community public servant said that for the past decades although the political administrative positions did not increase, the publicly funded institutes actually increased from a dozen to over 40 employees. Another official said that when the Lugu Community was firstly

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[58] The government-funded institute or Shiye Danwei is a unique state-sponsored entity, which, although formally does not enjoy administrative rankings, is informally and socially considered as the extensions of government agencies. According to the "Rules for Implementation of the Registration and Management Regulation for Institutes," the institutes refer to the organizations that is established by national bureaus or other organizations using the state assets for the purpose of public affairs. The institutes involve in education, scientific research, culture, health, sports, news and publication, radio and TV, social welfare, disaster alleviation, statistics and survey, technical promotion and experiments, infrastructure management, commodities storage, monitor, exploration and extraction, mapping, inspection and appraisal, legal services, resource management services, quality and technical supervision affairs, economic affairs oversight, intellectual property matters, notary and certification, information and advice, personnel exchanges, employment services, logistics services and other related social service organizations. According to the "Principles of the Civil Law of the People's Republic of China," the institutes have legal status. Currently, China has over 1.26 million institutes and over 4000 staff members.

established, the bureau level directors were only 6, but the number raises to 12 in 2012 (J. Li & Wang, 2012).

7.3 CASE THREE: NINGBO HAISHU COMMUNITY'S PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Although Ningbo is not like the provincial level metropolises as Beijing and Shanghai, it is one of the largest and most prosperous cities locating in the eastern Zhejiang Province. Haishu District is the seat for city government and the business and culture center. Haishu District has a geographic area of 38.7 square kilometers and a population over 360,000. It consists of 8 street level offices and 62 communities. One of the highlights of local administrative reform is its direct election of community committee directors. From March 23 to November 29, 2003, 59 out of 62 communities in Haishu District held direct election for their committee director. The total participating votes reached 167,693 accounting for about 88.5% of local permanent residents. The election work also involved over 4,000 volunteers. After the directors were elected, the community committees then began to hire office staff. Hence, a more democratic election and employment system was established in Haishu District.

The democratic political reform raises attention from many scholars in China (see Jia & Huang, 2008; Y. Li & Huang, 2009). Nevertheless, along with the political change, there is also social reform that fundamentally alters the managerial structure in local communities. Two cases of social reform will serve as examples to help understand the uniqueness of Haishu's "participatory governance," as described by (Jia & Huang, 2008).

1. The Shinning Stone Community Action

The Shinning Stone Community Action (SSCA) is a Beijing based NGO, which was initially registered as a consulting company due to its difficulty to get approval from local Civil Affairs Bureau. It is interesting to mention that the Chinese name of Shining Stone (*Canyushi*) is the homophone of Chinese "participatory style". Hence, the purpose of this NGO is to nurture the participatory style community action. The director of the NGO joined in one of China's largest environmental protection NGO the Global Village in 1997, after her early retirement from an SOE.

In April 2004, the Shining Stone offered training courses entitled "Community Participation Ideas and Methods" to about 60 Haishu's street level officials and community committee employees. This training program opened the eyes for local officials about the concept of community participatory governance. From December 22 to 24, 2004, the SSCA invited the California based Wildflowers Institute to jointly offer training workshop of "Social Sustainable Community Leadership Development Training." After this training workshop, Haishu District officials decided to invite the SSCA to participate in their local community reform. On March 29, 2005, the project of "Street and Community Participatory Cooperation and Governance" was formally established. According to Jia and Huang (2008), this is the first project that jointly practiced by the street level government and a CSO in China addressing the issue of community participatory governance.

There are four procedures for the project: training, participation, changing relations, and program evaluation. Starting from street level officials and staff, the SSCA bring new thoughts about participatory community governance to the practitioners, who become the major force to push the social reform. The goal of this project is to promote local residents' participation. Then, the second step is to encourage community members to self-organize, especially to help the target group to express their needs and participate in the policy process. In the old administrative and

policy process, the community committee directors visit street office once each month to report their policy implementation situations. But the participatory governance entirely changes this relationship. According to local government official records, the street level officials pay visits to each community at least once a month. During their visits, the community committee directors reflect the needs from the residents to them. The street level officials either answer the questions in the meeting or provide answers in a certain period of time. In order to make these changes more sustainable, any need-based service project is subject to review and evaluation. The street level government, community committee, and the SSCA form a three-party team to examine the outcome of the service provided.

2. Xingguang (Star Light) Senior Nursing Association

Ningbo Xinguang Senior Nursing Association (XSNA) was registered on June 16, 2003. Right after its inception, the association hosted the "Ten Best Individuals to Help the Senior" award. On October 8, 2003, Ningbo Xinguang College (Haishu Senior's College) was built by the association, which became the first college for the elderly in Haishu District. On October 30, 2003, the association filed a report to local government to raise the issue of socialized home-based senior services. On February 28, 2004, the association-sponsored Haishu Aging Problem Research Center was created and it soon became the major think-tank for local government to address aging society problem.

After all these preparation, on March 27, 2004, the XSNA formally became the government funded NGO to provide service for the "home-based senior services" project. This project is so successful that it attracts wide attention from the media, scholars, and various levels of government. According to the media report, XSNA is an NGO with 3,462 registered members. Currently, it serves over 600 seniors, who are 80 years old, living alone, and in extreme poverty.

The XSNA hires workers to go to the seniors' homes for service and walk them to the day care center for other social activities. This is a combination of family and social senior care. Haishu District government offers 2,000 yuan (approximately US$330) a year per person and spends 1.5 million yuan (approximately US$242,000) to purchase services from XSNA, including 1.2 million yuan purchase for services and 300,000 for daily expenditure for XSNA.

After government transfers fund to XSNA, the XSNA gives the money to the community committee two months in advance. The social workers go to the community committee to pick up their salaries after each month's service. The XSNA is responsible for training and supervision of these social workers. If there is any complaint and dissatisfaction from the elderly, the responsible worker will be penalized by reducing wages for the next month. The elderly normally eat their lunch in the community service center, where the social workers cook. The social workers are mostly the early-retired residents, who are still healthy enough to take good care of the elderly. Besides serving for salaries, the service workers can also choose to "deposit" their working hours into the "Service Workers' Banks," in which they can "withdraw" these hours for free nursing service in the future. Besides government funds, those senior residents who choose to eat at the community center shall pay 200 yuan (US$35) each month for basic food cost.

According to Mr. Yiping Xu, the deputy director of Haishu District, who administers local Bureau of Civil Affairs, the home-based senior nursing service is the key to solve aging social problem, especially in poor developing countries like China. When he was interviewed by the journalist, he showed then a budget comparison: To built a senior's nursing homes, each bed will cost about 50,000 yuan ($8,300); after that the monthly maintenance fee for a bed would be 250 yuan ($50). Take a nursing home with 200 beds as an example. The construction and maintenance fee would be 16 million yuan ($2.8 million) for ten years and that is the amount to take care of 800

senior residents with our home-based nursing services. That is to say, the innovative management method is four times cost-efficient than the traditional nursing home system.

It is also worth mentioning that the XSNA's founding manager is Mr. Dehai Cui, who is a retired Haishu government official. Before he retired, he was the chief of the Bureau of Publicity—this is a high rank Party office. When questioning and linking his official background with the success of the XSNA, he replied that he positioned the association as the bridge between government and the society: all the accomplishments are attributed to local government, while they take all the blames. In Haishu District, the XSNA is the only NGO that receives government fund to provide senior nursing services and there are no competitors at all.

7.4 CONCLUSION

All the above three cases explicitly demonstrate that at the grassroots level government reforms, to invite CSOs—regardless of whether they are government sponsored or not—to provide social services do encourage more local residents' participation to the daily policy issues, especially to the public affairs closely related to their day-to-day life. Citizens not only participate in community public servants' elections, but also choose what kind of service they enjoy. From this point of view, we do find the changes of accountability structure from upward to downward. Like Howell (2012) and Teets (2013), along with many Chinese scholars (see X. Chen, 2009; J. Yu & Li, 2011; Zhou, 2010), suggest Chinese local NGOs, although are still restricted in many areas, do push the process of political and administrative changes in China.

However, Western scholars also see these changes as "dual pressure of capitalism and the state" (Howell, 2012) or even a new model of "consultative authoritarianism," which "promotes

the simultaneous expansion of a fairly autonomous civil society and the development of more sophisticated and indirect tools of state control over this civil society" (Teets, 2013, p. 36). Based on these logics and standing at the point of local government, we would conclude that the social reform is indeed the stone that kills both the bird of poor service to citizens and the bird of social problems and disasters. Inserting a tightly controlled layer of CSOs, such as the NGOs Service Center in Shanghai, CRC in Beijing, and the XSNA in Ningbo, local government actually successfully achieves the outcome of being accountable for both top and bottom.

Although it is easy for the government-sponsored CSOs to be held accountable for local government with simple evaluation of the number of complaints from those social welfare service receivers, there is, unfortunately, no clear indication of any effective ways to hold these CSOs accountable to taxpayers. Most of the successful local service providing CSOs are government-funded, if not government-controlled, and mostly they are monopolies. Without an effective competition to provide social services, we do not know whether those CSOs are turned into profit-driven organizations. Local residents' feedback can only reflect the quality of the service, but whether the service worth the money government pays still remains an accountability question. However, comparing the cost and benefit of such social reform, we agree that to involve CSOs in local service providing is an innovation that pushes government to open its door to local citizen participation.

8.0 STATE AND SOCIETY RELATIONS – CHANGING PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PATTERNS?

Da Yu or *Yu the Great*, who dated back to approximately 2200-2100 BC, was the founding emperor to establish China's first dynasty "*Xia*" (2100-1600 BC), according to "*Shiji*" or the *Records of Grand Historian*, written by Sima Qian in around 100 BC. *Da Yu* was famous for his heroic action to effectively manage the enormous Yellow River floods in North China. Unlike his father, who built dams and dikes trying to stop floods but eventually failed after nine-year efforts, *Da Yu* started to control water by creating cannels and dredging riverbeds to successfully channel water into wide areas of farmland, which also made the Yellow River region become one of the cradles for Chinese ancient civilization.

The story of the "Great Yu's Control of the Waters" has been passed down throughout Chinese history and the relationship between water and the way people treat it is frequently utilized to illustrate the interactions of rulers and the ruled. In *Xunzi*, a Confucian philosophical masterpiece written by Xunzi (313-238 BC), there is a vivid analogy about such relations, which was used by Wei Zheng (580-643 AD), one of the greatest Chancellors in China's imperial history, to warn the Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty. Wei said that the commons are like the water, while the emperor and the kingdom are boats sailing in the water. The water can sustain the boats and keep it rowing, while it can also overturn the boats and engulf them.

Such analogy is also seen in the Western literature in democratic studies. In Halperin, Siegle, and Weinstein (2009) work of *The Democratic Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace* quotes A Yankee Businessman in New Hampshire:

> Dictatorship is like a big proud ship—steaming away across the ocean with a great hulk and powerful engines driving it. It's going fast and strong and looks like nothing could stop it. What happens? Your fine ship strikes something—under the surface. Maybe it's a mine or a reef, maybe it's a torpedo or an iceberg. And your wonderful ship sinks! Now take democracy. It's like riding on a raft, a rickety raft that was put together in a hurry. We get tossed about on the waves, it's bad going, and our feet are always wet. But that raft doesn't sink...It's the raft that will get to the shore at last.

Whether and how much do Chinese citizens participate in various policy agendas is exactly like the ability that Chinese government can manage the flooding waters. It may seem like a calm and tranquil river smoothly sailing the boat—as expected in the formal participation process in Chinese local government; but if anything goes against the commons interests, the overturn cases will happen—see the numerous mass disturbance cases in the recent decades and the largest one like the Tiananmen Student Movement in 1989. However, we do see Chinese local government began to gradually reform and innovate to invite more participation from local residents to solve social and economic issues. So the question comes to: how far can the Chinese big proud ship go?

Through all the cases and analyses in previous chapters, we see that Chinese local citizens participate in the policy process through various different means. Citizens can insert power either through social networks or professional societies, or through violent collective actions. Moreover, local government also changes, actively or passively, to open more channels for local participation. With more citizen participation, we also see the changes of accountability directions: local government officials respond more to their residents' demands, willingly or not. If we place the eight cases examined in this study into the Changes of Independent Variables

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Table in Chapter 1, we would generate the following new Table (see Table 8). Besides formal participation process, we see growing cases in citizen-driven collective actions and government-driven innovation, both of which grant more opportunities for citizens to get involved in social and economic policies in relation to their daily livelihood.

Table 8. Changes of Independent Variables

		Interest Groups/Grassroots Citizens	
		Limited Involvement	*Full Involvement*
Accountability Mechanism	*To the Top*	(I) Conventional and formal Participation *City X Case*	(II) Citizen-Driven Mass Disturbances *Chongqing Dingzihu Case, Xiamen PX Case, and City Z BLV Case*
	To the Bottom	(III) Government-Driven Innovation *Hangzhou Case, Shanghai Case, Beijing Case, and Ningbo Case*	(IV) Democratic Policy Process

Although Chinese government gradually makes progress in opening its policy agenda to wilder public scrutiny, there are no Western style democratic means of participation and involvement in key economic development and/or political policies. Although there are occasional cases regarding government reform in the budgetary and financial sectors, those reforms do not reach any institutional influence and not receive wide political support from upper level government (Fewsmith, 2013). Moreover, although community residents may have a control over what kind of community service or senior day care assistance they receive, they still keep indifferent to select their local government officials. So are we stuck in the deadlock of political authoritarianism? How to effectively solve political and social problems of accountability and participation? Can we achieve the goal of more participation and hold local government officials accountable to their citizens? Before we address all these questions, we

should, first of all, understand the contemporary political environment of the current Chinese state and society relations. At the central government point of view, the way to connect the society is, unfortunately, not through more citizen participation, but via the so-called "social management."

8.1 THE REFORM OF SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

On February 21, 2004, Chinese former Premier Wen Jiabao said in a meeting that "under the circumstance of socialist market economy, the major functions of government lie in four aspects: adjusting the economy, supervising the market, managing the society, and providing public service." He further elaborated that:

> "social management is to, through making social policies and regulations, manage and regulate social organizations and social affairs, to resolve social conflicts, to adjust income distribution, and to maintain social justice, order, and stability. Moreover, it is to strengthen social law and order by taking comprehensive measures, to protect the public safety and security of assets, and to preserve and manage ecological environment. In order to strengthen social management, we must speed up the establishment of emergency response mechanisms and improve the government's ability to deal with public crises" (Wen, 2004)

Not long after this speech, in November that year, the concept of "social management" was formally written into government report and then was included in the "Twelfth Five-year Plan" in 2011 to become a national development policy.

The term "social management" may sound awkward to the Western scholars, since the society is not in the scope for management. However, several scholars in the recent decade associate this term with "social administration" that several British sociologists have mentioned

in their studies (Walker, 1981). However, the Wen's definition is much more broader than Walker's explanation of social administration, which "has continued to concentrate its attention on government action through the five social services: health, education, social security, housing and personal social services" (Walker, 1981, p. 226). It seems that this concept or "discipline"—as defined by Walker—does not attract too much scholarly attention, at least in the political and policy area, because the neoliberal political scientists and neoclassical economists are the mainstream academicians in these disciplines, who believe in minimal government involvement in economic and social affairs.

It is, indeed, interesting to discover that the Chinese academic writings about "social management" can be easily found in as early as the 1980s, which are heavily influenced by the theory of practice of the former Soviet Union and the East European Communist countries (Deng, 1982; Du, 1987; Qiu, 1987; X. Wang, 1989; Xu, 1987; Z. Yu, 1983). During this period of time, Chinese scholars translated classic Marxist writings and quoted the Eastern European economic reform experiences to serve the purpose of creating new theoretical base for political adjustment to fit for the market style economic reform (S. Huang, 1984; Jiaming Yan, 1987).

Certainly, when Wen Jiabao raised this concept again in 2004, scholars quickly match it with more detailed content. Z. Chen (2005b) concludes in his series of studies in social management that the goal of social management is to "realize fully and comprehensively develop public affairs in a four-dimension structure 'ecological environment—government—social media groups—enterprises" (p. 11). To achieve this goal, he firstly lists six social problems: social safety and law and order, labor and employment, public security, social justice, underrepresented vulnerable groups, and population and environment (Z. Chen, 2005a). Then, he offers a "new social management structure" as a cooperative force of "leading by the Party Committee,

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managing by the government, coordinating the society, and participating by the citizens" (Z. Chen, 2005c, p. 31). Consequently, he proposes five mechanisms for the social management theory: (1) establishing social stability maintenance mechanism to protect public law and order, (2) creating social security mechanism to build social stability "safety net", (3) structuring social conflicts resolution mechanism to preserve a "peaceful" society, (4) facilitating an effective public assistance mechanism to protect the legal rights of vulnerable groups, and (5) mapping a social operating status supervision and warning mechanism to form a "preventative" government (Z. Chen, 2005c).

Being one of the major think tanks for the Communist Party's Central Committee, the CCCPE has done numerous studies in the field of social management. In 2009, the center published an edited book entitled *The Reform Roadmap for China's Social Management System*, which became one of the most comprehensive studies in this topic (He, 2009). The major contribution of this book is its systematically structured and detailed reform schemes covering ten social policy areas. The first area is a system reform to coordinate economic interest and to balance income gaps. In the roadmap, they provide four strategies to address this issue: (1) adjusting the higher income group, increasing the number of middle-class group, and raising income for the poor through reform of tax policies, social welfare policies and reporting salary rates of public officials and servants for public scrutiny; (2) improving the system of People's Congress and making them work for grassroots citizens, opening more channels to connect government with people, improving the function and system of visits and letters to offer a window for citizens to express themselves, and encouraging news media and the internet to be public forums for communication; (3) highlighting the status of the ruling Communist Party to surpass interests from government bureaus and powerful interest groups and to integrate different

interests; and (4) offering a communication and consultation platform for balancing interests from various social and political groups.

The second area is the reform of social security. In this section the experts from CCCPE urge government to promulgate social security related laws and to take more aggressive actions to protect social rights of rural migrant workers as well as farmers. They suggest promoting the "farmland exchange for social security" policy in rural areas. Farmers whose land is requisitioned by local government should enjoy the benefit of government subsidies for their social security. The plan also encourages banks and financial institutions to establish a long-term "house exchange for pensions" contract with senior citizens who have personal housing but no income. The third area is the reform of vulnerable groups protection system. In this area they suggest utilizing social forces and NGOs to assist providing social welfare services to the disabled, senior, female, youth, unemployed, rural migrant, and landless famers.

The fourth area touches upon the floating population in urban regions. As indicated in the plan, the goal of floating population management is to establish a joint floating population service and management system that combines household registration management, temporary living permit management, and ID card management. In this section, experts provide specific household registration policy linking to social benefits, especially to rural migrants and famers. The fifth area focuses on the reform of social organization management system, which is a management blueprint for CSOs or NGOs. Their plan says the goal of this reform is to complete the legal system, regulate management, optimize services, protect citizens' human rights on forming organization, promote civil organizations, strengthen the cooperation between the government and the civil organizations, form united force of social management and social services.

The sixth area is the reform of grassroots level social management system and its target is to establish a new model of community citizen management that enables the involvement of both government and society with healthy interaction. They suggest to change the old local administration style to the new community centered participatory interactions. The seventh area is the reform of social service system. The goals of this reform are to create a participatory basic public service system that leads by the government and is participated by the enterprises and social organizations and, in the meantime, to promote marketization, socialization, decentralization, and professionalization of social public service in order to maintain the living and development needs of people in the society.

The eighth area is the reform of social works system. This area touches upon the social welfare provision related public works. The experts suggest improving the policy and regulation systems, organizational and institutional systems, personnel system with professional and voluntary workers, and resourceful financial supporting system; and making social works more professional, occupational, and societal. The last two areas are reforms of social emergency management system and social and public safety system. For the emergency management reform, the target is to combine government leadership and social participation and to create a social emergency management system that has complete legal basis and effective and transparent operating mechanism. For the public safety system reform, the goal is create a comprehensive social security network through uniting social forces and professionalizing police teams (He, 2009).

Table 9. Ten Areas of Social Management Reform

Reform Area	Leading Actor	Participating Actors	Practical Reform Strategy
Economic and Income Gaps	Ruling Communist Party and government	People's Congress, news media and internet, powerful interest groups	Reform tax policies and social welfare system, enhance visits and letters offices, and establish consultation platform
Social Security	Government	Rural migrant workers	"Farmland exchange for social

		and farmers, banks and financial institutions, senior citizens	security" policy, "house exchange for pensions" contract
Vulnerable Groups Protection	Self-formed groups from the vulnerable people	Social forces and NGOs	Create bottom-up style self-formed organization to cooperate with other social forces
Floating population	Government		Create floating population service and management system, reform household registration policy
Social Organization Management	Government	CSOs or NGOs	Legalize and enhance cooperation, form united force of management
Grassroots Social Management	Government	Society and local community	Create a management system, and encourage participatory interaction
Social Service	Government	Enterprises and Social Organizations	Establish a participatory public service system
Social Works	Government	Professional and voluntary workers	Professionalize and legalize social work
Emergency Management	Government	Social participation	Create social emergency management network
Public Safety	Government	Police team	Create a comprehensive social security network

The above illustration of ten reform areas explicitly stresses the importance of government leadership with social forces' participation. The state is still the driving forces of all the reforms. From Table 9, we see this social management reform system is actually intended to start a comprehensive policy change and political change aiming to address societal related problems. Yet the definition and boundary are also blurry, given the fact that the ten areas cover economic issues, such as income gap; public management topics, as emergency management; and security issues, as public safety.

8.2 STILL IN THE STATE CORPORATISM STAGE

With a closer review to the so-called "social management" reform, we can identify that the ten areas are all public policy and management related issues. The purpose and function of government are exactly to provide guidance and to maintain justice to those social services. Hence, the "innovation" of such a great social and political jargon is no more than "placing the

old wine in a new bottle." To evaluate the comprehensive reform system with a Western lens, one could easily draw a conclusion that a real social reform, wither it is in the NPM style, or the Reinventing Government fashion, or even the New Public Service movement, all requires a retreat of government from social service provision, in exchange for efficiency and effectiveness.

However, inside the Chinese system, there is simply no way for government to give up its control or management to the society. The better the delicate design, the more tight control the Chinese government intends to have. Therefore, the state corporatism is still the most pertinent political theory to explain Chinese political status quo. With the identification of this political framework, we return back to our themes of accountability and citizen participation in local policy process. In order for local government to be more responsive to citizens and to encourage more participation in all policy areas, we need to discover a path to move from either conventional and formal participation, or citizen-driven mass disturbances, or even the government-driven innovation to the direction of democratic policy process, if preferably, and for the sake of constructiveness, not affect the current authoritarian political structure. That is to say to create more powerful social organizations to represent citizens to compete with local government for more resources.

8.3 FROM SOCIAL MANAGEMENT TO GOVERNANCE

According to the governance theory, government should retreat from providing services or trying to control or manage everything to a function of steering by making policies and regulations and protecting legal and procedural justice. Therefore, if Chinese politicians intend to reform the state corporatism to governance, what they urgently need is not technical or managerial roadmap,

but a change of political culture. This change is to shift from the culturally bounded hierarchical and vertical political tradition to a horizontal and participatory political culture. This political change is crucial for Chinese government, because gradually Chinese citizens have growing willingness and eagerness to participate in the public policies and affairs that, at least, are closely related to their economic and social livelihood. Hence, if there is no formal and horizontal easy access for them to get in, they will just break in through "informal" or collective resistant means, as recent history clearly indicates. If Chinese government tries to address this issue through "control" or "management" methods, the results would be, most likely, the same as the failure case of Yu the Great's father, who only knew to way to build dams and dikes to block waters. On the contrary, successful leaders should choose management path of Yu the Great by creating cannels and dredging ditches to channel floods and turning them into useful irrigating sources.

Actually, we do observe these cultural changes in recent decades as more and more government innovation cases emerge and evolve in all levels of government with intentions to solve social crises. However, the central government should make efforts to institutionalize such innovative political and managerial changes, instead of rowing or even serving the entire society all by itself.

9.0 CONCLUSION: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTICIPATION – WHERE DOES CHINESE LOCAL GOVERNMENT GO?

Throughout the study, we see different forms of citizen participation and changing of accountability structure at Chinese local level. Although we see democratic-style political innovations pushing the local government to be more responsible to their citizens, the state and local government still try hard to manage the entire society. However, for such a huge country – especially in terms of population, can the dynamic Chinese society be easily "managed?" Obviously, this question is so big that it deserves another book-long research. But to conclude this study, we want to highlight several future research directions that might lead to the next step study on the issue of participation and accountability.

First of all, what does accountability really mean in the authoritarian China and why this is important to the Chinese political development? In this study, we focus primarily on the interaction between the citizen participation and accountability, which is an important aspect of the concept of accountability in the Chinese context. But it is never the whole picture. Although participation is a way to switch the existing government accountability structure, Chinese government needs to have a more stringently designed rules and regulations to ensure the downward accountability structure.

Jun J. Ma (2010) identifies three paths toward the establishment of politically accountable countries after a thorough survey on the history of development of European and American

election and public accounting systems. He states that in the A path, a country creates the modern political election and public accounting systems almost simultaneously and develops the two systems jointly; in the B path, a country begins with a democratic election system and, then, moves to the establishment of a more transparent and unified public accounting system; and in the C path, prior to the creation of a modern election system, a country may start from a comprehensive public accounting system, which might also lead to the similar destination of the previous two paths. He believes that many European countries follows the A path, while the US accountability system comes from the B path. Then, he concludes that China is marching on the C path to making its accounting system more transparent and complete through a systematic reform of Chinese public accounting system.

J. Ma (2010) has rightly pointed out that the Chinese style accountability structure must firstly guarantee a responsible and transparent accounting and budgetary system that all levels of governments cannot manipulate public assets and make closed-door public policies by any means. However, using merely public election and public accounting system to draw roadmaps for accountability system has its theoretical and methodological limitations. Jun J. Ma (2010) bases his theoretical ground on Frederick A Cleveland's work on "Popular Control of Government" published in 1919, in which Cleveland illustrates four essentials of maintaining a "stable, effective democratic government: (1) consciousness of common ideals and purposes to be realized; (2) organization to secure these ends; (3) leadership, an essential to cooperation; (4) popular control to make the organization and leadership consistent with the conscious ideals and purposes of those who are served" (Cleveland, 1919, p. 237). Then, he discusses three budget-making schools, namely the "executive budget idea", the "legislative budgetary idea",

and the "government-by-boards-and-commissions-budget idea", and tries to identify an idea that can achieve a "responsible and visible government" that is popular controlled.

As we can see today, nearly a century after the publication of Cleveland's article, the American legislature – the Senate and Congress – tightly controls the public budgetary appropriating and supervisory power. In fact, the reason that the A and B paths can successfully lead to the end of an accountable government is primarily because of the existence of a powerful and independent legislature that represents the popular control. Using this key variable to evaluate the C path, in which China is still marching on, we have to be skeptical about whether it can lead China to the same end without a strong legislative control. In other words, in order for China to become an accountable government – whatever path it takes, we have to give a careful look at its legislative body – the People's Congress.

Currently, Chinese local People's Congress is no more than a "rubber stamp." Since the early 1990s, Chinese central government encouraged that the position of provincial level People's Congress director was concurrently held by the provincial Party secretary. Since 1993, the number of provinces with the same Party secretary and director of provincial People's Congress had raised from 10 to 24 (out of 31 provincial level government) in 2008. Actually, only the provincial Party secretaries who are also the Party's Central Committee members are not required to hold the position of the director of their respective provincial People's Congress (D. Guo, 2009). Below the provincial level, the Party secretaries of city, county, and lower levels also held the similar joint positions in almost everywhere in China since the 1990s.

This "joint appointment" style largely restricted the independence and functioning of local People's Congress. A director of the Party Organization Department in Bazhong City, Sichuan Province admitted that "in China, the Party and government have almost the same

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policy goal. The government head usually consult with and get approval from the Party secretary before he or she can issue any policy. Since the Party Secretary is the head of the People's Congress, there is less likely for the local representatives in the Congress to say something against the government policy" ("Continue or Give up, Party Secretary Jointly Appointed as Director of People's Congress," 2011, p. 50). In recent years, such "joint appointment" style was questioned by practitioners and scholars (S. Zhang, 2013).. The local People's Congress director's position in many local governments in Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Hubei provinces is no longer jointly held by the Party Secretary. The swinging of the rules for selecting the director's position further indicates a weak position of local People's Congress in the Chinese local politics. Consequently, to reform local People's Congress is probably the first step to guarantee a successful budgetary reform and eventually improve the Chinese accountability mechanism.

The second possible research question is how and to what degree does Chinese accountability change contribute to the literature of accountability concept in the world. Since 2008, Chinese social scientists began to discuss whether China's past thirty-year economic achievement offers a development "China model" to the world both economically and politically. But whether the China's "story of success" offers a pattern of paradigm change toward the developing world of a rather different pattern of development is largely determined by its contribution toward the world economic and political theories. We see shifting accountability patterns from the traditional to the NPM style; and we also see the accountability issues raised by the thriving civil society in the Western democracies. But does Chinese style accountability change lead to a new form of governance or even democracy?

If we believe that the 1980s' public management reform in the Western world aims to pursue the better performance, we can find stunningly wonderful performance – economically

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and politically – throughout the past thirty-five years in China. Many local governments achieve and even surpass the annual national development rate of around 8 percent for a consecutive three decades. However, some scholars warn the emergence of the "Lewis Turning Point," which may lead to the burst of Chinese economic bubbles in the next two decades. Nevertheless, the environmental degradation and public health and safety issues occurred in China in recent years also push the alarm of the conflict between development and environment. Economic growth without considering the cost of a healthy living environment becomes the most serious development hangover, which is the exact outcome of Chinese traditional accountability mechanism described in the first chapter. The several social collective actions against the establishment of PX factories in many different places in China demonstrate the change of accountability structure and also raise the interesting question: whether an authoritarian regime can peacefully reform its political structure without causing huge social disturbances. Moreover, purely pursuing the goal of performance and loosing the control of accounting and accountability procedures may cause long-term environmental and social problems. This may be the second contribution of Chinese experience to the world literature.

The third possible future research direction would be the regional political cultural differences inside China and their impact on political performance. In this study, we see political and managerial innovations from local Chinese government cases prevail in large cities and coastal regions, while governments located in inland and western regions in China tend to have less such reform cases. So does this observation represent a variation of geopolitical culture inside China? If there is, will the forerunners take the lead and push the lagged behind regions to catch up with local reform steps or will politicians need to apply different strategies?

Huning Wang, a prominent Chinese scholar, political advisor for three Chinese central administrators, and high level official in the central Political Bureau, published an article in 1988, talking about the nature of Chinese political culture. He differentiates Chinese political culture as "culturally-bound" as opposed to the Western "institutionally-bound" political culture (H. Wang, 1988). He explains that the ancient Chinese Confucian culture is eminently impact on Chinese political culture, although Chinese political culture has been reshuffled by the infusion of Western political ideas in the Nationalist China and the Communist ideology after the People's Republic. This is one major reason that China has a culturally-bounded political culture, in which the political affairs is closely connected to and entangled with people's daily social, ethnical, and moral life and there is no clear distinction between personal life, social life, as well as political life. According to H. Wang (1988), this is different from the Western institutionally-bounded political culture, where the political sphere is separated from the personal and social life and each has its respective realm of practice.

Unlike many other Chinese political scientists who either consider the Chinese political culture as an inseparable one piece or do not bother to explore the regional differences (Y. Ma, 2002; Wan, 1994; L. Wang, 2009), H. Wang (1988) acknowledges that there is a sub-political culture that touches upon the geographical, economic, ethnical, or even urban-rural regional variations. He also echoes the anthropologist Xiaotong Fei's research about the "earth-bound China" to highlight such a difference (Xiaotong, 1970). In fact, in our study, we find that such a geopolitical cultural differences could likely be one of the most significant contributing factors to the regional political development gaps, which certainly worth some efforts to explore.

Although we mentioned briefly in the previous chapters about the increment and influence of some successful innovative experiences, Fewsmith (2013) questions and is

suspicious about the Chinese political environment to facilitate institutionalization of such success. So are the Chinese successful political changes incremental or can they be institutionalized? The can be the fourth unsolved puzzle that deserves academic attention. Can we expect a universal political and cultural change toward the direction of the success? Or do we have to wait for a larger scale social disturbance to force Chinese government move into the fourth quadrant of the democratic policy process?

Xing Ni's research on corruption and the duration of incumbency of local Party secretaries shows that there is a significant positive correlation between the two variables (Ni & Chen, 2013). According to Ni and Chen (2013), the longer the Party secretaries lead local governments, the more opportunities for them to seek rent and corrupt, since there is a reducing rate of corruption cost. However, the City of Hangzhou, the case we discussed in Chapter Four, is indeed an outlier in Ni's study, according to the *Honesty Outlook Magazine* (Shu, December 02, 2013). Hangzhou's Party Secretary Guoping Wang took his position in 2000 and retired in 2010, exactly matching the period in our case analysis. Based on Ni's data, Hangzhou's average number of corruption cases reported (weighted against the population in the city) ranks No. 14 among all 15 vice-provincial level cities, which makes it one of the cleanest city government[59].

Frankly, it is hard for Chinese local political innovation to institutionalize, since higher local government officials rotate frequently and there is no mechanism to protect sustainable political development. But the Hangzhou success is noticed by several other places in China and we do see a gradual change toward the incremental direction.

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[59] Actually, the data reported by Ni is still questionable and skeptical, since he utilizes the publicly reported corruption charges in various government statistics yearbooks. The reliability of the data, hence, closely connects to the accuracy of the report filed by city government itself.

CLARIFICATIONS OF METHODOLOGIES

1. Case Study in Chapter III

Since this is a single case study, the unstructured interview and participant observation are more appropriate to fulfill the research goals. Bernard (2012) defined three types of participant observations: "(1) complete participant, (2) participant observer, and (3) complete observer" (p.347). In my case, the first—complete participant—will be an ideal way to conduct research and collect data, because this will allow the researcher to be an insider and there should be no barriers for local public employees and officials to behave normally and respond to questions frankly. But to be a civil servant in Chinese local government nowadays is not an easy job at all. According to the new *Civil Servants Organic Law,* only the provincial government possesses the legal authority to hold examinations and to recruit public employees. Without a lengthy process and time, there is no way I can find a formal position in the local government, despite the fact that most local governments are reducing their sizes and practicing stringent recruitment policies.

The third role as a complete observer is the least effective method to use in conducting my research. If the researcher acts as an observer, the difference effect will prevail, regardless of the possibility to be such an outside observer in a Chinese local government. Consequently, the participant observer is the most applicable role for a researcher to conduct research in the local government. However, scholars also raise questions on whether to be a covert participant or an

overt one when observing. Many social scientists dismiss the validity of covert participation because (1) the deceptive activity in research will not obtain more insightful interview data on the research topic; (2) this research methodology is ethically questionable for its interference of informants' privacy; and (3) it is also analytically problematic due to the role the researcher plays as a real intruder that would lead to the issue of reliability (Burgess, 2002; Cassell, 1982; Lauder, 2003; Richardson, 1991).

Many other scholars argue the value of covert participant observation methodology. Bernard (2012) quotes (Burgess, 2002; Cassell, 1982; Lauder, 2003; Richardson, 1991) arguments that: "overt and covert research produces different types of data and that covert participant observation is not a limitation, but an asset in collecting information regarding 'attitudes and beliefs of ordinary members, and about the everyday world of fringe politics'" (p.187). Lauder's conclusion of the function and uniqueness of the covert participant observation method is precisely pertinent for my research. He states:

> "When a study involves research on extreme political and religious groups or criminal organisations on the margins of society, the researcher may have no choice but to adopt a covert role in order to gain access to insider information; a covert role may be methodologically necessary in order to overcome the unwillingness of the community to allow outsiders access or a glimpse at the inner workings of the group" (Lauder, 2003, p. 194).

In my case, I use both covert participant observation and unstructured interview methods. For covert participant observation, I have worked in a local Chinese government as an intern to observe the local policy process and to collect relevant data for my analysis. Nevertheless, I have conducted informal and unstructured interviews with officials, public employees, and local citizens to receive their feedback on my research questions. At the time I was a participant observer, the newly established BIIT had 16 branch offices with a total of about 60 public

employees. I was working in the Bureau Office, where important policies related to the bureau all went through this office before distributing to all other branches. There were altogether five employees in this office. So during the observation process, I interviewed all of these five persons. Besides, I also conducted formal and informal interview to the bureau's director and three associate directors. Their interview contents are reflected in the case description and analysis in this chapter. Besides public employees, I also interviewed the X Industry Association's General Secretary, who also offered inside information regarding the entire policy process. The interview questions were unstructured and open-ended to leave enough space for their comments and opinions.

2. Cases Study in Chapter IV

Two cases and 193 sub-cases are analyzed in this chapter. Since these cases or social disturbance incidences were happened long before this research was conducted, most of the information utilized in this chapter is from reputable media reports both in and out of China, which include, but are not limit to, Hong Kong based Phoenix New Media Limited news website www.ifeng.com, China's Official People's Daily, Guangzhou based Nanfang Baoye Media Group Corporation, English newspaper China Daily, and non-Chinese media New York Times and Financial Times. The 193 sub-cases of Z city's BLV reports were collected directly from the office's archives. The utilization of these documents was permitted only for academic purposes and in confidential condition.

3. Hangzhou Case in Chapter V

The highlight of this case study, besides numerous reports and official documents listed in the CLGIA archives in CCCPE, is that I also collected almost all available peer-reviewed Chinese journal articles to conduct meta-analysis on this particular case. The analysis results are provided in the chapter.

Most of the scholarly works about this case were done by the professors in the College of Public Administration at Zhejiang University – the best public administration research and teaching program in the region, where I worked as a visiting researcher from 2008 to 2009. For example, the article "Citizen Participation and the Settlement of the Problems in People's Livelihood: A Case Study of Hangzhou" is published in *Zhejiang Social Science* by Professor Xunda Yu, who was the Associate Dean of this college and the Dean of Social Science Academy at Zhejiang University. *Zhejiang Social Science* is one of the most frequently cited Chinese social science academic journals and one of the key journals listed in the Chinese Social Science Citation Index.

It is also worth noting that although the articule "Continuous Innovation to Democratize Administrative Decisionmaking: A Case of Hangzhou" is not written by professors from China's top Zhejiang University, this research project conducted by a group of professors in the Hangzhou City Communisty Party School does have its unique values. Under the Chinese political system, China's Communist Party School system has its special role in the development of Chinese Communist ideology related literature. But besides academic institution, it is also a training center for all levels of government officials. Almost all Chinese officials must take training courses in the Party School in their respective region and political level before they can be promoted to a higher level. This special function of the school gives professors in the school system advantages reaching more indepth information about their local policies and political

issues from their government official students. This is exact what An et al. (2009) offered in their research papers.

4. Three Chinese NGOs Innovation Cases in Chapter VI

During the period that I conducted my pre-dissertation fieldwork, I got opportunities to get access to materials and information for over a thousand local government reform and innovation cases collected by the CCCPE at the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau in Beijing. The three NGO/CSO innovation cases are carefully selected from this large database. The selection is not random because as Creswell noted: "the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 203). This "in-depth exploration" can be practices via purposeful sampling strategy, which I use in this chapter. These three cares are selected because they not only have sufficient information and wide publicity for the in-depth analysis, but also attract attention from scholars worldwide. Hence, there are more high-quality journalistic articles available for meta-analysis. Some of the journal articles I utilized to analyze in this chapter are from the top English language Chinese study journals, such as *The China Quarterly* and *The Journal of Comparative Asian Development*.

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