

Understanding Ideological Diversity Within China's Emerging Middle Class

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Abstract

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The Party-state's popular legitimacy is difficult to assess. This study aims to do so via a two-step methodology that aims to reveal the political belief sets through which the Chinese public evaluates the present regime and imagines possible alternatives. I focus upon the emerging middle class, as conceptualized by the Party-state, because the Party-state views this segment's support as a priority for its legitimation efforts. And I focus upon Beijing, because theory and evidence suggests that Beijing's emerging middle class should be especially persuaded by the Party-state's ideological work. Ideological diversity discovered in Beijing is a baseline of what one would hypothesize to exist elsewhere in China.

First, I distil the main ideological traditions to which the emerging middle class is exposed—including Official Ideology, Liberalism, New Left and Political Confucianism—down into their essential convictions. Second, via Q Methodology, I present statements representing these distilled convictions to a sample of the emerging middle class and ask them, using these statements, to answer: 'What should the guiding values and principles of Chinese politics be?' From the patterns of their responses, I elucidate the variety of ways they evaluate the question—and hence, evaluate the legitimacy of the present regime.

Four discourses emerge. Social Welfarism and Liberal Idealism form orthogonal boundaries between which most members of the emerging middle class situate themselves. Regression analysis suggests that the former is the default view, but a variety of factors can rotate people toward the latter. Authoritarian Reformism and Critical Realism are minority discourses that reveal more radical possibilities.

My research suggests that the Party-state's efforts to contain public conceptions have had mixed success. The range of public political preferences is sufficiently constrained that a single Party can coherently claim to represent their fundamental shared interests. A corollary finding is that the 'middle class' is emerging into the role the Party-state envisages for it, as a stabilizing force. However, while its members may be 'allies of the state', only some are *devotees*, in the sense that they share substantially in the Official Ideological perspective. The bounded diversity of ideological discourses reveals the exquisite complexity of the Party-state's legitimation task, and many potential pitfalls and missteps. The present study reveals both the reach of the state (i.e., a bounded discourse weighted toward a Social Welfarist default) and its limits (i.e., popular drift toward problematic alternatives).

More broadly, I find that popular legitimacy *can* be subjected to direct investigation. I show that while state-centric approaches to investigating China are compelling for their explanatory power, a balanced approach offers richer insight.

for both of us

体会这狂野

体会孤独

体会这欢乐

爱恨离别

这是我的完美生活

也是你的完美生活

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Abbreviations and Conventions

CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP / CPC	Communist Party of China
GP	General Program (of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China)
PRC	People's Republic of China

Throughout the text, 'the Party' refers to the Communist Party of China. The 'Party-state' refers to the Communist Party of China and the various state institutions and apparatuses under Party control.

Except where otherwise specified, any italicized words within a quotation represent my emphasis added to the original text.

Except where otherwise specified, translations into English from Chinese sources are my own.

In-text citations are given in the past tense for works prior to 2010 and in the present tense for works thereafter. For example, Rosen (2004) found..., but Li He (2010) finds...

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I must also thank the more than 150 people who took formal part in this study as research participants. We had some good conversations, didn't we! I'm sorry it has taken me so long to produce the results. I hope you take away from them the same insight I do: that what you think matters—very much.

I cannot bear to list the people too important not to be mentioned here. I owe you each your own paragraph. Instead, I shall have to write more books. I beg for your patience.

1 Introduction

1.1 Genesis

‘The core value [of] stability is placed above everything’.
(Yu Keping 2008b, p. 31)

‘The most precious principle in politics is the exaltation of liberty’.
(Yan Fu, quoted by Max Ko-Wu Huang 2008, p. 198)



‘Democracy in China is a democracy under the leadership of the CPC’.
(Xinhua 2005b)

‘True democracy means the holding of power by the labouring masses, the right of the people to choose their own representatives to work according to their will and in their own interests’.
(Wei Jingsheng, quoted by He 1996, p. 58)



‘Public interests come first and private interests come later’.
(Mao Zedong, quoted by Nathan 1985, p. 64)

‘Free individuality constitutes the essence of modernity’.
(Huang Kejian, quoted by Kelly 1998, p. 106)



‘Development is the key to resolving all issues’.
(Hu Jintao 2011)

‘I think everyone will agree that it is not too difficult for a society to become rich and powerful, as long as you work hard and smartly, and have good management. But to build a spiritually healthy society is much harder’.
(Wang Xiaoming 2005)



‘Political legitimacy must be secured from the authority of the supra-experiential world, not the will of the people’.
(Jiang Qing 2003, p. 336)

‘Political power begins with the people and the legitimacy of a regime derives from the people’.

(Liu Xiaobo 2008)



This thesis is about ideological diversity. I search for it amidst Beijingers emerging middle class, I develop a framework to help make sense of it, and I reflect upon the implications of my findings for the legitimacy of the Party-state, for the political role of the emerging middle class, and for the prospects of competing ideological agendas going forward—in China and beyond.

The research question that frames this study is:

Is there ideological diversity amidst Beijing’s emerging middle class? If so, what is its variety and content, and what does it say for the legitimacy of the Party-state, the political role of the emerging middle class and for politics in China generally?

The research reported here begins with no particular bias as to the form or direction the ideals and values of China’s emerging middle class ought to take. Instead, my quest is simply to get a better understanding of the evolving political beliefs of what most analysts regard as a potentially highly influential segment of the Chinese population.

1.2 What is ideological diversity?

First, what is ideology? McLellan (1986, p. 1) describes it as ‘the most elusive concept in the whole of social science’. Throughout the history of its usage, its meaning has shifted to support different intellectual endeavours. The term was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher and economist Antoine Destutt de Tracy, who meant it in its literal, etymological sense as a ‘science of ideas’ (*idea* + *ology*). An intellectual of the Enlightenment, he hoped to discover the psychological rules that govern how people think, moralize and behave in politics and society.¹ Since then, ideology has been reconceived multiple times to explore, with various normative and descriptive intent, the role that ideas play in politics.

Geuss (1981) distinguished between three broad conceptions of ideology: pejorative, positive and descriptive. A lasting pejorative meaning was imprinted on the term in the 19th century by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Their *German Ideology* defined ideology as a bad thing, something to be overcome: a deliberate distortion of reality generated by production relations in capitalist society, which cloaks the exploitative power of the ruling class and into which the proletariat, as well as other social classes, are socialized without recognizing how unnatural, unscientific and harmful this ‘false consciousness’ is (Rosen 1996, Steger 2009).² The socialization of this mass illusion naturalizes and dehistoricizes it, so that it enjoys a reified existence beyond people’s ability to influence at a cognitive level. The antidote is to resolve the root material contradictions that generate false consciousness—to reorder society in accordance with, rather than in contradiction to, our material relations.

¹ Destutt de Tracy, Antoine Louis (1754-1836) (1826). *Éléments D'idéologie*. Leipzig: Bruxelles & Co.

² Marx, Karl (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) (1974). *The German Ideology*. Translated by C. J. Arthur. 2nd ed. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

In much 20th century usage, particularly in the context of the two World Wars and the Cold War that followed, the term retained these pejorative connotations of irrationality and social control. Hannah Arendt (1953) conflated ideology with totalitarianism. Western academics developed theoretical models to study such ‘ideational pathologies’ (Steger 2009), and Western politicians brandished the term as a condemnation against deviant individuals (‘ideologues’) and regimes that displayed ‘a rigid, irrational adherence to an overdetermined system or policy [that] defies common sense’ (Decker 2004, p. 3). As a label, ‘ideology’ retains the intimation of contempt in popular 21st century usage, however the collapse of the Soviet Union, end of the Cold War, entry of China into the global economic system and rise of international terrorism have together shifted the connotation somewhat from ‘deviance’ to ‘extremism’ and shifted the target of condemnation from states to non-state actors (Decker 2004).

On occasion, ideology has also been conceived positively. In the early 20th century, for example, Sun Zhongshan invoked ‘socialist ideology’ as a set of policies and beliefs to rally and hold together Chinese society in pursuit of political interests judged to be desirable—namely, the realization of the Republic of China. In this conception, ideology is the statement of values and mission by which a person or group articulates the political ends to be realized and attracts other people to help further that end.

Finally, ideology can also be invoked in a descriptive sense, as a concept or phenomenon for social or political analysis. Boudon (1989, p. 26) distinguished between the ‘traditional’, normative conception of the word and its ‘modern’, social scientific meaning. In the latter

sense—the sense in which I operationalize the term—ideology is an explanatory variable that draws attention to how ideas can shape, constrain or maintain political power and behaviours.

Within this descriptive vein, further definitions abound, and no final word on the term's meaning has been written. One of the most common strands of descriptive definition has to do with explaining the emergence and maintenance of a *dominant* social power.

Conceived as such, ideology is the meanings, symbols, beliefs and values by which a dominant power promotes its own agenda; naturalizes and universalizes them so that they occur to members of society as self-evident and inevitable; denigrates rival ideas; and obscures social realities that may inconvenience or contradict any or all of the above (Eagleton 1991).

That definition will not do here. This research aims to discover the *diversity* of political perspectives within China; it will not do so. While one set of meanings, symbols, values and beliefs may perhaps dominate their view, this study is also interested to know the extent to which *alternative* beliefs and meanings are adopted or espoused about what the guiding values and principles of Chinese politics ought to be. Such alternatives may include sets of meaning and belief that directly oppose a dominant power, but they may also include many other dimensions of disagreement (for example, accepting a dominant power but preferring that it adopt different goals or directions).

In order to be open to these alternatives, this study adopts a descriptive conception of ideology that is neutral with respect to its success at establishing dominance. Along these lines, Seliger (1976, p. 14) defines ideology as ‘a set of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify the ends and means of organized social action, irrespective of whether such action aims to

preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order'. Heywood (2012, p. 11) similarly describes 'a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power'. Steger's (2009, p. 5) definition—'patterned ideas and claims to truth that are codified by social elites and embraced by significant groups in society'—like Marx's directs attention to the roles of ideology producers and the public. Benabou (2008, p. 2) focuses on the public's role and sees ideology as 'collectively sustained...subjective mental constructs'.

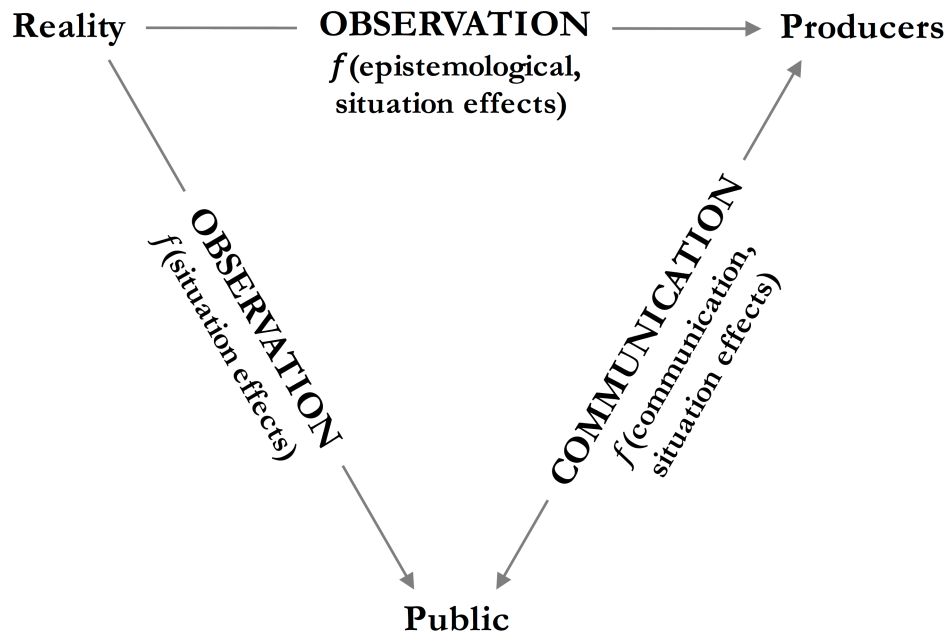
Two aspects of ideology's neutral, descriptive definition are essential to the framing of the present study: first, that it refers to a set of basic political beliefs, values, meanings or principles; and second, that this set can in some way be adopted or internalized by society.

This thesis is primarily concerned with exploring (the political implications of) the latter—ideology as socially adopted or internalized political values, meanings and beliefs. Just how ideology is 'w ideology is adopted or internalized by society is, again, an elusive question in social science with a long tradition. At its core lies an ontological debate over the proper sense in which ideology can be said to 'exist'. On one extreme, behaviorists such as Louis Althusser argued that ideology is a precognitive facet of human subjectivity. We 'live' ideology unconsciously as a set of images, symbols and concepts that permeate our society in a range of material practices and rituals, such as voting, saluting and genuflecting. For Althusser's intellectual predecessor, Antonio Gramsci, ideology was a lived, habitual social practice of consent to a dominant power. Such habit of consent was immanent in the whole of civil society—schools, families, churches, media and so on. Toward the other end of the ontological spectrum, the Marxist philosopher Georg Lukacs reified ideology as a disembodied

‘class consciousness’ that people internalize through their subjective identification with a social class (Eagleton 1991).

Without digressing into a full exploration of these issues, for the purpose of this study it is important to recognize that socially adopted or internalized political values, meanings and beliefs may comprise both conscious and unconscious elements. All ideology has unconscious, mythical and symbolic dimensions (Eagleton 1991). However, as Freeden (1996) argues, to the extent that an ideology aims to achieve *explicit* political ends, its contents—the beliefs, values and meanings it deploys to promote those ends—are open to conscious analysis and can be specified. (See §3.6 and §3.7.) Boudon (pp. 71-93) offers a concise theoretical framework for conceptualizing ideology’s conscious and unconscious aspects. See Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1 Boudon's (1989) conception of ideology



Producers of ideology—the Chinese Communist Party, for example, but also political theorists, economists and others—observe reality and filter the signals they receive through epistemological and situational lenses. The former comprises prevailing paradigms about what is or can be known (for example, whether certain *a priori* or *a posteriori* truths exist). The situational lens includes position effects (how our roles in society shape what we pay attention to and what we dismiss) and disposition effects (how our attitudes shape what we pay attention to, but also what we are pre-disposed to believe due to our unique life experiences, background cultural influences, and so on). The public also observes reality through a situational lens, however epistemological effects are weak because people do not ordinarily commit to the task of deliberately developing a coherent political agenda or consistent set of political beliefs.

Producers *do* commit themselves to this task, and having done so they then communicate their agenda and beliefs to the public in order to gain adherents.³ The message the public receives is mediated by situational effects, again, but also by what Boudon calls communication effects. Communication effects refer to the public's propensity to weigh more heavily those arguments and judgments they deem to be authoritative, since many political assertions are 'black boxes' that would require too much time and effort for people to demystify via their own rational resources.

Two important implications arise from Boudon's conception of how ideology is adopted or internalized by the public. The first is that internalized ideology is more than a simple feeling or attitude. 'Although it is not deliberate, it is meaningful and therefore rational...[I]t is a response which the subjects regard as well adapted to their social environment' (pp. 53-54). Internalized ideology has a 'logical gloss' that gives it the weight of truth for the subject (p. 59).

Second, it entails significant scope for diversity, or competition, among political agendas and belief sets. Members of the public may observe or listen to different signals; or they may observe the same signals, but process them differently. '[S]ocial actors are *situated* and...one's view of the world depends on one's vantage point' (p. 11, original emphasis). Boudon also emphasizes that 'those received ideas which go to make up ideologies can emerge *normally* in

³ Boudon is vague on the question of the appropriate analytic level for recognizing distinct producers as such. Is the Party or rather an individual theorist within the Party a 'producer'? I consider any individual or group that commits to the task of developing and communicating a consistent set of political beliefs to be a 'producer' in Boudon's sense with respect to that set.

the subject's mind, rather than being the result of arbitrary or unclear forces over which the subject has no control' (p. 71, original emphasis).

Ideological diversity among *producers* is readily observable in contemporary China. An explicit ideological discourse is conducted among politics scholars, Party-state officials and others who engage in assertion-making through formal public channels such as speeches, essays, lectures and publications. Producers' ideological discourse shows delineation between competing agendas, and internal consistency within a given agenda, because it is, in part, a product of conscious efforts to articulate and advance a system of beliefs and values. For example, a cursory glance through some of the major mainland Chinese politics journals, such as *Reading* 读书, *Res Publica* 公共论, *Theory* 求是 and the *CASS Journal of Political Science* 政治学研究, reveals a published contest being waged among academics as to the ideas and principles that ought to guide Chinese politics.⁴

The extent and content of ideological diversity within and among differing segments of the Chinese *public*, however, is not obvious. Public ideological discourse involves all members of society as they attempt to marry their language and ideas with their political interests. It is an amalgam of values imbibed from their rulers, 'lived, apparently spontaneous relations to a power-structure' that spring from their practical experience (Eagleton 1991, p. 221), as well as personal propositions advanced in private or public. To elucidate the diversity within this discourse is the aim of this study.

⁴ I lay out the broad outlines of this diversity in Chapter Four.

1.3 Why do I expect to find it?

I do not propose to investigate the details of *how* such ideological diversity forms and changes. That is a social-psychological question beyond the scope of this study. But with reference to Boudon's same three-part framework, there are good grounds for hypothesizing that such diversity *does* exist among the public. I focus my attention upon the Reform & Opening period, and the people born within it,⁵ for reasons I explain below. Since the start of this period, the signals the public receives and the lenses through which the public observes them have undergone significant change. The extent and content of ideological diversity that existed amongst the public prior to this period is beyond the scope of this study.

1.3.1 Reality

Reality, according to Boudon, cannot be observed directly. We see it only through our unique set of epistemological and situational lenses. Nevertheless, some epistemological lenses are so broadly shared that it is possible to give an account of changes that most observers would acknowledge and accept to be factual, true and significant. Perhaps the least controversial evidence that reality has changed is found in generally recognized macro level statistics, the investigation of which occupies much contemporary social scientific research on China. For example, according to such statistics:

- China's economy has grown. Real gross domestic product (GDP) rose from US\$186 billion in 1978 to US\$4.52 trillion in 2012, a compound annual growth rate of 9.8% (World Bank 2013). Average real wages increased more than seven-fold over a similar time period (Yang, Chen et al. 2010), and the share of the population living on less than

⁵ The Reform and Opening (改革开放) is a program of reforms begun in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

US\$2 per day fell from nearly 98% in 1981 to just over 27% in 2009 (World Bank 2013). Meanwhile, China's Gini coefficient—a prominent measure of economic inequality—rose from about 0.30 in 1980 to 0.47 in 2012 (China Daily 2013).

- China's economy has shifted. Production and employment have both departed agriculture and moved into industrial and service sectors. In 1978 agriculture generated 30% of GDP and employed 70% of China's labour force; by 2011 these figures had fallen to 10% and 35% respectively (CIA 2013, World Bank 2013).
- China's economy has opened, to market mechanisms and to international trade. In 1978, 94% of all agriculture transactions and 97% of all retail transactions took place under state-planned prices; the market priced the remainder. By 2001, the situation had reversed, with the state pricing less than 3% of activity in both sectors (Hope and Lau 2008, p. 5). Between 1978 and 2012, the value of China's exports grew from US\$39 billion to US\$1.7 trillion (from less than 7% to more than 30% of GDP), making a once near-autarky the world's largest exporter by value and the second-most open economy in the world (measured as $[\text{imports} + \text{exports}] \div \text{GDP}$) (Thomson 2012). From negligible levels in 1978, annual foreign direct investment (FDI) into China surpassed US\$100 billion in 2010, enough to make China the world's second most popular destination for foreign capital behind the United States. In the same year, China was the world's fifth-largest source of annual FDI (US\$69 billion).
- China's population has shifted, from rural to urban. In 1978, rural residents formed the large majority—81%—of the population; by 2012, with a 48% share, they had become the minority (World Bank 2013). In the first decade of the 21st century alone, internal migration added nearly 200 million new residents to China's cities (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2013).

- China's population has aged. Since 1978 the share of the population aged 65+ has nearly doubled (from 4.8% to 8.8%), while the share aged 0-14 has halved (from 37.3% to 18.0%) (World Bank 2013).
- China's transport and communications technologies have changed. The number of passenger cars per 1,000 people has increased from 1.5 in 1990 to 44 in 2010 (World Bank 2013). At the turn of the century, less than 1% of the population used the internet and less than 4% had a mobile phone subscription; by 2012 those shares had risen to over 42% and 81% respectively.

Reality is the source of the signals observed by ideology's producers and public. It seems reasonable to posit that the changes these statistics describe amount to significant changes in those signals.

1.3.2 Producers

These changes in reality change producers' input signals. Given their speed and scope, they are also likely to affect the epistemological and situational lenses through which producers perceive those changed signals. Boudon's epistemological lens is, by his own admission, similar to Thomas Kuhn's concept of a paradigm (p. 92). According to Kuhn, a paradigm shift occurs when a glut of inconsistencies between prevailing theory and evidence builds up. Doubts begin to appear, and people begin to question what before was undisputed. This often happens during periods of rapid change, because existing paradigms cease to be well-adapted to present epistemic circumstances (Kuhn 1996). Meanwhile, producers' situational lenses—their positions and dispositions—may have been affected by a wide variety of factors, among them: the loosening of Party-state control over intellectual and cultural life (Goldman 1996); the

rehabilitation of political science as an academic field (Deng Zhenglai 2009); the emergence of a policy marketplace that rewards the production of useful policy innovations, particularly institutional reforms (Frenkiel 2013); and the increase in international linkages and collaborations between Chinese political theorists and practitioners and their peers abroad (Zweig, Chen Changgui et al. 2004; Zhou Ping, Thijs et al. 2009).

Again, this is not the place to investigate these effects in detail, however Boudon's framework suggests that all the above should induce changes in the ideologies that producers produce—and given that each producer's vantage point may vary, induce diversification as well.

Indeed, that is what has happened. I detail this diversity in Chapter Four. I show both that the Party-state's own set of political beliefs has changed, and that its 'Official Ideology' now competes within professional discourse against a variety of alternative views regarding the values and principles that ought to guide China's politics. To the public, these competing ideologies communicate a rich and disparate range of political belief sets.

1.3.3 Public

Given the rapid and significant changes to their reality and the diversification of ideological production from producers, it makes sense to expect ideological diversity amongst the public as well. Furthermore, as with the producers, amongst the public there is another layer of change that may prompt ideological diversification: changes to the situational and communication lenses through which they observe and receive these other changes.

1 Introduction

1.3.3.1 *Changes in position*

Considerable empirical research supports the contention that the public's situational lenses—their positions and dispositions—are changing.

Social relationships have undergone significant adjustment. Guiheux (2007) argued that 'change' is an inadequate term to describe the subjective experience of lifestyle- and social reconfiguration for the generations who underwent the transition from planned to market economics. 'Shock' or 'upheaval' are more accurate, especially for those who lived and worked in the *danwei* (单位) system prior to the 1990s. For them, the transition to a market economy meant the collapse of administrative, political and social structures which previously had governed and controlled many important aspects of their lives, and the corresponding enlargement of the realm of individual choice-making (p. 155).

For generations born in the 1970s and later, one example of an adjustment with significant consequences for their social positioning was the marketization of graduate employment (Davis 1999). Marketization was introduced at a national conference on employment in 1988, where government planners announced their goal that the job assignment system be phased out and 70% of university graduates find work independently within five years. This target was met, and by 1995 virtually all graduates were responsible for their own employment search (p. 29).

The implications of this downloading of responsibility for one's position in society were significant. For example, Yang Cao (2004) found in a 1995 survey a large increase in 'meritocratic' hiring and firing practices. Changing hiring and firing criteria, combined with

state action to raise white-collar pay scales, served to increase the returns to higher education (and decrease the economic opportunities of those who lacked it) in the newly emerged job market (Zhao Wei and Zhou Xueguang 2002). (Similarly, de-collectivization in rural areas favoured workers with superior human capital qualifications (Walder 2002).)

At the same time, education funding reforms downloaded more responsibility for higher education tuition onto students and their families. Those with adequate family resources could secure a higher education degree and in turn a job in the modernizing economy. Those with inadequate wealth could not and did not. Together this bundle of policies helped to rapidly stratify society by wealth and caused people to define their own social position more and more in terms of wealth and income (Lewis and Xue Litai 2003).

1.3.3.2 *Changes in disposition*

Positional changes at the societal level have been accompanied by dispositional changes at the personal level. For example, Rosen (2004) found that emphasis on the accumulation of wealth has been steadily overtaking other, traditional values, including trust—especially among younger urban generations. But alongside rising fears of manipulation and domination from changing social relationships, there is also an air of expanding agency and individuation (Davis 2005). There is growing appreciation among the public for an enlarged private sphere beyond the reach of the Party-state and the luxury of choice in contrast to an impoverished past. Wang Yanlai, Rees et al. (2004) compared attitudinal surveys from 1990 and 2000 and found people from the latter survey to be significantly more attuned to the role of government in their lives, more confident and assertive regarding their ability to understand, critique and make political statements, and more tolerant of diverse political viewpoints.

Accelerating these attitudinal shifts, Lewis and Xue Litai (2003) argued, is a current ‘onslaught’ of Western culture (p. 928). Chinese touch points with Western culture are multiple and include trade, consumption of arts and entertainment, international policy dialogues, tourism, and studying abroad. The latter has received significant empirical scrutiny. Political psychologists have long agreed that studying abroad does shape people’s attitudes, particularly if undertaken during young adult years (Watson and Lippitt 1958). Prior to 1978, China sent virtually no students abroad. Today it sends more than any other country in the world. By 2008, an estimated 1.4 million Chinese people living had studied abroad—principally in the UK, Japan and the United States—and the total is growing by 40,000 to 50,000 students per annum. Han Dongling and Zweig (2010) found returnees to be more supportive of open trade and more strongly inclined to prefer co-operative versus assertive foreign policy.

1.3.3.3 *Communication effects*

Communication effects determine the weight or authority with which messages sent from producers are received by the public. Just as shifting reality can lead producers to modify their epistemological lenses, the public’s own observations of these same shifts can lead them to rationalize changes to how they evaluate producers’ communications.

Empirical research suggests at least three other mechanisms by which the public’s perception of producers’ authority is changing:

The first is changing levels of educational attainment. Chen Xueyi and Shi Tianjian (2001) found that in China education has a significant negative effect on public trust in formal

authority. Education increases the public's ability to understand complexity and take an interest in public affairs, and alienates them from a Party-state whose faults and misdirection they can increasingly perceive. Between 1978 and 2011, secondary school enrollment rose from 31% to 81% and tertiary enrollment rose from 1% to 27% within the corresponding age groups (World Bank 2013).

The second is changing subjective notions of social status. Wu Yuning and Ivan Sun (2009) found that people's perception of their own status has a positive effect on their trust in formal authority. The more successful and respected in society people perceive themselves to be, the more likely they are to trust those in charge.

The third is the changing nature and public management of media. Media is not a neutral conveyer of producers' messages; rather, by its presentation and editorializing it can build and influence the biases with which the public receives those messages, or by its censorship determine which messages are sent. Since 1978, mass media has changed from an organ of the government completely subsidized by the state to a mixed industry of state-run and private-invested media outlets delivering both Party-state prescribed and market-oriented content (Yang Aimei 2012). Market competition has driven market-oriented outlets to increase the variety and quality of their content. The number and quality of journalism schools has increased dramatically, and journalists are increasingly likely to recognize timeliness, objectivity and social responsibility as values of their profession (Luther and Zhou Xiang 2005). Party-state censorship has adapted to this new media environment, inviting much freer criticism of the state, its leaders and its policies on the one hand, and exercising much greater control over attempts to incite or support collective action on the other (King, Pan et al. 2012).

The influence of social media on public perceptions of producers' authority is not yet well understood. Carpini, Cook et al. (2004, p. 319) observed that social media enables the public to 'develop and express their views, learn the positions of others, identify shared concerns and preferences, and come to understand and reach judgments about matters of public concern', although by displacing traditional media it may also enable the public to tune out of such matters and focus more on trivial or pleasure-seeking affairs. Yeo and Li (2012) argue that social media increases public trust in formal authority by improving the Party-state's awareness of, and response to, crises deemed important by the public. Shirk (2011) observes how the Party-state's practice of employing ghostwriters and respected academics or celebrities to generate supportive online conversations can covertly sway online opinion and avoid the public alienation caused by more obvious censorship efforts. However, Chan, Wu et al. (2012) argue that social media may instead damage government credibility by increasing the public's awareness of the many ways in which the Party-state fails to live up to expectations, and enhancing the credibility of those who bring these failings to light.

In summary, I expect to find ideological diversity amongst the public born in the Reform & Opening period because their reality, the production of ideology, and the lenses through which they perceive reality and receive ideological messaging have all undergone significant changes in their lifetime—and because different people process all these changes differently as they adopt and internalize political beliefs.

1.4 Outline

Why study ideological diversity? Why study the emerging middle class? Why study China? In Chapter Two I answer these questions and motivate my research with reference to the relevant literature. I review the role of ideology in contemporary Chinese statecraft. I review the literature on the link between ideology and Party-state legitimacy, and I identify how the present study helps to overcome theoretical and methodological limitations to our present understanding of this link. I explore the theoretical importance of the emerging middle class to state-society relations generally, and to regime legitimacy in particular. I probe the debates over the existence, identification and role of the middle class, and I explain how mapping its ideological diversity will yield firmer hypotheses about its present and future political behaviours.

Chapter Three introduces my research methods. I employ Q Methodology, which is a qualitative technique for categorizing subjective phenomena. Introduced by Stephenson (1935, 1953) and adapted to political science by Brown (1980), it translates research participants' subjective viewpoints into empirical data. It does so via structured interviews in which participants are asked to sort a set of statements spanning a theorized discourse along a spectrum from 'most agree' to 'most disagree'. Q Methodology then employs factor analysis to cluster similar sorts together so that the various distinct ways in which participants make sense of the statements can be identified. The output of this operation is a statistically validated typology of viewpoints (Cross 2005).

Following a general overview, I introduce the particular data sourcing, collection and handling procedures of a Q Methodology study. While factor analysis is a statistical technique, Q

Methodology is a qualitative method and each step in its application—defining the discourse then sampling it to yield a representative set of statements, defining the discourse participants and sampling them, and factor-analyzing the sorts they produce—involves choices that must be justified theoretically. I discuss why Q Methodology is superior to other methods for this study and how it overcomes key theoretical and methodological criticisms that interview- and survey-based approaches face when researching subjective phenomena. I also address its limitations.

In the second half of Chapter Three, I introduce the method, proposed by Freedden (1996), by which I analyze and sample ideological discourse in contemporary China in order to produce the actual set of statements that research participants will sort. In a Q Methodology study of a large and complex discourse, a representative miniature is developed by first modeling the discourse theoretically, then saturating this theoretical structure with representative statements drawn from the discourse itself. Finally, a random sample of these statements is drawn from each component of the saturated structure. The quality of the study's results rests finally upon the quality of this sampling framework (Watts and Stenner 2012, p. 59). I discuss the need for such a framework in the present study and describe Freedden's method for elucidating one from what I label 'professional ideological discourse'.

In Chapter Four, I identify four major ideologies within professional discourse—Official Ideology, Liberalism, New Left and Political Confucianism—then apply Freedden's method of ideological analysis to each. I elucidate the internal conceptual arrangement of each ideology in turn via textual analysis and summarize the resulting sampling framework.

Chapter Five lays out the principles and procedures by which I conduct the actual sampling of both the discourse and of my population of interest (i.e., the emerging middle class). I describe the variety of mainland Chinese sources I consult to saturate my sampling framework—including published papers, books, official statements, news articles, social media and interviews conducted by me—and draw a pilot sample of 47 statements. I test this pilot sample with twenty research participants, refine statements based on their feedback and augment them with additional viewpoints that emerge from the pilot study, yielding a final sample or ‘Q-set’ of 65 statements.

I then give my rationale for field site selection—Beijing—and proceed to sample its population. As per Q Methodology, the sampling of my population of interest is theory-driven, not random. The theoretical objective is to maximize the diversity of views represented by the population sample. I briefly review the literature on correlations between demographic characteristics and political attitudinal diversity in China, and based on that review I define several variables, such as age, urban registration, Party membership, employment, educational attainment and foreign experience, to serve as sampling criteria. In Q Methodology, a small sample, properly constructed, is sufficient to yield statistically valid results (Brown 1980, Barry and Proops 2000). Nevertheless, to test the reliability of my own sampling criteria, I elect to draw two separate population samples, or ‘P-Sets’ ($n_A=58$, $n_B=59$), during two separate time periods and factor-analyze their results separately. I explain this approach, as well as the chain-referral sampling technique used to draw each sample, and present anonymized summary information on the overall sample.

Chapter Six explains the administration of the sorting task to research participants and factor-analyzes their responses. Certain analytic steps—factor extraction and rotation—require the researcher’s judgment, and I explain and justify my choices. I compare the factors that emerge from P-Set A and P-Set B, reconfirm the reliability of my sampling criteria and apply statistical methods to resolve the results from each P-set into a single typology comprising five factors.

Chapter Seven interprets these five factors, maps the overall discourse space, and discusses its implications for regime legitimacy and the political role of the emerging middle class. Each factor represents a different way of sorting the 65 statements within the Q-set—and thus a different subjective viewpoint within middle class ideological discourse. I translate each factor back into its unique arrangement of 65 statements, and with reference to those arrangements and to follow-up interviews conducted with archetypical research participants, I assemble and elaborate five factor narratives: Liberal Idealism, Social Welfarism, Liberal Socialism, Authoritarian Reformism and Critical Realism. I show statistically and visually how Liberal Idealism and Social Welfarism are the ‘boundary discourses’ between which most of the emerging middle class find themselves, and I highlight the areas of greatest convergence and divergence among them. I explain how this new picture of the discourse space advances our present understanding of ideological diversity in China and the complexities the Party-state faces in sustaining its ideological and legitimation work. I conclude from the picture that the Party-state’s efforts to shape public subjectivities through its ideological work have had mixed success, and that while the middle class may be emerging into the role the Party-state envisages for it—an ‘ally of the state’—only some of those allies are genuine devotees whose own ideological perspectives overlap with the regime’s.

In Chapter Eight I perform some simple regression analyses on my dataset to discover relationships between research participants' demographic characteristics and their ideological affinities. Formally, these regression findings cannot be used to make claims with respect to the broader population, because, per Q Methodology, the participants were not randomly sampled. Nevertheless, on the specific quantitative question prompted by this study's results—namely, what respondent characteristics relate to, or may predict, affinity with the ideological discourses identified above?—mine is the best data available with which to begin providing the answer.

Chapter Nine lays out a future Q Methodology-based research agenda and makes a final methodological contribution, which is to demonstrate how the findings from this study may be used to construct a survey instrument suitable for a large-*n* quantitative study aimed at finding generalizable relationships between demographic traits and ideological affinities.

I also offer some broader reflections: on the methodological innovations I have proposed here that submit 'legitimacy' to a new angle of scholarly investigation; on the relative importance of state- and society-centric approaches to evaluating legitimacy; and on how the study of ideology contributes to our understanding of legitimacy, and of Chinese politics generally. I argue that we cannot ignore the ideological contest to fix the public's political beliefs. My research suggests that the debate over these meanings is real and encompasses a wider range of coherent outcomes than most research-to-date into China's political future suggests. We should spend more time watching this contest and pay careful attention to the creative meanings being made out of core political concepts. Within that variety lies the most

important challenge the Party-state faces, and the possible pathways for a uniquely Chinese political future.

2 Research Motivations and Literature Review

2.1 Why study ideological diversity?

The emphasis of this study is upon uncovering ideological variety. The primary output of the research is a typology that: identifies distinct assemblies of political beliefs, or ideological narratives, amidst Beijing's emerging middle class; elaborates the contents of each narrative; and clarifies the conceptual relationships among them. How does this contribute to our present understanding of Chinese politics?

2.1.1 Ideologies are a key link between belief and action, in political theory and state practice

2.1.1.1 *Theory*

Ideologies are the 'maps that help us navigate our political universe' (Steger 2009, p. 5). As discussed at §1.2, even though these maps may not be deliberately constructed or even internally consistent, they are nonetheless subjectively experienced as meaningful, rational guides for evaluating political signals and responses. As such, they can play an integral role in people's political thought processes and have observable effects, encouraging and constraining public action. They can: provide social stability or contribute to fragmentation and alienation; supply standards of normative evaluation as well as oversimplify social complexity; and serve as guides for action as well as excuses for inaction.

Ideologies help to explain why the social reality observed by political science often departs from the utility-maximizing behaviours posited by mainstream economic theory (Lieber 2013). For example, one way to make broad sense of contemporary Chinese socio-economic change is by reference to ideology: Under Mao, Party-state ideology committed the public to an agenda of social perfection. As evidence mounted that it could or would not be achieved, rising instability and popular discontent resulted. Post-Mao, the Party-state's work has been to

erase many of the logics by which the public had been mobilized in the past, and instil within them a new political belief set supporting ‘modernization’ via stable, evidence-based technocratic management (Schurmann 1971, Burton 1987).

‘Ideology’ is distinguished from other conceptual linkages between thought and action by its rationality and hence sensitivity to the influence of discourse and argument. In comparison, Charles Taylor’s ‘social imaginary’ or Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’ are shared, overarching background visions of self and community.¹ These concepts point to the lenses in Boudon’s framework—the epistemological beliefs and dispositions through which we filter reality and which supply social experience with a foundation of mutual recognition, identity and intelligibility (Bourdieu 1991). Nathan’s (2007, p. 3) conception of political culture as ‘deeper, slower changing public values and attitudes’ similarly addresses this background.

Ideologies are the political belief sets built atop such foundations. Understanding their diversity and content improves our understanding of why people behave as they do and the mechanisms by which their behaviours can change.

2.1.1.2 *Practice*

Ideology is a major component of statecraft in contemporary China (Brady 2009, Brady and Wang Juntao 2009). Virtually all official speech acts contain evidence of just how seriously the Party-state takes this task. The most explicit evidence is its practice of reifying certain terms

¹ See:

Taylor, Charles (2004). *Modern Social Imaginaries*. London: Duke University Press.

Anderson, Benedict (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

and their definitions via plenary pronouncements at major Party and state congresses, e.g.: ‘Deng Xiaoping Theory’ (邓小平理论), ‘Three Represents’ (三个代表), ‘One Country Two Systems’ (一国两制), ‘Scientific Outlook on Development’ (科学发展观) or ‘Harmonious Society’ (和谐社会). These are precise formulae that (a) fix an interpretation of what’s happening in Chinese society and (b) set boundaries for what ought to be said and done in response. Any change in language signals a significant change to the ideological framework in which government policy is being set and enacted.

Beyond its frame- and agenda-setting functions, ideology plays a variety of discernible roles within the day-to-day professional life of Party-state cadre: as a means for cadre to signal their loyalty (by sticking their necks out in explicit favour of new ideological pronouncements); by supplying the key vocabularies that cadre use at work; and by helping to prop up cadre loyalty and pride (for example by framing corruption, not as an endemic fault of the regime, but as disloyalty to its guiding principles) (Lieber 2013).

The Party-state attempts to instil its official belief set in the wider Chinese public through a variety of methods: by setting and adjusting the content of the public education curriculum (Lee and Ho 2005, Vickers 2009); by directing the legal system and judicial decisions (Brady 2008, ch. 5); through its 80 million Party members, who convey Party messages and apply peer pressure in the workplace, in residential communities and in their social networks (Pieke 2009, Thornton 2013); and through large-scale public information and propaganda campaigns across official and unofficial media channels (Shambaugh 2007).

The latter—propaganda—has been deemed essential to the Party’s work since its founding. The Party’s original Politburo, consisting of just three members, included in that trinity a director of propaganda, and propaganda work was the second item on the agenda of the Party’s inaugural meeting (Communist Party of China 1921). In 1929, Mao Zedong declared propaganda work to be the Red Army’s most important task (Brady and Wang Juntao 2009). In different eras it has served different ideological goals. After the Communist Party’s victory was proclaimed in 1949, propaganda work was directed at pressuring social elites to accept the new socialist reality. In the late 1950s and the 1960s propaganda work attacked the hold-outs and resistance groups. By the time of Mao’s death in 1976, brutal excesses of propaganda work had seriously eroded the Party’s popularity and prompted debate among the Party leadership as to the need for propaganda going forward, but after a decade of uncertainty the events at Tiananmen in 1989 made the pro-propagandists’ case in spectacular fashion (Vickers 2009). Henceforth propaganda work would be seen as critical for: reshaping the public’s conception of the Party from its historical role as leader of a socialist revolution to a contemporary role as the most capable, stable guide for China’s modernization; focusing the public upon the task of economic development; and cultivating public attitudes in support of a market economy—including building up tolerance for the inequalities, uncertainties and shifting welfare burdens that marketization entails (Communist Party of China 1999b, Brady 2009, Tomba 2009, Greenhalgh 2010).

Given the resources that the Party-state invests into ideology management and the priority the Party-state places upon it, evaluating its effectiveness is an important proxy for the Party-state’s governance capacities. One measure of its effectiveness is the extent to which coercive measures are not required to achieve Party-state policy objectives that impose a significant

burden upon the public. Citing one prominent example, Greenhalgh (2010, p. 37) observes that ‘the [one-child] program has worked not so much by oppressing people as by changing their subjectivities—their sense of self, their bodies, their desires, and their hopes for the future’ so that they choose themselves to act in accordance with its aims.

The present research will offer another measure, by explicating the diversity and content of political values and beliefs adopted among the Chinese public and enabling clearer comparison with the content of official Party-state ideology. The results of this comparison will in turn inform the larger question with which the present study is principally concerned: the legitimacy of the present political order.

2.1.2 Ideology informs the legitimacy of the Party-state

2.1.2.1 *What is legitimacy?*

Legitimacy is ‘the key to politics’ (Jost and Major 2001, p. 4). Weber observed that any governing authority requires legitimacy in order to sustain its voluntary acceptance by the people, and hence sustain itself.²

Gerschewski (2013) examines this regime-sustaining role of legitimacy within autocracies specifically, and offers a theoretical framework in which to situate its contribution toward that outcome. The task of maintaining regime stability comprises three modes of interaction with the public, corresponding to three distinct audiences for the regime’s power. Actual and potential opponents to the regime’s authority are addressed via repression—coercive efforts to

² See:

Weber, Max (1864-1920) (1964). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Translated by A. M. Henderson and T. Parsons. London: Collier Macmillan.

dissuade, disintegrate or silence their resistance. Strategically relevant actors (for example, private entrepreneurs whose willing participation is required in order for the regime to achieve market-based economic development goals) are addressed via co-optation: offering them incentives, rewards and want-fulfilment such that they have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. All those who fall into neither of these two groups are addressed via legitimization—producing broad public consent, support and acceptance for the status quo. Following Easton (1979), Gerschewski identifies two types of support: specific support, which (similar to the co-option of strategic actors) this audience offers in exchange for actual or promised fulfilment of particular wants and desires; and diffuse support, which is more general, long-term oriented, and is offered out of a sense of sharing with the regime beliefs, meanings and values regarding the role and exercise of power—i.e., sharing an ideology—and/or religious, nationalistic and cultural interests. Legitimacy, then, comprises the specific and diffuse support that the public confers upon the regime.

Attempts to specify the nature of this support further fall into two broad categories.

Descriptive definitions of legitimacy centre on explaining how or why a governing authority obtains or sustains this support. For Weber, who emphasises the diffuse aspects of legitimacy, a political regime is legitimate if its participants have certain beliefs about it ‘by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige’ (p. 382). Weber describes three sources for such prestige: tradition, or beliefs generated by a system having been around for a long time; charisma, or beliefs generated by the appeal of a system’s leaders; and legality, or beliefs generated by a system’s apparent rationality.

Normative definitions focus upon justifying political authority. They aim to explain why a particular body should be permitted the use of political power and why there is a moral duty to obey it. Rawls (1993) is the paradigmatic case. For Rawls, political authority is legitimate if it is conferred and exercised according to rules that a constitutional conference might establish if convened under certain neutral conditions (mainly, that each participant stand behind a ‘veil of ignorance’ that denies them any knowledge of their own place within the political order).

A third strand of definition combines elements of both. Normative definitions may be unsatisfactory because they fail to give adequate attention to how social behaviours and processes, and historical pathways, can direct broad public approval toward the present exercise of power, regardless of its normative flaws or inconsistencies. Descriptive definitions may fall short because they fail to adequately recognize the prestige that normative claims can confer. It is not merely the possession of tradition, or charisma, or rationality that imbues political authority with prestige, but also the second-order beliefs that participants within the system generate about those characteristics—namely, that such qualities *should* confer prestige, authority and a moral duty to obey it (Habermas 1979, Beetham 1991). Likewise, it is not merely the fulfilment of public wants and desires that wins their support, but the second-order beliefs that the political authority *should* fulfill them. According to Beetham, regardless of the type of political system, power is ‘legitimate’ ‘to the extent that (i) it conforms to established rules, (ii) [these] rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate, and (iii) there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation’ (pp. 15-16).

I adopt this understanding of legitimacy for my study. It readily admits a relationship between the dynamism of the contemporary Chinese context and regime legitimacy. Shifting Party-state priorities and messages, and shifting social attitudes and behaviours, both impact the legitimacy of the political system according to this definition, either by changing the established rules or changing participants' beliefs about them. Legitimacy is constantly being produced, destroyed and reframed in an ongoing process of adaptation. This definition also admits a tight correspondence between legitimacy and ideology. Legitimacy, it maintains, is about maintaining a congruence between what the rules for wielding power in the system are and participants' internalized beliefs about what those rules ought to be—in other words, between the established rules and participants' ideologies, according to the meaning of the latter I adopted at §1.2.³ Finally, it admits the possibility of a diversity of legitimate arrangements. “The social world is...a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any of which can be readily invoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized” (Edelman 1993).

2.1.2.2 *Why does legitimacy matter?*

Evaluation of any regime's legitimacy confronts a *prima facie* tautology.

- (i) A regime must have legitimacy in order to survive.
- (ii) The regime survives.
- (iii) Therefore, it must be legitimate.

³ One consequence of this correspondence is that ‘Official Ideology’, a term that appears often in this study, is by definition just that arrangement of political meanings and beliefs that is articulated and promoted by the Party-state to enhance its legitimacy. See:

Bondes, Maria and Sandra Heep (2013). “Conceptualizing the Relationship between Persuasion and Legitimacy: Official Framing in the Case of the Chinese Communist Party.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* **18**(4): 317-334.

This tautology fails for two reasons. First, as Gerschewski's above framework for regime stability makes clear, statement (i) is an oversimplification. Theoretically, it may be possible for a regime to lack legitimacy, but enjoy stability nonetheless due to its repressive and co-optative efforts vis-à-vis opponents and strategic actors, respectively. Second, and of greater relevance to the present inquiry, legitimacy is a dynamic, emergent property of state-society relations (Sandby-Thomas 2014). Like any emergent property of a political system, both reinforcing and debilitating processes may be underway, which require that the regime maintain a constant inquiry into the overall strength of its specific and diffuse support.

That, at least, appears to be the analysis of the Party-state, for which securing the right to rule has become 'an ever-present concern' (Laliberté and Lanteigne 2008, p. 92). In recent times, Party debate over its continuing legitimacy was heightened by Jiang Zemin's articulation of his 'Three Represents' theory in 2000 (which the Party itself framed as a strategy to redefine its legitimacy) and, according to one source at the Central Party School, the fall of the Guomindang candidate in that year's Taiwan presidential elections (which triggered a broader set of senior cadre to take the question of Party legitimacy seriously) (Gilley and Holbig 2009). In 2004 the 4th plenary session of the 16th CPC Central Committee acknowledged this question's validity by declaring that 'the Party's governing status is not congenital, nor is it something settled once and for all' (p. 341). In a rapidly changing domestic and international environment, legitimacy is 'brittle' and threatened by widespread social protest, official corruption, widening inequality and other problems (Lampton 2008, p. 118). Whether the Party-state can maintain its legitimacy is the most important question it—and Chinese political discourse generally—faces.

An extensive theoretical and empirical literature attempts to answer the legitimacy question. Regime theory holds that authoritarian systems are plagued by weak legitimacy (Moravcsik 1997). Some scholarship points to the Party-state's withdrawal from many aspects of social, economic, political and intellectual life as a sign that its mandate is indeed destabilizing (Shambaugh 2000, Chao Chien-min and Dickson 2003). However, the prevailing view is that—despite such predictions to the contrary—the Party-state is successfully adapting its legitimacy claims to new domestic and international conditions (Brodsgaard and Zheng Yongnian 2006, Laliberté and Lantaigne 2008). A large body of empirical work shows consistently high levels of support for the Party-state among the Chinese public (Chen Jie, Zhong Yang et al. 1997; Shi Tianjian 2001; Chen Jie 2004; Li Lianjiang 2004; Tang Wenfang 2005; Wang Zhengxu 2005). The present Party-state system has proved 'resilient': rather than be eroded by modernization, the Party-state has upheld popular support through sound economic and foreign policy performances and by disciplining its use of monopoly power through progressive institutionalization (Nathan 2003, Shambaugh 2008, Tudoroiu 2011).

2.1.2.3 *How does ideology contribute to legitimacy?*

Following Beethman's theory of legitimacy, the Party-state's ideology management work, introduced above, must be factored into this explanation. The beliefs of the populace provide the normative foundation for its rule. Official Ideology is the persuasive frame by which the regime aims to mould the public's core political values, beliefs and meanings into a shape consistent with its exercise of power (Bondes and Heep 2013). Gilley and Holbig (2009) found that among mainland Chinese politics scholars, ideology is the most frequently-mentioned strategy by which the regime's legitimacy is either strengthened or contested. Consistent with this characterization, Nathan (2007) found that the Party-state's performance in economic and

other policy areas could not by itself account for its high levels of public support. Wang Zhengxu (2010, p. 18) notes that legitimacy is the public's perception of a political system, and thus is 'largely constructed. The Party's ability to maintain a discourse in favour of its one-party system will be the key to its continuing hold onto power.'

The Party appears to recognize this as well, and, consistent with the predictions of Beetham's legitimization model, its leadership has worked continuously to renew and adapt Official Ideology to changing socioeconomic conditions throughout the reform era, in order to guide the public's interpretation of policies and events (Huang Jifu 2002, Zhang Lianguo 2005, Gilley and Holbig 2009). Officially, Marxism remains the core of Party thought, and is deemed a necessary but no longer sufficient condition to sustain Party legitimacy (Huang Jifu 2002). Maoism, which can be understood as legitimacy derived from the charisma of the central figurehead and mass indoctrination via Party slogans, is widely seen as outdated and unworkable among Party intellectuals today (Zhang Lianguo 2005). Deng Xiaoping issued a clear break from this Maoist conception of legitimacy by declaring that economic growth and prosperity would be the measure of the Party's legitimacy going forward. Jiang Zemin re-aligned the Party's membership toward Deng's conception with his 'Three Represents' by explicitly extending the mass base whom the Party claimed to represent beyond workers to include the economically ascendant elements of society (Qi Xingfa 2003). Rising social inequalities, which in the 1990s were widely accepted as an unavoidable cost of economic modernization, had by the 2000s become a major source of popular discontent (Wang Shaoguang 2009). In response, the Hu-Wen administration modified Deng's line further, claiming that not only economic growth and prosperity but also human and social development should be the standards against which the Party is measured (Gilley and Holbig

2009). Through successive leadership generations, the Party has shifted the basis of its legitimacy claims away from reverence and revolutionary comradeship, towards technocratic competence—governing well and accountably in areas of economic, social and human development.

Another major ingredient in the Party's contemporary ideological renewal is nationalism (Lu Ailin 2006). During the 1980s, a significant gap opened between unfriendly official rhetoric toward foreign developed countries and popular fascination and admiration with their culture, products and wealth. In the 1990s, however, a popular process of 'de-romanticization' unfolded (Zhao Suisheng 1997). Beijing's failure in 1993 to secure the 2000 Summer Olympics, the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999 and other episodes helped to shift the public's opinion of the developed world closer to the antagonistic view espoused by Party intellectuals. With this shift, national self-confidence and pride emerged as a new and powerful ideological resource for Party intellectuals who portrayed the strengthening of the Chinese state as a Party-led national mission. This nationalism lent strength to a neo-authoritarian call for a strong state to push modernization tasks through the social resistance they were beginning to face from the populace (p. 732). Party intellectuals leading this discourse and backed by the 'princelings' (太子党)⁴ argued that economic development and the national interest must take priority over personal comforts and freedoms. They pointed to the collapse of the Soviet Union as evidence of what would happen in China without ideological vision and strong leadership.⁵ Non-Party scholars, including many

⁴ *Taizidang* refers to the grown-up children of revolutionary-era Communist Party elders.

⁵ For a fuller study of this neo-authoritarian discourse, see:

foreign-educated Chinese scholars, also took up the neo-authoritarian call. Some were fed up with the judgmental stance of foreign intellectuals and politicians; others saw a global realpolitik competition for power and resources on the horizon and argued (often with reference to the historical lessons of the weak Qing Dynasty's capitulation to foreign demands) that a strong state would help China to achieve a more favourable outcome (Wang Jisi 1995, Zhao Suisheng 1997).

2.1.2.4 *'Legitimacy' poses unresolved theoretical and methodological problems*

Schubert (2008) called for a new research agenda into the Party's legitimacy. In doing so he identified two broad deficiencies in the field up to that point. First, much scholarship on the question mixes normative and descriptive definitions of legitimacy without adequately distinguishing between the two. Arguments of illegitimacy tend to presuppose democratization to be the alternative, while 'legitimacy' implies the continuity of authoritarian rule. Seen this way, it is no surprise that 'resilience' has become an attractive term within the legitimacy discourse. It cleverly straddles descriptive and normative modes, by conceding the stability of the present political order with language that embeds a connotation of eventual failure. As a result, second, scholarship has avoided taking as seriously as it otherwise might have the possibility of a permanent authoritarian future for China, or the investigation of how the Party generates fresh legitimacy through ideological adaptation, technocratic performance or other means.

Chen Feng (1997). "Order and Stability in Social Transition: Neoconservative Political Thought in Post-1989 China." *China Quarterly* **151**: 593-613.

Fewsmith, Joseph (1995). "Neoconservatism and the End of the Dengist Era." *Asian Survey* **35**(7): 635-651.

To redress these shortcomings, Schubert argued for more research into legitimacy at what he terms the micro-political level—at the level of specific actors, policies or situations—rather than via broad opinion surveys. The micro political level is ‘the most promising trajectory to understand political legitimacy in contemporary China’ (p. 203). Higher-level quantitative surveys, he argued, fail to capture the subjective frame-setting and actor-level interactions between state and society that sum together to produce the emergent property of legitimacy. Surveys may identify levels of diffuse regime support, but they do not adequately ground or explain those levels in terms of state or social behaviours.

Sandby-Thomas (2014) exposes two theoretical issues with Schubert’s proposed agenda. First, while the micro-political approach might reveal ‘partial legitimacies’ relevant to the specific cases investigated, Schubert does not propose how those partial legitimacies might be summed into an assessment of overall regime legitimacy, which is the property of the political system about which we are mainly interested. Furthermore, it is hard to envisage what a valid summation method would be, since cases of partial legitimacy will span different actor relationships (e.g., elites-cadre, cadre-masses, elites-masses) and since it is reasonable to presume that macro-level legitimacy can be consistent with some measure of micro-level conflict. Which are the cases that count, and which can be safely discounted?

Second, even at the micro-level, ‘legitimacy’ is difficult to operationalize for social scientific investigations that aim to probe more deeply than surveys of public opinion into the state-society relationship. In his own micro-political study Schubert investigated legitimacy along three dimensions: ideology, structure and personal authority. Sandby-Thomas critiques each as unclear and incomplete. For ideology, Schubert focused on the actor-level consequences of a

few formal tropes such as 'Three Represents and Harmonious Society, but offered no rigorous explanation for why these handpicked familiar phrases are an adequate proxy for the role of Official Ideology in shaping public subjectivities. Sandby-Thomas argues that any operationalization of 'legitimacy' is going to be too narrow to meaningfully inform our understanding of it.

In short, Sandby-Thomas contends, Schubert's research agenda into Party-state legitimacy, while important, is unworkable. Either its partial findings will fail to sum up to an understanding of macro-legitimacy, or whatever macro-property it does elucidate will be something narrower than the diffuse property about which we wish to know.

His solution is to abandon the study of regime legitimacy (i.e., the diffuse system property) in favour of *legitimation*, which comprises the dynamic set of processes, programs and discourses by which the Party-state seeks to build regime support among the population. Legitimation research has the virtue of focusing on concrete activities, as opposed to abstract macro properties. It also places the analytic frame squarely upon the state actor. One critique of research into legitimacy that tries to unpack public opinion is the possibility that public opinion may not matter very much to explanations of how the political system works. 'If the elite maintains the discipline of state bureaucrats and the allegiance of Party members, it can withstand challenges from other groups in society, even in periods of economic hardship and social upheaval' (Sandby-Thomas 2014, p. 581).

In a recent response to this critique, Schubert (2014) contends that Sandby-Thomas' solution only obscures a problem that stubbornly remains. Whether a particular legitimation strategy

helps the regime to remain in power depends in some measure upon how the public views that method. '[L]egitimate power needs feedback from the people...What makes [Sandby-Thomas] so certain that the findings from his analysis reflect the shared beliefs of those who are addressed?' (p. 597). Absent an understanding of how Party-state programs and discourses are received by the people, research into these concrete observables does not amount to an empirical test of legitimation.

In this study, I offer a different solution. Rather than abandon the study of legitimacy, I show that it is possible to innovate methodologies that get around the theoretical roadblocks Sandby-Thomas identifies. It *is* possible to distil an official ideological program into a complete set of core beliefs, rather than essentialize it into a few formal, discrete elements. It *is* possible to capture the public's subjective sense-makings of that program in ways that higher-level quantitative surveys miss, and it *is* possible to elucidate from that understanding something more than 'partial legitimacy'—namely, the global discourse space which the public occupies when expressing its support (or lack thereof) for the present political order.

2.1.3 Ideological diversity is only weakly understood

In evaluating the link between ideology and the Party-state's legitimacy, diversity is a key variable. Diversity informs the prospect of alternative claims of legitimacy—such as procedures (e.g., voting), tradition or supernatural authority—gaining public traction. As I argued at §1.3, there are good reasons to expect to find diversity, and as I will show in Chapter Four, even within the state-managed field of producers' political discourse, Chinese intellectuals, both Party and non-Party, promote significantly different ideas about the proper relationship between the state and the people. All accept one-Party rule for the present, but

they diverge significantly in their arguments as to the agenda such authority ought to pursue.

The question then becomes, with which sets of ideas does the public find affinity?

Understanding better the diversity and content of the public's political belief sets is the first step to answering this question. Unfortunately, despite its potential explanatory contributions, the variety and content of ideological affinities among the Chinese public is a weakly understood aspect of contemporary politics.

The situation is improving. The Asian Barometer (since 2002) and World Values Survey (since 1990), two multi-country omnibus surveys, both supply national-level survey data on Chinese political and cultural values, and Manion (2008) points to a growing field of domestic political attitudes surveys and analyses. After only two such surveys in the 1980s, in the 1990s the industry of political attitudes research produced over 60 books and articles on contemporary political attitudes, not counting a larger number concentrated on economic and sociological attitude research. Moreover, self-censorship no longer seems to be the obstacle it once was. The evidence suggests that such self-reports are sufficiently reliable to be taken seriously (Manion 1994, Shi Tianjian 1996, Tang Wenfang 2005), and Wang Shaoguang (2008c) found that two-thirds of respondents are open to discussing politics with other people. Among the reluctant remainder, the most frequently cited reasons were a lack of interest in politics or a belief that engaging in such discussions yielded no benefit. Fear of official reprisal did not appear to be a factor.⁶

⁶ Follow-up conversations by myself with research participants in 2014 and 2015 suggest that the more aggressive public monitoring under the Xi-Li administration may have heightened such fears. Fresh research into this question is warranted.

However, this growing body of empirical research has *not* illuminated the range and content of ideological diversity, for two reasons. First, as Schubert (2008) warned, survey data offers a very narrow empirical base upon which to understand people's views on complex, multidimensional concepts. Second, much of this work has been conducted *within* an ideological frame: it aims to test for the public presence of, or attitudes toward, specific beliefs rather than to explore the variety of belief sets that have been instilled or adopted. The consequence is that alternative belief sets, as well as subjective differences in the meaning of political terms used, are under-explored from the theoretical design stage onward.

This is most clearly demonstrated by research on democratization. Manion (2008) observed that more than 50% of published articles based on survey work in China focus on attitudes toward democratization. Chu Yunhan and Huang Minhua's (2010) investigation of why the Chinese public consistently expresses high levels of support for democracy epitomizes the ideological blind spots that such research can reinforce. Using Asian Barometer data, they compare respondents' professed support for 'democracy' with their support for other liberal-democratic values (such as political equality and the separation of powers) to produce a four-part typology. See Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Chu and Huang's (2010) typology of democratic orientation

		Support for Democracy	
		Low	High
Support for Liberal-Democratic Values	Low	Non-Democrats 19.3%	Superficial Democrats 41.6%
	High	Critical Democrats 12.6%	Consistent Democrats 22.5%

Their research suggests that 22.5% of respondents, ‘Consistent Democrats’, have adopted a political belief set that is similar, in major respects, with liberal democratic ideology. But it obscures, rather than illuminates, the belief sets of the overwhelming (77.5%) majority, who are identified only by what they are not. Fully 41.6% of respondents are found to be ‘Superficial Democrats’. Given the above discussion of ideological diversity’s implications, it would be more useful to know: Of what beliefs are they *authentic* advocates? With what alternative belief set(s) do ‘Critical Democrats’ or ‘Non-Democrats’ identify? Considering the contents of their various belief sets as a whole, are the differences among them best represented by four separate categories, as the democracy lens suggests, or does that lens blur other similarities and differences that are better summarized in another conceptual framework?

My research will help answer these questions.

2.2 Why study the emerging middle class?

2.2.1 The emerging middle class is weakly defined

In this work, ‘emerging’ refers first to an age demographic. I focus my research upon people born between approximately 1970 and 1990. Subjects born in this period were between approximately 20 and 40 years old at the start of the study. While no clear consensus appears about how to define generations in China, the age bracket I define is a familiar one to studies of Chinese politics. It coincides roughly with Erickson’s (2009) ‘Generation Y’ or Sun Jiaming and Wang Xun’s (2010) ‘economic reform generation’. Approximately 30% of the Chinese population falls within it (World Bank 2013).

Two theories of why age matters to people’s political thinking are relevant to my decision to focus on this age bracket. One is a cohort effect. Each generation grows up in different social, economic, political and cultural contexts and is socialized into different values and beliefs during their formative years. These remain relatively stable within a given cohort, but value change takes place in society because newer cohorts eventually replace older ones (Inglehart 1971, Baker and Inglehart 2000, Tan Ern Ser and Wang Zhengxu 2007).

The upper boundary of my age range for this study is set with this cohort effect in mind. The intention is to capture a population segment that (a) has been heavily exposed during its formative years to the changing Reality and Producer contexts described in §1.3, and (b) has ample future opportunity to carry its differences forward into social roles and life choices that may have political relevance.

Wang Zhengxu (2010) labels people in a similar age bracket as ‘post-reform’ citizens. Deng Xiaoping’s Reform and Opening, pronounced in 1977, marks the introduction of market economics into the mainland economy and the beginning of a staged withdrawal from state socialism. It also marks the re-introduction of ideological diversity into mainland intellectual discourse, as well as the beginning of aggressive importation of foreign economic and political thought. People born substantially before the promulgation of the Reform and Opening—in their late 40s and older at the beginning of this study—grew up with very different formative experiences and in very different choice environments, and therefore constitute a different cohort.

A second theory of why age matters is an adult learning effect. After their formative years, people develop new values and attitudes through the distinctive experiences they gain as a result of their individual life choices and their consequences (Ike 1973; Van Lange, De Bruin et al. 1997). For example, people immersed in a market form of economics which they had not experienced before may acquire values that are conducive to market exchange.

Adult learning informs the lower age boundary for this study, which excludes people below the age of admission to higher education. The age of admission to higher education is offered as a proxy for intellectual maturity; people below this age have had relatively limited opportunity to make life plans and choices that could reveal—or challenge them to reflect upon—their political beliefs.



‘Emerging’ refers, second, to the unsettled state of China’s socio-economic or class structure. Social science invokes the concept of class in order to elucidate broad patterns of social

action—to help us recognize that, and understand why, a large cluster of individuals in society may behave similarly (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992). Whether a ‘middle class’ exists, and how it ought to be defined, are fiercely debated questions in Chinese studies. ‘A virtual cottage industry of books and articles’ has emerged to quantify and describe China’s middle class even as it struggles with these two fundamental issues (Rosen 2004, p. 28).

Part of the problem is that the language and concepts of social stratification carry heavy ideological baggage. In traditional Chinese society, class was a function of birth or education (the latter reflected the Confucian notion that the best educated were the best qualified to rule) (Guo Gang 2005). In the aftermath of the Communist revolution, however, class took on a very different meaning. ‘Class’ (阶级) is a central concept within Marxist ideology, which sees the demarcation of different classes within society not as an act of social scientific explanation, but as evidence of society’s failure to realize the human potential of all its members. Class distinctions mark the exploitation of one social group by another, and the political and moral objective of Marxism is to eliminate such exploitation by realizing a classless society (Hunt 1974). The latter half of the 20th century saw the Party-state wage a war on class as understood in these Marxist terms, reshaping and dismantling institutions that generated socioeconomic differences and staking its right to rule on the virtues of doing so.

This war on class was reversed under the Reform and Opening. Socioeconomic differences were no longer seen as intolerable. Instead, they became part of the incentive mechanism that urged economic development (Li He 2006a). For example, mass education programs were scrapped in favour of the reestablishment of an elitist education system aimed at producing a cohort of economic modernizers (Sheng Jin 2000). As the goal of class revolution was

abandoned, the Party-state and Chinese social scientists shifted their conceptual language away from ‘classes’ to ‘strata’ (阶层) (Anagnost 2008). The new language enabled them to study and respond to social stratification, while sidestepping the legitimacy conundrum that its resurgence entailed for an avowedly Marxist Party-state (Wu Xiaotao 2005).

2.2.1.1 *The debate over middle class definitions*

Any empirical study of the middle class has to deal with the basic issue of how to define it. Class boundaries chosen by social science always contain some arbitrariness—a methodological problem that is magnified under conditions of rapid social and economic change such as contemporary China experiences (Johnston 2004). Conceptual definitions of the middle class comprise two broad theoretical camps: the subjective approach (Centers 1949, Kamieniecki and O’Brien 1984) and the objective approach (Lipset 1968, Coburn and Edwards 1976, Wright 1997).

The subjective approach sees individuals’ self-concept or self-identification of social status as the main driver of social stratification. Self-identification with membership of a particular social class, it is argued, shapes a person’s political attitudes, motivations and participation (Walsh, Jennings et al. 2004). Virtually all theoretical work on the political behaviour of the middle class implicitly or explicitly assumes some sort of self-identification on the part of the social agent with a particular socioeconomic circumstance. Therefore, the subjective approach offers the most direct linkage between theory and evidence.

Nonetheless, few studies on the Chinese middle class take a subjective approach. One practical explanation may be that subjective studies often involve difficult and expensive qualitative data

gathering. Chen Jie and Lu Chunlong (2006) theorized a sociological explanation. The notion of a middle class takes time to develop within a population. However, they argued, prior to 1978 all references in China to class were dominated by a Marxist ideology within which the middle class had no role. Even since the introduction of the Reform and Opening, the government has given little recognition to the concept of a middle class, and so the Chinese public has had very little opportunity to form a subjective understanding of what the middle class is and who constitutes it.⁷ Class identity formation is further obstructed by party-State-imposed limits on autonomous association, media and other idea institutions such as universities (Li He 2003). Since the domestic discourse environment lends itself either to poor perception or misperception of the middle class, Chen and Lu advocated objective measures.

The objective approach posits a different chain of causality: subjective self-concepts are driven by objective socioeconomic differences in income, occupation or education levels (Featherman, Jones et al. 1975). Those who occupy some middle range on the index or middling categories on the ordinal scale are designated the middle class.

A number of studies have identified the Chinese middle class by income. Goodman (1999) defined a middle class person as one earning a wage of RMB 5,000 to 6,000 per month in the more developed South or East China region, or someone earning RMB 3,500 to 4,500 in the less developed West. Johnston (2004) considered the household to be the appropriate unit of

⁷ This view is corroborated by Li Chunling, who found that two-thirds of the people he interviewed in Hunan in 1995 could not distinguish classes in society and could not say whether they belonged to the middle class. See:

Li Chunling 李春玲 (2003b). “当前中国人的社会分层意识 (The Social Stratum Consciousness of Contemporary Chinese People).” *湖南社会科学 Hunan Social Science* 2003(5): 76-79.

analysis, and more modestly situated the middle class among those households with monthly incomes of RMB 3,000 or more. Ming Ruifeng and Yang Yiyong (1997) judged the middle class household income threshold to be RMB 2,500 per month at that time. Zheng Hangsheng and Li Lulu (2004) set a broad, nation-wide middle class income bracket of RMB 1,000 to 10,000 per month, or RMB 2,000 to 20,000 for Beijing residents. Official definitions include a 2002 Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) report which marked the middle income stratum at RMB 2,000 to 3,000 per month (RMB 4,000 to 6,600 per month per family) (Lu Xueyi 2002), and a 2005 National Bureau of Statistics survey which marked middle-income households as those earning monthly incomes of RMB 5,000 to 42,000 (Xinhua 2005a).

These income approaches to defining the middle class are vulnerable to a variety of criticisms. First, reliable personal income data is difficult to obtain. Reported and actual incomes may vary widely, particularly in white-collar professional occupations (where tax evasion is not uncommon) (Chen Jie 2004). Second, incomes vary significantly from region to region within mainland China, and so the definition of index boundaries must be region-specific (Li Chunling 2003a). This multiplies the arbitrariness inherent within the quantitative model. Third, class boundaries must be updated frequently to reflect China's rapid economic development and personal wealth expansion, such that even stratifications built upon reliable data may be out-of-date by the time they are published (Wang Xin 2008). A 2014 report by the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics reports the average income across all Beijing employees to be RMB 77,560 per year, or RMB 6,463 per month (Patrick Li 2015).

In order to overcome these issues of measuring and delineating Chinese incomes, many researchers have turned toward more stable qualitative metrics, especially occupational

classifications such as white-collar professional, private entrepreneur, managerial personnel, wage labourer and so forth. Stratifying society by occupation has many practical advantages. Occupations are much easier to detect and more constant across regions than personal income, and their categorical nature helps simplify somewhat the problem of picking demarcation points (Chen Jie and Lu Chunlong 2006).

Theoretically, an argument can also be made that occupation groups are a good proxy for qualitatively distinctive socioeconomic attributes (Oppenheimer 1985, p. 7). For example, Liu Zuyun and Hu Rong (2006) argued that occupation is a useful proxy for one's position in power structures in China. The middle class is meant to describe a stratum of society that can exert some influence upon the upper or leadership strata. A university professor in China may rank below quantitative middle income thresholds, but such classification arguably underrepresents his or her scope of social action and influence.

Several stratifications by occupation have been proposed. Li He (2003) suggested that five job categories represent the Chinese middle class: scientific development entrepreneurs, Chinese managerial staff working in foreign firms in China, mid-level managerial staff in state-owned financial institutions, professional technicians in various fields, and some self-employed private entrepreneurs. Chen and Lu (2006) set the middle class occupations to be private entrepreneurs of small or medium businesses, managerial personnel, and white-collar professionals. (In their three-class typology, senior personnel within state bureaucracies and private entrepreneurs of large businesses form the upper class, while the lower class comprises service workers, industry workers, and the unemployed.) The Chinese Academy of Social Science, in its report from a 2001 national survey, defined ten social strata by occupation,

including a ‘middle-income’ grouping composed of: owners of private enterprises, business professionals, managers, government officials, university professors and school teachers, technicians, and ‘specialists’ (Lu Xueyi 2002). The different groupings yield broadly consistent estimates of the overall size of the middle class: 15% of respondents in Chen and Lu’s typology versus 11% under the CASS version. The CASS study projected the middle income population to number 100 million people nationally, growing 20% per year.

The qualitative occupation-based approach is popular in the current literature, however Johnston (2004) noted that the term ‘middle class’ is somewhat of a misnomer when delineated by occupation. Within present-day China these occupation groups are more accurately described as an elite, in terms of living standards and consumption, given the wide gulf between their incomes and those of unskilled and low skilled labor.

In summary, little is settled in the literature regarding the structure of the Chinese middle class; its existence and its definition are debated. It matters to social science which definition is used. For example, Tang Min, Woods et al. (2009) found the Chinese middle class prefers democratic forms of government versus autocratic forms, but only if such middle class is defined subjectively by self-identification or objectively by occupation. Defined by income, the middle class betrayed no statistically significant preference either way. Unsurprisingly, therefore, even less is settled regarding the individual-level perspective—the values and political attitudes—of its membership. The prevailing working hypothesis from the structural level is that the Chinese middle class, however defined, is either opposed to or indifferent about democracy and other political reforms (Pearson 1997, Goodman 1999, Chen An 2002).

However Wang Xin (2008, p. 59) notes that ‘there is little systematic data available’ from individual-level studies to support such conclusions.

Definitional uncertainties aside, the term nonetheless usefully directs attention toward a segment of the Chinese population that has been transformed by political, social and economic change since the Reform and Opening. It is a segment marked by increasing consumption power and choice, education, and contact with foreign goods, capital, people and ideas. As this study is primarily concerned with the middle class as invoked and shaped by Party-state ideology, for my purposes it is the Party-state’s conception of the middle class that takes precedence over other definitions. I operationalize the term accordingly in Chapter Five.

2.2.2 The middle class is an important audience to Official Ideology and major alternatives

The middle class is a theoretically and ideologically important population segment. Since Aristotle, western political theory has placed a special weight of expectations for political action upon the middle class. The middle class is seen as democracy’s primary advocate in a pluralist society (Moore 1993). According to Aristotle, a large and prosperous middle class stands as a moderating influence between the interests of the poor and the rich, the latter of which would otherwise press their power advantage to tyrannically exploit the former (Decornez 1998).

In the 20th century, with the beginning of the Cold War, western social scientists began to build theories and evidence to show how this democratizing influence of the middle class may produce regime change in non-democratic societies. The father of this field, Seymour Lipset, postulated what has since been labeled modernization theory. Lipset argued that economic,

social and cultural changes displaced traditional beliefs and practices with more modern ones based on scientific rationality, and that these modernizing societies would push for democratic institutions in order to realize their diverse personal agendas (Lipset 1959, Deutsch 1961). In short, economic growth breeds democracies. Much research since Lipset has problematized his seminal conclusion. Przeworski and Limongi (1997) analyzed economic growth and political regime data between 1960 and 1990 to argue persuasively that modernization theory fails to hold in practice. Economic growth is a poor predictor for democratic reform; reform events could be observed at every level of development in their cross-country dataset. However, the level of economic development, measured as per capita income, proved to be an excellent predictor of the *survivability* of such events or reforms. Democratic reforms in relatively more developed countries were more likely to stick.

Huber, Rueschemeyer et al. (1993) refined this result further. They argued in their review of democratization movements in Latin and Central America that it is not rises in per capita income but rather associated changes in the class structure and state-class relations that determine whether democratizing reforms persist. Rustow (1970) followed a similar line of refinement with his finding that the existence of an objectively defined middle class is insufficient to play a democratizing role. The class has to exist subjectively as well—that is, members of society have to see themselves as a middle class with a set of common interests before they can be counted on to fulfil Aristotle's expectations.

Out of this long tradition of class research, a strong conviction has been built in western politics literature that the emergence of a middle class introduces complexities in state-society

relationships and challenges political authority in ways that encourage democratic reforms and help them to stick when they occur.



In the context of the debates on Party-state legitimacy introduced at §2.1.2, the question becomes whether these expectations are relevant to China. The literature does not support the argument that economic development and a middle class lead *necessarily* to a decline in authoritarian legitimacy. Wealthy authoritarian states are not uncommon. Is it safe to assume that the emerging Chinese middle class will force fundamental changes to the relationship between the Party-state and society?

The literature's present answer is mixed. There is certainly evidence that the middle class, variously defined, has political influence. Philip Huang (2008) demonstrated how Party-state policymaking on such major policy questions as the widening wealth gap between the coast and the interior and between cities and the countryside, environmental degradation, and government corruption have all been influenced by pressures originating in this stratum. Johnston (2004) pointed to the influence of middle class opinion upon foreign policy issues ranging from Taiwan to Japan to the treatment of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Wang Shaoguang (2008a) demonstrated how the marketization of Chinese media and diffusion of Internet and mobile technologies have enabled a literate, connected stratum to influence policy agendas and decisions. But the case for middle class influence must not be overstated. As Li He (2006a) observed, the middle class, however it may be defined, remains a minority within contemporary Chinese society, and in recent years unemployed workers and frustrated peasants have been much more likely to engage in political actions such as protest or demonstration.

Moreover, in evaluating the role that the emerging middle class plays, and will play, in China's politics, due consideration must be given to the Party-state's public frame-setting and ideology management capacities. Whereas modernization literature tends to regard the middle class as a stratum evolving under the aegis of institutional guarantees against heavy-handed state interference, research on the Chinese middle class points to a significant Party-state role in shaping both objective stratification by income and occupation, and subjective stratification—that is, how members of the middle class perceive their relationship to power and their common interests within their social stratum (Anagnost 2008). The development of the Chinese middle class is in many ways dependent upon the Party-state's patronage, which acts variously as employer, financier and regulator to a great many of the class's members (Goldman 2005, Li He 2006a).

Propaganda also plays a role. Many Party-state-run public education programs have been enacted during the Reform and Opening, to engineer morals and values among the emerging economically well-off and to encourage them to respond cooperatively, rather than competitively, in the face of state power (Chen An 2002, Heberer 2009). Vickers (2009) noted how, in order to earn the allegiance of upwardly mobile young people, official rhetoric within compulsory politics courses for all students in middle school and high school de-emphasized the Party's increasingly untenable socialist agenda and instead raised patriotic themes of nationalism and called for the sober, experienced hand of the Party to guide the country through the difficult modernization process.

Rather than allow an emerging middle class to find its own identity, perhaps one that wrestles against state power as western theorists anticipate, the Party aims to engineer that identity into one supportive of its leadership and objectives (Tomba 2004). It sees the development of a cohort of educated, white-collar consumers whose lifestyle is dependent upon socio-economic modernization and stability as an integral component of its bid to establish legitimacy as a post-revolutionary party of good government (Peerenboom 2014).

Whether or not the Party is succeeding in doing so is the same question I posed at §2.1.2 on the maintenance of Party-state legitimacy, which I can now focus upon the middle class. What research to-date has made clear is that the Party takes very seriously the possible political influence of an emerging middle class and is doing much to co-opt this emerging power into the existing political apparatus. Dickson (2007) pointed to Deng Xiaoping's 1992 Southern Tour as a major turning point in the Party's positioning vis-à-vis the emerging middle class, when he signaled a re-softening of Party rhetoric toward entrepreneurs (which had softened after 1978 but hardened again against their perceived involvement in Tiananmen Square). This softening culminated with Party constitutional reforms at the 16th National Congress of the CPC in 2002. There Jiang Zemin promulgated his Three Represents, explicitly widening Party membership to include businessman, small-business owners and entrepreneurs, and arguing that these 'advanced productive forces' were significant contributors to China's modernization and now formed part of the mass whom the Party represented (Wang Xin 2008).

The ultimate success or failure of these efforts to shape the emerging middle class remains to be seen. It is mixed but looks good for the Party. Enrolment among young people is up (Rosen 2004, Dickson 2007), even though the Party's propaganda seemingly fails to connect

with them (Guo Gang 2005, Sato and Eto 2008). Tang Min, Woods et al. (2009) found broad middle class support for democratization and disapproval of autocracy, however a growing body of research disputes this result and suggests the emerging middle class are a pragmatic, conservative bunch. They have benefitted from an era of reform policies that, in sharp contrast to the policies of middle class suppression under Mao, have raised demand for their education and skills, inflated their salaries, and created opportunities for them to accrue social respect and status as expert advisors to the local and central state (So 2013). They have been welcomed into the Party and afforded the improvements in salary, benefits, security and career horizon that membership brings (Dickson 2014). Their interests have been well-served by the present political order—for thirty years, it has validated, improved, and expanded their lifestyle—and so they are primarily interested in securing their gains within it (Pearson 1997, Goodman 2001, Chen Jie 2004, Tomba 2004, Tang Min 2011, Harmel and Tan 2012). In summary, this line of research concludes, ‘China’s combination of state-led development policies, market forces associated with late industrialization, and socialist legacies have given most Chinese citizens good reason to accept the authoritarian political status quo’ (Wright 2010, p. 162). Any revision to the status quo—especially, democratization—may have unpredictable, possibly detrimental results. Both the transition toward a new political order and the subsequent open contest for political authority with the low-skilled majority only offer to make the middle class’ ongoing enjoyment of preferential policies less certain (Unger 2006).

These theorizings about the middle class motivate my own work in two ways. First, they again highlight that the questions I engage remain weakly understood and demand more study.

‘Much has been written at theoretical and abstract levels, but little has been done to empirically reveal the political values and beliefs of the Chinese middle class’ (Tang, Woods et al. 2009, p.

82). Wang Xin (2008, p. 59) concurred: '[T]here is little systematic data available to analyze China's middle income stratum's social values'. Consequently, predictions regarding the middle class' role in the Party-state's future legitimacy or replacement by a democratic alternative remain under-substantiated.

Second, in light of the preceding discussion on ideological diversity and the likelihood of finding it, the 'pragmatism hypothesis', as I call it, is deeply dissatisfying. Assigning a label such as 'moderate' (Cai 2005, So 2013) or 'accepting' (Wright 2010) to the behaviours of the emerging middle class reveals very little about the ideological beliefs of the people behind these behaviours. '[I]deological beliefs may signify material interests; disavow, rationalize or dissemble them; run counter to them; and so on' (Eagleton 1991, pp. 211-212). Pragmatism *may* be evidence that some people have accepted and adopted the policy priorities and arguments of the Party-state by placing urgent economic objectives above messy long-term political questions whose welfare effects are highly uncertain. Perhaps other people reject the Party-state's prioritization of economic development to the exclusion of political values, yet judge that no alternative vision can succeed in the present climate. Pragmatism, like silence, need not signal consent. It may be a front for consent, dissent, resignation, neutral disinterest or a calculated patience for the opportune moment (Scott 1990).

I argue it is more realistic to hypothesize a plurality of middle class viewpoints and that we should pay much more careful attention to the ideational richness and confusions we may find amidst this 'pragmatic' population segment. To the extent that such variety is found, then the notion that the emerging middle class are 'allies of the state' (Chen and Dickson 2009, 2010), however accurate in terms of describing their diffuse or specific supporting behaviours at

present, is incomplete—and would have to be improved upon if we wish to better model regime legitimacy, now and in the future. The presence of significant variety within their ideological discourse would underscore that political allies are not the same as devotees, and that while the latter may be relied upon to support the regime through ebbs and flows in its various claims to legitimacy, not all allies may be so reliable. If their support for the Party-state is purely self-interested—i.e., because it has delivered the goods—then that support is contingent upon the regime continuing to deliver the goods, and is in part contingent upon forces that the Party-state cannot control (such as the global economic situation).

It is only once we probe into the ideological discourses of the emerging middle class that we can start to distinguish true devotees from mere allies. Within their subjective variety may lie a deeper understanding of the legitimacy challenges the Party-state faces and the possible pathways of a uniquely Chinese political future. This study aims to discover and describe that variety.

2.3 Why study China?

More than any other polity, China forces the question: Should we take ideology, and hence ideological diversity, seriously?

Arguably, we do not. Bell (1960) declared that ideology (which he meant pejoratively as rule by irrational ideas) has outlived its usefulness; social science will show technocrats the best way forward, and the only rational choice for policy makers and the public will be to follow along. Fukuyama (1992), who used ‘ideology’ in the social scientific sense, did not declare its end but rather the victory of liberal democracy over its competitors, as evidenced by the collapse of socialism in the former Soviet Union and its managed retreat in China.

We’ve since shied away from such sweeping pronouncements (Decker 2004, Jost 2006), nevertheless a sense of inevitable decline still pervades prevailing conceptions of the Party-state’s legitimacy. In the decade following Tiananmen Square, the primary question for research on Chinese political reform, at least within foreign scholarship, was ‘When will China democratize?’ By the early 2000s, after China had acceded to the WTO and withdrawn the iron rice bowl without social collapse, this frame shifted from understanding when democratization would happen, to understanding why it hadn’t happened yet. ‘Resilient authoritarianism’ (Nathan 2003), one of the most heavily cited conceptions of China’s present political condition, betrays an unwavering expectation. The inevitable force against which the Party-state has proven ‘resilient’ is, of course, modernization’s democratizing influence.

What if the Party-state’s authoritarian legitimacy is not ‘resilient’, but instead self-renewing? If so, political science would need to discard any implicit commitment to an inevitable legitimacy

crisis, and take seriously the possibility that the Party-state is capable of regenerating its legitimacy, by drawing upon different and changing sources to suit different and changing public beliefs. Such a Party-state could enjoy a lasting and renewable right to rule.

This perspective seems to have been largely neglected. If valid, it would have significant consequences for politics, and politics research.

First, it would broaden the scope of inquiry into China's own political future, and demand that we ask questions once deemed improbable or illegitimate, such as 'When will China Confucianize?' or 'When will China realize socialism with Chinese characteristics?' If ideological diversity must be taken seriously, then the latter can no longer be dismissed as an empty formula, but rather must be taken at face value, as an important, unresolved political question in the Chinese context. The Party-state justifies its power monopoly by claiming to direct itself toward this ambiguous end and has reserved for itself the sole authority to declare when it has been achieved. If we need to take ideological diversity seriously, however, the definition of those success conditions ought to become a magnet for political and intellectual contestation.

Second, it would broaden the scope of inquiry into the political futures of other countries. It would strengthen China's claim to offer an alternative model of modernity to other authoritarian states, with potentially significant consequences for those states' modernization pathway and for China's soft power in the world.

Third, and more broadly, it would re-raise the theoretical debate of the particularity versus universality of political systems and values. How deep does diversity go? Is the diversity of political systems in the world today a temporary glitch or a permanent feature of human civilization? Is a ‘global imaginary’ emerging that strengthens the validity of concepts like ‘global justice’, ‘global inequalities’ and ‘world peace’ (Steger 2009, p. 12), or do such concepts disrespect the different value choices being made within different societies?

China is the acid test for whether or not ideological diversity should be taken seriously; the results of that test will inform all of the above. One of first steps to conducting it is to understand better the ideological diversity amongst the Chinese public, to see whether the basis for authoritarian renewal exists in society.

2.3.1 Why Beijing?

By a similar logic, I focus on Beijing as the primary investigation site. I do not claim that Beijing’s emerging middle class is typical or representative of their China-wide peer group. Regional variation in economic development, openness and exchange with the rest of the world, and in political agents and priorities all weigh against treating Beijing as a representative case. A safer assumption is that no such case exists. China’s population is enormous and contains enormous diversity along most dimensions of social science research.

But in the absence of any representative case, Beijing is a particularly useful one. 天高皇帝远, goes the old Chinese adage⁸—roughly, the farther one goes from the centre of power, the less control the centre can exert—and studies suggest that this wisdom has some basis in social

⁸ *Tian gao huangdi yuan*

fact. For example, Chen and Dickson (2010) find that regime support among private entrepreneurs is strongest in Beijing and declines as one travels south.⁹ Moreover, if the emerging middle class is indeed 'pragmatic' and rationally accepting of the Party-state's rule as one of chief beneficiaries of its socio-economic reform policies, then it should be especially so in Beijing, where economic growth has been swift and the practical benefits of a close relationship to the state are most abundant. Finally, with respect to the focus of the present study, the presence in Beijing of the main organs and actors of Party-state ideological production suggests that Beijing is where such production is most heavily advantaged vis-à-vis alternative voices. From all the above it is reasonable to hypothesize that whatever subjective drift away from Official Ideology is found among Beijing's emerging middle class is the baseline, or minimum, of the ideological drift one would expect to find in all other parts of China.

Just as China is the acid test for whether ideological diversity should be taken seriously, Beijing is the acid test for whether the Party-state's efforts to shape the ideological discourse of the emerging middle class are successful. If no discourse diversity is found among them, that is an unsurprising result that further strengthens the emerging view that they are being moulded and co-opted as allies of the state. But to the extent that such diversity can be found even there, it problematizes this observation. It immediately invites a fuller investigation into the diverse value orientations that underlay middle class acquiescence to power, and the potential pitfalls for the regime's ongoing legitimation task—not least because the most reasonable assumption is that even greater, and more vexing, variety exists amongst the middle class everywhere else.

⁹ One theorized explanation for this geographic variation is that northern China's political culture is more traditional, less orientated toward the outside world and thus more attached to the state (Liu 2001).

A second, pragmatic reason to contain my study to Beijing was resource constraints. My fieldwork was largely self-funded and self-staffed, and time-limited. With additional resources, valuable comparative work in cities of different size, level of development, and physical and ideological distance from the centre would no doubt help to complete this partial picture in important ways.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Q Methodology correlates people to discover the range of views on a topic

In any study of political perspectives, a researcher is probably interested to know two things. The first is a description and typology of the different political perspectives that members of the population may adopt or express. The second is the proportion of the population that subscribes to each category.

Q Methodology seeks to separate these two tasks and offer a statistical solution to the former in place of the investigator's own theoretical construct. Q Methodology is a qualitative technique for the categorization of subjective phenomena. Introduced by Stephenson (1935) and adapted to political science by Brown (1980), it translates viewpoints into empirical data via in-depth interviews in which subjects are asked to sort a variety of statements spanning the theoretically established discourse space.

Its name is intended to draw explicit contrast with 'R' methodology, namely the application of regression and other statistical methods to correlate research participants' objective traits with observed participant behaviour (in political science, generally via surveys or questionnaires) (Brown 1972). Q Methodology correlates *participants* in a selected discourse. It employs factor analysis to cluster similar sortings together and thereby identify attitudinal patterns, or categories, which divide the participants into distinct constituencies. The output of a Q Methodology study, therefore, is a statistically validated typology of subjectivity (Cross 2005).

Q Methodology is most widely applied in experimental psychology and sociology (Brown 2011). However, in recent years it has also been deployed in an increasing variety of political studies where more conventional interview and survey techniques are deemed inappropriate or

insufficient (Danielson 2009). Examples include research on political identity (Thomas, McKeown et al. 2004), citizenship (Barry and Proops 2000), voting behaviour (Rhoads and Kinsey 2008), policy impacts (Frantzi, Carter et al. 2009) and policy consultations (Venables, Pidgeon et al. 2009). It has also been used to assess the reliability and construct validity of questionnaire items for use in subsequent ‘R Methodology’ studies (Nahm, Solis-Galvan et al. 2002).

Q Methodology has also been applied to the study of broader political discourses and political culture. For example, Schultze (2010) used Q Methodology to understand varying elite attitudes toward minority policies, majority–minority relations, and language use in Estonian society in the post-EU accession period. Tureanu and Iliescu (2006) explored the diversity of Romanian public opinion on EU accession in a similar study. Pelletier et al. (1999) used Q Methodology to evaluate how participation in democratic deliberation shifts citizens’ attitudes toward public policy questions. Salazar and Alper (2002) examined how the political conceptions of environmentalists both accord and conflict with the agendas of other ‘progressive’ movements.

Q Methodology has also been used in previous studies of public political viewpoints in mainland China. Peng Yali (1998) drew upon Q Methodology to extract four distinctive conceptions of democracy operating within mainland Chinese society. His findings demonstrated the subjective variability overlooked by previous survey research into democratic attitudes. Pu Xiaoyu and Zhang Guang (2007) studied the views of China’s emerging elites regarding the foreign policy implications of China’s economic rise. They identified four distinct orientations and explored the potential influence of each upon China’s

foreign policy direction. The methodology itself has been presented and discussed in the Chinese academy by Zhao Delei and Yue Guo'an (2003). Blecher (2008) applied Q Methodology to uncover the variety of ways in which workers in Tianjin made sense of economic structural reforms during the 1990s. His findings have bearing on the present study, which I discuss under §7.6.2.

3.2 Q's methodology

A Q Methodology study typically proceeds through six stages.

Stage one is to define the discourse to be studied—the ‘concourse’, in Q Methodology literature. It involves the collection of statements from a variety of sources, including for example published papers, books, official statements, articles, and interviews, which express the full range of ideas, opinions, values, and preferences on a selected issue. The selection of sources is driven by the forms of discourse coverage available and the research purpose.

Stage two is to select from this concourse a subset of statements, or ‘Q-set’. The investigator continues to select statements from the discourse until the Q-set has achieved theoretical saturation, such that no more statements can be added which increase the diversity of ideas represented. This stage is similar to elements of grounded theory, wherein sampling of the experimental environment is guided by the researcher’s search for all relevant perspectives (Eden, Donaldson et al. 2005). In complex concourses, prior to sampling the concourse the researcher develops a theoretical model of the diversity in the underlying discourse in order to ensure it is adequately represented. Any framework will do, so long as it comprehensively represents the discourse’s diversity (Brown 1980). Nevertheless, the choice of framework is meaningful. It allows the researcher to state his theoretical position explicitly (Brown 1980). In this study I model the concourse in terms of contesting ideologies. By doing so, I am theorizing that the diversity of viewpoints expressed by the emerging middle class may be conceptualized as ideological contestation.

Typically, a Q-set contains no more than 50 to 70 statements—sufficient to give full representation to the variety within the discourse, yet also manageable for research participants.

The third step is to identify an appropriate set of research participants, referred to in the Q Methodology literature as the ‘P-set’. Again similar to grounded theory, sampling is theory-driven, not random, and the objective is to maximize the diversity of perspectives represented. Because sampling is theoretical, a small sample is sufficient to yield statistically valid results. Barry and Proops (2000) found that in a Q-set of 35 statements, as few as 12 research participants were sufficient to accurately identify the complete range of subjective positions revealed by a larger, $n > 70$ study.

In stage four, members of the P-set individually conduct a Q-sort, which involves scoring the Q-set statements on a spectrum, typically from -5 to +5 for large sets, representing ‘most disagree’ to ‘most agree’, respectively. The precise sorting instructions may vary: some researchers allow participants to distribute the statements freely; others advocate forcing a normal distribution upon the participant to clarify the extremities of their attitudinal positions. In practice, the distribution rule has no significant effect on the subsequent statistical analysis, which is more heavily influenced by the ordering of statements than skewness. Q-sorts may be conducted in private, in person with the investigator, or online using one of several web-based Q-sorting programs available.

Stage five submits the completed Q-sorts to factor analysis. Whereas traditional factor analysis attempts to collapse multiple variables into a smaller set of underlying causes of model

variability, in Q Methodology the aim is to collapse individuals—to cluster similar sortings together and thereby identify a smaller set of underlying viewpoints within the P-set. Common methods of factor analysis used include Principal Components Analysis and Centroid Analysis. As with traditional factor analysis, once the initial factors have been calculated the researcher may rotate the factors via Varimax or judgmental rotation to clarify factor loadings and elucidate a clearer set for interpretation.

Several rules have been applied within the Q literature to select factors for inclusion within the final factor model. Common acceptance criteria include: an eigenvalue > 1.0 , also known as the Kaiser criterion (McKeown and Thomas 1988); Cattell's Scree test, which plots factor eigenvalues and discards all factors on the asymptotic 'long tail' (Venables, Pidgeon et al. 2009); and that a minimum of two participants' Q-sorts load significantly and uniquely upon each retained factor (Watts and Stenner 2005).

The sixth and final stage involves interpreting the factor analysis results. Each retained factor represents a subjective sense-making of the concourse, and the investigator can analyze and synthesize the Q-set statements associated with each factor to give the factor a thick description and lay out areas of consensus and opposition with other positions in factor space. The investigator typically conducts follow-up interviews with those research subjects who loaded particularly strongly onto the retained factors in order to confirm interpretations and develop them further.

3.3 Why use Q Methodology?

Q Methodology's strengths align well with the specific nature of my research question.

First, ideologies, according to the definition adopted in this study, are subjective phenomena.

They are, to reiterate, 'collectively sustained...subjective mental constructs' (Benabou 2008). Q Methodology was developed specifically to study subjectivity.

Second, because the aim of this study is to uncover the diversity of these subjective constructs, it is important that the research method give primary place to the sense-makings of the participants themselves, rather than merely test whether their views confirm some pre-conceived theoretical constructs of the researcher. Provided the Q-set and P-set are properly constructed (see Chapter Five), Q Methodology enables the researcher to query the subjective constructs of respondents without imposing predefined categories upon them; they are free to impose their own structure upon the Q-set via their sorting decisions (Cuppen, Breukers et al. 2010).

Third, Q Methodology offers a response to some of the methodological barriers the literature identifies with respect to researching linkages between ideology and legitimacy. Whereas other approaches to evaluating this link are indirect (i.e., they infer a measure of legitimacy from either the legitimization activities of the state or by studying specific cases of state-society interaction), Q Methodology offers the possibility of making a broad but direct assessment of the correspondence or dissonance between Official Ideology and the political discourse(s) of its intended audience. It brings empirical data to the question of whether, recalling Beetham

(1991), the established rules ‘can be justified by reference to beliefs *shared* by both dominant and subordinate’.

Q Methodology also offers some more general advantages. Most research on political attitudes or beliefs in China follows one of two methods—and both suffer from significant methodological drawbacks. The first is in-depth interviews with a limited number of subjects.¹ Bias is always a potential problem for such studies, since the interviewer’s interpretation of what was meant by what was said is unconstrained by measurement rules (Bryman 2008). It is especially problematic when the political culture of the researcher and the research subjects differ, as is the case for foreign scholars working on China. More generally, such research methods introduce a high risk of subjective misalignment. Differences between the researcher’s and the interviewee’s cognitive frameworks render communication errors and misinterpretation possible, if not probable. In part for these reasons, it is also very hard to duplicate the results of small-*n* in-depth interviews, making it difficult to demonstrate the validity of conclusions drawn. In Q Methodology, however, the researcher’s interpretation of the participants’ responses is constrained by quantitative rules of correlation and statistical significance. No attitudinal perspective can be derived that is not represented in the Q-sort data. Q Methodology results are also more easily replicated and tested for reliability and

¹ See, for example, Faure’s study of values in post-industrial China via 73 in-depth interviews:

Faure, Guy Olivier (2008). “Chinese Society and Its New Emerging Culture.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 17(56): 469-491.

See also Guiheux’s analysis of 18 laid-off workers-turned-entrepreneurs:

Guiheux, Gilles (2007). “The Promotion of a New Calculating Chinese Subject: The Case of Laid-Off Workers Turning into Entrepreneurs.” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 16(50): 149-171.

validity. A test-retest reliability of 0.80 or above is common in Q Methodology studies (Brown 1980, 1993). This test-retest reliability also makes Q Methodology a useful tool for longitudinal studies of attitudinal shift.²

The second method is large-*n* surveys or questionnaires that aim to identify statistically generalizable patterns of behaviour or expression.³ Again, the subjective nature of the object under study poses methodological obstacles. A survey is constructed with theorized behavioural categories and pre-determined correlations between the response given and the meaning inferred. If done prematurely,⁴ this structuring runs the risk of imposing the investigator's conceptions upon the research participants and obscuring categories and meanings that the survey is not designed to recognize. Secondly, the close-ended data derived from large-*n* omnibus surveys makes it difficult for a researcher targeting a specific discourse

² See, for example:

Thomas, Dan B. and Larry R. Baas (2008). "The Mutable Mandate: Crafting the Constructed Message, Meaning, and Strategic Subjectivity in the Post-Election Campaign for 2004." *Operant Subjectivity* **31**: 2-37.

³ Such large-*n* studies are numerous. See, for example:

Chan's examination of Chinese political culture using data from the World Values Survey, Chan, Steve (2008). "Chinese Political Attitudes and Values in Comparative Context: Cautionary Remarks on Cultural Attributions." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* **13**(2): 225-248.

Han and Zweig's study of the foreign policy attitudes of students returning from overseas, Han Donglin and David Zweig (2010). "Images of the World: Studying Abroad and Chinese Attitudes Towards International Affairs." *China Quarterly* **202**: 290-306.

Shi and Lou's study of middle class perceptions of political change using data from the Asian Barometer Survey, Shi Tianjian and Lou Diqing (2010). "Subjective Evaluation of Changes in Civil Liberties and Political Rights in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* **19**(63): 175-199.

⁴ i.e., prior to undertaking an empirical study to elucidate such categories

to claim a robust understanding of multi-faceted and often messy viewpoints that respondents actually hold on complex political questions. Nevertheless, many attempt to do so.⁵

In addition, survey-based studies often make intersubjective comparisons using data drawn from an ordinal scale that are not theoretically defensible. If subject A ‘agrees’ and subject B ‘strongly agrees’ with the statement ‘I am more free now than I was ten years ago’, is it the case that B’s agreement is greater than A’s? No, unless A and B have similar frames of reference. If, however, A is a recently released political prisoner, A’s ‘agree’ may count for more.

In contrast to large-*n* surveys, Q Methodology enables construction of a fuller picture of the content of each discourse: its identity, core beliefs and areas of consensus and contention with other discourses. And because respondents are asked to rank each statement in the Q-set against all others, the Q-set itself becomes a common frame of reference that makes intersubjective comparisons valid.

⁵ See, for example:

Tang Min, Dwayne Woods, et al. (2009). “The Attitudes of the Chinese Middle Class Towards Democracy.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* **14**(1): 81-95.

3.4 Criticisms and caveats

Q Methodology does bring with it important limitations. The main caveat is that elucidating a typology of discourses does not permit the investigator to say what proportion of the population subscribes to each discourse. Theory-driven selection of the P-set prevents such statistical generalizations. Such generalization would be possible if the P-set were formed via random sampling, however research rarely follows this design. Aside from the theoretical concern that such a P-set may not adequately represent the underlying variety within the discourse studied, random sampling for a P-set is an inefficient use of research resources. Because each interview needs to collect extensive data on participants' preference-rankings, Q Methodology is mentally taxing and time-intensive. A face-to-face appointment with a practiced test administrator is typically needed to generate sufficient commitment from each respondent to complete the process (Danielson 2009). 'Administering Q-sorts is a clumsy way to count noses' (Brown 1980, p. 18). More efficient would be a two-stage research design, which I illustrate at §9.5.

The second criticism concerns reliability. Given different theoretically sampled statements administered to different participants of the same discourse, do the same factors emerge? A recent affirmative answer comes from Nicholas (2011), who performs a pair of studies and independently derives factors from each that correlate at 0.89. This is not the first or final word on the question, and more published tests of Q Methodology's reliability would be helpful. Cross (2005) emphasized that reliability depends upon a well constructed Q-set that represents adequately the diversity of the discourse. 'People can tell a story only if they have the appropriate statements with which to tell it' (Cross 2005, p. 212). To ensure that this condition is met, some Q Methodology studies task two or more investigators, working

separately, to each develop a theoretical model for the concourse and then iterate with each other and with test subjects until all are satisfied with the concourse structure's representativeness.⁶ This twin investigator approach was not suitable here.

Careful theory-driven concourse construction prompts charges of circularity: by defining the concourse which in turn guides the selection of Q-set statements, the investigator is biasing the factor analysis to mirror the initial concourse design. This is a serious charge, but one based on a misunderstanding of the methodology. First, the framework is hidden from the research participant. Once it has been used to produce a broad, balanced sample of the concourse, the framework is discarded and the statements are randomized.

Second, it has been shown that the precise theoretical framework used to construct the sample has no statistically significant impact upon the final factor analysis results, so long as it adequately represents the concourse's diversity (Brown 1980, pp. 186-194). Whatever theoretical framework is used to construct the sample, the research participant is left with a very large number of possible ways to sort it. (In the present study, a research participant can sort the sample of 65 statements across 11 categories in any of 5.1×10^{58} unique ways.)

Given the astronomically large number of possible sorts, any correspondence found between the theoretical framework used to construct the sample and the final data analysis is a useful result rather than a methodological flaw. It indicates that the researcher's in-going hypothesis

⁶ See, for example:

Cuppen, Eefje, Sylvia Breukers, et al. (2010). "Q Methodology to Select Participants for a Stakeholder Dialogue on Energy Options from Biomass in the Netherlands." *Ecological Economics* **69**(3): 579-591.

of the discourse's structure was a good one. But often, the in-going theoretical framework and the outcome differ in illuminating ways. Wong and Sun's (1998) study of Taiwanese national identity discourse is considered a seminal example. Their concourse construction followed a tripartite attitudinal typology of 'unification / status quo / independence', support for which had been tested by a large number of previous surveys. However, their factor analysis revealed the actual discourse comprised five distinct perspectives: Chinese nationalism, status quo, confused identity, Taiwan prioritism and Taiwanese nationalism. Each perspective was separately formed, motivated and advocated, but survey work built upon the tripartite typology had failed to elucidate them.

A final criticism of Q Methodology is that the factor analysis stage is open to wide interpretation and manipulation. Published Q Methodology studies rarely present alternative factor solutions supported by the data, and rules for selecting factors, such as the Kaiser and Scree tests, are ultimately arbitrary (De Graaf and Van Exel 2008).

This is a valid and important criticism, albeit one shared by all applications of factor analysis. The best the researcher can do is to abide by accepted standards of factor significance and report completely for peer scrutiny the data handling procedures followed to move from raw factor scores to the final set of factors retained for interpretation. I do so in Chapter Six.

3.5 The need for a theoretical framework to guide concourse sampling

‘The level of the discourse dictates the sophistication of the concourse’ (Brown 1993, p. 95).

For Q Methodology studies of a small, clearly bounded concourse, for example the views of senior officials at a particular ministry about a particular meeting, the concourse can be assembled by speaking to all event participants and gathering each person’s views on the topic.

In studies where the concourse has very broad boundaries, such as Schulze’s (2010) study of Estonian views toward the EU and Russia or Frantzi, Carter et al.’s (2009) study of perceived environmental regime effectiveness, a sampling approach toward assembling the concourse is required. For the present study the full concourse is very large and includes, for starters, all relevant statements contained within print and online newspapers (especially their editorial sections), magazines, television, blogs, tweets, speeches, books and articles published or broadcast in mainland China. It also includes all relevant views expressed by my target demographic group. Most of these latter views go unrecorded, however by conducting interviews within my target demographic I could in principle record as many such statements as resources allow.

As with sampling people in survey research, the main goal in selecting a sample of this concourse is to construct a miniature that, in major respects, reflects the diversity of the larger process being modelled. The sample should cover the major topics and major debates of the concourse. This representativeness is achieved by first modelling the statement population theoretically, then sampling the concourse until the theoretical model is saturated with statements (Watts and Stenner 2012, p. 59).

Note that random sampling is not appropriate for this task. Random sampling could deliver a sample that is representative of different *prima facie* kinds of statement in the concourse—say, blog posts vs. newspaper editorials vs. public speeches. But without a prior theoretical framework to give the statements semantic structure, it could not deliver a sample that is representative of the different meanings in the concourse.

3.5.1 Methodological considerations for framework design

Prior Q Methodology studies of political discourse have faced a similar task of drawing a broad, balanced sample from a very large concourse. Several have employed the framework advanced by Dryzek and Berejikian (1993).⁷ The rationale behind Dryzek and Berejikian's framework is that any statement in a political concourse can be analyzed along two dimensions. The first dimension is the discourse element the statement evokes. Dryzek (1988) identified four possibilities: an ontology (e.g., individuals, classes, nations, interests); a degree of agency; a motive (either recognized or denied); or a conception of the nature of political relationships. The second dimension is the type of claim being made: definitive (concerning the meaning of terms); designative (concerning questions of fact); evaluative (concerning the worth of something); or advocative (concerning what should be done). This two-dimensional 4x4 framework yields 16 cells. By sampling the concourse until all cells are populated with

⁷ See, for example:

Dryzek, John S. (1994). "Australian Discourses of Democracy." *Australian Journal of Political Science* **29**(2): 221-239.

Barry, John and John Proops (1999). "Seeking Sustainability Discourses with Q Methodology." *Ecological Economics* **28**(3): 337-345.

Peng Yali (1998). "Democracy and Chinese Political Discourses." *Modern China* **24**(4): 408-444.

many examples and then randomly selecting n statements from each cell, the researcher generates a sample of the concourse comprising $16n$ statements that cover all syntactical possibilities.

The two apparent virtues of this framework are portability and objectivity. Because the framework is independent of the content of the concourse, it can be applied to any political concourse of interest. By focusing on the syntax of each statement rather than its meaning, the researcher minimizes selection bias in concourse sampling.

However, this latter virtue is also the framework's flaw. Q Methodology is the study of subjectivity. The sampling framework should seek semantic, not syntactical, coverage. The sample of the concourse should cover the range of meanings being expressed, so that when a research participant is handed the sample and asked to sort it she is able to express her own thinking on the topic. A sampling framework that is blind to the meaning of the statements being sampled will only offer coverage in this latter sense in one of two ways: (1) by luck, or (2) if the sampling is guided by some additional theory or intuition not made explicit by this analytic framework. I find neither acceptable and therefore advance my own theoretical framework.

The tangential question arises: Why has the Dryzek and Berejikian framework been used and published in previous Q Methodology studies of political discourse, despite its mistaken focus on syntax? I speculate one reason may be to protect such Q Methodology studies from accusations of circularity. If a theoretical framework is used to select some statements for the sample and exclude others, and the study ultimately finds support for the theoretical

framework behind the dataset, isn't it simply the case that the theoretical filter has predetermined the results?

Rather than sidestep this critique with a *prima facie* bias-free framework, it should be confronted directly (see §3.4, above).

3.6 Toward a framework drawn from producers' ideological discourse

The framework I advance is not generic but rather specific to producers' ideological discourse in contemporary China. It rests upon a distinction offered by Freedman (1996) between political theory discourse and ideological discourse. Political theory is an open-ended discourse arena. The objects of discourse are political concepts—terms such as liberty, justice and equality—which he deems 'essentially contestable' because they may be understood in many different ways, none of which can logically or conclusively be established as the single correct meaning (p. 54). The purpose of political theory discourse is to explore the possible interpretations and arrangements that these concepts can assume. Ideological discourse, by contrast, is motivated not to discover the boundaries of a political concept, but to assert a fixed meaning, or conception, upon it. An ideology, according to Freedman, is a distinctive collection of such assertions that relate to each other, support each other, and together promote a distinctive political agenda (pp. 1-9). This intentionality distinguishes ideological discourse from political discourse generally (Eagleton 1991, p. 194).

The theoretical framework I advance is a map of the major ideologies promoted within contemporary Chinese producers' ideological discourse, and the main assertions made by each. Once each ideology and its main assertions have been identified, I can sample the discourse until each assertion is represented by several statements, then randomly select one statement representing each assertion for inclusion in my Q-set. I identify and analyze four major ideologies within producers' discourse—Official Ideology, Liberalism, New Left and Political Confucianism—in Chapter Four.

Any sample thus formed will, I believe, offer a broad and balanced snapshot of the concourse. Embedded in this approach is the hypothesis that the range of ideological views promoted within producers' discourse captures the complete range of public thinking about the values and beliefs that ought to guide Chinese politics. I soften my sampling method's dependence on this hypothesis during the pilot study phase, by presenting the sample thus drawn to pilot participants and inviting them to identify what ideas, if any, they are unable to express with the statements given. I compile their responses and add recurring ideas to the sample. I record these steps at §5.1.2.

3.6.1 Censorship of producers' ideological discourse

It must be recognized at the outset that producers' ideological discourse in contemporary China is a bounded one that takes place under Party-state monitoring and censorship (Brady 2008, Gilley and Holbig 2009). Major questions on the legitimacy and proper authority of the Party are launched and run by the Party and partisan intellectuals. Gilley and Holbig estimated that on the question of Party legitimacy, for example, fully half of the intellectual discussants have passed through the Party School system. All participants recognize and abide by constraints imposed by the Party—the question is how can the legitimacy of the Party be strengthened, not whether it can be or should be.

Within these constraints, however, the publication of diverse views is common. (Published opinions on out-of-bounds questions tend to appear—if at all—via oblique methods such as satire and cartoons with implicit double meanings (Hao Zhidong 2003).) Between the Party's red lines, there is a marketplace for competing political ideas, what Xiao Gongqin (2003) termed 'policy freedom'. Li He (2010) observes that ideas from this marketplace impact upon

society. They broaden public awareness of policy changes which otherwise might ‘escape’ the notice of media or the general public. By hashing out conflicting views on the Party’s direction they help highlight the advantages and disadvantages—and winners and losers—of different policy directions. Occasionally ideas introduced in their discussions force their way onto the Party-state policy agenda and become policy.

The existence and health of this marketplace depends on several factors: the Party-state’s present bias in favour of policy experimentation, which creates a steady demand for new, testable thinking; the Party-state’s appetite for scholarly endorsements to help legitimize its decisions to either promote or shut down such experiments; elite factions within the Party, who as patrons and beneficiaries of competing political agendas help maintain corresponding factions within political scholarship; and a shared rhetoric of loyalty among all professional discourse participants that their final motive is patriotic—namely, to help make the present system better through their intellectual efforts (Brady and Wang 2009).

The Party-established red lines themselves may be becoming increasingly porous. As Goldman (1996) revealed, intellectual and cultural life in China is too vast and too diverse to be wholly managed by the Party. Goldman observed that as early as 1994, three-quarters of media publishers (by count, not by audience) were private. Public discourse took place across 561 publishing houses, 8,000 periodicals and 2,100 newspapers, as well as via modern travel and telecommunications infrastructure, so that it was ‘no longer possible for the Party to sustain even the relatively loose controls over intellectual and cultural life it had before 4 June’ (p. 50). The same year, China connected to the global Internet. Since then, access to instant online communication and self-broadcasting has expanded the channels for political speech. As the

channels for political speech proliferated and sped up, the Party-state invested heavily in content-filtering technologies and reactive censorship capabilities.

The consequence of the above for any research into ideological production is to bear in mind that any discourse that the Party deems threatening may be restricted, either by forcible suppression or self-censorship. To counter-balance the influence of the former, I deliberately included statements drawn from suppressed materials in my sampling sources. See Appendix §11.1. As to the latter, it must simply be assumed that any political material has, prior to publication, been evaluated as to whether its agenda fits within the supervisory boundaries of permissible and fundable scholarship—and if not, self-edited accordingly.

3.7 Methodological considerations for the analysis of ideologies

Ideologies are dynamic social phenomena open to and revised by diverse participants whose contributions in many cases are loosely- or un-coordinated. The products of such collaborations resist sharp definition. But it should be possible to elucidate their broad outlines. Presumably, some stability of content and argument is a pre-requisite to mobilizing and sustaining a discourse tradition that seeks to influence society.

The appropriate methodology to analyze the content of, and bring some specificity to, these competing ideologies must be rigorous. It must push beyond merely describing the diverse debates in play and instead elucidate the distinctive internal arrangement of each that can serve as an explicit framework for sampling the concourse.

This can be a challenging task in China's supervised ideational space, as divergent programs compete to tap the same available sources of legitimacy. There is significant scope for confusion and vagueness. The same political concept, for example democracy (民主主义), is adopted with quite different interpretations by different ideological programs—all seeking to extend the term's halo of popularity over their own agendas (Nathan 1990, Ip 1991, Friedman 1994, Bell 2006, Cheng Chungying 2007, He Baogang 2010). Confucians and liberals may both adopt Marxist language to show their political programs' consistency with socialism in order to obtain official permission and funding to conduct their research. Likewise, Marxists and liberals, conscious of their status as foreign imports, may employ Confucian terms and try to establish consistency between their political programs and Confucianism, in order to recruit for their own purposes the resurgent respect enjoyed by that native tradition.

Having borrowed Freedden's distinction between political theory and ideology at §3.6, I now evaluate the suitability of his method of ideological analysis for the present study. If an ideological discourse is understood as an attempt to close debate on a collection of essentially contestable ideas, it becomes possible to identify and map the phenomenon somewhat rigorously.

Doing so involves two steps of analysis. The first is to analyze the usage of terms within a discourse to identify the specific political concepts commonly evoked within it, as well as the particular conceptions, or decontested meanings, asserted for each concept. (For example, in the next chapter I observe that both Liberalism and the New Left regularly evoke the concept of 'equality', but whereas Liberalism holds a conception of equality that is primarily about citizens' relative political and legal status, the New Left sees it to be primarily about citizens' relative material condition and opportunities.) The second step is to understand how these conceptions shape and constrain one another when put together and thereby shape the overall program's agenda. (For example, in Political Confucian discourse I observe that the strong commitment to a 'paternalistic state' is restricted from sliding into totalitarianism by a parallel commitment to 'self-cultivation'. The latter requires that people enjoy sufficient autonomy to discover for themselves the moral truths that permeate human relations.)

Freedden's approach is attractive, for two reasons. First, it pushes the specification of each ideology beyond summarization. It forces an explicit identification of the component conceptions of each. It investigates which arguments or assumptions are essential for the remainder of the program to hang together and which are merely add-ons. Any ideological analysis thus performed cannot claim to be definitive, since the analyst's hand is involved in

selecting the statements that count as evidence. However, it can claim to articulate in a more rigorous way a previously fuzzy description of what the ideology stands for and what values it comprises.

Second, beyond its immediate applicability (i.e., assembling a broad and balanced sample of the discourse), the set of ideological analyses thus generated may be of wider use to scholarship on Chinese political discourse. It offers a fresh take on China's ideological landscape. Many foreign studies of mainland Chinese ideological space begin by highlighting a single concept of interest—democracy, care ethics, Kantian ontology, civil liberties—and then proceed to investigate the different mainland political traditions for a compatible foundation (Joseph Chan 2002, Herr 2003, Ackerly 2005, Albert Chen 2007, He Baogang 2010).

Approaching ideologies in this way, with a predetermined lens, runs the risk of confusing theoretical possibilities with ideological endorsements—blurring the fundamental distinction which Freedman's methodology of ideological analysis can help to clarify.

Domestic scholarship, too, may benefit from a fresh approach. Makeham (2008, p. 86) noted in his review of mainland Confucian research: "The same hackneyed themes of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness", inner sageliness and outer kingliness...appear in publication after publication, generally with little or no creative analysis of these themes'. Zheng Jiadong (1999) acknowledged in his review of a decade of mainland Confucian scholarship that the introduction of western discursive systems and analytic models would help mainland scholars to innovate their methods and engage more deeply with scholarship outside China. The output of this methodology may also inject clarity into definitional debates. Already, 'too many philosophically incompatible thinkers have been grouped together as New Confucians'

(Makeham 2003, p. 31). Freedden's method of ideological analysis offers the hope of a more robust framework to resolve such disputes.

The virtues of Freedden's methodology applied to the development of a theoretical framework for discourse sampling must be tempered by some practical limitations. The full analysis of even a single ideology is, Freedden observed, 'an immense task' (1996, p. 139). An ideology is by definition a widely prevailing conceptual configuration, and an exhaustive analysis of the conceptions and meanings deployed in its service is beyond the capacities of any one scholar, let alone one thesis.

Therefore, the analysis I undertake is exhaustive neither in the breadth of extant ideologies treated nor in the depth to which each is explored. Given the objectives and space constraints of the present study, it is necessary to focus only on the main conversations within the four ideological discourses I identify, such that the hallmark assertions of each can be described in the available space. (Consistent with the frequent observation that Official Ideology and Liberalism are the dominant ideological contestants within professional political discourse, I afford them larger space within the following analyses and within my sampling framework.⁸)

Part of the sophistication of Freedden's method is to specify the internal arrangement of conceptions with an ideology. He identifies at least four different orbits of declining

⁸ See, for example:

Holbig, Heike (2013). "Ideology after the End of Ideology. China and the Quest for Autocratic Legitimation." *Democratization* 20(1): 61-81.

Liu Yu and Chen Dingding (2012). "Why China Will Democratize." *The Washington Quarterly* 35(1): 41-63.

importance: core conceptions, quasi-contingent conceptions, culturally and logically adjacent conceptions, and peripheral conceptions. A conception belongs within the core if its removal causes the wider argument to fall apart. Out on the periphery, conceptions are specific to the point of prescribing policy. They can be inserted or deleted with little disturbance to the logic of the wider argument. While I make mention of the relative centrality of various conceptions, I do not attempt to achieve this degree of refinement within the present space constraints.

I also set aside a complete defence of each analysis I perform. Virtually every statement I make regarding the content and significance of an ideology's core program is open to scholarly debate. For the purposes of the present study, I will be satisfied if each analysis articulates reasonably well the common ground within each ideology and identifies a clear conceptual structure that can then be applied (in Chapter Five) to draw a broad and balanced sample of the concourse of views among China's emerging middle class about what the guiding values and principles of Chinese politics should be.

4 Concourse Sampling Framework: Four Ideological Programs

4 Concourse Sampling Framework: Four Ideological Programs

I identify four major ideologies, or ideological groups, within contemporary professional discourse:

1. Official Ideology, the doctrine espoused publicly by the Party-state;
2. Liberalism, which seeks to promote individual liberties (and a sub-discourse, Libertarianism, which focuses on the promotion of individual liberties within economic relations between the state and society);
3. New Left, an amended version of Marxist socialism that recruits market-based economics—properly guided by a strong state—to the socialist cause; and
4. Political Confucianism (or, more generally, New Confucianism), a revived version of Confucian thought applied to contemporary political and social problems.

4.1 Official Ideology

Official Ideology is the doctrine espoused publicly by the Party-state. Its primary aim is constant—to assert the continued leadership of the Party over Chinese politics, economics and society—however, its content and emphasis evolves. During the 1980s the Party-state began a transition from a totalitarian to an authoritarian stance, and a central debate among Party scholars and officials became the proper pace of political opening. In the aftermath of Tiananmen, the view that China required an extended period of authoritarian governance to guarantee social stability through the tumultuous social and economic modernization process was strengthened (Xiao Gongqin 2003). The ideological thought leadership of the Party's Propaganda Department had declined in perceived importance during the 1980s, but in the wake of Tiananmen, and amidst the wave of democratization and collapse of socialism underway internationally, it regained a place of priority as the 'life line' (生命线) of the Party (Communist Party of China 1999a).

The analysis of Official Ideology is greatly simplified by the existence of an authoritative text and formally adopted amendments to that text, which together encapsulate the ideological agenda and record its evolution over time. That text is the Constitution of the Communist Party of China (中国共产党章程). For the purposes of this analysis, I take the 1982 Party constitution, adopted by the 12th National Party Congress, as my starting point. It is the first Party constitution published after the Reform and Opening and marked a significant break from the Party's revolutionary past. It has remained the framework document through all subsequent revisions.

4 Concourse Sampling Framework: Four Ideological Programs

A secondary document I consult is the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国宪法), most recently amended in 2004. The PRC Constitution is a derivative of the Party constitution in many ways and is routinely amended at the National People's Congress immediately following any National Party Congress at which a significant amendment to the Party constitution is passed. The Party constitution is, naturally, focussed on the role of the Party and the duties of Party members. The PRC Constitution spells out many of the implications of Official Ideology for non-Party citizenry.

English translations of Party and state documents are those published by the Xinhua News Agency.

4.1.1 Unified interests of the overwhelming majority

This is perhaps the central claim within Official Ideology, and the most basic logic upon which the Party's legitimacy rests from the 1982 Party constitution up to the most recent revision in 2012.

The first paragraph of the General Program (总纲) of the 1982 Party constitution begins:

'The Communist Party of China is the vanguard of the Chinese working class, the faithful representative of the interests of the people of all nationalities in China' (1982, GP para. 1).

By 2002, this formula was revised slightly, and has remained unchanged since:

'The Communist Party of China...represents...the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people' (2002, GP para. 1).

The Party's claim to represent these interests is analyzed separately, below. Although not explicitly stated within the Party constitution, it is a logical pre-condition of that claim to first assert that such interests exist, and that they exist in a unified form. At the 'fundamental' level any value conflicts over what is good or ought to be promoted must resolve into agreement among the people about what they want, since it would be incoherent for a single political actor to claim to represent fundamentally conflicting or mutually exclusive values.

The Party constitution asserts this unified interest as both historical and contemporary fact. The historic unified interest is stated explicitly as 'their prolonged revolutionary struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism' (1982, GP para. 6), one of the few formulas to remain untouched since 1982. The contemporary unified interest is implied throughout the Party constitution when referring to the Party's identity and program of work. In 1982, 'The programme and policies of the Party are precisely the scientific expressions of the fundamental interests of the working class and the broadest masses of the people' (GP para. 17). From 2002 onward, this paragraph's language was revised to emphasize the need for the Party to be sensitive to the masses in order to elucidate this interest, rather than foist the Party's own interests upon the masses. 'At all times the Party gives top priority to the interests of the people...carrying out the principle "from the masses, to the masses", and translating its correct views into conscious action of the masses' (2002, GP para. 21). It remains a logical necessity for Official Ideology that these interests contain no fundamental value conflicts.

4 Concourse Sampling Framework: Four Ideological Programs

4.1.2 The Party is the vanguard of the nation

Tightly bound to the assertion of a unified fundamental interest among the masses is the identity of the Party as the unique embodiment of that interest. As cited above, this equation has been the first paragraph of the Party constitution since 1982, with scant variation.

The assertion of the Party as vanguard (先锋队) encompasses this equation, plus one additional notion: the Party's role is one of active, comprehensive leadership in society, in order to give that embodied interest maximum expression. 'Party leadership consists mainly in political, ideological and organizational leadership' (1982, GP para. 19). This language of comprehensiveness has remained virtually unchanged since 1982. What has changed—or more precisely, expanded—is the list of spheres or sectors in which Party leadership is actively called upon. In 1982, this list remained quite close to the Party's Marxist tradition, for example:

'The focus of the work of the Communist Party of China is to lead the people of all nationalities in accomplishing the socialist modernization of our economy' (1982, GP para. 9).

'The Communist Party of China leads the people in promoting socialist democracy, perfecting the socialist legal system, and consolidating the people's democratic dictatorship' (1982, GP para. 11).

By 2012 the Party's vanguard role had been expanded by full paragraphs to include leading the people in 'developing the socialist market economy' (2012, GP para. 14), 'developing an advanced socialist culture' (2012, GP para. 16), and 'promoting socialist ecological progress' (2012, GP para. 18).

The Party's unique vanguard role is also affirmed throughout the PRC Constitution, e.g.:

‘Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism...’ (2004, Preamble para. 7).

‘The system of the multi-party cooperation and political consultation led by the Communist Party of China will exist and develop for a long time to come’ (2004, Preamble para. 10).

4.1.3 Stability through organic change

Since the 1982 Party constitution, China’s development path has been asserted consistently to be ‘a long historical process’ (一个长期的历史过程):

‘The development and improvement of the socialist system is a long historical process...The cause of socialism is advancing and is bound gradually to triumph throughout the world along paths that are suited to the specific conditions of each country’ (1982, GP para. 4).

In subsequent versions, this formula was changed slightly to emphasize the need for political continuity amidst modernization (Sausmikat 2006):

‘The development and improvement of the socialist system is a long historical process. So long as the Chinese Communists uphold the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism and follow the road suited to China’s specific conditions and chosen by the Chinese people of their own accord, the socialist cause in China will be crowned with final victory’ (2002, GP para. 4).

The priority upon maintaining stability is also enshrined in the PRC Constitution:

‘The State prohibits in accordance with law any organization or individual from disturbing the socio-economic order’ (2004, Art. 15).

Importantly, stability is not stasis. Rather, it is a process of change that follows incrementally from the (‘socialist’) path China is already on. The consequence of this conception for the

overall ideological program is to admit gradual reform ‘suited to China’s specific conditions’ but condemn sudden revolution. The formula explicitly invokes socialism as the element of continuity that gives shape and boundaries to the change process (Ben Xu 2001, p. 126).

This conception of, and emphasis on, stability is far more common in conservative thought than Marxist thought, which classically supports radical discontinuity from the past in order to set society upon a new path (Cui Zhiyuan 2005a, p. 407). The importation of this conservative notion of change into the core of Official Ideology redirects its substantial policies away from radicalism and toward pragmatic, incremental modes of action.

4.1.4 China is at the primary stage of socialism

This formula (社会主义初级阶段) was inserted in a 1992 amendment to the Party constitution:

‘China is at the primary stage of socialism and will remain so for a long period of time. This is a historical stage which cannot be skipped in socialist modernization in China that is backward economically and culturally. It will last for over a hundred years’ (1992, GP para. 6).

It is repeated in the PRC Constitution:

‘China will be in the primary stage of socialism for a long time to come’ (2004, Preamble para. 7).

The timing of this amendment gives a hint as to its purpose. The Reform and Opening of the 1980s proceeded amidst growing uncertainty within the Party as to the longevity of its political monopoly. The repression of the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations signalled the Party’s

intention to maintain this monopoly, and this intention was made explicit with the above amendment at the next (14th) National Party Congress in 1992.

This assertion, together with the definition of change as organic and incremental, assembles a straightforward political logic. Realizing an advanced stage of socialism is a long process of organic change under the Party's leadership. China is at the beginning of this process. Therefore, China will need the Party's leadership for a long time to come.

This assertion is also sociological. Alternative political forms require an economically and culturally advanced population, and since China is 'backward' (经济文化落后) such options are not presently feasible here. Its strength is its ambiguity. It is not made clear what an advanced stage of socialism looks like (although from Marxist theory we can infer that one important aspect would be the realization of more substantial socio-economic equality), and so the Party reserves the sole authority to mark progress or regress toward that stage and declare when (if ever) it has been reached.

4.1.5 Democratic dictatorship of the people

'Democratic dictatorship of the people' (人民民主专政) is an important bridging concept between the Party and the state. The notion of democratic dictatorship accomplishes two important objectives within the Official ideological program. It legitimizes the formal concentration, or unity, of powers in the Chinese constitutional system (namely, putting the powers of the executive and the judiciary under the legislative, or National People's Congress). It also sets forth the logic by which the Party claims monopoly control over that unitary state power.

Democratic dictatorship is the subject of the first two articles of the PRC Constitution:

‘The People’s Republic of China is a socialist state under the people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants’ (2004, Art. 1).

‘All power in the People’s Republic of China belongs to the people’ (2004, Art. 2).

The PRC Constitution is democratic in the sense that the National People’s Congress (NPC) is the highest authority under the Constitution, and all citizens over the age of 18 enjoy the right to participate in, and stand (indirectly) for, election to it (2004, Art. 34). It is a dictatorship in that the leadership of the other two branches of government (the executive and the judiciary), are chosen by, and subject to the majority views of, this body. The unity of state power under the NPC validates and protects the supremacy of the people’s will over the country’s affairs.

The Party’s active, comprehensive leadership over political and social life is fully compatible with the democratic dictatorship of the people, because, as enshrined in the Party constitution since 1982, ‘The Party has no special interests of its own apart from the interests of the working class and the broadest masses of the people’ (1982, GP para. 17). The Party is an embodiment of, and an instrument of, the interests of the people, rather than a bearer of independent interests that might conflict with the people’s.

Except for this strict equation of the Party’s interests with the will of the people, Official Ideology might swiftly collapse into despotism. Since 1982 this sentence has remained untouched, and the relevant paragraph considerably expanded (presumably in response to a

growing number of cases of perceived divergence of the Party's interests from the people's).

In 2002, the paragraph made explicit that the development by the Party of special interests is the definition of corruption, and that the Party must persistently purge special interest formation from its work:

'The biggest political advantage of our Party lies in its close ties with the masses while the biggest potential danger for it as a ruling party comes from its divorce from them. The Party's style of work and its maintenance of ties with the masses of the people are a matter of vital importance to the Party, and the Party persistently opposes corruption, exerting great efforts to improve its style of work and make itself clean and honest' (2002, GP para. 21).

In 2007, the Party went one step further, calling for new institutional structures to police the Party's alignment with the people:

'The Party will establish a sound system for punishing and preventing corruption by fighting it in a comprehensive way, addressing both its symptoms and root cause...' (2007, GP para. 25).

While consistently repeating and elaborating the equation of the Party's and people's interests, Official Ideology has gradually recognized an increasing role for broader society to play in the exercise of this democratic dictatorship. In 1982, the Party constitution held that 'effective measures should be taken to protect the people's right to run the affairs of the state and of society' (1982, GP para. 11). In 2002, this formula shifted from protecting their right to developing their capacity to do so: 'The Party should encourage the people to act as the masters of the country and take effective measures to protect the people's right to run the affairs of the state and of society' (2002, GP para. 12). In 2007, the Party constitution introduced rights language into the same paragraph: '[The Party] respects and safeguards human rights' (2007, GP para. 15).

4.1.6 Democratic centralism

Democratic centralism is the reigning conception of democracy within Official Ideology. It aims ‘to create a political situation in which there are...both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness’ (2012, GP para. 27). Democratic centralism interprets democracy as a process of discussion and debate within the confines of decisions reached at higher hierarchical levels, so that unity and discipline are preserved in the process. Yu (2008a) defines it as a consultative system in which alternative voices are allowed to speak but decisions are taken by only one voice. Within the ideological program it plays a balancing role: it restrains the totalitarian tendencies of the Party’s comprehensive vanguard leadership role, while preventing the people’s democratic dictatorship from disrupting the unity and discipline of one-Party rule.

Democratic centralism has been expounded within the Party constitution since 1982. ‘Within the Party, democracy is given full play, a high degree of centralism is practised on the basis of democracy...’ (1982, GP para. 18). In subsequent revisions, this rather vague formula was given more explicit definition, presumably to assert more forcefully the Party’s decision-making processes going forward:

‘Democratic centralism is a combination of centralism on the basis of democracy and democracy under centralized guidance. It is the fundamental organizational principle of the Party...Within the Party, democracy and the initiative and creativity of Party organizations at all levels as well as the vast number of Party members must be given full play. Correct centralism must be practiced so as to ensure concerted action in the whole Party and prompt and effective implementation of its decisions’ (2002, GP para. 22).

As with other core assertions, this one is also enshrined within the PRC Constitution:

‘The State organs of the People’s Republic of China apply the principle of democratic centralism’ (2004, Art. 3).

One important consequence of this interpretation of democracy is that it is strictly a means, not an end. Democratic centralism is a technology of governance that aims to recruit creative thought and expression into the decision-making process while preserving top-down unity of action. It is deployed by Party and state organs as both work to advance Chinese socialism, but it does not in itself constitute realization of any political goal.

4.1.7 Release and develop society’s productive forces

This assertion follows directly from the identification of the Party as the people’s vanguard, and it fleshes out the Party’s policy-making roles and work program. (It is also in the articulation of these policy roles that the distinction between Party and state blurs completely, even in the text of the PRC Constitution.) It has undergone regular revision over the past thirty years as the Party’s idea of the proper role of government has evolved.

What is constant is the assertion that the Party-state’s role ought to be comprehensive and active. Since 1982, the emphasis in defining the Party-state’s role has been on socio-economic engineering—ranging from market reform to family planning—to promote economic growth.

‘The focus of the work of the Communist Party of China is to lead the people... in accomplishing the socialist modernization of our economy. It is necessary vigorously to expand the productive forces and gradually perfect socialist relations of production...’ (1982, GP para. 9).

Since 2007, this conception has been moderated by the new language of ‘Scientific Outlook on Development’ that, in essence, constrains this comprehensive, active role to recognize the limits of environmental, social and market tolerance. In 2007 this idea that economic

development priorities cannot be pursued exclusively, but rather must be balanced with other concerns, penetrated most every statement of the Party's policy-setting and implementation roles with new language:

‘...[T]he Scientific Outlook on Development...puts people first and calls for *comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development*’ (2007, GP para. 7).

‘The Party must promote *all-round economic, political, cultural and social development* in accordance with the overall arrangements for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics’ (2007, GP para. 9).

‘The Communist Party of China leads the people in building a *harmonious socialist society*. In accordance with the general requirements for democracy and the rule of law, equity and justice, honesty and fraternity, vigour and vitality, stability and order, and harmony between man and nature and the principle of all the people building and sharing a harmonious socialist society, the Party focuses its efforts on improving people’s lives...’ (2007, GP para. 17)

In the 2012 amendments, Scientific Outlook on Development was upgraded to the status of a ‘guiding ideology’, which means that all policy agendas going forward will have to demonstrate this balancing act between economic growth and other concerns. The commitment to more balanced policy-making was further evidenced by the addition of a new paragraph promoting ‘socialist ecological progress’ and outlining environmental policy goals (2012, GP para. 18).

4.1.8 Dogmatic rationality

Dogmatic rationality is a label coined by Cao Tianyu (2005b, p. 1), who defined it as the belief that ‘objective truths and universal values can be discovered, and social processes can be controlled and a rational society designed on the basis of that discovery’. Once discovered, such truths need no longer be sensitive to further evidence or subjected to further debate. Cao contrasted it with critical rationality, a core concept from Liberal ideology, which refutes the

existence of objective truths and holds that present beliefs must always remain sensitive to new interests and circumstances.

Within the Official ideological program, dogmatic rationality supports the technology of democratic centralism: once dogma is discovered no further consultation is necessary, and what is henceforth required is for society to align behind the revealed truth and see it realized. It also supports the core notions of a fundamental people's interest and the Party's vanguard role, by making it irrational for independent self-interests to challenge dogma, once discovered. In short, it adds a layer of rationality to the whole program.

In the 1982 Constitution, dogmatic rationality expressed itself in the perfectionist language that is a legacy of the Party's utopian projects:

‘It is necessary vigorously to expand the productive forces and *gradually perfect socialist relations of production*, in keeping with the actual level of the productive forces...’ (1982, GP para. 9).

By 2002, the verb ‘to perfect’ (完善) had been purged entirely from the Party constitution and replaced with gradualist notions of step-by-step improvements that refrained from specifying any end-state:

‘[O]ur basic task is to further release and develop the productive forces and achieve socialist modernization step-by-step’ (2002, GP para. 7).

This shift from attaining socialist perfection to step-by-step modernization is consistent with the evolving notion that the Party-state's role as society's chief engineer ought to be moderated by concerns for ecology, society and non-public markets, discussed above.

4 Concourse Sampling Framework: Four Ideological Programs

One may almost say that dogma is in decline within the ideological program. More accurately, the proper scope of dogma is retreating from policy tactics to major strategic programs. Reform and Opening is the present epitome of dogmatic rationality. This policy direction is emphatically beyond debate:

‘Reform and Opening are the only way to make our country strong’ (2002, GP para. 11).

‘Reform and Opening are the path to a stronger China. Only Reform and Opening can enable China, socialism and Marxism to develop themselves’ (2012, GP para. 13).

4.1.9 Policy pragmatism

Policy pragmatism calls for evidence-based policy making. It is a bias towards doing what works, what is measurable, and what people want rather than what some theory says they should want. Its insertion into the ideological program is generally credited to Deng Xiaoping, and specifically his 1992 Southern Tour (Ai Jiawen 2009b). Within the ideological framework, it mediates dogmatic rationality, bending it away from the central planning that was its expression in the pre-Reform era and toward experimentation informed by contemporary social science.

Policy pragmatism’s role in Official Ideology is epitomized by the formula ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’. This language was inserted in 2002 and replaced reference to socialism throughout the Party constitution, most notably in the opening paragraph of the preamble:

‘The Communist Party of China is...the force at the core leading China’s cause of socialism’ (1982, GP para. 1).

‘The Communist Party of China is...the core of leadership for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics’ (2002, GP para. 1).

Using present policy as a guide, it would seem to refer mainly to the introduction of private market forces into the economy, amidst ongoing heavy state presence and ownership.

‘Socialism with Chinese characteristics’ is, however, a deliberately unspecified formulation. Its vagueness allows the Party to maintain ideological continuity while liberating its policy work from many prior theoretical constraints—mainly, the supposed contradiction between capital and labour that arises in a market economy.

The replacement of ‘socialism’ with this more pragmatic alternative coincided with:

1. The elevation in priority and urgency of economic development:

‘It is necessary to strive for the *gradual improvement* of the standards of material and cultural life...’ (1982, GP para. 9).

‘Development is the Party’s *top priority* in governing and rejuvenating the country’ (2002, GP para. 7). ‘[T]he Communist Party of China must persist in taking economic development as the central task, making all other work subordinated to and serve this central task. We must lose no time in speeding up economic development...’ (2002, GP para. 9);

2. The erasure of communism from statements regarding the ultimate aim of the Party:

‘The Party members...must work...until the ultimate realization of communism’ (1982, GP para. 23).

‘Party members must work...to build socialism with Chinese characteristics’ (2002, GP para. 23); and

3. The redefinition of success according to evidence-based grounds:

‘The general starting point and criterion for judging all our work should be how it benefits the development of the productive forces in our socialist society, adds to the overall strength of our socialist country and improves the people’s living standards’ (2002, GP para. 7).

Subsequent major amendments reflect an increasing emphasis on actual wants rather than theorized needs. This includes the language of ‘harmonious society’, added in 2007:

‘The Communist Party of China leads the people in building a harmonious socialist society...the Party focuses its efforts on improving people’s lives by solving the most specific problems of the utmost and immediate concern to the people...’ (2007, GP para. 17).

4.1.10 Rule by virtue

This strongly unitary power framework needs a mechanism to guide and discipline the exercise of authority—to encourage desired behaviours and discourage unwanted behaviours. Checks and balances between multiple constitutionally-empowered entities would be inconsistent with the ideological core; therefore, self-discipline in the form of internalized virtues must be the primary instrument. Virtue is conceived as alignment with the people’s interests.

The Party’s basic formula for encouraging desired behaviour, ‘socialist spiritual civilization’ (社会主义精神文明), has remained present since the 1982 Constitution:

‘The Communist Party of China leads the people...in building a high level of *socialist spiritual civilization*’ (1982, GP para. 10).

In 2002, the formula was expanded to give explicit, fuller mention to legal and ethical measures:

‘The Communist Party of China leads the people in their efforts to build *socialist spiritual civilization* as well as material and political civilizations and to combine ruling the country by law and *ruling the country by virtue*. It is essential to...raise the ideological, moral, scientific and educational levels of the entire nation...It is essential to...imbue Party members with lofty ideals, resist corrosion by capitalist and feudal decadent ideas and wipe out all social evils so that our people will have lofty ideals, moral integrity, a good education and a strong sense of discipline’ (2002, GP para. 13).

In 2007, the behavioural objective was expanded further to include the development of ‘advanced socialist culture’ (社会主义先进文化) (2007, GP para. 16). The new formula follows the expansion of the Party’s membership under Jiang Zemin’s Three Represents to include advanced productive forces (i.e., capitalists), and gives the Party greater liberty to actively promote as virtuous characteristics previously deemed bourgeoisie (such as ‘innovation’):

‘[The Party]...promotes patriotism-centred national spirit and the spirit of the times centring on reform and innovation and advocates the socialist maxims of honour and disgrace’ (2007, GP para. 16).

The use of state resources to promote preferred behaviours and beliefs among the population is explicitly authorized in the PRC Constitution:

‘The State strengthens the building of a socialist society...by promoting education in high ideals, ethics, general knowledge, discipline and the legal system, and by promoting the formulation and observance of rules of conduct... [The State] conducts education among the people in patriotism and collectivism, in internationalism and communism and in dialectical and historical materialism, to combat capitalist, feudal and other decadent ideas’ (2004, Art. 24).

The Party’s formula to discourage unwanted behaviour (i.e., corruption), which has evolved from vague platitudes to specific institutional measures, has already been outlined in the discussion of democratic dictatorship, above.

4.1.11 Individual freedoms are subordinate to the interests of the state

The formulation of the ideological core shrinks the scope for individual choice and action to shape agendas and outcomes. For example, democratic centralism depends for its coherence upon the primacy of collective interests and objective truths over individual claims. This

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subordination of the individual cannot be stated outright in the Party constitution, since the Party must identify itself as serving the people by embodying their fundamental interests. However it is stated explicitly in the PRC Constitution, which enumerates citizens' rights and duties. The enumerated list of rights and freedoms is extensive, some of which include: to vote and stand for election (Art. 34); speech, press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration (Art. 35); religious belief (Art. 36); and freedom from arbitrary arrest (Art. 37).

However, they are all carefully circumscribed by latter Articles 51 and 53:

'Citizens of the People's Republic of China, in exercising their freedoms and rights, may not infringe upon the interests of the State, of society or of the collective, or upon the lawful freedoms and rights of other citizens' (2004, Art. 51).

'Citizens of the People's Republic of China must abide by the Constitution and other laws, keep State secrets, protect public property, observe labour discipline and public order and respect social ethics' (2004, Art. 53).

These two Articles are given further weight by the first and fifteenth Articles of the PRC Constitution, which together make it clear that stability of the current socioeconomic order is an absolute trump over any enumerated rights of the citizen:

'The socialist system is the basic system of the People's Republic of China. Disruption of the socialist system by any organization or individual is prohibited' (2004, Art. 1).

'The State prohibits in accordance with law any organization or individual from disturbing the socio-economic order' (2004, Art. 15).

4.1.12 Loyalty as obedience

Explicit within the Party's expectations of its members and implicit within several Articles of the PRC Constitution (especially the first and fifteenth Articles, cited above) is the equation of

loyalty with obedience. To be loyal is to be obedient. This equation is an extension by implication of ‘rule by virtue’ and the subordination of the individual to the group. Moreover, obedience is the agent-level behaviour required to make democratic centralism work, as well as to give credence to the fundamental notion that the interests of the overwhelming majority are unified and embodied by the Party.

Loyalty through obedience is an explicit command to all Party members:

‘The Communist Party of China makes the realization of communism its maximum programme, to which all its members must devote their entire lives’ (1982, GP para. 16).

The language was later revised to delete reference to a communist telos:

‘The whole Party must achieve unity in thinking and in action with Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents and the Party’s basic line and will persevere in doing so for a long time to come’ (2002, GP para. 19).

4.1.13 Freedom as national strength

Official Ideology recognizes that its own agenda is threatened by the collapse of similar agendas internationally and the advance of liberal democratic programs of limited, divided power. In response, Official Ideology asserts state power vis à vis other powers in the international system as the freedom to realize an alternative form of modernity domestically. This alternative is a good thing: it offers fuller expression of the Chinese nation than foreign, imported forms of modernity could possibly permit.

In 1982, this stance was articulated in socialist terms:

‘[The Party] adheres to proletarian internationalism and firmly unites with the workers of all lands, with the oppressed nations and oppressed peoples and with all peace-loving and justice-upholding organizations and personages in the common struggle against imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism and for the defence of world peace and promotion of human progress’ (1982, GP para. 14).

By 2002, explicit reference to international socialism had been dropped, however the characterization of its ideological competitor, liberal democracy, remains negative:

‘[The Party] stands for developing relations with other countries in order to bring about a favourable international environment for China’s reform, opening up and modernization. In international affairs, it adheres to the independent foreign policy of peace, safeguarding China’s independence and sovereignty, opposing hegemonism and power politics, defending world peace, and promoting human progress’ (2002, GP para. 17).

In 2007, the goodness of an alternative modernity is emphasized. Also, the first language promoting civic nationalism along these lines is inserted. To love your country is to promote an alternative modernity that gives the Chinese nation fuller scope to express itself. By implication, to instead advocate a liberal democratic alternative is unpatriotic. Liberalism is a ‘trojan horse’ that limits this national expression to a poorly suited vehicle that has been developed outside Chinese history and culture (Cheng Yinghong 2008, p. 395):

‘[The Party] adheres to an independent foreign policy of peace, follows the path of peaceful development and a win-win strategy of opening up...and vigorously develops relations with other countries in order to bring about a favourable international environment for China’s reform, opening up and modernization. In international affairs, it safeguards China’s independence and sovereignty, opposes hegemonism and power politics, defends world peace, promotes human progress, and pushes for the building of a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity’ (2007, GP para. 21).

‘[The Party] promotes patriotism-centred national spirit...’ (2007, GP para. 16).

This conception of freedom as national strength dovetails with the Party's many efforts over the past two decades to elaborate the mythology of a 5,000-year national history and revive aspects of traditional Chinese culture (Ben Xu 2001). I do not explore those adjacencies here.

4.1.14 The unity of the motherland is inviolable

Arguably, this is a repetition of many core concepts within Official Ideology about unity. But whereas those concepts treat ideational diversity, this one applies to diversity's visible forms: ethnic, geographic and social diversity. This concept carries implications both for political relations among these definable groups, and also for the Party's membership.

Since 1982, the Party constitution has addressed both aspects in close proximity:

‘[The Party] upholds and promotes relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all nationalities in the country, persists in the policy of regional autonomy of minority nationalities, aids the areas inhabited by minority nationalities in their economic and cultural development, and actively trains and promotes cadres from among the minority nationalities’ (1982, GP para. 12).

By 1992, the reference to minority nationalities had shifted to ‘ethnic groups’ or ‘ethnic minorities’ to further strengthen the concept of a single Chinese nation (2002, GP para. 15). In 2007, religious believers were added to the unity formula, making it clear that their emergence as an identifiable social sector would be contingent upon their contributing to, rather than disturbing, the socioeconomic order:

‘[The Party] upholds and promotes socialist ethnic relations based on equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and harmony...[It] strives to fully implement its basic principle for its work related to religious affairs, and rallies religious believers in making contributions to economic and social development’ (2007, GP para. 19).

The unity of visible diversity is treated explicitly within the state Constitution, which repeatedly asserts the inviolability of the ‘motherland’ and expressly forbids any domestic actor from upsetting that unity:

‘The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities’ (2004, Preamble para. 11).

‘Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited...All national autonomous areas are integral parts of the People’s Republic of China’ (2004, Art. 4).

‘It is the duty of citizens of the People’s Republic of China to safeguard the unification of the country and the unity of all its nationalities’ (2004, Art. 52).

4.2 Liberalism

China's liberal tradition was already evident in the latter decades of the Qing Dynasty and extended through the Republican period. Yan Fu (1854-1921) and Liang Qichao (1873-1929) translated classic liberal texts from abroad and advocated agendas of individual and national freedoms as part of a critique of China's political and social weakening. Hu Shi (1891-1962) was a prominent advocate of liberal concepts during the New Culture Movement of 1915; during the May 4th Movement of 1919 he promoted the ideas of Mill and Spencer against Confucian orthodoxy. Today all are widely-acknowledged pillars of Chinese liberal thought, however for the first thirty years following the founding of the People's Republic, their words and ideas were rare topics within professional discourse.

That changed after the promulgation of Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening policy. Over the course of the next decade, an appeal for the realization of western-style multiparty democracy and other components of the liberal agenda in China gained strength among professional discourse participants and elements of the broader Chinese public. After Tiananmen, many liberal intellectuals adjusted their agenda to accept the Party-state's monopoly over the pace-setting of political reform, while supplying ideational resources to various groups to support and affirm a process of individualization in Chinese society (Yan 2009).

4.2.1 Individuality

At the foundation of Liberalism's program is a concept of individuality. Individuality has two components. The first is to affirm 'the irreducible value of the individual, which cannot be sacrificed...as an instrument for whatever abstract goals...' (Zhu Xueqin, quoted by Chen

Lichuan 2004, p. 4).¹ Each person is sanctified as a novel entity possessing unique attributes and worth, which cannot be traded or aggregated.

The second is a mandate for self-development. Individuality means a unique identity that is to be respected and protected; it is also an attribute whose cultivation and strengthening enhances its—and the bearer’s—significance. ‘[I]t is only the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well-developed human beings’, according to Mill, whose works were translated by and influenced Liang Qichao and other early Chinese liberals (Mill 2011, pp. 55-56).

In contemporary discourse, its emphasis is in response to a perceived historical overweighting of the collective in Chinese thought (Gan Yang 1989). Yan Fu and Liang Qichao, two of the fathers of Chinese Liberalism, nonetheless downplayed the importance of the individual vis à vis the group (Wang Hui 2004). For both, the chief concern was not self-development, but the security, continuance and development of a faltering Chinese state. ‘Freedom means freedom for the group, not freedom for the individual’ (Liang Qichao, quoted by Pusey 1983, p. 189). Sun Zhongshan, the first president of Republican China, famously worried about a culture of permissiveness and excess individualism in which the Chinese people were like ‘loose sand’, lacking form and strength (Shapiro 2006, p. 739). However, events through the rest of the 20th century—the Great Leap Forward, the People’s Communes, and the Cultural Revolution—in which individual identity and worth were subordinated to radical, totalistic

¹ Zhu Xueqin 朱学勤 (1952-) is a professor of history at Shanghai University and frequent political and economic commentator in public media.

visions of what is best for the whole group, have proven the need to put priority upon the individual (Deng Zhenglai, cited by Frenkiel 2013).²

But individuality is not individualism. The latter would assert that the individual is all that matters. The former asserts that the protection and cultivation of each person's identity is an essential part of what matters. Asserting individuality is also to recognize that other values (discussed below) inform and constrain the self, and prevent it from sliding into atomization, selfishness or vicious anti-social competition.

4.2.2 Sociability

A close companion concept to individuality is sociability (Freedden 1996). Developing individuality is a necessarily cooperative project. Each person exists in society with other people and takes on social roles and relationships. Therefore, we can only develop our own individuality if we develop a tolerance or respect for the variety that manifests in society as a result. This tolerance extends to a degree of care and concern for the general welfare, so that we ourselves also have a positive environment in which to live.

Sociability restricts individuality from collapsing into atomization. The choice between an atomized and a united society is a false one. Asserting individuality does not logically entail a radical notion of the self that admits no social rules or roles. In practice we do not self-legislate every aspect of our existence. Mostly we operate within a framework of morality and judgment that we have uncritically inherited from society, and we pick up social attachments and

² Deng Zhenglai 邓正来 (1956-2013) was a legal philosopher who rose to prominence in the 1980s for his translations of Friedrich von Hayek.

consider ourselves bound to them. Such mutual regard and concern for one another is a part of human nature—and, as noted above, has been a feature of Chinese liberal thought since the Qing period (Edmund Fung 2006).

On the other hand, as contemporary liberals influenced by intervening 20th century events are quick to assert, sociability cannot be permitted to expand into socialism—which would argue that since humanity exists in society, human nature is *primarily* social. While acknowledging a social aspect to human nature, Liberalism denies it is natural to subjugate the individual below it. Human instinct is to place a heavy value on self-identity, rather than instinctively yield that sense of self to the group. The possibilities of group authority are constrained by the need to affirm the identity of each individual within it (Xu Youyu 2004). Xu pointed out that while early liberal scholars emphasized the urgency of building collective strength, they never advocated coerced obedience to such priorities. Their program, rather, was to revitalize Chinese society by liberating the individual. Hu Shi characterized the fundamental issues facing Chinese society in the 1910s and 1920s as social and economic: poverty, ignorance, diseases, disorder and superstition (Fung 2005, p. 324). Building the country, therefore, meant cultivating stronger individuals (individuality) who could then accept greater social responsibility to help redress these ‘evils’ (p. 333).

China’s history of socialist experiments proves that Hayek was right: subjugating the will of individuals to the group is the road to serfdom (Liu Junning 2000). The best way to form a healthy group is, rather, to protect and develop the individuality of its members (Chen Lichuan 2004, Feng Chongyi 2007). Sociability taken to a degree that stifles individual space must be

opposed, but such opposition does not mean eliminating the natural, rational expression of care and concern for others.

It is the difference between addressing others as ‘comrade’ versus ‘citizen’ (Liu Junning 2007). Comrade is a label for people who subordinate their own ideas and identity to the community. Citizen is a label for people who respect and support one another as irreducible ends. People need to be free to develop their sociable qualities, rather than forced to do so.

4.2.3 Liberty as non-constraint, open-ended and active

Liberty, as the etymology suggests, is a basic concept of the liberal agenda. It is ‘the object of politics’ (Jin Guantao 1990) and ‘the core priority’ (Chen Lichuan 2004). ‘After three hundred years of comparison and selection in the whole world since the age of industrialization, and particularly after more than one hundred years of Chinese experimentation, on the largest scale in human history, there is sufficient evidence to prove that liberty is the best, universal value’ (Li Shenzhi, quoted by Feng 2008, p. 675).³

It is also a concept subject to many interpretations, and the particular meaning it takes within Chinese Liberalism is shaped by the balance struck between individuality and sociability. This meaning has three aspects: non-constraint, open-ended and active.

Non-constraint is the constant, ‘ineliminable’ aspect of liberty across all liberal ideologies (Freeden 1996, p. 145). It is the aspect of liberty that respects people’s irreducible individuality

³ Li Shenzhi 李慎之 (1923-2003) was a former vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and was dismissed from that post for his political criticisms.

in public action and ‘resolutely opposes acts that deprive individual citizens of [free spaces to develop their individuality] in the name of the “general will” or the “collective interests of the state”’ (Liu Junning 2005).

Liberty as ‘open-ended’ means that its exercise is valued prior to any regard toward the content or consequence of that action (so long as the action does not constrain others’ liberty). Liberty involves a ‘politics-free zone’ of existence that concerns individuals alone to the exclusion of others, and to deny that space is harmful to the individual. Each person has thoughts, and his natural inclination is to express them. When that expression is restricted, something very deep and close to the nature of that person is prevented from coming into being (Luo Longji 2001).⁴ Hu Ping put the matter in stronger terms: to constrain such expression is an evil (He Baogang 1995).⁵ The immediate consequence of this aspect of liberty is a strong respect for diversity, and it has been an important counterweight to many homogenizing ideological programs: traditional Confucian critiques of the content of people’s free actions; the ‘official regulations, rules, decrees, campaigns, and indoctrination that the Nationalist party state was imposing on the nation’ in the pre-PRC era (Fung 2006); and Maoist era Party efforts to erase entirely the distinction between private and public spheres of thought and action.

Third, liberty is active. Liberty is valued in itself, but it is also valued for the role its exercise plays in the development of individuality. To assert liberty is not to assert self-determination,

⁴ Luo Longji 罗隆基 (1896-1965) was a political science professor and newspaper editorialist. He was condemned as a rightist in 1957 for voicing opinions against the Party during the Hundred Flowers Movement.

⁵ Hu Ping 胡平 (1947-) was a student participant in Tiananmen Square and is the chief editor of *Beijing Spring* magazine (北京之春).

but the subset of self-determination called self-development. A free person is one who thinks and acts independently, and who is prepared to contribute to society and the common good by forging him- or herself into a useful tool (Fung 2005, p. 333).

This active conception of liberty is meant to prevent its sliding into licentiousness, vegetation or wastefulness. Early Chinese liberals (and contemporary non-liberals) often criticized European strains of Liberalism for this perceived fault (Fung 2002). Liang Qichao, after his tour of Europe in 1919, reflected on what he called the ‘bankruptcy of European materialism’ (quoted by Fung 2002, p. 403-404). Hu Shi urged his students to pursue a life of meaning. It is also meant to marshal individuality as a weapon of change against over-collectivism and tyranny. During the May 4th Movement, Hu Shi conceived of liberty as a struggle against a deep and strong Confucian system of ethics (Fung 2006). More recently, Wang Youcai described it as ‘the most effective remed[y]...to cure the chronic and stubborn disease of tyranny in China’ (quoted by Liu Junning 2000, p. 51).⁶ Liberty’s function in the program of Chinese Liberalism is to strengthen individual voices, rather than legitimize their withdrawal from the conversation.

4.2.4 Human nature as progressive and good

Whereas a political program emphasizing authority and control puts its faith in the moral quality or expertise of one or a few power holders, Liberalism must put its trust in humanity. ‘Its only hope lies in enlightenment’ (Mao Yushi 1998, p. 23). If humanity’s nature is progressive, then the forward-looking belief that a community of self-developing, freely

⁶ Wang Youcai 王有才 (1966-) co-founded the China Democratic Party in 1998, was subsequently imprisoned for subversion and was exiled from China in 2004.

associating individuals will ultimately thrive is less an act of faith, and more a logical projection. The mandate of individual self-development that Liberalism seeks to affirm presupposes a human nature that is developmental, improvable and capable of maturing.

Progressive, yes, but neither perfectible nor perfect. Liberal conceptions of individuality and liberty preclude the possibility of perfectibility, since any conception of perfection would overwrite people's diverse life plans and pursuits with sameness. Early Chinese liberals (perhaps owing to their socialization in Confucian ethics, which lays heavy emphasis upon moral realism) did express views with perfectionist overtones. Liang Qichao theorized three stages of human development: original chaos, intermediate well-being, and ultimate great harmony wherein natural order and moral order are unified (Wang Hui 2004). Later liberals were, and remain, strongly suspicious of the idea of human perfectibility and any program that depends on it or aims for its realization (He Baogang 1995). '[Liberalism's] reformist vision is dependent on a moderate progressivism that prefers gradual expansion and evolution to the artificial construction of radicalism' (Zhu Xueqin, quoted by Chen Lichuan 2004, p. 3). It is precisely because people are imperfect that the liberal program is necessary:

'It is because human nature is not perfect, because people are not divine beings and have all kinds of weaknesses, that democracy is a necessity. If human nature were really as perfect as the Communists or the Marxists suppose it is, there would be no need for any political system. But this hypothesis is baseless' (Liu Xiaobo 2005, p. 38).

Closely related is the belief that human nature is on balance good, and so on balance we will exercise our liberty with positive intent toward ourselves and others. Zhang Dongsun expressed this goodness in terms of heavenly limits to personal freedoms—a balancing act between freedom and responsibility that takes place in our own minds according to the ideas

of morality in which we have been socialized (Fung 2002, p. 415).⁷ This aspect deserves separate mention because it has been a strongly contested idea in Chinese liberal thought. Referencing the excesses and abuses of power during the 20th century, Yan Jiaqi, Hu Ping and Liao Xun perceived instead that human nature is capable of great evil, and it is to forestall this evil, rather than to develop our individuality, that the liberal program must resolve itself (Bachman and Yang Dali 1991).⁸ ‘The principle of preventing evil is the theoretical basis for democracy’ (Liao Xun, quoted by He 1995, p. 294). Their arguments echoed Hume’s assertion that it is impossible to change human nature and Hobbes’ view that humans possess ineradicable selfish instincts (Hume 1978, p. 237; Hobbes 1996, ch. 6). The most we can do is to change our systems so that in pursuing our selfish ends, we are incentivized to promote rather than destroy the welfare of others.

I argue that, despite the rhetoric they deployed, their claim was not that people are inherently evil by nature, only that the *capacity* to do evil is inherent in human nature, and that in positions of unrestrained power they may be corrupted to express it. Theirs is more properly a statement about the corrupting influence of power upon our own sociability than it is a condemnation of humanity generally. In his later writing, Liao Xun adopts this clarification (He 1995).

⁷ Zhang Dongsun 张东荪 (1886-1973) was a political philosopher and influential member of the China Democratic League who died in a re-education camp during the Cultural Revolution.

⁸ Yan Jiaqi 嚴家其 (1942-) was a prominent voice for political reform during the 1980s and one of the leading intellectuals supporting the 1989 Tiananmen student demonstrations.

Liao Xun 廖逊 (1950-) is an advocate of ‘small government and big society’ (小政府大社会) and professor at the Hainan Province Party School.

If human nature is in fact evil, then Liberalism has no solution. Rather (as Hobbes concluded), an absolute monarchy that coerces us to be free of our own nature would seem to be humanity's best hope. (This more pessimistic view of human nature reappears in my pilot interviews, and therefore while I exclude it from this survey of Liberalism, it is represented among the peripheral perspectives. See §5.1.3)

4.2.5 Critical rationality

Critical rationality is a belief about how each individual copes with the task of individual choice and the exercise of their liberty. It is also a belief about how political objectives are developed and validated, given that there is no perfect truth or authority upon which to rely. Zhu Xueqin summed up Liberalism's approach to these tasks as 'empiricism as opposed to apriorism' (quoted by Chen Lichuan 2004, p. 3). The astrophysicist Fang Lizhi put it more memorably: 'Studying natural science, it is especially easy to become a counter-revolutionary' (quoted by Buckley 1991, p. 2).⁹ The idea he expressed is opposition to the notion of *a priori* truths to which all other actors must submit regardless of what their own reason tells them.

One of the major ideological contributions of the fathers of Chinese Liberalism to Chinese discourse was to replace reliance upon the perfect perception of a heavenly principal with an expanded role for the faculty of human reason to test, evaluate and decide (Wang Hui 2004). They achieved this break with the past through three cognitive shifts: by projecting the realization of moral and political ideals into the future, rather than the past; by conceiving time as a progressive continuum rather than cyclical; and by separating fact from value, rather than

⁹ Fang Lizhi 方励之 (1936-2012) was an astrophysicist and political dissident who opposed Marxist philosophy's guiding role over natural science.

seeing the latter as immanent in the former. Together these shifts opened the door for later liberals to adopt an empirical approach that rejects utopian or totalizing visions for society and instead advocates a more scientific, evidentiary and argumentative approach toward social and political change (Gu Zhun 1999).¹⁰

Critical rationality has a limiting aspect and an empowering aspect. It limits the imposition of dogma. Since the existence of *a priori* truths is refuted, no political program can validly claim to be unalterable in the face of concrete interests, circumstances or dissent. ‘We must give up the wishful idea that we can create the future of mankind by careful thinking’ (Mao Yushi 1998, p. 21).

The empowering aspect is the power of ideas (Cheng Yinghong 2008). Critical rationality mandates discovery and debate. Since ‘careful thinking’ alone is insufficient to create the future, we must innovate, experiment and argue. New ideas can amass evidence of their suitability, persuade others and be adopted.

Within the program of Liberalism itself, critical rationality is also important as an enabler of sociability, precisely because individuality and liberty are perceived to be rational pursuits. It occurs ‘naturally’ to people that liberty is a good thing and that certain values, such as happiness and harmony, are worth pursuing (Zhang Dongsun, cited by Fung 2002, pp. 414-416). These pursuits are natural because they are rational, and therefore we can understand and appreciate these efforts among other people. This mutual intelligibility is the foundation of our

¹⁰ Gu Zhun 顾准 (1915-1974) was a high-ranking Party intellectual and financial officer who fell victim to an ‘anti-Rightist’ purge in 1957.

respect and tolerance for the choices other people make, even if those choices are very different from our own. This respect and tolerance, in turn, is an important basis for Liberalism's institutional preferences, which form the bulk of the remaining analysis.

4.2.6 Responsible, limited power

Containing power is inevitably core to an ideology that highlights liberty. The development of appropriate structures to accomplish this containment is inseparable from the Chinese Liberalism program, since the more power society exercises over the individual, the less scope for self-legislation and self-development exists (Liu Junning 2004).

Responsible, limited power is Liberalism's preferred institutional arrangement. 'While [Liberalism] respects the liberty of each in what specially regards himself, [it] is bound to maintain a vigilant control over his exercise of any power which it allows him to possess over others' (Mill 2011, p. 110). Power needs to be spread around on an equal-access basis so that competing interests can be expressed and served, and so that different interest groups and people can deliberate and reach peaceful resolution of public questions where deep disagreements over appropriate means and ends can be rational and irreconcilable (Liu Xiaobo 2008).

Like many others, this core idea within Chinese Liberalism is powerfully motivated by historical experience. Mill's famous warning against 'the corrupting influence of undivided power' (2001, p. 234) has been repeated by Chinese liberals. 'Absolute power corrupts absolutely...The Communist Party supervising itself is like using one's left hand to supervise one's right hand' (Ren Zhongyi 2000). This suspicion of concentrated authority in Chinese

liberal thought has been a prominent feature since at least the May 4th Movement. The intellectuals who drove that movement strongly criticized arbitrary and oppressive state power, which subjected people to arbitrary arrest and censorship despite legal guarantees to the contrary.

Contemporary liberals have criticized the Party's monopoly of political power on similar grounds. Wang Huning blamed the absence of any division of power for enabling and sustaining the Cultural Revolution (He 1995).¹¹ It has transformed the state itself into liberty's greatest threat, and simultaneously established the division of power as the single most important reform objective (Ren Jiantao 1999).

Its importance is reflected in the Party-state's strong objection to it. 'Chinese politicians are the most untouched by, and hostile to, the ideas of division in political power' (Xu Youyu 2004, pp. 194-195). Officials' argument is that a system of limited or divided power would introduce hindrances and inefficiencies into policymaking. This argument betrays the basic difference between the Liberal and Official ideological conceptions of state authority. Official Ideology wants to concentrate power in order to promote and realize the fundamental interests of the majority, which it is best positioned to perceive and express. Liberalism wants to limit power so that no one conception of those fundamental interests can override the plurality that in fact exists. Instead society must acknowledge the limits of human rationality to perceive such fundamentals and set up a correspondingly limited, competitive power structure that facilitates an ongoing discovery of society's progressive path.

¹¹ Wang Huning 王沪宁 (1955-) was elected to the 18th Politburo of the Party in 2012.

4.2.7 Rule of law

Rule of law encapsulates two notions: that a system of rules be established to govern the functioning of the political system, the scope of its authority and relations both among people and between people and the state; and that the enforcement power be separated from the lawmaking power, in order to guarantee neutrality in how these rules are applied (Liu Xiaobo 2005, p. 37). It is an elaboration of the concept of limited, responsible government, but it bears highlighting in the Chinese Liberalism agenda for two reasons.

The first is its present popularity within political discourse. Since 2003 there has been a powerful and comprehensive ‘rights defence movement’ (维权运动) involving many social groups advocating more consistent respect for the various rights and freedoms of citizens enumerated in the PRC Constitution (Feng Chongyi 2010). These social groups include, for example: Christian liberals who ‘defend rights according to the law’ (依法维权), and see their campaign for religious freedom as a gateway to strengthening other constitutional freedoms; and human rights lawyers (维权律师) who sue the state under administrative litigation laws or with reference to the constitution; and grassroots rights activists (Feng 2010, Givens 2013). The Party itself has announced that it should not place itself above the laws but rather must act within their scope (Yu Keping 2005), and must complete a transition from the rule of man to the rule of law (2008a). A complex dynamic is currently underway, in which various interest groups attempt to advance their interests against the Party-state via an evolving legal system that remains partial toward Party-state interests. That partiality is only restrained to the extent that the Party-state exercises self-restraint.

This raises the second point: rule of law is Liberalism's explicit critique of Official Ideology's effort to promote 'rule by virtue'. The Party has abused its unlimited authority too many times for Liberalism to trust to broad ethical imperatives (Yan Jiaqi 1992, pp. 313-317). Even if it had not done so, Liberalism doubts the efficacy of self-restraint, generally. 'Government by man is the most corrupt and foolish form of political life in which the human race has ever indulged' (Liu Xiaobo 2005, p. 39). Morality is no substitute for institutions; in a political structure of unrestricted authority, even the most perfect character would tend toward moral decline. That the lofty should ascend to rulership is a backward belief from traditional Chinese culture. It is not the quality of people or their moral character that should determine who should lead. Rather an institutional arrangement should be put in place such that public-minded people are encouraged to step forward and self-interested people are limited in the extent to which they can impose their own agendas upon others.

4.2.8 Electoral democracy

Once the above conceptions of individuality, liberty, rationality and responsible power are accepted, one is heavily inclined to equate 'the rulers' with 'the people'. Equating the rulers with the people involves exercising political power on the basis of actual, manifested choices that the people make or have made, rather than by asserting to represent or perceive their latent interests. In the history of Liberalism many possible technologies have been developed to fulfil this equation, to suit evolving norms and particular conditions (Freeden 1996).

Electoral democracy—delegating authority to representatives via direct popular vote—is one form advocated by contemporary Chinese Liberalism prior to the 1989 Tiananmen demonstration and suppression. Yan Jiaqi stressed its procedural fairness, which renders it

capable of resolving disputes, withstanding abuse and correcting mistakes through regular checks on power (cited by He 1995). In more recent discourse, it has been advocated in opposition to one-party rule as the only reliable guarantee that authority is exercised in the people's interests (Sausmikat 2006, p. 78) and that government is truly 'of the people, by the people, and for the people' (Liu Xiaobo 2008).

In addition to these procedural and legitimacy arguments, electoral democracy is also promoted for its perceived intrinsic value. An election is an act of liberty (Liu Junning 2004). It is also an opportunity for people to exercise individual, rational and sociable faculties of an especially high kind, which they otherwise would have little or no opportunity to develop (Yu Keping 2008b).

The current international norm (also adopted by the PRC Constitution for usage in its indirect electoral format) is universal suffrage, with bare eligibility tests including citizenship, age and lawful behaviour. This norm is relatively recent in most current liberal democracies and also in Chinese discourse. Official ideologues and the New Left echo traditional Confucian thought when they argue that voter quality ought also be a condition of expanded, direct electoral participation. In Confucian thought, significant education and cultivation are needed before someone can be handed the authority to perceive and negotiate social interests. For the New Left, raising the quality of the would-be electorate requires improving material socioeconomic equality. Instituting a stronger form of electoral participation prior to such material development will serve only to solidify present inequalities and legitimize the present concentration of political power in the hands of socioeconomic elites. Liberalism, which sees the exercise of liberty as the primary site of self-development and most meaningful form of

equality, advocates swift expansion of political participation (Zhang Dongsun, cited by Edmund Fung 2002, p. 415).

4.2.9 Participation improves quality of governance

A closely related assertion to electoral democracy is that widening participation improves the quality of governance. This pro-democracy argument is consequentialist rather than teleological in nature; it argues for democracy as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

Since the 1989 Tiananmen protests, expression of the latter argument has been carefully monitored by the Party-state. Many of its strongest advocates now live overseas or have been imprisoned. Therefore the more widespread argument in contemporary mainland liberal discourse is to promote democracy on consequentialist grounds. Persistent subordination of individual interest formation and expression beneath collective goals will lead to measurably worse outcomes in the end. This idea can be traced back to Liang Qichao, who saw citizen participation in government via democratic election as one of the keys to transforming China from an imperial empire into a modern state. In his view, which he supported with reference to Anglo-Saxon history, it is the political arrangement most responsive to changing times and most conducive to long-term prosperity. The success of Anglo-Saxon societies was not due to chance or virtue but to the proven ability of those people's political systems to produce good decisions and align society behind them (cited by Theresa Lee 2007, p. 312).

It is also the pro-democracy argument most commonly made by liberals within the Party. They justify their call for democracy to Party colleagues by claiming: that it is the best political

arrangement to prevent the kind of policy mistakes that did dreadful damage to the Party's legitimacy in the past; that it is the best way to eliminate social inequality, minimize social upheaval and maintain long-term social stability; or that it is the only viable way to root out corruption (Hu Jiwei, Li Rui, Wu Jinglian and Yao Jianfu, cited by Feng Chongyi 2008).

4.2.10 Political equality

As a positive assertion, political equality repeats much of the ground covered by the assertion of electoral democracy. Political equality insists that the views of all citizens ought to have equal weight in the political process, and electoral democracy is the technology meant to fulfil that demand. As discussed above, given the arrangement of core concepts, it is difficult for Chinese Liberalism to arrive at any outcome other than that the people are the rulers, and that the people exercise equal formal authority, manifested as one person, one vote. The only departure from this conception that might be compatible with the liberal core is a temporary one: political equality is the ideal toward which society ought to direct itself, but there may be a transition period of limited suffrage during which all people develop the requisite sociability and rationality to exercise that power responsibly. The sudden injection of uneducated, poorly socialized masses into the electoral process could be destabilizing, vindictive or even brutal.

This elitist strain has ample history in China. Earlier liberals called upon the intellectual elite to play a preeminent role in the absence of a strong middle class. The intellectual elite have a 'historic mission' to be the paragons of reason and the conscience of a society numerically dominated by uneducated masses who are not yet able to articulate themselves in the political process (Zhang Dongsun, cited by Fung 2002, p. 420).

In contemporary Chinese discourse, liberals are hesitant to slip down that slope. Recent history (as they judge it) has taught them to be skeptical of any temporal arguments for putting off the expansion of political participation into the future, because tomorrow never seems to come.

The new work this conception does within Liberalism is to limit the meaning of equality to the formal, political realm. Equality does not mean sameness, nor equality of result, nor maximizing equality of opportunity to an overly burdensome degree. Such conceptions of equality are constrained by Liberalism's prior commitment to individuality and liberty (although the commitment to sociability supports social welfare programs that do not unreasonably interfere with these prior values). Political equality seeks to remove special privileges so that the playing field is neutral, but material inequalities that occur as a consequence of that play need to be accepted (Lee 2007).

4.2.11 Universalism

Since Liberalism is grounded in an assessment of human nature—individuality, progressiveness and rationality—rather than in an analysis of a particular society or culture, its dictates apply everywhere. Once you recognize the dignity of each individual, the rational plurality of their ends and sociable respect for that plurality, Liberalism's political agenda is asserted to be the only logical consequence. While the specific institutional expressions of that agenda may vary from polity to polity, under no circumstances will the subordination of the individual have legitimacy.

Liberalism's universal validity is commonly cited by Chinese liberals to assert its applicability to contemporary China. 'Above all the states stands mankind' (Hu Shi, quoted by Feng 2007, p. 57). 'The Chinese people...see clearly that freedom, equality, and human rights are universal values of humankind and that democracy and constitutional government are the fundamental framework for protecting these values' (Liu Xiaobo 2008). 'I have confidence that liberalism will prevail in China, for it is an idea that is universal and grounded in human nature... As long as people are free to choose, most people will choose liberty and liberalism' (Liu Junning 2000, pp. 51 & 55). 'Respect for individual choice, protection of basic human rights, and tolerance of individual freedom...extend beyond the boundaries of particular nations or civilizations. The principle of social integration based on individual choice and basic human rights applies to all nations and civilizations' (Qin Hui, quoted by Ben Xu 2001, p. 130).¹²

A separate assertion of universality is grounded not in human nature, but rather in market economics. Because market economics helps to develop some of the basic prerequisites for Liberalism—individuality through the expression and satisfaction of individual wants, and sociability through marketplace exchanges—a free market for labour and commodities will ultimately result in a free market of ideas. Li Shenzhi referred to 'the normative economy leading to normative politics' (quoted by Chen Lichuan 2004, p. 5). Liu Junning (2000, p. 55) argued that 'since the process of marketization in China is irrevocable, Liberalism's triumph is inevitable'. Xu Youyu (1999) made the argument in a weaker form that runs closer to the body of social scientific evidence: market economics does not necessarily lead to democracy, but the two seem strongly correlated. In the world today there is no example of a stable democracy that does not have a market economy.

¹² Qin Hui 秦晖 (1953-) is a professor of history at Qinghua University.

Universalism also asserts strict limits on the validity of particularist agendas, notably nationalism. Given the equal dignity and rationality of all humans everywhere, nationalist arguments for an alternative modernity on the basis of special circumstances are mistaken. A certain dose of nationalism can be healthy to inculcate weak or embryonic communities with a stronger sense of sociability, but politics should be built atop the common foundation of human nature rather than inflate irrelevant differences among individuals such as language, history and culture. Such particulars will of course inform the shape political institutions take, but they have no relevance to the prioritization of individuality and liberty. Persistent subordination of individuals to a nationalist agenda is counter-productive. ‘A bitter lesson has been learned: nationalism, once it overrides universal liberal values...becomes xenophobia in international relations and an accomplice of despotism in domestic politics’ (Feng 2007, p. 54).

4.2.12 Libertarianism

Libertarianism is an offshoot of Liberalism that emphasizes individuality and liberty and deemphasizes sociability as a moderating influence upon those two values.

Libertarianism emerged in contemporary Chinese discourse after Deng Xiaoping’s 1992 Southern Tour, which set China’s economy on a path of marketization accompanied by strong state ownership and interference. In response, a clear break emerged between intellectuals: the New Left argued in favour of this heavy state presence in the economy, which they saw as necessary to redress injustices generated by market economics; and Libertarians, mostly citing Hayek, argued against it, preferring the state to withdraw from its role as partial economic participant and retreat to the role of impartial regulator and arbiter of private economic activity

(Frenkiel 2013). The latter discourse revolves primarily around making that argument, which is itself grounded in two prior, implied assertions:

4.2.12.1 Economic activity as an integral aspect of liberty

The first prior assertion is that economic activity is an integral aspect of liberty. Hayek saw political and economic liberty as inseparable. Human nature and society have a significant economic, utilitarian aspect. Economic activity is natural. Therefore, for the state to coerce or control it denies us of an aspect of individuality and self-knowledge that can only come about through self-directed economic exchange. By the same logic, material property is also an aspect of our individuality and an important means of self-development that needs to be protected from state interference (Hayek 1960, chs 1-6).

4.2.12.2 Self-help

This second assertion is a corollary of the first. Given humanity's economic nature, people thrive on rivalry. In order to know ourselves and to grow, we need to be exposed to the economic consequences of success and failure, winning and losing. Any attempt to construct an artificial equality beyond formal political equality is damaging to our self-development because it delinks effort and reward and so dampens this exposure.

Self-help is not an atomizing value, but it does recognize that society is the sum of the individuals who compose it. To make society strong, therefore, individuals must be made strong, and an integral component of individual strengthening is to face nature's economic justice.

Atop these assumptions, Chinese Libertarian discourse makes two related substantive arguments. The first is to promote laissez-faire economics as the best economic institutional form. The second is to diagnose the main cause of social inequality and injustice to be the Party-state's failure to realize such institutions:

4.2.12.3 *Laissez-faire economics*

The economic institutional arrangement which best respects liberty's economic aspect and the importance of self-help to the development of individuality is a laissez-faire configuration that respects the naturalness, spontaneity and efficacy of the market (Wang Shaoguang 1997). The role of the state in the economy should be limited to enacting and maintaining a system of neutral, predictable rules, enforcing contracts and maintaining currency stability, so that private actors can conduct economic activity independent of specially-privileged state interests (Jiang Xiaojuan 1993a, b).

4.2.12.4 *Market as social justice*

In addition to respecting best the priorities of individuality and liberty, such unfettered markets also work better to generate socially desirable outcomes.

A persistent feature of contemporary society is social inequality and injustice. Official Ideology frames it as a characteristic of the primary stage of socialism, and strong, unified leadership is needed to usher society past it. The New Left blames the introduction and expansion of market economics into Chinese society, which unfairly accumulates the value of labour in the hands of the owners of capital, thereby amplifying inequality and calcifying social classes. Libertarians diagnose the problem as the failure to introduce market economics more fully.

In terms of its pattern of public versus private investment, its structure of employment and the status of private property in its constitution and laws, China is not yet a market economy, so any equation of present social ills with market economics is flawed (Xu Youyu 2003). ‘We think that Chinese society has undergone great changes, but the nature of that society and its political system are direct descendants of the society and the system that was founded in 1949 and that has passed through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s without revolution or rupture, nor qualitative change’ (1999, pp. 428-429).

The economic reforms of the past thirty years are more properly described as the marketization of power (He Qinglian 1997) or power elite capitalism (权贵资本主义) (Qin Hui, cited by Feng 2010). The concentration of political power in the hands of the Party-state is converted into wealth via a managed, top-down process of allocating economic privileges to its own corporate entities and allies, rather than allowing wealth to be diffused according to the successes and failures of private actors competing without state interference.

The primary cause of material inequality, therefore, is a despotic political system that duplicates political inequality within the socioeconomic realm (He Qinglian 1998). It is not the ‘dirty hand of the market’ that is to blame for expanding social injustice and unrest during the reform period, but the ‘visible foot of the state’ upon the throat of the economy (Zhu Xueqin 1998, p. 397). Marketization without liberalization has served only to amplify the rewards that accrue to political authorities by placing their own self-interests before the people’s. A deeper, more pernicious consequence of this process is to deny society’s members the opportunity and

responsibility to develop themselves through fully free economic participation, thereby impairing China's collective health and strength.

The solution, therefore, is to develop and consummate a genuine market economy of fair competition among private economic actors, wherein the state is limited to supplying a conducive framework and supervised by law and the press to ensure that it abides by those limits (Xu Youyu 2003).

4.3 New Left

The New Left (新左派) can be understood as a reinterpretation of socialist ideology to conform to the new boundaries on ideological debate imposed by the collapse of international socialism, the delegitimization of socialist economic theory and the Party-state's unwavering commitment to the marketization of parts of the economy (Wang Shaoguang 1997). Some scholars classify the New Left as a species of Liberalism (Liu Junning 2000). Some New Left scholars, including Wang Hui, Wang Shaoguang, Gan Yang and Cui Zhiyuan, identify themselves as liberals and promote a great deal in common with Liberalism, such as political equality, the protection of human rights, and the development of democracy (Frenkiel 2013). However, although much of their respective policy agendas overlap, these agendas are built atop quite different ideological cores, and this leads them to interpret some shared concepts (for example, democracy) quite differently.

The core of New Left thought retains some of the basic philosophical commitments of Marxism:

4.3.1 Social essence of the self

'Society does not consist of individuals; it expresses the sum of connections and relationships in which individuals find themselves' (Marx 1971, p. 77).¹³

The foundation of New Left thinking is the recognition of society as the context in which individuals take on definite roles and definite identities, and without which no claim to individuality can be made. 'Man is...not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society' (Marx 1971, p. 17). Like the concept of developing a

¹³ Marx, Karl (1818-1883) (1971). *The Grundrisse*. Translated by D. McLellan. New York: Harper & Row.

language, developing individuality is an absurdity without individuals living together and talking to one another. Most of the important decisions that affect our lives are social rather than individual (Peffer 1990, p. 130).

Hi Shi, generally regarded as an early modern Chinese liberal, expressed this social essence of each person in his ‘social immortality’ theory, in which he suggested two classes of being: the lesser self (小我) and the greater self (大我). The greater self (i.e., society), is composed of, and immanent in, the myriad lesser selves. The myriad lesser selves make history, which becomes part of the tradition, morality and values of the greater self, which in turn shapes the lesser selves (cited by Fung 2005, p. 333). Contemporary Liberals see such heavy emphasis by their predecessors upon the social essence as a mistake. Early modern liberals were collectivists, not individualists, and their intellectual preferences ‘stained’ their liberalism with socialism (Liu Junning 2000, p. 54). However, New Left theorists see it as wisdom to be carried into contemporary discourse.

4.3.2 Priority of the social

A close corollary to the recognition of society as the essential context for individual identity is to assert the priority of its health and development over all other concerns. ‘The social essence of the individual must be defended at all costs’ (Liu Huaiyu, quoted by Davies 2007, p. 181).¹⁴

Society is ‘the product not of nature but of history’ (Marx 1971, p. 71). It cannot be taken for granted. Rather, attention must be paid to the kinds of relationships and socioeconomic structures that comprise society, and the consequences of those relationships for the identities

¹⁴ Liu Huaiyu 刘怀玉 (1965-) is a professor of Marxist philosophy at Nanjing University.

that individuals may form within it. Egalitarian relationships yield a society of freely developing individuals; exploitative relationships yield a society of masters and slaves (Marx 1971, pp. 141-143). The latter ‘could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would physically destroy man and transform his surroundings into a wilderness’ (Karl Polanyi, quoted by Wang Shaoguang 2008b, pp. 15-16).

Liberalism recognizes life’s social aspects and the importance of cooperation with others to advance one’s own individuality, but this recognition fails to perceive the depth to which the possibilities for that individuality are determined by the social context.

4.3.3 Welfarism

‘To Marx...the world of men is a world of needs and...it is [needs] which constitute the real links between members of the community’ (Kolakowski 1978, p. 150).

The New Left’s priority on the social is best observed in its concern for welfare issues. Satisfying human needs and promoting human welfare, in both material and nonmaterial senses, are core objectives of traditional leftists and remain so for the New Left. This focus is motivated by Marxist theory—only a society whose members’ needs are properly understood and satisfied can develop into a healthy one—and contemporary circumstances, namely the measurable spike in social ills (such as income inequality, unemployment, and corruption) since the start of the Reform and Opening. Marx was motivated by similar concerns in 19th century Europe during the industrial revolution: ‘Society suddenly finds itself put back into a

state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence' (Marx and Engels 1967, p. 226).¹⁵

Government policy must switch from 'letting a small group of people get rich first' to 'worrying more about social equity' (Liu Guoguang 2009). Such views have been cited already, in the analysis of Liberal sociability. Indeed, the two conceptions are close cousins. The same conception can appear in competing ideological programs, but they take on a different complexion depending on their ideational surroundings. Within Liberalism, sociability is limited to expressions consistent with parallel commitments to individuality, liberty and rationality. The result is to recommend careful limits to the authority of the state in its efforts to proclaim and realize communal aims. Within the New Left, welfare stands beside a perception of society as a constitutive element of the person, and therefore supports more expansive interventions to bring society, and through society the person, to greater health.

4.3.4 Human dignity

The New Left's commitment to social development and welfarism is balanced by an idea of human dignity. Human dignity comprises, first, a negative condition—the absence of exploitative relations in society, which are dehumanizing and degrading. It also comprises a positive condition—the opportunity to participate in the social decisions that affect one's life.

This conception of human dignity overlaps somewhat with Liberalism's active conception of liberty. Marx himself asserted that humanity is 'free not through the negative power to avoid this or that but through the positive power to assert his true individuality' (quoted by Peffer

¹⁵ Marx, Karl (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) (1967). *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). Translated by S. Moore. London: Penguin.

1990, p. 131). It plays a similar role in the overall ideological program: namely, to balance the priority upon the constitutive social with a recognition of the individual as an inviolable entity with important positive capacities that need to be protected and developed. To the New Left, this balancing is a critical part of its ideological work: ‘China is caught between the two extremes of misguided socialism and crony capitalism, and suffering from the worst of both systems. We have to find an alternate way. This is the great mission of our generation’ (Wang Hui, quoted by Pocha 2005, p. 25).¹⁶

‘Nature...spur[s] man on to the multiplication of his wants, his capabilities, his means and modes of labour’, and it is society’s role to support that nature, not stifle it (Marx, quoted by Elster 1985, p. 59). Thus while the New Left supports a more expansive program of state intervention in the outcomes of people’s lives, it opposes totalitarian and monopoly arrangements of power (Yu Guangyuan 2005). At the same time, the priority of the social underscores human dignity’s participatory aspect and precludes its degeneration into atomizing behaviour by individuals. Rather, the social essence in each of us determines our ‘natural vocation’, ‘which sets the goals whose pursuits and fulfilment will constitute a meaningful life’ (Marx, quoted by Wood 2004, p. 21).

4.3.5 Substantive equality

‘Substantive equality’ summarizes the institutional and policy implications of balancing a priority upon the social and welfarism with the cultivation of individuals’ capacities to participate in society. It reflects a strong concern for contemporary social ills, such as poverty,

¹⁶ Wang Hui 汪晖 (1959-) is a professor of Chinese literature at Qinghua University and was the executive editor of 读书 (*Reading*) from 1996-2007.

unemployment and exploitation, which suppress the participatory capacities of those afflicted by them and weaken the social context for all society's members.

As with Liberalism's commitment to formal equality, substantive equality eschews sameness. Sameness would require constant intervention in people's lives to even out the consequences of individual economic and social activity, and constantly overriding individual choice and action is contrary to the New Left's parallel commitment to human dignity. Rather, substantive equality aims at the elimination of exploitation (Tian Yucao 2005b). For traditional leftists, this was achieved by eliminating market forces from society and instead allocating resources and opportunities according to some moral principle, such as Marx's dictum: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs' (1977, p. 569). For the New Left, it demands recognition of market failures and an effective state empowered to step in and redress them when they occur. "[U]nequal market expansion promote[s] social polarization, damage[s] the foundation of social stability, and provide[s] reasons and conditions for heightened political control and economic monopoly' (Wang Hui 2005, p. 76).

In other respects, substantive equality is an explicit contrast to Liberalism. For liberals, concern for social ills is mediated by the priority placed upon individual self-development: the search for policy responses is constrained by a commitment not to unreasonably burden individuals' authority to shape their own lives. For the New Left, however, welfare concerns are reinforced by the priority placed upon the social and therefore call for a more intrusive investigation of, and response to, inequality's root causes. The conclusion of this investigation is that for formal equality to have meaning, it must have a material underpinning. Material inequalities are symptomatic of other inequalities in society's political, economic and cultural

structures. To pronounce formal equality without dealing with inequality in its substantive form is to paper over those structural deficits. '[T]he struggle for freedom must also be a simultaneous struggle for social equality, including in the areas of labour contract freedom, trade freedom, political freedom, and so on' (Wang Hui 2005, p. 83).

Moreover, pushing formal equality prematurely may actually entrench structural inequities, yielding a permanent 'democratic deficit' (Wang Shaoguang 2008c). 'If freedom is emphasized without regard for equality, then the majority of the masses will be "free to pursue abject poverty"' (Wang Hui, quoted by Davies 2007, p. 86). Absent the elimination of power differences and exploitation, formal processes will be hijacked by the wealthy and power elite to legitimize and perpetuate their exploitation of weaker groups (Wang Hui and Karl 1998). This result can be observed in both American and Russian political systems (Cui Zhiyuan and Unger 1994). Substantive equality is the foundation of a substantive democracy, understood as an egalitarian system of power distribution in which leaders are representative, responsive and accountable to the whole of society (Tian Yucao 2005a, p. 314).

4.3.6 Market as an imperfect technology

The commitment to substantive equality, alongside evidence of compounding social ills throughout China's rapid economic growth and recent global economic crises, supports a strong critique of market economics. Market economics has delivered economic growth, but it has also exacerbated, rather than eliminated, exploitation. 'On the road to serfdom, the free

flow of capital seems to strengthen the privileged classes and to enslave the masses' (Han Yuhai, quoted by Xu Youyu 2003, p. 3).¹⁷

Traditional leftists believe that market economics and substantive equality are incompatible: market systems build and reinforce hierarchical and exploitative relationships, as well as atomizing behaviours and values, that are directly antithetical to this goal. The New Left purges this rejection from its ideological program. The market is a technology, and like all technologies it is inherently neither good nor bad. Contemporary social science has shown that markets are often the most efficient way to price and allocate resources, and therefore deliver economic growth (Yu Guangyuan 2005). Since it is not possible to improve the material condition of hundreds of millions of people living at a subsistence level without first enlarging the overall economic pie, markets are a necessary tool for advancing welfare and equality (Fung 2005, p. 330).

What must be rejected, rather, is market utopianism—the belief that the market is a perfect mechanism that works better the less the state interferes with it, or that market mechanisms can fix substantive inequalities without state guidance. The empirical evidence of expanding social ills during the past thirty years of marketization gives ample proof against such assertions, and social science has catalogued many instances of market failure: the provision of public goods, externalities, monopolies, wage and price rigidity, incomplete risk markets, information failure and others (Wang Shaoguang 1997, Wang Hui 2003, Tian Yucao 2005a).

¹⁷ Han Yuhai 韩毓海 (1965-) is an associate professor of Chinese language and literature at Peking University.

Libertarians rejoin that such analysis is flawed. Heavy state ownership and intervention throughout the reform period have corrupted the market's functioning; any investigation into the causes of social misery should look to the former, not the latter. For the New Left, the state's ongoing presence in some sectors is insufficient grounds to deny market economics' culpability. 'Commercialization and its attendant consumption have thoroughly penetrated every aspect of social life...the social and the economic roles of the government at every level [are] daily becoming more intimately related to capital' (Wang Hui and Karl 1998, p. 9). It began with the sporadic introduction of markets for consumer goods, proceeded to the introduction of a set of interconnected market systems, including markets for commodities, labour, capital, currency and lands, and is being entrenched through the development of a market society of atomizing values and behaviours that has 'ruined the foundation of the moral economy' (Wang Shaoguang 2008b, p. 18). Along the way, the role of the Party-state has been transformed. A wide range of welfare policy concerns, such as equality, employment, employees' rights and interests, healthcare and the environment have been demoted beneath an overriding commitment to market imperatives (Freeman and Wen Jinyuan 2012).

4.3.7 Effective state

The solution is not to reverse the development of market economics. Rather, the solution is to build an effective state to manage this economic growth technology and redress its failures. '[I]n order to realize socialism, we must make use of the market but we also need to count on the state...Whether a society can take full advantage of [the market's] vigour and avoid disastrous social polarization depends on the way in which a society regulates the market' (Tian 2005a, pp. 3-4, 300). Responsibilities of an effective state are extensive and include regulation, adjustment and control of market outcomes (Du Runsheng 2005); reform and

transformation of existing financial markets (Cui Zhiyuan 2005b); and the establishment of workers' and public property rights to recognize the claims of workers and the public interest over production (Cao Tianyu 2005a).

The New Left's position is diametrically opposed to Libertarian discourse, which advocates laissez-faire economics and a minimum state. Laissez-faire is a 'do-nothing policy' that seeks to deny the link that exists between politics and economics and demands that the state 'abandon its responsibilities for social welfare and protection, relinquishing the means by which to regulate market activities' (Wang Hui 2005, p. 80). The New Left also denies the assertion that the market is an end in itself and that private property is an inviolable aspect of liberty. Rather, both are a means to promote social and individual welfare. For this reason, the role of non-market methods to improve welfare outcomes should be neither dismissed nor underestimated (Wang Shaoguang 1997). The state is the visible hand without which the market's invisible hand could not operate (Xiao Gongqin and Zhu Wei 1990).

An effective state is not a totalitarian one, however (Yu Guangyuan 2005). The traditional left adopted a statist interpretation that advocated monopoly institutional arrangements. The New Left 'is a social protection movement' that opposes monopoly and demands eventual democracy in order to protect human dignity and realize substantive equality (Wang Hui 2005, p. 63). A strong state is needed to guide the market toward the development of a healthy society, but that health also demands democratic processes and individual liberties to protect and encourage people's participation. In this regard, the New Left superficially resembles European social democracy, however the latter tolerates persistent structural inequalities whereas the former remains committed to their elimination. The New Left advocates much

stronger state action to reform the basic capitalist structure of property ownership and limited state investment, plus the careful pacing of democratic expansion to ensure it serves to further weaken, rather than legitimize, the market's unequal effects (Cui Zhiyuan 2005b, p. 160).

Bound up in this call for an effective state is the judgment that the current state apparatus is too weak to do the job. China is an intrusive state, yes, but not an effective one; the state suffers from an 'ominous capacity deficit' evidenced by under-policing (by per capita measures), poor management of public finances, and weak taxation and regulatory capacities (Wang Shaoguang 2003, p. 38). The roots of this weakness can be traced back to Mao's decentralization agenda, which Deng Xiaoping's reform policies accelerated (Frenkiel 2013).

4.3.8 Economic independence

An important corollary to an effective state, as the 2008 global financial crisis clearly demonstrated, is economic independence (Freeman and Wen 2012). Globalization is the global expansion of market economics in the post-Cold War era (Tian Yucao 2005b). Like all market activity, international trade relations can be an important tool of welfare improvement if managed carefully by an effective state to redress its failures. As currently conceived under the World Trade Organization, globalization restrains the flexibility of states to do so, with predictable consequences: the exploitation of labour, the polarization of rich and poor, environmental destruction, atomizing consumer behaviour, and the suppression of the development of state capacities in poor countries (Chen Yangu 1998). A destructive international race to the bottom for wages, working conditions and social and environmental protections is underway, producing an unjust world economic order that exploits poorer countries in a 'colonial economic arrangement' (Zhang Hongliang 2009).

As with market economics generally, the appropriate response is not anti-trade but more effective management of trade and its consequences (Wang Hui 2005). A higher degree of trade protectionism and less dependence on international trade is needed so that the Chinese state can assert welfarist ends and values domestically against the demands of global capitalism (Zuo Dapei 2010).¹⁸

4.3.9 Call for socialist culture

To realize substantive equality and democracy with the assistance of market technologies demands highly developed citizens possessing a strong socialist culture (Du 2005). Such a culture regulates their raw instincts and self-interest with an awareness of humanity's social nature and the concomitant need to live in harmony with it. 'The most essential characteristics of the socialist culture are: exploring individual and human liberation as the ultimate value of modernity in its most universal and thorough form; judging and evaluating all existing institutions and cultures, making appropriate institutional arrangements, and developing corresponding philosophical, economic, political and cultural theories on the basis of that value...' (Tian 2005a, p. 302).

The challenge is that China is still 'a developing, backward country with populous peasants'. Therefore, the call for socialist culture is also a call for patience—particularly with regards to formal equality and procedural democracy. Democracy invites the widest possible competition for political power. In order for people to elect power responsibly, they must have an adequate

¹⁸ Zuo Dapei 左大培 (1952-) is an economist in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He speaks and publishes extensively on economic nationalism.

perception of, and concern for, social imperatives. Absent that perception and concern, maximizing competition for political power could damage the social entity in many ways. Popular patience with sound long-term policy making may fall; rising expectations may outstrip government's ability to deliver; and previously contained regional, ethnic, class and religious tensions may rise again and cause social or even territorial disintegration (Wang Shaoguang 2003).

The call for socialist culture also appears as a call for renewed Party leadership—not to govern society directly, but to help shape public opinion, educate the uneducated, and confront the ideological hegemony of international liberalism with a more balanced view of the strengths and limitations of market economics and individual liberty, and the legitimate role for an effective state to contain and correct those limits (Tian 2005a).

4.3.10 Alternative modernity

The New Left asserts an alternative conception of modernity as a denial of Liberalism's claim to universality, which is seen as especially pernicious since China's adoption of market economics. Marx warned: '[T]he more extensive the market through which [capital] circulates..., the more it will aspire to greater extension in space for its market, and thus to greater destruction of space by time' (Marx 1971, p. 119).

Liberalism's claim of universality questions the legitimacy of all alternative ideological agendas. Official Ideology and the New Left find common cause in resisting this claim, and it is not surprising to find a version of this resistance within both discourses. The New Left's alternative vision of modernity consists of socialism updated with contemporary social science

(Wang Hui, cited by Chen Lichuan 2004). The combination aims to deliver prosperity to society while avoiding the mistakes made by liberal democratic capitalism that produced persistent unemployment, poverty and inequality:

‘The truth is that even the Western Left’s policies (like progressive taxes) are only reactive and aimed at correcting imbalances caused by a capitalistic system. Our ultimate goal should be to develop a new theory of poverty and an independent society where such massive imbalances do not occur in the first place’ (Cui Zhiyuan, quoted by Pocha 2005, p. 31)

To assert the legitimacy of an alternative vision is anti-universalism, but also anti-wholesale westernization. Chinese intellectuals need to guard against an insidious ‘cultural hegemony’, whose ‘magic power is evident in its ability to make people unconsciously become the vassals of others’ (Wang Shaoguang 2011, p. 34). ‘We should rather say that we live in new colonial times than in post-colonial times’ (Zhang Kuan 1996, p. 22). Rather than be cognizant of these dangers, which ‘stifle our own creative potential’ (Wang 2011, p. 34), contemporary liberals ‘are guilty of taking Eurocentrism as the unalterable principle and submitting themselves to the rhetoric of universalism’ (Zhang Xudong, quoted by Ben Xu 2001, p. 122).

The popular expression of the argument for an alternative modernity is nationalism. Far from being an irrational attachment to the particular, nationalism is a natural response against foreign ideologies that seek to delegitimize China’s social, cultural and ideational distinctiveness (Chen Kuiyuan, cited by Wang Xingfu 2012).¹⁹ The rise of national consciousness is inevitable in the face of foreign attempts to access China’s labour and markets on their own terms, to demand that the state retreat from defending society against

¹⁹ Chen Kuiyuan 陈奎元 (1941-) is president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

the market's ill effects, or to impose foreign value judgements upon China's particular social and cultural identity and aspirations (Tian 2005a, p. 304).

4.4 Political Confucianism

Ten years of state sponsorship under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, from 1986-1995, resuscitated Confucian studies to the point where Fang Keli, the lead co-ordinator for both five-year projects and thus a highly partial observer, had by 1991 declared Confucianism to be one of the three most influential systems of thought in mainland China (alongside Marxism and Liberalism) (Fang Keli 1991).

Given the heavy role of state sponsorship in its contemporary re-emergence, it is worth asking whether Confucian ideology contributes a distinctive agenda to professional discourse worthy of separate inclusion in the concourse sample, or whether it is simply a cloak of cultural and historical legitimacy repeating official doctrine. In the 1990s critics of Confucian discourse argued that it was being orchestrated by the Party-state in order to provide the Party with an alternative justification for state nationalism (Zhao Suisheng 2000) or to counter Western cultural influences (Meissner 1999). Ai Jiawen (2009a) observed that a large quantity, perhaps a majority, of Confucian scholarship in mainland China is still undertaken by academics with bureaucratic linkages. Much funding and publication focuses upon the efforts of these scholars, and their agenda seems to be to establish a compatibility between Marxist thought and Confucian thought, presumably so that popular recognition of and support for Confucianism can be recruited by the Party to solidify its authority and aid its efforts to maintain social order.

The compatibility of certain aspects of Confucian thought with Party-state policy is no doubt an important factor in its popularity and continued state sponsorship. But renewed Confucian discourse cannot be reduced to Official Ideology. The core assertions of Political Confucian

ideology are quite different, even if some of their broad policy implications are not. Its preference for authoritarian leadership derives from distinct ideas about the moral authority required to rule and about how such authority is gained.

Contemporary scholarship labels a multitude of Confucian schools of thought: classical and popular, official and unofficial, political and social, secular and spiritual, Socialist and Liberal, aristocratic, institutional, imperial, deep structure, critical, real life, New, Post-New, New New and others (Makeham 2008). It is therefore difficult to identify the contemporary mainstream of Confucian political thought. Some question whether any contemporary political program can be advanced atop a Confucian foundation. ‘Confucianism as a life philosophy is still very much relevant to our modern society, but to refit it as a relevant political ideal in the modern society is an immensely difficult task’ (Joseph Chan, quoted by Jiang Qing 2013, p. 112).²⁰

Among the most systematic attempts to do so are the works of Jiang Qing. Jiang Qing is a leading Confucian who achieved widespread recognition in the field of Confucian studies in 1989 with his publication of what Fang Keli later labelled ‘a political manifesto and ideological guideline for the revival of Confucianism’ (1997, p. 424). I base the following analysis largely upon his works.

4.4.1 Immanent morality

At the heart of Confucian thought is a conception of immanent morality (Fox 1997, p. 587), expressed within the canonical texts as Heaven or the Way. Contemporary Confucians debate to what extent Heaven or the Way commits themselves to a transcendent ontology, but

²⁰ Joseph Chan is a professor of politics at the University of Hong Kong.

common among their interpretations is a philosophical commitment to moral realism and a belief that human relations are the site at which this moral reality is embodied and observable (Julia Ching 1977, Chan Wing-tsit 1981, Hall and Ames 1987, Puett 2002, Bai Tongdong 2013).

‘Heaven is the higher law background’ or ‘transcendental value’ of the Confucian program (Jiang Qing 2013, p. 48). Immanent morality is a rejection of ‘the relativization and secularization of values. [Such a] society, in its entirety, would lack a value standard derived from a transcendent sphere; its values would be fragmented, disintegrated and in acute conflict’ (Jiang Qing 2003, p. 328). Instead, the foundation for a unifying morality—natural, universally valid criteria for good and bad, praise and blame—is available for discovery within our various social roles and relations (Cha Seong 2003). ‘The way of heaven is not some abstract postulate of a far-removed metaphysics; it is a concrete reality that exists in all human cultural forms: political institutions, legal institutions, matrimonial institutions, moral institutions, educational institutions, and industrial-commercial institutions’ (Jiang Qing 1989, pp. 34-36).

Reminiscent of the New Left’s idea of the social self, the Confucian commitment to immanent morality makes human relations a constitutive part of full personhood (Herr 2003, pp. 471-472). The self is ‘irreducibly interpersonal’ (Ames 1991, p. 105). ‘Without others and without social relations, the self has no ground on which to be based’ (Liu Yuli 2004, p. 367). Seen the other way, this commitment also implies that society and the moral rules society embodies are a part of the self. ‘[S]ociety is not conceived of as something out there that is being imposed on the individual. It is in essence an extended self. The internalization of social values...can

therefore be interpreted as a creative step taken by the self to enter into human relatedness for the sake of none other than its own realization' (Du Weiming 1979, p. 25). The good life is rich relationships.

4.4.2 Self-cultivation

Moral truth can be discovered; doing so—through self-cultivation—therefore becomes a central motive for the Political Confucian program (Liu Yuli 2004, p. 374). Discovery is concomitant with expression; self-cultivation is therefore the basis for achieving a well-ordered life, family, state and universal peace. Although morality is immanent in our social roles, awareness and knowledge of the duties and benefits that accompany our roles is not innate. It must be learned. A person's set of social roles is complex and dynamic with respect to both time and circumstance, and so the proper fulfilment of these roles is a life-long developmental process by which one becomes increasingly cognizant of one's social nature and the duties and benefits they imply. It is also a society-wide process:

'Without others and without social relations, the self has no ground on which to be based, and self-cultivation cannot be possible' (Liu Yuli 2004, p. 367).

'[O]nly when personal lives are cultivated are families regulated; only when families are regulated are states governed; only when states are governed is there peace all under Heaven. Therefore, from the Son of Heaven to the common people, all, without exception, must take self-cultivation as the root' (*The Great Learning*, translated by de Bary, Chan et al. 1960, p. 115).

To count as such, self-cultivation must be autonomous. 'Learning for the sake of one's self,' 'Getting it oneself,' 'Finding [the Way in] oneself,' and 'Taking responsibility for [the Way] oneself' are frequent exhortations in the Confucian canon (de Bary 1983, p. 9). A person must

voluntarily carry out his moral responsibilities. If he fulfils them only under threat, clearly he has failed to perceive them or their importance (Joseph Chan 2002).

Self-cultivation must also be intentional. Confucius explicitly derided 乡原 ('the village worthy')—persons who unwittingly discharge their moral duties—because ignorance is an unreliable foundation upon which to build a prosperous society (Analects, 17:13).²¹ Plus, to blindly follow norms is to close one's awareness to the reality of changing circumstances that, upon reflection, warrant either a revision to ethical behaviour or an earnest renewal of declining good habits.

This autonomous and intentional aspects of self-cultivation generate a strong commitment to public education (Joseph Chan 2008) and a preference for moral suasion over legal punishment to rectify behaviour (Bell 2010). It also generates tolerance of pluralism: 'If a person does not have any opportunity to be exposed to contrary views and falsehood, he will not be able to develop the ethical and mental capacities to make the best judgment or hit at the mean in many practical situations in human life' (Chan 2008, p. 125).

Self-cultivation overlaps somewhat with Liberalism's notion of self-development. However, whereas the Liberal notion envisages actualization through the expression of individuality, self-cultivation identifies actualization in the fulfilment of one's social roles. Moreover, the Confucian person does not self-legislate through abstract reasoning (Chan 2002, p. 290).

²¹ Confucius 孔丘 (551-479 BCE) (1983). *Confucius: The Analects*. Translated by D. C. Lau. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Rather, he discovers moral imperatives embedded in human nature by studying actual social relations in his own life, then extends those oughts and shoulds to his conduct with strangers.

4.4.3 Sacred tradition

‘The state is formed naturally and reasonably over a long period of history owing to the cooperation of heaven, earth, and the human element’ (Jiang Qing 2013, p. 71).

Self- and social cultivation and expression of human society’s immanent morality is a cumulative, ‘step by step’ process of entering ‘every aspect of the daily lives of Chinese people, by means of the establishment of political, social, economic and educational institutions’ (Yu Yingshi, quoted by Makeham 2008, p. 111).²² Each successive generation builds upon the moral progress of the previous.

History, and historically built-up culture and traditions, are therefore sacred resources (Xu Fuguan, cited by Cheng Chungying 2003, p. 166).²³ ‘They are the storehouse of a civilization’s accumulated wisdom. ‘Chinese people most fear the fall of culture because this means the demise of values...Culture is nothing less than the medium and confluence of a nation’s life values and the meaning for its existence’ (Jiang Qing 2003, p. 2).

This sanctification of the past is the foundation for much of the Political Confucian program. It equates to a conservative, organic notion of change—comparable to Official Ideology—that

²² Yu Yingshi 余英时 (1930-) is a professor (emeritus) of history and East Asia at Princeton University.

²³ Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1902-1982) was a historian and one of the authors of ‘A Declaration of Chinese Culture to the Scholars of the World’ (为中国文化敬告世界人士宣言), a 1958 New Confucian manifesto.

admits gradual reform that is respectful of, and builds atop, the past, and condemns sudden or fundamental revolution that discards it. By adopting a progressive notion of history, contemporary Confucian thought makes an important departure from classical Confucianism, which sought to reverse society's trajectory and return to a perceived Golden Age in the past (Marcus 1961). For the classical Confucius: 'I transmit but do not innovate. I am...devoted to antiquity' (Analects, 7:1). In contrast, contemporary Confucians see moral development as 'both a historical accumulation and a formation that is here and now; it is the complex interaction of the traditional and the immediate...This "here and now" can be creatively transformed into a source or resource of modernity' (Jing Haifeng, quoted by Makeham 2008, p. 110).²⁴

Sanctification of the past also sanctifies present social and state institutions as both products and custodians of history and tradition, which forms an important justification for the paternalistic state (discussed further below). 'The state is lofty and spiritual, transcending the secular interests and selfish desires of a given time' (Jiang Qing 2013, p. 73). It vests state and cultural authorities with two important powers: history's interpreter ('excavat[-ing] those unique, historically enduring, and broadly significant intellectual values of our nation's historical culture' (Zheng Jiadong, quoted by Makeham 2008, p. 47)) and arbiter of what counts as the present generation's contribution to tradition vs. what is incompatible with it and therefore must be rejected.²⁵

²⁴ Jing Haifeng 景海峰 (1957-) is a professor of ancient Chinese literature at Shenzhen University.

²⁵ Zheng Jiadong 鄭家棟 (1956-) is a Confucian philosopher and former researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

It also vests them with the responsibility to teach tradition. It is necessary for state and cultural authorities to revive Confucian practice and norms on all fronts. Jiang Qing calls for: a Chinese Confucian association with broad political, financial and institutional privileges to design the national education curriculum and plan major national ceremonies; Confucian universities, colleges, newspapers, journals and publishing houses, television and radio channels, and internet sites; and Confucian lecture halls at the local, provincial and national levels.

4.4.4 Hierarchical interdependence

The first lesson from human relations is that society is imbued with a natural order, or hierarchical interdependence.

‘Those who labour with their minds govern others; those who labour with their strength are governed by others...This is a universal principle’ (*The Great Learning*, translated by de Bary, Chan et al. 1960, p. 69).

‘Let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be a minister, the father be a father, and the son be a son’ (*Analects*, translated by de Bary, Chan et al. 1960, p. 39).

People do not ordinarily approach one another as equals. Instead we live in defined relations of benefactors and beneficiaries (Nosco 2008). The foundation for this insight into natural hierarchy is the relationship between parent and child, which Confucius identified as the first and primary source of moral insight and experience to guide one’s reflection upon his social roles (Rosemont 2008, p. 52).

This perception of hierarchy is mediated by a recognition of interdependence. A hierarchical relationship is not one of simple mastery—of command and obedience. It is a relationship of

mutual giving and receiving that cultivates the social self of all involved (Madsen 2008, p. 7). Each type of relationship is a different source of moral insight and provides different opportunities for self-cultivation. Therefore, persons should not be ‘subordinated as an instrumental means to serve the realization of the other. Rather, they stand as mutually implicatory ends’ (Hall and Ames 1987, pp. 159-160).

Hierarchical interdependence, as a further fleshing out of the nature of social relations, does important work within the Political Confucian program. It lends further specificity to the project of self-cultivation. The task is clarified as the conscientious exercise of authority over those who exist in a beneficiary relationship toward us, and of conscientious respect toward our own benefactors. It sets the parameters for the relationship between paternalistic state and obedient citizen (discussed in the proceeding sections). And it provides a flexible legitimizing resource for a range of responses to contemporary social and political problems: emphasizing hierarchy when a weak state threatens social disorder, collapse or conquest; emphasizing interdependence when a strong state tends toward totalitarianism (Lin Anwu 1996).

It also provides a basis for critiquing Liberal and New Leftist equality agendas. Political inequality is a logical implication of recognizing hierarchy as natural and possessed of moral meaning. Political relationships are based not on equality and entitlements, but responsibility and respect. Social inequalities are acceptable by the same logic.

Where equality is recognized is in each person’s capacity for moral development (Kim 2008, p. 14). This equality finds expression in the Confucian commitment to meritocracy. Social hierarchy, while natural, is not naturally fixed. When people born into lower levels of the

hierarchy show excellence in their self-cultivation, their status in the hierarchy should be adjusted—both to reflect that cultivation, and to place them in positions where society can better benefit from their highly developed capacity to judge actions. This equality of developmental capacities reinforces upon hierarchical benefactors the duty to supply favourable conditions for moral development, especially education, to those people or populations under their administration.

4.4.5 Paternalistic state

‘The virtue of the gentleman is like wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend’ (Analects, 12:19).

The problem with power is not, as Liberalism suggests, how to limit its scope or to protect a private realm from its interference. Power is a natural aspect of human hierarchical relations, and thus an important aspect of self- and social cultivation. There is no need to fear it or set constraints upon it (Du Weiming 1993, p. 6). Nor is the problem, as New Leftists suggest, how to eliminate elite influence. It is unnatural to try to do so. Instead, the problem is to strengthen the qualities of those who wield power and limit its misuse by those who lack the requisite wisdom and ability, so that stable and strong governments can administer society toward peace and prosperity (O’Dwyer 2003, p. 43). Power should be wielded by ‘worthy and capable scholar-officials [who] are able to truly represent the interests of the masses thanks to their moral virtue and political ability, and hence once in power they can forcefully oppose the monopoly of power of capitalism and the oppression that this brings to the masses’ (Jiang Qing 2013, p. 17).

The conception of morality as a progressively cultivated perception of human nature—progressive over time and also vertically up the social hierarchy—imposes upon such worthy elites a responsibility to act paternalistically—to constrain citizen actions whose content is contrary to that cultivated awareness. The state, as the idea that establishes continuity between one generation and the next, is the custodian of society’s historical gains toward an exemplary state of being. The sovereign ‘knows and communicates with the great Way’ (Jiang 2013, p. 51). Therefore, rather than preside over a free debate about which values should rule, or permit itself to be constrained by ignorant objections, the state must bring its privileged perceptions to bear, wielding a ‘benevolent visible hand’ in people’s economic and moral lives that guides them to live virtuously within society’s moral tradition and prevents pernicious ideas from spreading (O’Dwyer 2003, p. 45). The ‘main purpose of sovereignty is to implement religious and moral values, using transcendent and sacred goodness to regulate sovereignty and guide it toward the good’ (Jiang 2013, p. 52).

4.4.6 Liberty through loyalty

‘When an action is motivated by selfish or excessive desires, it is wrong. When an action is in line with the benevolent, life-nurturing principle of heaven, it is a form of moral creativity identical to Heaven’s creativity’ (Wang Yangming, quoted by N. Serina Chan 2003, p. 145).²⁶

The implication for individuals of a paternalistic state is a conception of liberty through loyalty to the moral leader. Liberty is not the unrestrained pursuit of one’s own whims and desires, nor unlimited rational critique, nor radical experimentation with alternative social orderings.

²⁶ Wang Yangming 王阳明 (1472-1529) was a Confucian philosopher during the Ming Dynasty.

Liberty is a matter of being a cooperative participant in a society ordered according to humanity's social nature (Fung 2006, He Baogang 2010).

Within this context, liberty through loyalty renders to the individual wide freedom of choice:

‘It involves more deeply understanding the meaning of one’s [various] roles...so that one can flexibly, even playfully, reconcile these with each other and with all the other confusing roles that one must play in an evolving modern world. This task can provide wide latitude for action and immense challenges for personal creativity, and it can lead to a plethora of individualized responses to particular situations. Under the right circumstances, it can encourage vigorous entrepreneurial initiative. In practice, well-cultivated Confucians would have a great deal of freedom to choose. But in principle, their choices would be directed toward a larger goal, a dynamic, open process of spiritual development leading toward...a civilized society’ (Madsen 2008, p. 16).

The state is a partner in personal liberty. ‘Unlike the liberal conception of society and politics, Confucianism sees no separation between public and private morality...Society and politics are closely knitted together under a single ideal’ (Joseph Chan 2008, p. 120).²⁷ Liberty is located not in the act of doing, but in the content of one’s actions, and government intervention in people’s lives can yield a desirable expansion of liberty if it helps to direct their development (O’Dwyer 2003, p. 45). Each person should expect to encounter constraints against acts of commission and omission that go against the moral order, and incentives and rewards for acts in harmony with it.

Likewise, each person is a partner in the development of the morally ordered state.

Developing one’s mind and heart cannot be accomplished by passively accepting the voices of

²⁷ Jiang Qing (2013, p. 101) likewise maintains that virtues, society and politics are inseparable, although he nuances this unity. He distinguishes between ‘leading’ and ‘non-leading’ values (pp. 169-170). The former are publicly expressed and govern public life; the latter are privately expressed and belong to the realm of private choice.

authority. It demands active obedience to one's duty as revealed in experience and upon reflection, even if those revealed truths conflict with authority. In such cases, true loyalty is to criticize social authority and government for their moral mistakes, rather than submit to them. 'Promoting the concept of loyalty does not necessarily imply that one must be loyal to a particular political authority' (Guo Qiyong, quoted by Makeham 2008, pp. 264-265).²⁸

4.4.7 Benevolent authority

The legitimacy of sovereign authority does not derive from its placement at the top of a hierarchy. Such placement is the source of the sovereign's duties and benefits. Instead, legitimacy derives from virtuous action—i.e. action consistent with those duties and benefits. Authority, then, like the liberty of the sovereign's subjects, is content-dependent.

The relationship between the state and the people should be like the relation of loving father and dutiful son (*The Classic of Filial Piety*, ch. 9).²⁹ Like parenthood, 'political authority is a *trust* conferred by the Mandate of Heaven upon the government *for the welfare of the people*' (Albert Chen 2007, p. 201). This trust begins with providing for the well-being of the poor, and can also be understood to extend to providing general sustenance and security, promoting widespread economic development, investing in public education, and cultivating virtue and reducing vice among society (Bell 2010).

²⁸ Guo Qiyong 郭齐勇 (1947-) is the dean of philosophy at Wuhan University.

²⁹ Zeng Zi 曾子 (505-436 BCE) (2008). *The Classic of Filial Piety* (孝经). Translated by Feng Xingming 冯欣明. Online: http://www.tsoidug.org/Xiao/Xiao_Jing_Comment.pdf.

While prescribing right actions, the benevolence test proscribes others. Per Confucius' golden rule, 'Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire' (Analects, 12:2). The paternalistic ruler does not have license to run a police state. Neither punishment nor forced obedience can accomplish the cultivation of heart and mind that yields a civilized society. Excessive rule making and heavy-handed policing are the hallmark of a weak state. 'Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue...and they will...reform themselves' (Analects, 2:3). Behaviour management should be principle-based (argument, persuasion, naming and shaming, for example) rather than law-based (penalties and incarceration). Laws can be enforced; they can also be circumvented. No set of laws can foresee every situation, and no police force can supervise the totality of society. But principles, once internalized, govern one's actions in every circumstance, foreseen and unforeseen.

When hierarchical powers fail the benevolence test, they lose the legitimacy to govern. 'He who injures humanity is a bandit. He who injures righteousness is a destructive person. Such a person is a mere fellow' (Book of Mencius, 1B:8). Mencius went on to explain that one former King of Zhou (a wicked ruler who ignored his people's plight and thus a 'mere fellow') was therefore rightfully murdered. Bell (2010) argues the modern equivalent: the proper justification for humanitarian intervention abroad should be to alleviate a people's material suffering.

This conception of legitimacy constrains Political Confucian notions of hierarchy and paternalism from endorsing unlimited power. Among contemporary Confucians, Jiang Qing has gone furthest in the attempt to articulate a contemporary constitutional structure that

embodies this balance. He recognizes democratic voting as an important expression of popular will and welfare concerns, but '[s]o long as the will of the people is seen as the *sole* source of legitimacy, politics can never aim at implementing the good' (2013, p. 36). Legitimization on the basis of popular will alone leads to secularization, selfishness, hedonism and disregard for history and ecology; on the other hand, legitimization on the basis of benevolence alone can quench the people's voices. Jiang proposes a tri-partite hierarchy in which three sources of legitimacy are represented—in declining order of precedence: heaven (benevolence, represented by a direct descendent of Confucius), earth (historical and cultural traditions, selected by meritocratic examination) and human (the elected will of the people). 'Sovereignty lies in the people, but the right to rule lies in the wise and virtuous' (p. 121). Pan Wei (2003), Joseph Chan (2007) and Bai Tongdong (2012) proposed similar forms of political meritocracy (贤能政治) that aim to select, rather than elect, morally competent rulers with superior knowledge and virtue who take people's interests into consideration when making decisions and choose good policies on behalf of society.

4.4.8 National unity

The whole Confucian program—perceiving the Way and ordering society accordingly—stresses the importance of national unity. It is one of the cardinal characteristics of a healthy society; disunity is one of the clearest signs of social degeneration.

In domestic decision-making, this emphasis yields a strong preference for consensus building over conflict. Politics is not about competition among conflicting values. It is about discussion and contemplation to arrive voluntarily at a common understanding of what is best for the whole community (Joseph Chan 2000). The alternative, compromise—whereby different

parties represent particular interests and bargain against one another—is repugnant (He Baogang 2010, p. 121). Compromise implies either a failure to go deep enough into one’s analysis of the facts and values in question, or a rejection of the understanding revealed by one’s own moral faculties. Either way, it stultifies the cultivation of the person and society.

This understanding of political bargaining shapes attitudes toward state sovereignty and minorities. Federalism is viewed with suspicion, and formal independence—the departure of a group from the political community—is rejected. The state is a single organism; either of these developments would signal a collective failure to arrive at a common understanding of what’s best for the whole. Just as people are naturally born into a hierarchy, so too are they born into a society and a tradition. Part of the task of self-cultivation is to discover and appreciate one’s place within that society.

National unity does not, however, justify cultural assimilation; the latter would trample the autonomy upon which self-cultivation depends. The result is an unequal, yet nuanced, stance toward minorities that demands membership to the majoritarian tradition, but welcomes diversity of personal lifestyle, cultural expression and belief. Conflict must be met with mutual respect, active exchange and intermingling among society’s diverse components to discover their root moral unity (Joseph Chan 2008, p. 125). And it must be met with a willingness to adapt. Minority differences are not sacred by the simple fact of their existence. They should support the moral development and the unity of society. If instead they prove to have a deleterious effect, the paternal state is justified in limiting their expression (He Baogang 2004, p. 118).

4.5 Summary of the theoretical framework for concourse sampling

The above ideological analyses comprise the theoretical framework for sampling the concourse of views among China's emerging middle class about what the guiding values and principles of Chinese politics should be. Table 4-1 summarizes this framework. In Chapter Five, I apply this framework to draw the initial concourse sample.

Table 4-1 Theoretical framework for concourse sampling

Official Ideology	Liberalism	New Left	Political Confucianism
1. Unified interests of the overwhelming majority 2. Party as vanguard 3. Organic change 4. Primary stage of socialism 5. Democratic dictatorship 6. Democratic centralism 7. Release and develop productive forces 8. Dogmatic rationality 9. Policy pragmatism 10. Rule by virtue 11. Subordination to the interests of the whole 12. Loyalty as obedience 13. Freedom as national strength 14. Unity of the motherland	1. Individuality 2. Sociability 3. Liberty as non-constraint, open-ended and active 4. Human nature as progressive and good 5. Critical rationality 6. Responsible, limited power 7. Rule of law 8. Electoral democracy 9. Participation improves quality of governance 10. Political equality 11. Universalism 12. Libertarianism - Economic liberty - Self-help - Laissez faire - Market as social justice	1. Social essence of the self 2. Priority of the social 3. Welfarism 4. Human dignity 5. Substantive equality 6. Market as an imperfect technology 7. Effective state 8. Economic independence 9. Call for socialist culture 10. Alternative modernity	1. Immanent morality 2. Self-cultivation 3. Sacred tradition 4. Hierarchical interdependence 5. Paternalistic state 6. Liberty through loyalty 7. Benevolent authority 8. National unity

5 Concourse and Population Sampling

5.1 **Concourse sampling (Q-set)**

Having developed a theoretical sampling frame, the next step is to saturate this frame with representative statements drawn from actual social discourse (i.e., drawn from the concourse).

5.1.1 Concourse sampling principles

The concourse sample, or Q-set, is a ‘representative miniature of the concourse’ (Van Exel and De Graaf 2005, p.5). It should possess two characteristics: coverage and balance.

Coverage is achieved if the statements in the Q-set saturate the sampling frame. Balance is achieved if the sample offers participants opportunities to express support for a variety of different viewpoints through positive agreement. (An unbalanced sample would be one in which participants could only get certain ideas across by disagreeing with most of the statements within it.) Ultimately, coverage and balance are judged by the research participants themselves. Hence it is important to pilot the Q-set once the sample has been drawn and ask pilot participants how well it achieves these two objectives. Coverage: Do you have something important to say about which values ought to govern Chinese politics that you haven’t been able to express through this set of statements? Balance: How confident are you that your own viewpoint on this topic is captured in your arrangement of statements? Recognizing that the sample cannot present every view, if pilot participants routinely report feeling frustrated or limited by the statements offered within the Q-set, revision may be needed (Watts 2011).

5.1.2 Concourse sampling procedures

Per standard Q Methodology practice, I drew upon an eclectic range of sources. Sources I sampled for statements included print and online newspapers (especially their editorial sections); magazines; speeches; books; political education textbooks; articles; government,

media, institutional and personal websites; blogs; and posts on social message services. (See Appendices, §11.1, for a selection of sources.) All were published in mainland China.¹

Censorship in China may suppress some elements of the sampling frame from these public sources. Therefore, I supplemented the statements drawn from published sources with statements drawn from interviews conducted with a pilot study group. Published ideological statements, particularly by officials and scholars, may epitomize the discourses they represent, but broader society also makes important contributions to political thinking, and in summarizing the ideological space it is important that the vernacular be represented alongside professional speech (Freeden 2011).

Sampling continued until the theoretical framework was well-saturated with statements, which I operationalized as a minimum of 4 representative statements per each of the ‘cells’ within the sampling frame. I then randomly selected one statement from each cell to form an initial Q-set for use in the pilot study.

The pilot study involved 20 participants, sampled via the same chain-referral technique as the main study, described at §5.2.2. Pilot participants took part in two rounds of interviews in October and November/December, 2011. The first round, prior to drawing the initial Q-set, was an unstructured discussion of their political value preferences, using conceptions from the theoretical frame as prompts to invite them to express their own opinions and reactions. These interviews contributed statements to help saturate the sampling frame. In the second round, after the initial Q-set had been drawn, I administered the statement-sorting task. From one pilot interview to the next, I made adjustments to the draft Q-set as warranted by

¹ Not all remained available upon review in July, 2015.

coverage and balance criteria: dropping statements that were consistently deemed vague, confusing or irrelevant and re-drawing a new random statement from the corresponding cell; adding statements to express ideas that participants felt unable to express within the Q-set; replacing statements with clearer or more concise alternatives offered by participants; and adjusting the tone of statements to improve the balance in the way perspectives were presented. It is at this stage that peripheral ideas were added that my theoretical framework had excluded: feminism, environmentalism and nihilism. (The latter is a good example of the limits of the theoretical frame. One view to which it was blind, but which several pilot participants wished to express, was that these debates did not matter to them. Heberer (2009), citing Hannah Arendt, argued that the freedom to express disinterest and abstain from political activity is itself a significant demonstration of political power for a class that has successfully 'de-totalized' politics and claimed a private sphere for itself. Statements #14, #19, #21, #24, #26, #48 and #55 were added to the sample set to give expression to this notion.) The final Q-set selected for the main study was the 15th iteration in the process. As a result of the pilot work, about 40% of the statements from the initial Q-set were altered. Alterations ranged from minor rewordings to complete replacements.

As a final step, the statements were randomly numbered from 1 to 65 to obscure the original sampling frame.

5.1.3 Concourse sampling result**Table 5-1 Official Ideology statements**

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
4	Democratic dictatorship	法官对重大案件的判罚，应该采纳政府的意见。 When judges decide important cases, they should accept the opinions of the government.
5	Party as vanguard	如果没有共产党了，中国就站不起来。 If there were no more Communist Party, China would not be able to stand up.
8	Rule by virtue	所有的政治体制都存在大规模腐败的问题。这不是体制的问题，而是人类的本性。 Large-scale corruption problems exist in all political systems. This isn't a problem with the systems; it's human nature.
9	Primary stage of socialism	当前对中国最有益的就是由一个单一、强大、统一的政治力量领导国家并带领这个国家完成艰难的现代化过程。 The best thing for China right now is a single, strong, united political force to lead the country and hold it together through the difficult modernization process.
20	Unity of the motherland	中国必须保持统一。 China must remain united.
22	Policy pragmatism	完成目标比遵从既定的规则和程序重要。 It is more important to accomplish the goal than to follow established rules and procedures.
27	Loyalty as obedience	无论政府形式有多不完善或犯过多少错，作为公民都应该时刻保持对自己政府的忠诚。 A citizen should always remain loyal to his government, no matter how imperfect it is or what wrong it has done.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
29	Dogmatic rationality	为了更好地发展国家，我们需要更好地融入全球经济体系。 To better develop the country, we need to better integrate with the global economic system.
39	Freedom as national strength	在当今世界，只有强大的国家才能真正拥有自由。 In today's world, only strong countries are truly free.
47	Organic change	我们现在需要安定，暂时不要出任何的乱子。 For right now we need stability and should not cause any trouble.
50	Subordination to the interests of the whole	为了共同利益，个人应该自愿牺牲其言论，出版，集会，示威，宗教信仰，财产等自由权利。 For the sake of the common good, the individual should be willing to sacrifice his powers of speech, press, assembly, demonstration, religion, property and so forth.
52	Democratic centralism	党派竞争对我们的社会并无益处。 Party competition brings no benefits to our society.
59	Unified interests of the overwhelming majority	大多数中国人有着相似的思维方式和相同的需求。因此，单一政党长期执政并保护大多数人共同的根本利益是非常有道理的。 Most people think the same way and want the same things. Therefore, it makes sense for a single political party to hold power for a long time and promote the shared, fundamental interests of the majority.
65	Release and develop society's productive forces	政府可以限制我生孩子的数量是对的。 It is appropriate for government to limit the number of children I may have.

Table 5-2 Liberalism statements

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
1	Rule of law	司法系统应当独立于政府以外，让人民用以限制政府的力量，以确保法律面前人人平等。 The law and the legal system should be separate from the government, so that it can be used by the people to limit government power and so that it applies impartially to everyone.
10	Critical rationality	一小群知识分子就可以改变国家的命运，其观念足以改变世界。 A small group of intellectuals can change the fate of the country; ideas can change the world.
18	Sociability	中国人和其他国家的国民，除了生活习惯不一样以外，最基本的价值观是差不多的。 Setting aside some differences in lifestyle habits, the basic values of Chinese people and foreigners are approximately the same.
23	Universalism	其实无论一些理念是否源于别的文明，例如自由、民主等，它们的价值观都是具有普遍性的。我们应该分享这些有普遍性的价值观。 It doesn't matter that ideas like freedom and democracy emerged in other civilizations. Their value is universal. We should share these universal values too.
25	Electoral democracy	只有公民通过一个公平、公开的选举来选择他们的统治者，才可以被称为真正的《自由》。 Only if citizens get to choose their leaders in a fair and open election can they truly be called 'free'.
28	Participation improves quality of governance	社会做出长期、正确决策的有效方式是将全社会人民纳入到那些决策中来。 An effective way to make good long-term decisions for society is to involve all society in those decisions.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
37	Responsible, limited power	权力带来腐败。因此，好的政治体制必须限制权力，并赋予人民密切监督的权利。 Power corrupts. Therefore a good political system must limit power and give people the authority to supervise power closely.
40	Human nature as progressive and good	人类的本质是好的。 People's intrinsic nature is good.
45	Liberty as non-constraint, open-ended and active	社会很重要的目的应该是可以让每一个人根据自己的个人目标和梦想自由地思考与行动。 One of society's very important goals should be to allow each individual to think and act freely according to their personal goals and dreams.
51	Individuality	《同一个世界，同一个梦想》这句口号是不对的，会导致同识化的垄断和假强大。其实同一个世界，不同的梦想才会让世界进步，让人们有权利做不同的梦。 The slogan 'One World, One Dream' is incorrect. It would lead to the assimilation of everything under a false power. Rather, 'One World, Different Dreams' is what would move the world forward, and give people the right to pursue different ideals.
57	Political equality	稍许受过教育或受教育程度较低的人应该享有与受高等教育者同等的政治话语权。 People with little or no education should have as much say in politics as highly-educated people
<i>Libertarianism</i>		
7	Laissez-faire economics	政府在经济中应当尽可能扮演一个小角色。 Government should have as small a role in the economy as possible.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
11	Self-help	政府越试图帮助人们，人们越无法帮助自己。 The more government tries to help people, the less people are able to help themselves.
38	State interference as the primary cause of social injustice	不平等是由政治集权造成的，进而导致了财富的集中。 Inequality is caused by the concentration of political power, which then concentrates wealth.
49	Economic activity as an integral aspect of liberty	对富人大力征税来帮助穷人是不公平的。 Taxing the rich heavily in order to help the poor is unfair.

Table 5-3 New Left statements

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
2	Welfarism	经济收益应当被社会中的每一个人按需分享。 Economic profits should be shared by everyone in society according to their needs.
6	Human dignity	我只有参与政治生活才能发展成更为完整的个体。 Only by participating in political life can I develop into a complete person.
31	Market as an imperfect technology	新的消费经济正在侵蚀着我们的社会、价值观，把我们逐步转变成为金钱和资本的奴隶。 The new consumer economy is eroding our society and values and turning us into slaves of money and capital.
32	Effective state	如果国家将经济问题交给私营部门去解决，问题只会越来越大。 If the country leaves economic problems up to the private sector, the problems will only get bigger.
33	Substantive equality	社会很重要的责任之一应该是尽可能具体地保护并体现平等性。 One of society's important responsibilities should be to protect and express equality as concretely as possible.
35	Priority of the social	我们应减少对自身的关注，多关心公益。 We need to think less about ourselves and more about the common good.
44	Alternative modernity	我们的国家应该维护我们自身的行为准则，而不是照搬他国的。 Our country should defend our own way of life, not indiscriminately copy others'.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
46	Call for socialist culture	中国的百姓非常容易被利益买通。我们的批判精神在哪里呢？单位里，和稀泥、随大流者越来越多，坚持原则者越来越少。如果我们想建造一个更好的社会，我们需要去逆转这种风气。 Average Chinese are very easily bought off. What happened to our spirit of criticism? The number of people who goes with the flow is multiplying; those who stick to principles are disappearing. If we want to build a better society, we need to reverse this general mood.
53	Social essence of the self	真正意义的《个人》并不存在。我们因为有了与伴侣、子女、同事和社会中的其他人之间的各种责任，才使我们成为完整的人。 True 'individuals' do not exist. It is only through our various responsibilities toward partners, children, colleagues, and other citizens that we become whole persons.
54	Economic independence	中国应该更自足，减少对国际贸易的依赖。 China should aim to be more self-sufficient and less dependent on international trade.

Table 5-4 Political Confucianism statements (and other traditional beliefs)

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
3	Historical wisdom	《仁义》治国就是以《正义、公平》治国。中国要实现现代化、要构建现代国家，都需要回归这些伟大而古老的智慧。 To govern a country with benevolence and righteousness is to govern justly and fairly. To construct modern China, the country must recover this great wisdom from its ancient past.
15	Sacred tradition	公共教育服务体系应该强调教育年轻人尊重和遵守既定规则 and 传统。 The public education system should emphasize teaching youth to respect and obey established norms and traditions.
17	Hierarchical interdependence	如果我们发现人民变得堕落、邪恶，那是因为政府亦腐败且不公正。如果人民变得善良且正义，同样也是因为政府的廉明与公正。腐败与廉明，邪恶与正义，都是萌芽于领导阶层。 If we see that the people have become corrupt and unjust, it is because the government is corrupt and unjust. If we see that the people have become good and just, it is because the government is good and just. Corruption and goodness, justice and injustice: both start at the leadership level.
30	Paternalistic state	如果一个政府时常受到其公民的监督，将大事无成。 If a government is always under the people's supervision, it cannot accomplish great things.
42	National unity	变革的驱动力必须来自最高政治阶层。 The driving force for change must come from the highest political levels.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
43	Self-cultivation	倘若要提升一个国家的管理水平，就应该提升全民族的教育水平。 If we want to improve a country's quality of governance, we should raise the education level of the citizenry.
60	Benevolent authority	只要政府从道义和道德上行使权力，它是有权统治我的。这些考虑因素——伦理和道德——比选举和选择的过程更为重要。 A government has the authority to rule over me so long as it exercises power ethically and morally. These considerations—ethics and morality—are more important criteria than processes like elections and selections.
61	Liberty through loyalty	如果政府的统治是能够使多数人受益而损害小部分人利益的，那么我仍将会支持。 If a government rules in a way that benefits the majority of people, but hurts a minority, I should still support it.
62	Immanent morality	如果人们的想法有过多的差别，社会将会变得混乱无序。 If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.
63	Respect for transcendent authority	宗教价值观应在政治上发挥更大的作用。 Religious values should play a bigger role in politics.
<i>Other traditional beliefs</i>		
12	Non-attachment (Buddhism)	正因为我们在生活中追逐着太多不必要的事物，才会迷失自我，而不知道什么才是最重要的。如果我们能够适当放弃一些不必要的事物，那么事情自然会有所好转。 We chase after so much unnecessary stuff in our lives that we lose ourselves and have a hard time seeing what's truly important. If we can let go of some of the unnecessary

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
		stuff, things will start to get better naturally.
64	Non-action / 无为 (Daoism)	我们不应该尝试着去修理或改进政府和社会。如果我们停止对其刻意修正并让事情顺其自然，那么事情都会按照自然规律展现。 We should let go of trying to fix or improve government or society. If we stop trying to fix things and just let things take their course, everything will turn out naturally.

Table 5-5 Peripheral discourse statements

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
<i>Skepticism / Nihilism</i>		
14	Denial of human improvability	我们不能改变人类本性，也无法将我们自己改造成一个更好的社会群体。我们的基本价值观和行为，好与坏，都是由社会、历史或宗教所决定的。 We cannot change human nature. We cannot remake ourselves into better people. Our basic values and behaviour, good and bad, are decided by social and historical forces.
19	Denial of abstract duties	我对家庭有义务，对朋友有义务，但我并不对那些素不相识的人、或者《社会》——那么抽象的一个事物——有什么义务。 I owe a duty to family. I owe a duty to friends. But I do not owe a duty to people I do not know or to 'society', which is a pretty abstract term.
21	Denial of political participation	在当今的环境下，政治是我们不用关心的。 In the current environment, we don't need to pay attention to politics.
24	Freedom as economic good	在我们生活的真实世界中，实现有意义的自由的重要方式是挣更多的钱，发展经济。 In the real world we live in, an important means to achieving meaningful freedom is to make more money and grow the economy.
26	Denial of government improvability	改变政府，还不如改变我们自己，以期让我们成为更好的人。 It's more important to change ourselves—to make ourselves into better people—than to expect government to change.
48	Denial of abstract values	世界上其实没有《自由》这样一种东西，这只是一些人的一种幻想。 There is no such thing as 'freedom'. It is just some people's illusion.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
55	Freedom as non-interference	如果你上街问问，大家都觉得自己过的挺自由。事实上，这也就是自由。只要政府不干涉我的私人生活，那么，政府如何控制公众言论和行为，对我来说真的不是那么重要。 If you ask people on the street, they all feel that they live life pretty freely. And that's all freedom is, really. As long as the government doesn't interfere with my private life, it doesn't really matter to me what it does to control public speech and actions.
<i>Traditional Marxism</i>		
36	History as progressive	随着时间的推移，事物必然会向好的方向发展。 Things inevitably develop in a positive direction over time.
41	Liberation through labour	工作是一切幸福的源泉。 Work is the source of all happiness.
56	Historical materialism	忘记中国历史，应该是建立现代公民社会的捷径。 Forgetting Chinese history would be a shortcut to building a modern civil society.
58	Progress through class struggle	政治变革应遵循农民的意愿。 Political change should be guided by the peasantry.
<i>Christianity</i>		
13	Moral realism	一些人认为《对》与《错》是由社会来决定的；或者说，是非对错，是会随着时间和人们观念的变化而变化的。但是，这其实是不对的。《对》与《错》是永恒的真理，不是由人们来决定的。 Some people think that 'right' and 'wrong' is for society to decide, or that what is 'right' and 'wrong' can change with the times and with people's views. But this is incorrect. Right and wrong are permanent truths. They aren't for people to decide.

Q-set #	Concept	Statement
<i>Feminism</i>		
16	Power as gendered	事实上，这是一个由男人统治的世界。导致不公正和不自由的很重要的来源是女人不被允许全面、平等地参与其中。 The truth is this is a man's world ruled by men. A great source of injustice and unfreedom in society is that women aren't allowed to be full and equal participants in it.
<i>Environmentalism</i>		
34	Priority upon nature	我们迫切需要扭转中国环境破坏的现状，即使这意味着我们要以减缓一些发展速度为代价。 We urgently need to reverse environmental destruction in China, even if it means we need to slow down the rate of development.

5.2 Population sampling (P-set)

5.2.1 Population sampling principles and criteria

The first step in recruiting research participants in Beijing is to operationalize the ‘emerging middle class’. Whether, and in what sense, a middle class exists is an interesting debate for demographers, but what is important to this study is that the middle class exists as a concept in domestic political discourse and that it is invoked in the pursuit of ideological aims. The vagueness of the term—‘middle’ is unobjectionable to most audiences, and ‘class’ is hard to pin down across much of social science—makes it a useful trope that can be adapted to a range of ideological programs (Goodman 2013). I am primarily concerned with the middle class as invoked by the Party-state and whose subjective sense-making of identity and political role the Party-state attempts to shape. Therefore, for the purposes of this study the Party-state’s conception of the emerging middle class takes precedence over other definitions.

I focus on higher education as a defining characteristic for the recruitment of my research participants. As Goodman (2013, p.61) observes, ‘[h]igher education has become associated with the middle class because it is generally the entry point to the types of jobs and salaries that supports its consumption and asset accumulating lifestyle’. Moreover, since the Party’s promulgation of the theory of Three Represents when ‘advanced productive forces’ displaced workers as the Party’s revolutionary vanguard, students in higher education or adults possessing a higher education degree have become a core audience for the Party’s ideological work. Political education is a mandatory component of the higher education curriculum, and the Party courts them actively during their studies by ‘portraying them as an indispensable elite that is needed to guide the country to progress’ (Hansen 2013). Searching for ideological diversity among this audience can be considered an acid test for its success in shaping public

political values amidst the marketization and socio-economic development of Reform and Opening. Between 1978 and 2013, the graduating class nationwide swelled from 165,000 to 7 million university students per year. A 2001 study by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences which sought to lay out official definitions for national income strata found that 72.5% of its ‘middle income’ stratum had a postsecondary-level of education or higher, and argued that higher education gave this group a distinctive capacity to acquire social, economic and political capital (Lu Xueyi 2002).

Sampling of Beijing’s emerging middle class is, as explained at §3.2, purposive rather than random. The task of the Q Methodology researcher is to theorize the most important respondent characteristics that may drive differences in their subjective perceptions (e.g., gender), and to pull together a P-set of research participants that covers the different values those characteristics may take (e.g., men and women).

Drawing on existing empirical literature on the political attitudes of the Chinese public, I selected the following commonly tested characteristics for coverage in my P-set:

Gender. Although women’s liberation is a long-running theme within Party-state policy-making and propaganda, women are still disadvantaged due to differences in parental education investments, traditional social practices and gendered norms within institutions. Gender has been found to relate to levels of legal knowledge (Yang Ming and Chen Juan 2009), political attention and election participation (Tang Min 2011), and participation in local-level committees (Howell 2006), for example.

Age. I laid out the theorized importance of age at §2.2.1. Age effects on political and social values have been found in numerous studies, for example Rosen (2004), who found that wealth accumulation, individualism, and self-centeredness were steadily overtaking traditional values among younger cohorts, and Cheng Shengli (2002) who identified a marked decline in trust among young urban generations.

Income. A common hypothesis within Chinese political attitudinal research is that the more satisfied people are with their social and economic condition, the more supportive they will be of the political status quo. Chen Jie and Dickson (2009) found that the economically well off were relatively positive on the Party-state's performance and unconcerned with official corruption, while Chen Jie and Lu Chunlong (2010) found them less likely to support democratic change. Johnston (2004) found that middle income brackets were more dovish in their foreign policy preferences than poorer income groups.

Subjective social class. I laid out the theorized role of subjective class at §2.2.1. Evidence of this role includes Chen Jie's (2004, 2010) findings that urban Beijingers who identify themselves as middle class are more likely to support incumbents than regime change and Chen and Lu's (2005) work showing that the self-described middle class is less likely to participate in so-called 'grassroots self-government' institutions.

Ethnicity. In a population that is dominated by one ethnic group, minority ethnicities can be expected to feel marginalized in state-society relations. That the Party-state actively works to shape ethnic identities and expressions also makes it a variable of interest. The relationship between Uyghur or Tibetan identity and negative attitudes toward the Party-state, its ideas and

policies is well known. In a more general study of ethnicity's effects, Chinese who have lower levels of perceived political power and influence were found less likely to trust police and other expressions of state authority (Wu Yuning and Ivan Sun 2009).

Party membership. Loyalty is a primary obligation of Party members; it is therefore expected that the views of Party members will align more tightly with official values versus non-members. Jiang Shiqing, Lu Ming et al. (2012) find Party members express higher satisfaction with the status quo. More general studies have shown that Party members have a higher interest in politics than others in society and are more concerned about equality issues, for example (Tang Min 2011).

Study, work and travel abroad. Political psychologists have long agreed that studying and working abroad does shape political values, particularly if undertaken during young adult years when such values are especially malleable (Watson and Lippitt 1958). Consistent with this, Han Donglin and Zweig (2010) find that returnees are less nationalistic than their China-bound peers, and Li He (2006b) observed that returning students often serve as carriers of foreign political values.

Hukou residency / perceived home. A local (Beijing) hukou brings with it different treatment in the labour market and provision of public services. Meanwhile, depending on the region or province where people grow up, they may experience very different levels of industrialization, marketization and contact with foreign values. Michelson (2008) found that rural residents and migrants were both more aggrieved and less likely to seek redress via legal processes than urban residents. Liu Shixiong (2005) identified regional differences in

orientation toward individualism versus collectivism, short- versus long-termism, risk aversion and other common dimensions of cultural values.

Occupation / economic sector. Employment in Party-state units, the state-owned- or private sectors may yield a different range and intensity of contact with official and alternative political views. Chen and Lu (2010) find employment in the state apparatus (government and Party agencies, state-owned enterprises, and public organizations) to be negatively associated with support for democratic values and institutions. Meanwhile, as Zhao Wei (2012) finds, different occupation classifications may be associated with differences in self-perceived social status, and thus different levels of concern with inequality issues.

5.2.2 Population sampling procedures

I employed a modified form of chain-referral sampling (i.e., snowball sampling (Goodman 1961)) to recruit my research participants.

Chain-referral sampling begins with a small, diverse pool of ‘seed’ participants, each of whom refers the researcher to a number of additional participants, up to a predetermined maximum (in my case, three). It is most commonly used when a sampling frame is not available, or when studying hard-to-reach populations (for example, illicit drug users) with whom a trusted referral is often necessary in order to gain access and consent.

My target population is broad and not at all hard-to-reach, however initial cold-calling interview efforts with strangers at several venues (cafés, fast food restaurants, university common rooms and reception areas at office buildings) yielded a very poor response rate. The

politically sensitive nature of many statements in the Q-set, the time and effort demanded to complete the sorting task properly, my identity as a foreign doctoral scholar associated with a widely recognized foreign university brand, and the formality of the participant consent process likely all contributed to this high failure rate. An existing trust relationship or referral via someone they trusted was, I discovered, the key to unlocking people's participation.

I recruited an initial pool of 12 seeds and randomly divided them into two equal groups to seed two separate chain-referral sampling waves: January-May 2012 (P-Set A) and July-October 2012 (P-Set B). Seeds included friends and acquaintances, and strangers recruited through a variety of channels to which I had access. These seeds and access channels are summarized in Table 5-6.

Table 5-6 Chain-referral sampling seeds

Seed / Wave	Recruitment Channel
1A	Cold-call study participant
2A	Former work colleague
3A	Advertisement for volunteers circulated by local university professor to colleagues
4A	Advertisement for volunteers circulated by office worker to colleagues
5A	Advertisement for paid participants (RMB 50) circulated via social media (微信 Weixin)
6A	Friend of friend
1B	Advertisement for paid participants (RMB 50) circulated via social media (微信 Weixin)
2B	Business associate
3B	Advertisement for volunteers circulated by friend to social network

Seed / Wave	Recruitment Channel
4B	Former work colleague
5B	Friend
6B	Advertisement circulated by friend to colleagues

After interviewing each seed, I asked for introductions to up to three additional people who met my study criteria. Initially I pursued all referrals that resulted; as each wave progressed, my referral requests became progressively more exact as I sought to achieve coverage of the characteristics identified above. I proceeded in this manner until I had conducted 60 interviews in each wave. Subsequent removal of participants whose answers to the intake survey indicated they did not meet the study's criteria left the final tally of participants in each wave at 59 and 58 respectively.

I present a complete list of respondents by unique identifier and short description in the Appendices, at §11.2. Here, I present summary statistics of the coverage achieved. The sampling method is not expected to produce balance along each variable, nor to recruit a pool of respondents who embody every possible combination of the coverage characteristics. Diagnostic studies of Q Methodology show that findings are robust despite these practical limitations (Brown 1980).

5.2.2.1 *Minimizing chain-referral bias*

Bias is always an issue with chain-referral sampling techniques, however it is less of an issue in this study because any relationships found between participants' demographic characteristics and their ideological discourses are not intended to be generalized across a wider population of people. Instead, relationships found among the Q-set sample of statements are intended to be

generalized across the wider political discourse. Whether, say, a Party member is more likely to align with discourse *X* than a non-Party member is not a question that the P-set is intended to answer (although any such relationships found within the P-set may serve as in-going hypotheses for a follow-up study that does seek to answer such questions—see Chapter Eight.)

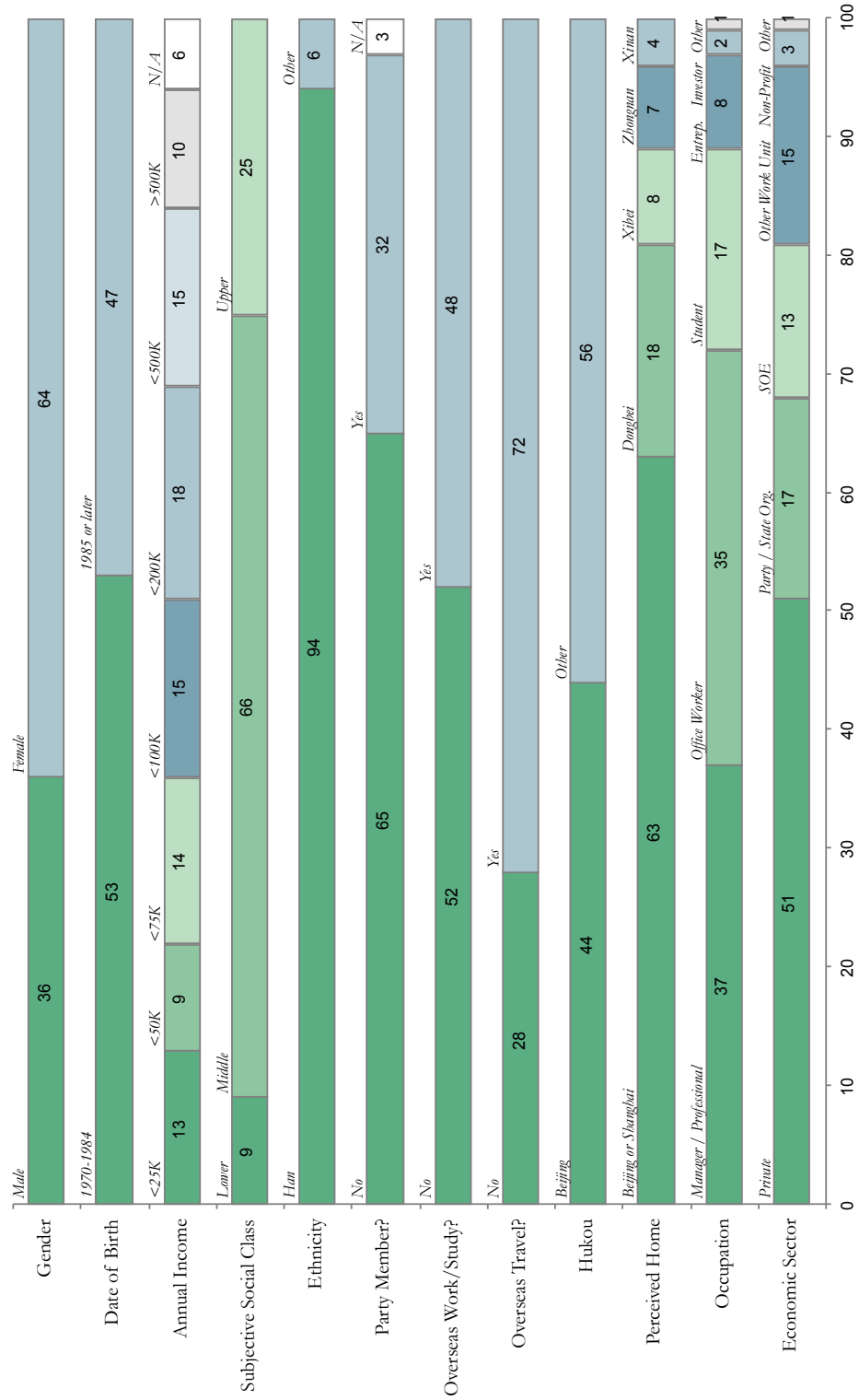
One concern about chain-referral bias that traditional quantitative work and Q Methodology do share is homophily. This is the concern that, since respondents are known to one another, together they underrepresent population diversity. I minimize this bias in three ways. The most important is to set explicit criteria for diversity within the P-set, as above, and to apply these criteria progressively more stringently through each wave of the chain referral process. As the summary statistics below show, the result was a P-set that achieved good coverage of those characteristics theorized to drive discourse diversity. The characteristic with the poorest coverage in my sample is ethnicity, although the proportions in my sample are similar to those of the wider Chinese population, and therefore not surprising. Obtaining more robust representation of minority ethnicities would require deliberately oversampling for that characteristic. That is not the purpose of this study. Instead I acknowledge that the present study looks mainly at majority Han discourse and that to understand the political discourse of minority populations better a separate study targeting such groups would need to be conducted.

The second way I minimized this bias was to recruit a diverse group of seeds, none of whom were known to each other, from diverse channels and with diverse incentives (i.e., both paid

and unpaid). The third protection against bias was to limit the number of referrals by each participant to a maximum of three.

5.2.3 Population sampling result

Figure 5-1 Descriptive statistics of the full P-set



6 Data Analysis

6.1 Data collection

6.1.1 Condition of instruction

Each study participant was asked to rank-order the 65 statements in the Q-Set according to a given ‘condition of instruction’. The condition of instruction is an important aspect of each interview’s setup. Its purpose is to present all study participants with an identical frame of reference for the statement sorting task, so that their responses can be meaningfully compared and correlated.

The following condition of instruction was presented (in Chinese) to all study participants:

What should the guiding values and principles of Chinese politics be? According to your own opinion, please sort these 65 cards from ‘Most Agree’ to ‘Most Disagree’.

主导中国政治的价值观和原则应该是什么? 请按照您自己的观点把这 65 张卡片从“最同意”到“最不同意”的级别分类。

6.1.2 Administration of the sorting task

All sorting interviews were conducted in-person.¹ The group size for interviews ranged from 1 to 3 participants over both interview periods, with the majority of interviews (67) conducted singly. The average duration of the interview was a little over one hour, with the shortest taking only 30 minutes and the longest lasting two hours (not counting the participant’s smoking break).

Each interview began with the participant completing a questionnaire administered via tablet computer. The first screen of the questionnaire presented the participant with a consent form

¹ Seven interviews were finalized by email, in cases where the research participant was unable to complete the sorting task in the time available during the in-person meeting.

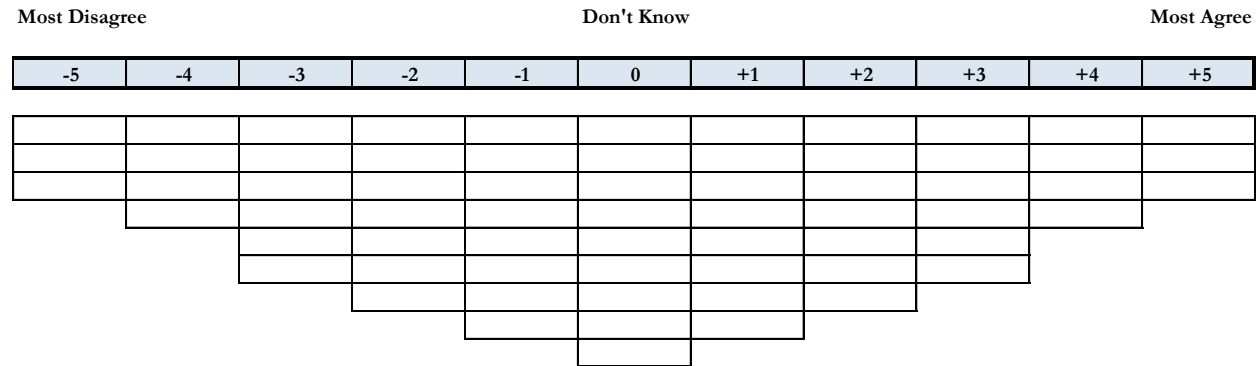
approved by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC), outlining the study and its purpose, and arrangements to ensure anonymity. The participant expressed consent by tapping a checkbox and proceeding beyond the first screen to the first of a series of 13 demographic questions.² The demographic questionnaire ended with the option to supply contact information in the form of an email address and make themselves available for follow-up questions. In total 115 study participants opted to do so.

Once each participant had completed the consent form and questionnaire, the interview proceeded to the sorting task. Each participant was given a deck of 65 2" x 3" cards on which the 65 numbered statements of the Q-Set were printed.

Along with the deck of statements, the participant was also given the condition of instruction, orally and printed on paper for easy reference throughout the task. The paper also showed a picture of the distribution (11 categories ranging from +5 Most Agree to -5 Most Disagree, with a fixed number of statements per category) into which she was required to sort the cards. See Figure 6-1.

² In the pilot study, a hardcopy consent form requiring participants' signature was used. However, after some pilot study participants suggested this mode of expressing consent may make some participants uncomfortable, given the subject matter, the electronic form was adopted. This modification was duly submitted to CUREC and approved.

Figure 6-1 Fixed distribution for sorting task



To aid each participant's card-sorting efficiency, I orally guided her through a series of three initial sorting steps:

1. Rifle through all the cards and divide them into three rough piles according to first impressions: Agree, Disagree and Don't Know.
2. Review the Agree pile and divide it into Agree and Strongly Agree; Review the Disagree pile and divide it into Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
3. Review the Don't Know pile and divide it into three: Somewhat Agree, Don't Know and Somewhat Disagree.

Each participant was then left with seven piles ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. During these first three steps, I placed no limit as to the number of cards the participant could place in each pile. (In practice, after the first step most participants had sorted the cards into three roughly equal piles. Distributions during subsequent steps varied widely.)

In the next step, the participant was asked to begin placing cards into the forced distribution. Starting with her Strongly Agree pile, I asked her to draw out the three statements with which she *most* agreed. Those three were placed under the +5 category. From the remainder of her Strongly Agree pile, I asked her to draw the next four statements with which she most agreed.

If there were insufficient statements remaining, I asked her to begin digging into her ‘Agree’ pile, and so on until she had exhausted all the statements with which she had agreed. I then asked her to repeat these steps for all the statements with which she had disagreed. The process continued until the entire distribution had been completed. The participant was then encouraged to review the full distribution one last time and make any amendments she wished.

Figure 6-2 Performing the statement sorting task³



³ Photograph by the author, printed with permission from the research participant.

Once she had completed this sorting task, the participant was invited to participate in an optional 15-minute on-the-spot follow-up interview to discuss some of her sorting decisions.

The typical interview comprised three main questions:

1. Why do you most agree with the three +5 statements? Why do you most disagree with the three -5 statements?
2. What other statements made a strong impression upon you and why? Which statements were the hardest to sort?
3. What's missing? What haven't you been able to express through these statements?

Only 35 participants opted to participate in this on-the-spot follow-up interview. In general, if they had completed the questionnaire and sorting task in considerably less than an hour, participants were willing to spend additional time discussing their sorting decisions. If the interview had already gone beyond one hour, they were reluctant to face another 15 minutes of questions.

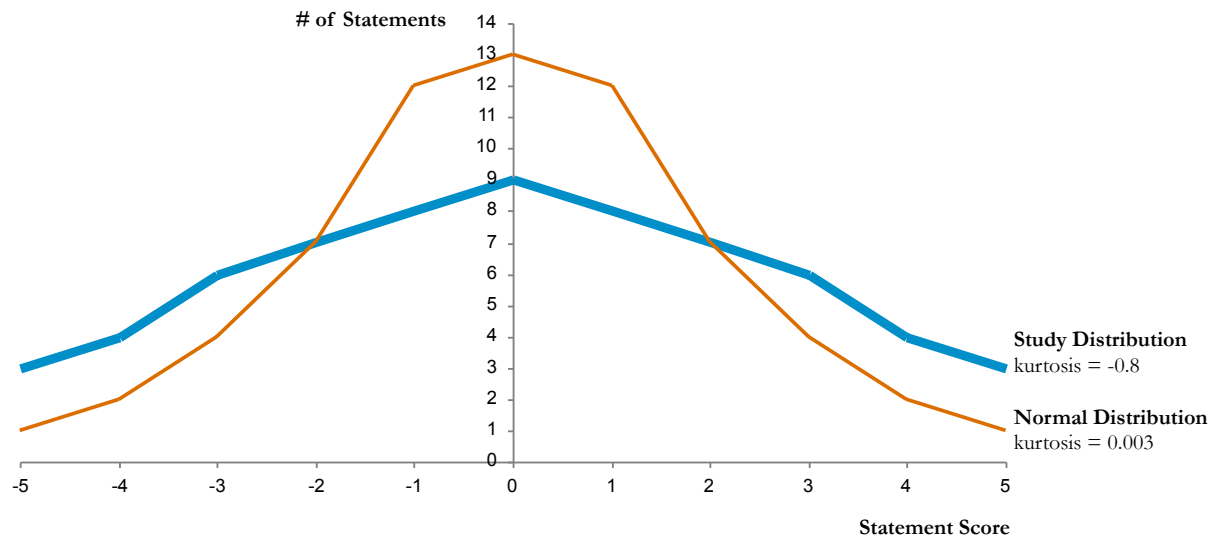
6.1.3 Distribution of participants' responses

Presenting participants with a forced distribution is standard practice within Q Methodology studies. In doing so, the researcher is striking a pragmatic balance between two objectives, namely to maximize the quantity and quality of data obtained from the participant. A forced distribution encourages participants to make distinctions that they might not otherwise volunteer but of which they are generally capable (Brown 1980, p.203). At the same time, it is considerably less demanding than asking for a complete rank-ordering from 1 to 65 of all statements.

No hard rule can be found in the Q Methodology literature for the specific shape the fixed distribution should take. Brown (1980) suggested a range from +6 to -6 for studies containing more than 60 statements. The distribution in the pilot study did range from +6 to -6 (13 categories), however one consistent theme in the feedback from the pilot was to simplify the sorting task if possible. Removing two categories of distinction by shortening the range to +/- 5 was seen by those pilot participants as a step in the right direction.

The kurtosis, or peakedness, of the distribution should be a function of how contestable the statements are (Van Exel and De Graaf 2005). If the research participants are expected to have few, weak, or uninformed opinions on the statements, then an approximately normal distribution is appropriate. A normal distribution has a kurtosis of 0—a relatively tall peak in which participants can score a large number of statements as Don't Know or Weakly Agree/Disagree. See Figure 6-3 (orange plot). The pilot study suggested that the alternative is true in this case. Pilot study participants were sensitized to most of the opinions contained in the deck of statements and were anxious to agree or disagree with many of them. Under these circumstances, a more flattened (formally, platykurtic) distribution is appropriate and was selected for this study (Figure 6-3, blue plot). The chosen distribution has a kurtosis of approximately -0.8.

Figure 6-3 Study distribution (platykurtic) vs. normal distribution



6.2 Factor analysis

After administering the sorting task to all participants, the next step is to identify any common patterns among the participants' sorts via factor analysis. Factor analysis is a statistical method that—analogueous to factoring '21' into '7 x 3' and '42' into '7 x 3 x 2'—expresses all observed sorts in terms of their different weightings on a common set of unobserved variables, or factors. For example, if I have two participants in my study, A and B, I might find that their sorts can be expressed as:

$$A = (0.6 \times \text{Factor 1}) + (0.3 \times \text{Factor 2}) + (0.1 \times \text{Factor 3})$$

$$B = (0.8 \times \text{Factor 1}) + (0.2 \times \text{Factor 2}) + (0.0 \times \text{Factor 3})$$

Their common, high loading on Factor 1 would indicate that A's sort and B's sort are significantly similar. Factor analysis is generally used to discover common traits. In such studies A and B would be said to possess a common trait (Factor 1), say 'athletic ability'. In Q Methodology factor analysis is used to discover common discourses. A and B express a common discourse, say 'authoritarianism'.

6.2.1 Principal components analysis

'A dizzying array of options confront the analyst' who performs factor analysis (Widaman 2007). However commonly used methods such as principal factor analysis involve computational steps that fail in the special case where the number of variables exceeds the number of cases (as with Q Methodology, wherein participants are variables and statements are cases) (Schmolck 2012b). Only two methods, centroid factor analysis and principal components analysis (PCA), are routinely applied in Q Methodology studies (Watts and Stenner 2005).

Although some statistics texts (Basilevsky 1994) and IBM SPSS Statistics regard PCA as a method of factor analysis, formally the aims of PCA and centroid factor analysis are different. The goal of PCA is data reduction. It is a descriptive method that simplifies n correlated variables into a much smaller number of uncorrelated *components* that contain most of the information of the original set (Bartholomew, Steele et al. 2008). With PCA, nothing external need be brought to the data; it is simply a transformation of the data into a more concise form to aid understanding. By contrast, factor analysis (including centroid analysis) is a modelling technique. Its aim is to relate latent variables (i.e., things that cannot be directly observed) to data that has been observed. It brings to the data propositions about the existence of such latent variables, or *factors*, and their causal relation to the observations. Formally, therefore, components and factors are different, although in practice—and this study—the words are used interchangeably to simplify language.

In practice, centroid factor analysis and principal component analysis ordinarily produce similar results (Harman 1976). Nevertheless, centroid factor analysis is the most commonly used method of factor analysis within the Q Methodology literature (Watts and Stenner 2012). This preference is generally stated on theoretical grounds. One of the main differences between the two methods is in the construction of the $n \times n$ correlation matrix (where n is the number of sorts in the P-set). PCA inserts a perfect correlation ($r = 1$) along the diagonal, i.e., between each sort and itself. Advocates of centroid analysis argue this to be too aggressive an assumption for the modelling of subjectivity. Each statement in the deck presents participant C with the task of understanding the meaning of a proposition P, and as philosophers of language such as Wittgenstein and Quine have argued, this task may be plagued by

indeterminacies (Quine 1960, Wittgenstein 2009). If the meaning of P is indeed underdetermined, then C's understanding of P may vary from reading to reading.

A more conservative value for the diagonal correlations would be the estimated test-retest reliability of participant C, which, while unknown without specific investigation, is assumed to be less than 1. Centroid analysis permits the researcher to insert such non-zero estimates along the diagonal. A common estimator is the communality, or h^2 , of participant C's sort, calculated by means such as those described by Brown (1980) or Horst (1965). Communality measures the proportion of the variance of participant C's sort that is accounted for by the factors in the model. By allowing for test-retest errors of reliability along the diagonal, the centroid factor solution may be a more realistic model of subjectivity (Brown 1980).

This theoretical preference is problematic, for at least two reasons. First, without knowing participant C's test-retest reliability, it's not known whether the communality estimate $h^2 < 1$ is closer to reality than systematically overestimating communality as $h^2 = 1$. Second, the emphasis on diagonal correlations is misplaced, since for factor analysis the motive for substituting the 1's with values less than 1 is to *de-emphasize* the importance of the diagonals to the factor solution. '[T]he goal [of factor analysis] is accurate representation of the *off-diagonal correlations* among variables, as these correlations reflect the influence of shared, or common, latent variables' (Widaman 2007).

For the present study, I reject the above theoretical preference for centroid analysis, and deem PCA preferable on alternative grounds. Formally, centroid analysis presumes the existence of a latent political viewpoint that causes participant C to score statements in the deck accordingly.

It is an open ontological question whether participant C actually possesses such political viewpoints, or whether I, in the process of interpreting those scores, impart to the response pattern more clarity and cohesion than exists in C's own thoughts. PCA is likewise open on this question—it brings no such presuppositions to the data. Using PCA to extract components permits the present study to remain open as well. This approach seems closer to the theoretical foundations espoused by Q Methodology's founder: 'The factors are *operants*. Matrices are looked at for what the data tell us, not what we project upon them as hypotheses or categorizations' (Stephenson 1986, original emphasis).

6.2.2 PQMethod software

Factor extraction and rotation is conducted using PQMethod 2.33, December 2012 revision (Atkinson and Schmolck 2012). PQMethod is a statistical package streamlined for Q Methodology studies. The software offers data entry forms customized for Q Methodology data structures. PQMethod's principal components computations and Varimax rotations follow the standard algorithms and have been publicly verified to four decimal places on multiple datasets against IBM SPSS Statistics (Schmolck 2012a). The software also outputs results in the format required for interpreting Q Methodology results.

6.2.3 Correlating participants' sorts

The fundamental step in factor analysis is to produce a correlation matrix of all pairwise correlations for all variables (i.e., for all sorts). The ordinary interpretation of the correlation equation must be modified in a Q Methodology study, to account for the structure of the dataset. The value for each variable to be correlated is not a single number, but rather a forced quasi-normal distribution of 65 scores ranging from -5 and +5.

The correlation between two sorts, X and Y, is given by the Pearson correlation coefficient, i.e.:

$$r = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^n (X_k - \dot{X})(Y_k - \dot{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{k=1}^n (X_k - \dot{X})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{k=1}^n (Y_k - \dot{Y})^2}}$$

where:

n = the number of statements in the sort (65)

X_k = the score given to the k^{th} statement by participant X (in the range -5 to +5)

$\dot{X}$ = the mean of the distribution of participant X's statement scores

Y_k = the score given to the k^{th} statement by participant Y (in the range -5 to +5)

$\dot{Y}$ = the mean of the distribution of participant Y's statement scores

When the mean and standard deviation of the distribution of scores for participant X and Y are equal, as is the case in the present study due to the application of a forced normal distribution, the formula for Pearson's correlation coefficient can be simplified to (Brown 1980):

$$r_{xy} = 1 - \frac{\sum_{k=1}^n d_i^2}{2ns^2}$$

where:

n = the number of statements in the sort (65)

d = the difference between the scores given to the k^{th} statement by participant X and participant Y

s = the standard deviation of the distribution of statement scores (equivalent for all X and Y)

6.3 Factor extraction

Eight potential factors were extracted initially via PCA. The next step is to select how many factors to retain for analysis and interpretation. This decision is the result of both statistical and judgmental tests.

The Kaiser-Guttman criterion (Kaiser 1970) suggests dropping any factors whose eigenvalue is less than 1. The eigenvalue for factor j , EV_j , is calculated as the sum of the squared correlations of all participants i with factor j , i.e.:

$$EV_j = \sum_{i=1}^m a_{ij}^2$$

where

a_{ij} = the correlation of the i^{th} participant's sort with factor j

m = the number of participants in the study (for P-Set A, $m = 58$; for P-Set B, $m = 59$)

From this equation it can be seen that if factor j were simply substituted by any participant i 's sort, then factor j would have an eigenvalue of at least 1.00 owing to its perfect correlation with itself. It follows that any extracted factor with an eigenvalue of less than 1 describes less study variance than a single participant's sort, and therefore does not help to reduce the study's total variance into a simpler form. In both P-Sets A and B, all eight extracted factors pass the Kaiser-Guttman criterion.

Whereas the Kaiser-Guttman criterion is concerned with absolute eigenvalues, Cattell's (1966) scree test judges the relative sizes of eigenvalues across components. The scree test plots eigenvalues in descending order of their magnitude and determines where the curve becomes

asymptotic. The break between the steep slope and the asymptote suggests a possible break between meaningful factors and factors that cannot be distinguished from random error. The plots for P-Sets A and B are presented in Figure 6-4 and Figure 6-5. In both sets, the scree test suggests retaining at most two components.

Figure 6-4 Scree test: Eigenvalues by extracted component for P-Set A

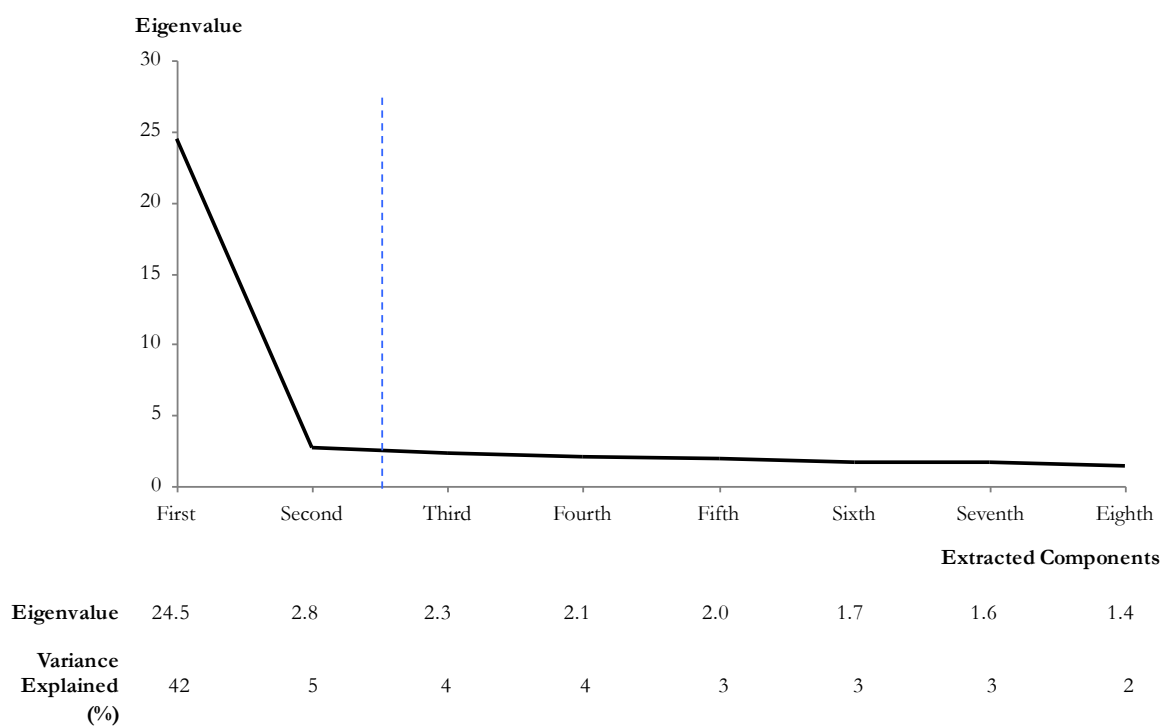
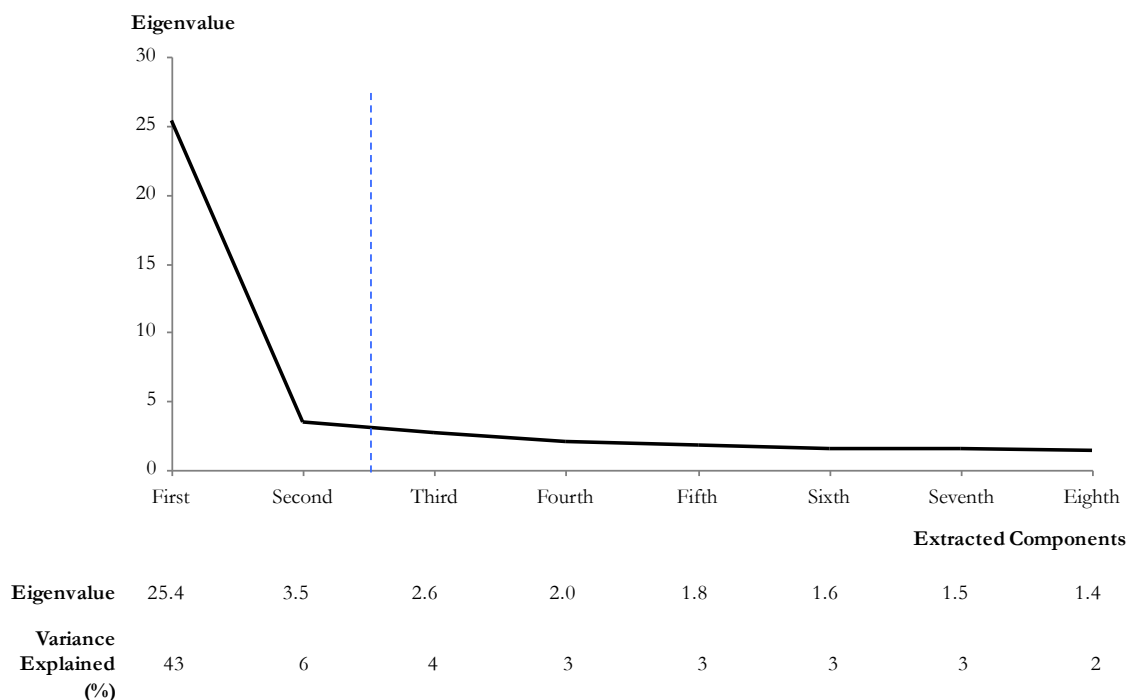


Figure 6-5 Scree test: Eigenvalues by extracted component for P-Set B

The existence of extracted study factors that are indistinguishable from random error can be verified by parallel analysis. Parallel analysis calculates eigenvalues from random datasets that parallel the study's dataset with respect to the number of cases (i.e., statements) and variables (i.e., participants) (O'Connor 2000). Using IBM SPSS Statistics, 1,000 datasets were randomly generated, each comprising 65 cases and 58 variables. PCA was run on each random dataset, and the eigenvalue was calculated for each extracted factor. From each factor's distribution of 1,000 random data eigenvalues, the 95th percentile eigenvalue is reported in Table 6-1.

If the eigenvalue for the j^{th} factor in the study exceeds the eigenvalue of the j^{th} factor in Table 6-1, there is a less than 5% chance that the study factor's explanatory power is consistent with random error. Parallel analysis suggests retaining the first factor from P-Set A and the first two components from P-Set B. The remaining components have a greater than 5% chance of

being spurious. (Alternatively, they may be interesting minority perspectives adhered to by a small number of study participants.)

Table 6-1 Parallel analysis: Random data eigenvalues vs. P-Sets A and B

Component No.	Random Data Eigenvalues (95 th Percentile)	P-Set A Eigenvalues	P-Set B Eigenvalues
1	3.7787	24.479	25.3986
2	3.4268	2.7645	3.5319
3	3.1663	2.266	2.6396
4	2.9677	2.0519	2.025
5	2.8095	1.9794	1.7903
...	...	...	...

Based on the above considerations, the first two factors from each of P-Set A and B were retained for factor rotation.

Taking forward two factors from each P-Set carries three analytic advantages. It permits similar factor rotations to be performed on each of the two P-Sets, which simplifies subsequent comparison testing. It makes it possible to visualize factor rotations and analyses on a two-dimensional Euclidean plane, which aids interpretation. And it has the virtue of parsimony: the two-factor solution accounts for 47% of the total variance in P-Set A and 49% in P-Set B. Among Q-Methodology studies, accounting for 35-40% of the study's variance is the threshold for a satisfactory factor solution (Watts and Stenner 2012).

Figure 6-6 and 6-7 present the initial (unrotated) two-factor solutions for P-Set A and P-Set B, respectively, showing the factor loadings in two-factor space for each sort. A *factor loading* is another term for a_{ij} , the correlation between the i^{th} sort and the j^{th} factor.

Following Brown (1980), a *significant* factor loading a_{ij}^* is defined by:

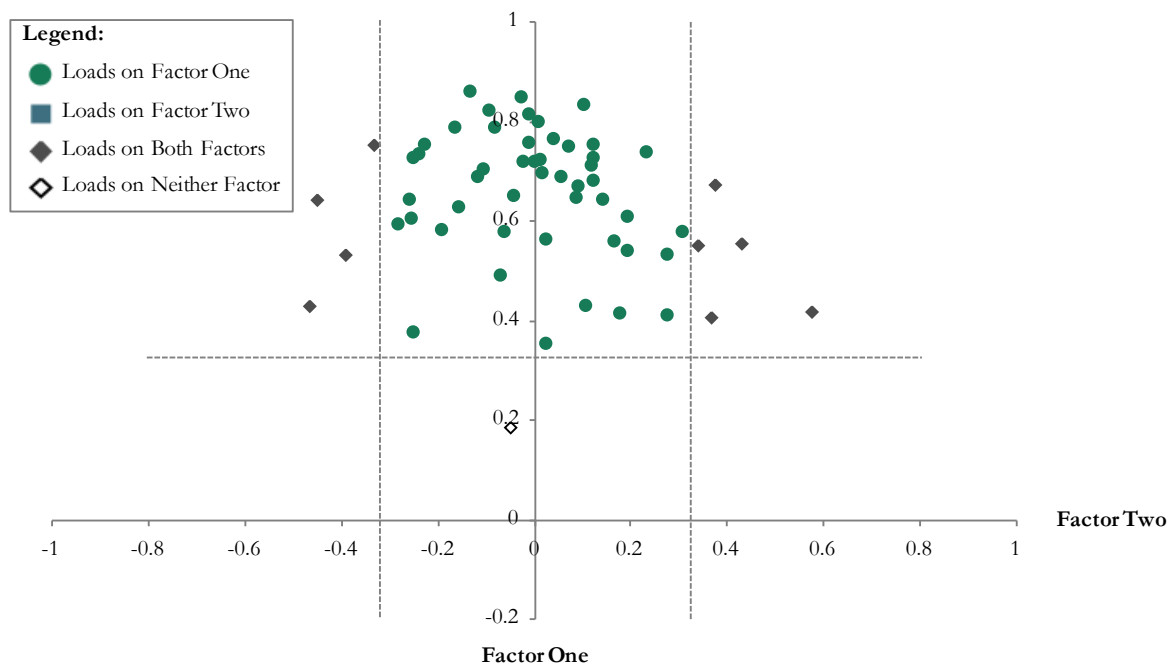
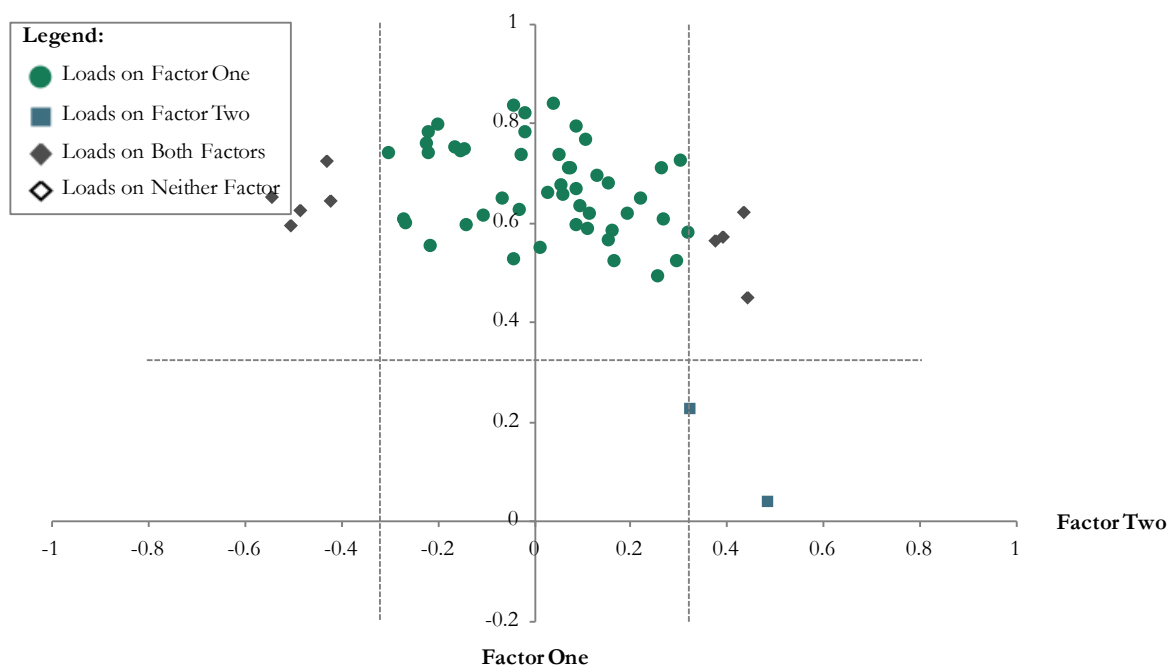
$$a_{ij}^* = z \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \right)$$

where

z = the two-tailed z-test statistic for a chosen threshold p-value

n = the number of statements in a sort

The term in brackets is simply the standard error of the correlation coefficients in the correlation matrix. For $p=0.01$, $z=2.58$ and a significant factor loading is 0.3200.

Figure 6-6 Factor loadings in two-factor solution for P-Set A, $a^* = 0.32$ Figure 6-7 Factor loadings in two-factor solution for P-Set B, $a^* = 0.32$ 

6.4 Factor rotation

The unrotated factor solution for each P-Set exhibits characteristics common among PCA initial factor solutions. Both are artefacts of the linear algebra by which the factors are calculated (Kline 1994). The first characteristic is a dominant first factor. In PCA, the extracted factors are eigenvectors of the correlation matrix. PCA extracts eigenvectors in order of declining eigenvalues (i.e., declining variance explained). By design, therefore, the first factor is always the largest. The second characteristic is that the second and subsequent factors tend to be bipolar (i.e., exhibit both positive and negative factor loadings). Again, this is only a mathematical result; without further analysis it cannot be accepted as a sound interpretation of the empirical data. Eigenvectors are orthogonal to each other; they intersect at right angles. If we imagine the first eigenvector as a vector (arrow) drawn through the centre of the densest cluster of data points in the correlation matrix, then the second eigenvector is the dimension that describes the dispersion of that cluster to either side of that arrow. The image gives us an intuitive grasp of the inevitable mathematical result that some variables load positively and some load negatively on the second factor.

The question is whether this initial algebraic result offers the best factor structure for interpretation, i.e., for identifying, distinguishing and describing a set of underlying types which impart understanding about the phenomenon under study (in this case, political discourses among China's emerging middle class). If the answer is no, then I can rotate this initial solution in an attempt to reduce ambiguities and clarify the relationships between the factors. Rotation adjusts the frame of reference: it changes the loadings of each variable on each factor and the proportion of variance explained by each factor, which changes the interpretation of each factor. In most cases, rotation improves interpretation (Child 1990).

So long as the origin point remains fixed the total variance accounted for by all factors remains unchanged; in this respect the rotated solution is mathematically identical to the initial solution. It follows that all such rotations of the initial result have equal mathematical validity. Therefore, additional criteria must be applied to arrive at the preferred rotated solution. Thurstone (1947) proposed that the ideal outcome of factor rotation should be to achieve ‘simple structure’, in which each variable loads highly on one of the factors and near zero on all others, since such a structure offers the fewest ambiguities for the interpreter.

6.4.1 Orthogonal versus oblique rotation

Factor rotation can be orthogonal or oblique. Orthogonal rotation preserves the right-angle relationships (zero-correlations) between the factors in the initial solution. Oblique rotation relaxes this constraint. Conceptually, it allows the drawing of a separate vector through each datapoint cluster in the dataset, even if those vectors are correlated.

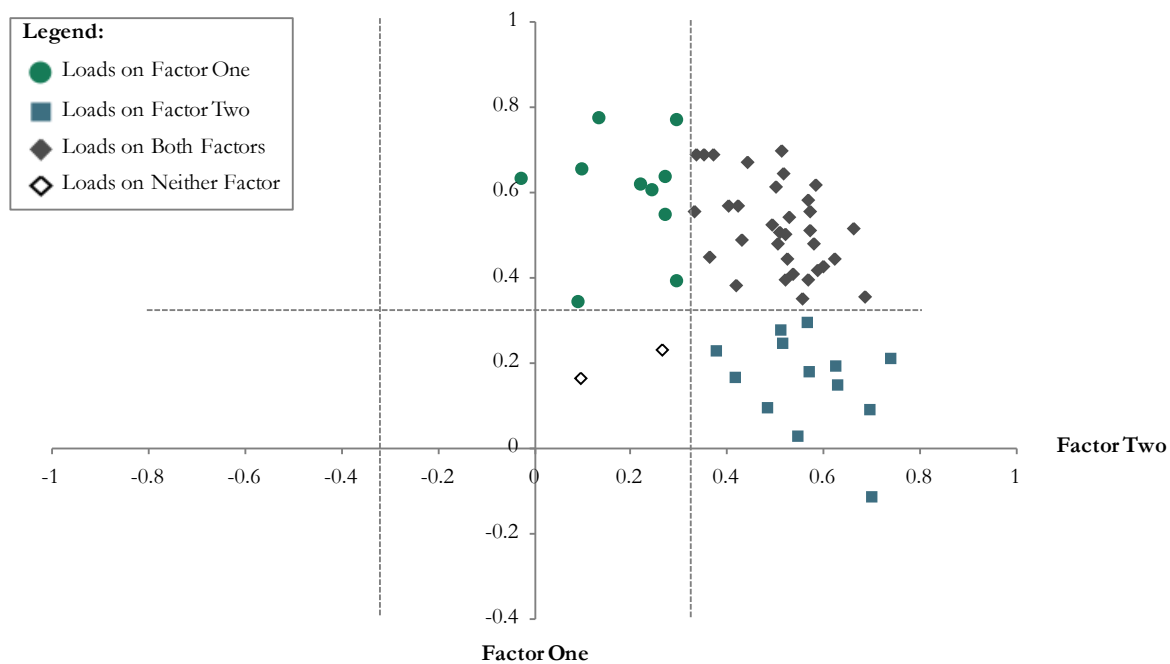
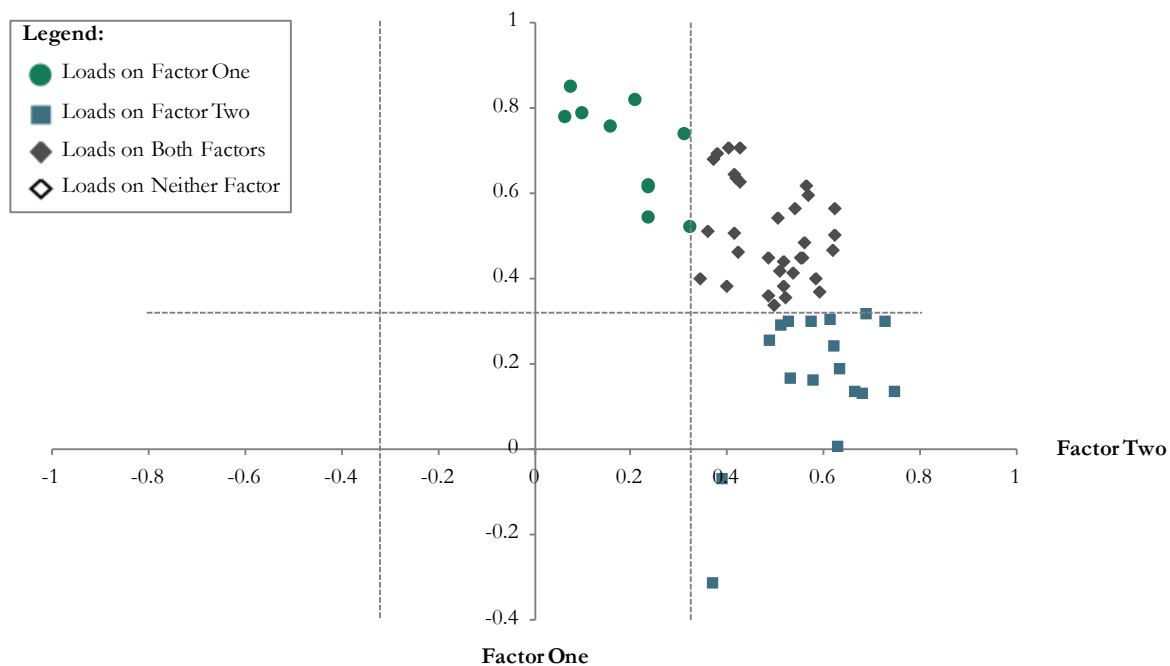
Oblique rotations may be preferred in many situations, such as in psychological studies that employ factor analysis to elicit personality types (Cattell 1978). Personality traits are usually correlated with one another to some extent, so relaxing orthogonality brings the factor solution closer in line with reality. (This flexibility comes at the cost of interpretive clarity. Distinctions are difficult to draw when the correlations between factors are high.)

In a political study that employs factor analysis to elicit discourse types, orthogonal rotation may be preferred. While orthogonal personality traits may be empirically hard to find, orthogonal political viewpoints are readily identifiable. For example, if person C strongly

agrees with the statement ‘China must remain united’ while person D expresses indifference, those two viewpoints are conceptually orthogonal.

Graphical inspection of the initial factor solutions for P-Sets A and B suggests that orthogonal rather than oblique rotation will produce a simpler factor structure. Oblique rotation is helpful in datasets where the data points make up several discrete clusters within the factor structure; it allows us to draw, and interpret, a separate vector for each cluster. The present study’s datasets are not comprised of discrete clusters, but rather broad clouds (albeit with a few outliers).

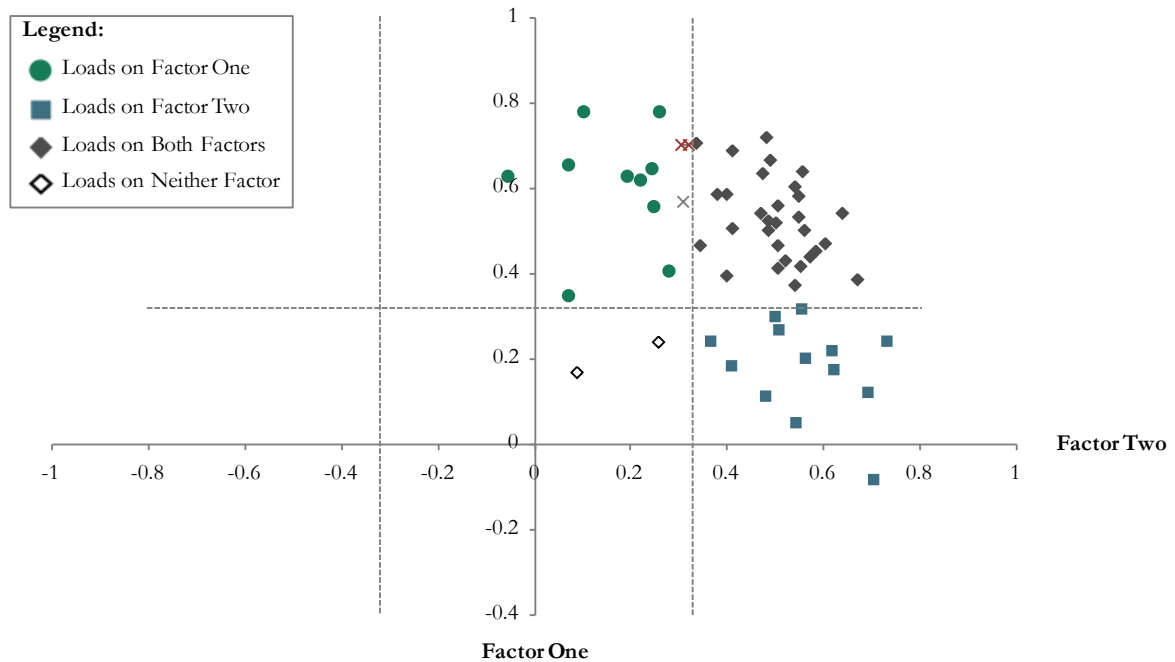
Consider Figure 6-8 and 6-9, which show the results of rotating the initial factor solutions of P-Set A and B orthogonally 45° clockwise. Compared to the unrotated solutions, this rotated factor structure offers a clearer interpretation: Factors One and Two define the boundaries of political discourse, within which the majority of viewpoints fall (and beyond which few viewpoints are found). If we can understand these two ‘boundary’ viewpoints, as well as the mixed (or in statistical terms, ‘confounded’) viewpoint from the middle, then we will have a good map of the overall range of political discourses among the emerging Chinese middle class.

Figure 6-8 Factor loadings in 45° rotated solution for P-Set A, $a^* = 0.32$ Figure 6-9 Factor loadings in 45° rotated solution for P-Set B, $a^* = 0.32$ 

6.4.2 Varimax versus manual rotation

The most common method of orthogonal rotation is Varimax (Kline 1994), initially developed by Kaiser (1958). For a given variable C (or in this study, person C), Varimax squares C's factor loadings from the initial solution, then aims to *maximize* the sum of the *variances* between these loadings across all the factors. Mathematically, this is achieved by rotating the initial factor solution such that variable C loads on each factor with a correlation as near 1 or as near 0 as possible. To the extent the data accommodates this objective across all variables, the rotated solution should have 'simple structure' in the Thurstonian sense.

Performing Varimax rotation on P-Sets A and B confirms the manual rotation above. Varimax rotates the initial factor solution for P-Set A approximately 43° clockwise and for P-Set B, approximately 42°. The result for P-Set A is shown in Figure 6-10, in order to illustrate graphically that the difference in factor loadings between the manual and Varimax rotations is literally marginal. In comparison with the manual rotation of P-Set A, three marginally confounded variables (marked ×) now load uniquely on Factor 1 at the $p=0.01$ significance level.

Figure 6-10 Factor loadings in Varimax solution for P-Set A, $a^* = 0.32$ 

The results of the initial solution, manual rotation and Varimax rotation are summarized in Tables 6-2 and 6-3. For the present study, the manual rotation is judged to be the preferred solution for interpretation. This rotation best reflects the theoretical purpose of the rotation, which is to interpret the general factor from the initial solution as the midpoint of a discourse that is delimited on both sides by orthogonal boundaries. Equalizing the variance explained by Factors One and Two via manual rotation offers the clearest starting point for this interpretation. (In practice, the two rotations would yield nearly identical factor interpretations, since the representative cases selected to define the boundary discourses and the midpoint discourse would not be drawn from those marginal cases whose significant factor loadings differ between the two rotations.)

Table 6-2 P-Set A rotation summary

	Unrotated	Manual 45°	Varimax
Eigenvalues			
Factor 1	24.48	13.62	14.53
Factor 2	2.76	13.62	12.71
Total	27.24	27.24	27.24
Variance Explained (%)			
Factor 1	42.20	23.49	25.06
Factor 2	4.77	23.49	21.91
Total	46.97	46.97	46.97

Table 6-3 P-Set B rotation summary

	Unrotated	Manual 45°	Varimax
Eigenvalues			
Factor 1	25.40	14.46	15.47
Factor 2	3.53	14.47	13.46
Total	28.93	28.93	28.93
Variance Explained (%)			
Factor 1	43.05	24.52	26.21
Factor 2	5.99	24.52	22.82
Total	49.03	49.03	49.03

6.5 Factor loadings

The factor loadings for each participant's sort following factor extraction and rotation are reported in the Appendices, at §11.2.

6.6 Selection of defining sorts for each factor

Factoring is an intermediate step toward interpretation. I must now determine each factor's *defining sorts*. Defining sorts are those sorts from the study deemed to load significantly and uniquely on the j^{th} factor (i.e., with a high factor loading on j and a low factor loading on all other factors). From the defining sorts I may then calculate *factor scores*. A factor score is the value in the range -5 to +5 that the k^{th} statement ($k = 1$ to 65) takes within the j^{th} factor. It is calculated as the weighted average of the scores given to the k^{th} statement by each of the defining sorts, where the i^{th} sort's weighting equals its factor loading a_{ij} . From the set of all factor scores for the j^{th} factor I can then construct a *factor array*. Conceptually, a factor array is the 'representative' or 'average' sort of all defining sorts for that factor, which may then be interpreted as the common political discourse among these defining sorts.

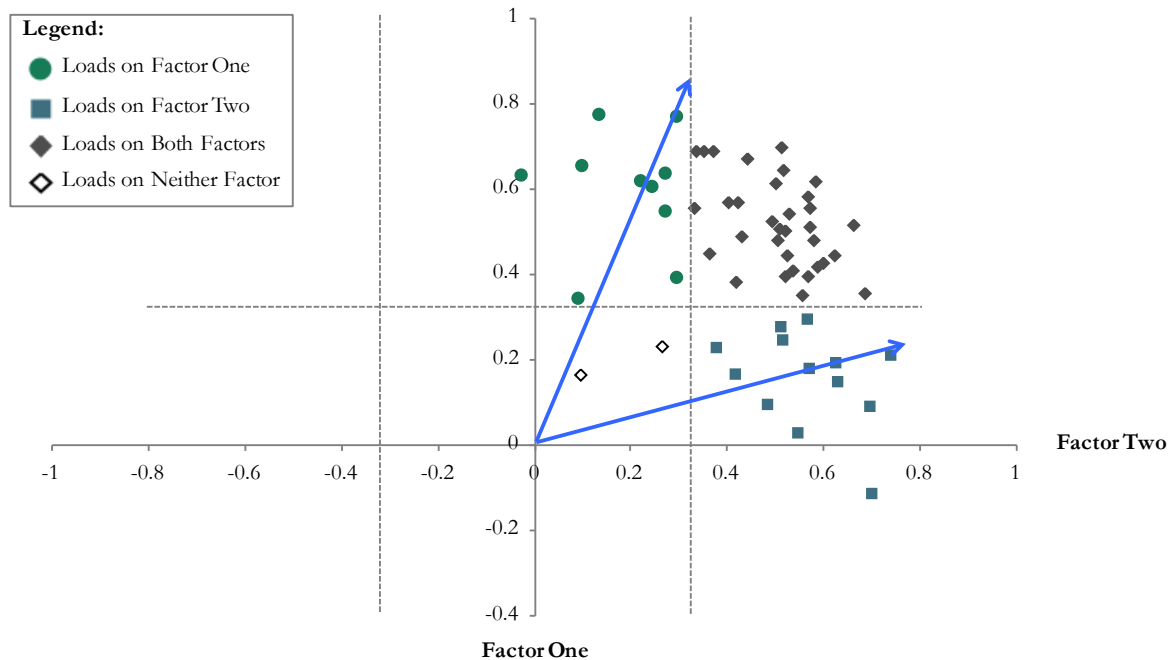
Any sort that loads significantly on one and only one factor is a candidate to be a defining sort for that factor. Recall that the equation for a significant factor loading a_{ij}^* is given by:

$$a_{ij}^* = z \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \right)$$

The use of a z-statistic presumes a hypothesis test. In the context of this study the null hypothesis is that the i^{th} sort does *not* express the j^{th} factor. Given a threshold p-value of 0.01, $a_{ij}^* = 0.32$. (In other words, if I were to construct a new P-Set C of m randomly generated sorts where $n = 65$, I would expect 99% of all correlations in its $m \times m$ matrix to fall between ± 0.32 .) It follows for P-Sets A and B that, if the null hypothesis is true, there is a less than 1% chance that the i^{th} sort will show a loading $> \pm 0.32$ on the j^{th} factor. Any loading greater than ± 0.32 is strong evidence that the null hypothesis is false and the i^{th} sort *does* express the j^{th} factor.

Figure 6-11 illustrates the approximate vectors of the resulting factor arrays if I accept this test to identify defining sorts for P-Set A.

Figure 6-11 Illustrative vectors of P-Set A factor arrays, $a_{ij}^* = 0.32$



However, I may wish to apply more stringent criteria to the selection of defining sorts. ‘No default settings for flagging [should] be allowed to supersede the factor-analyst’s judgment’ (Brown 1997). My aim is to ‘flag’ those sorts that best represent each factor and best clarify the overall factor structure, so that each factor interpretation offers conceptual distinctiveness and clarity. It’s clear from the participants’ factor loadings (Appendices, §11.2) that this will be a challenge: most sorts correlate positively with both Factor One and Factor Two. Thus for each factor I want to be especially careful to select defining sorts that almost certainly *do* express one factor and almost certainly *do not* express the other, to minimize the risk of contaminating each’s interpretation with the other.

In statistical terms, in testing whether the i^{th} sort is defining for Factor One, I want to (a) minimize Type I error (i.e., erroneously rejecting the null hypothesis) with respect to its loading on Factor One and (b) minimize Type II error (i.e., erroneously accepting the null hypothesis) with respect to its loading on Factor Two. I do this by selecting different threshold p-values for each of tests (a) and (b). For test (a), I select a p-value of 0.001. This threshold is arbitrary, but any result that is significant at the $p=0.001$ level is generally accepted to be very strong evidence against the null hypothesis. For $p=0.001$, $z=3.291$ and $a_{ij}^* = 0.4082$. For test (b), I select a p-value of 0.1. Again it is an arbitrary threshold, but any result that is insignificant even at the $p=0.1$ level is generally accepted to be fully consistent with the null hypothesis. For $p=0.1$, $z=1.645$ and $a_{ij}^* = 0.2040$.

Applying these two more stringent significance tests narrows my pool of candidate sorts. See Figures 6-12 to 6-15, and Tables 6-4 to 6-7. Graphically, these tests have the effect of widening the angle between the vectors of the resulting factor arrays. This has two virtues: it promises more conceptual clarity and distinction between the two factor arrays, and, consistent with my interpretation of the overall factor structure, it better enables these factor arrays to describe the boundaries of the discourse.

I used my own judgment to overrule the determination of defining sorts by these significance tests in three cases:

In P-Set A:

1. A22 passes both significance tests but loads *negatively* on Factor One with a score of -0.1145. It is the only case in this P-Set to do so, and is

therefore deemed worthy of separate study. I exclude it from the defining sorts for Factor Two and instead analyze it at §7.9 as a Minority Factor.

2. A16 barely fails the Type Two error test ($\alpha^* = 0.2040$) with a score of 0.2210 on Factor One. However, it has the highest score on Factor Two within this P-Set (0.7418). I retain it as a defining sort for Factor Two.

In P-Set B:

3. B31 barely fails the Type Two error test ($\alpha^* = 0.2040$) with a score of 0.2109 on Factor Two. However, it has the second-highest score on Factor One within this P-Set (0.8177). I retain it as a defining sort for Factor One.

Figure 6-12 Defining sorts for Factor One in P-Set A

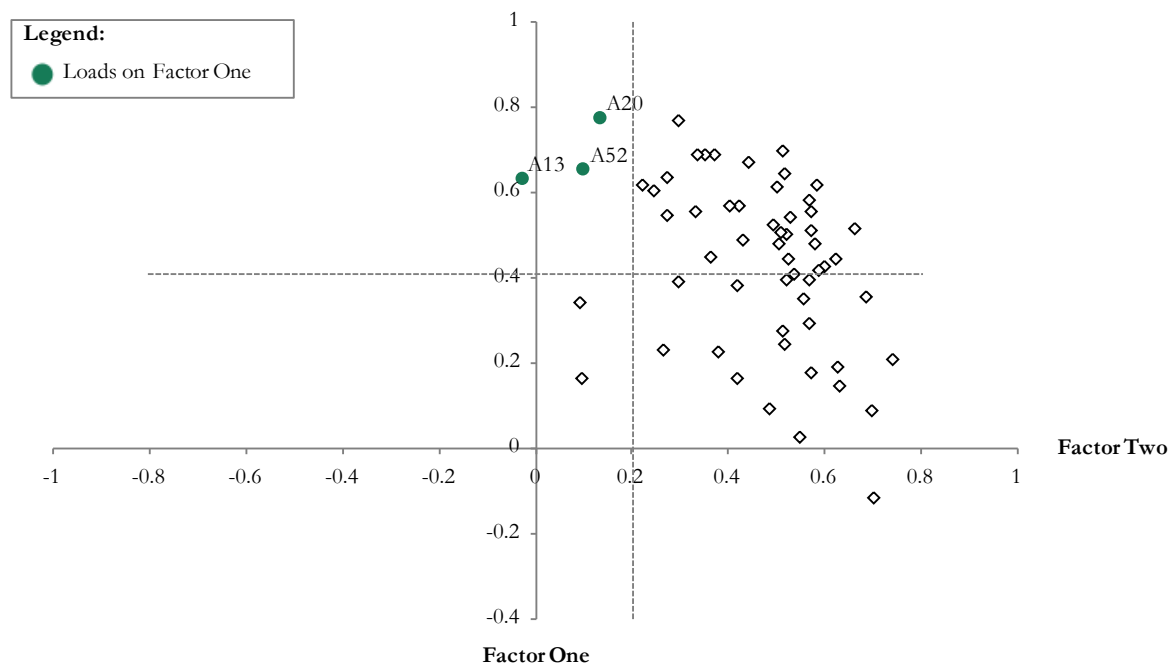


Figure 6-13 Defining sorts for Factor Two in P-Set A

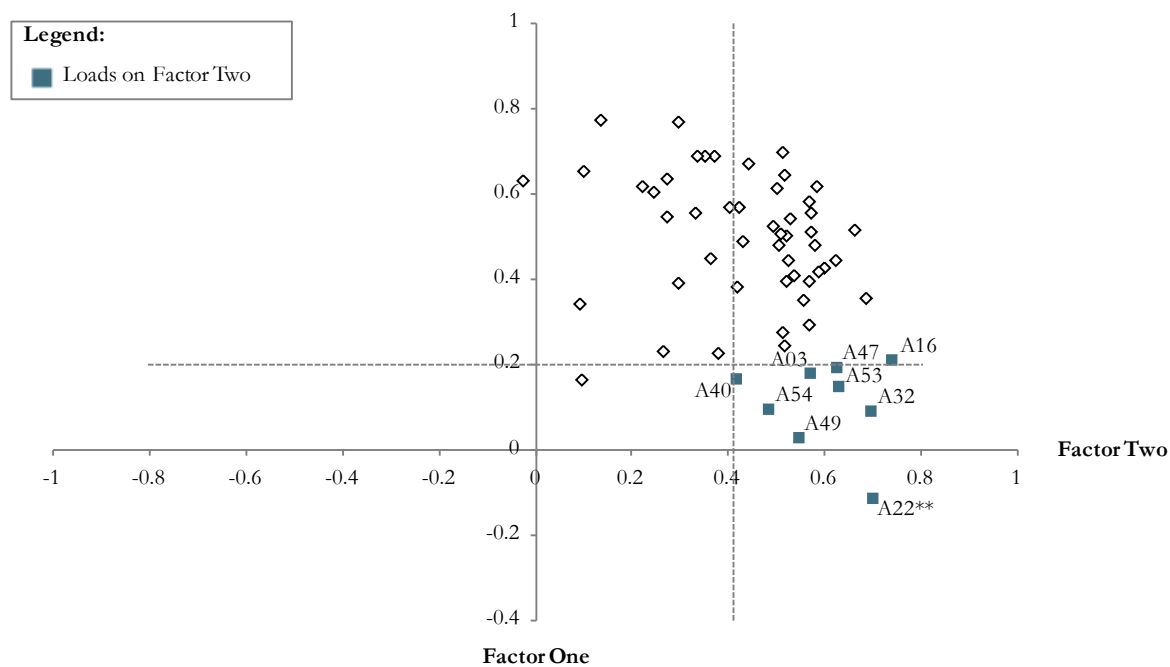


Figure 6-14 Defining sorts for Factor One in P-Set B

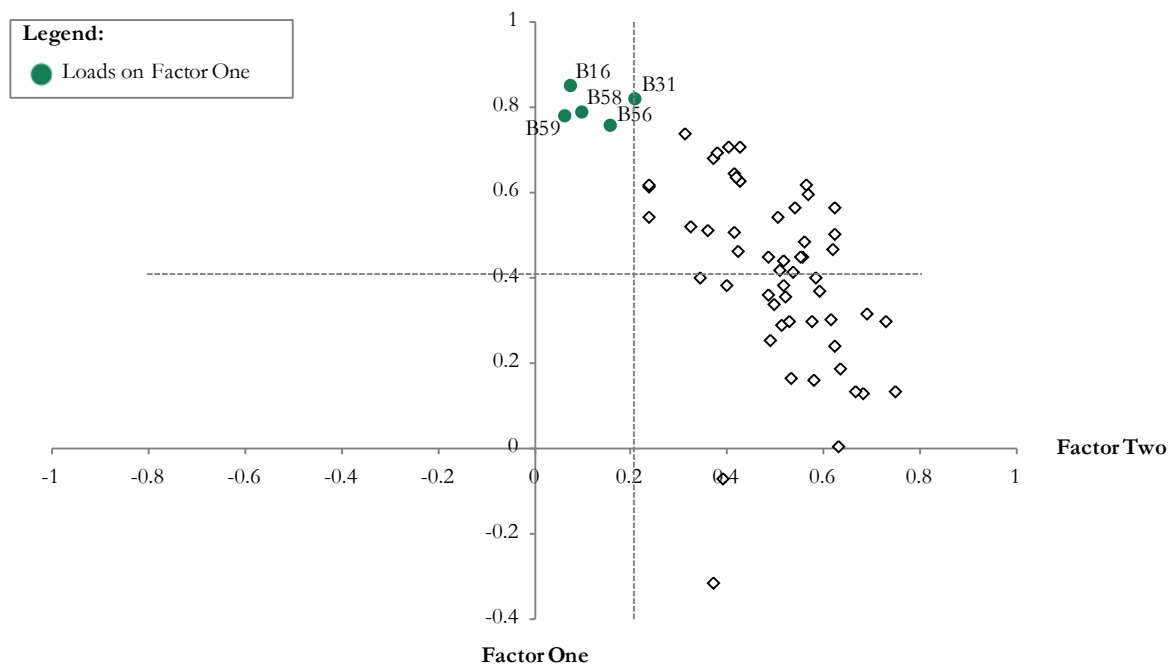


Figure 6-15 Defining sorts for Factor Two in P-Set B

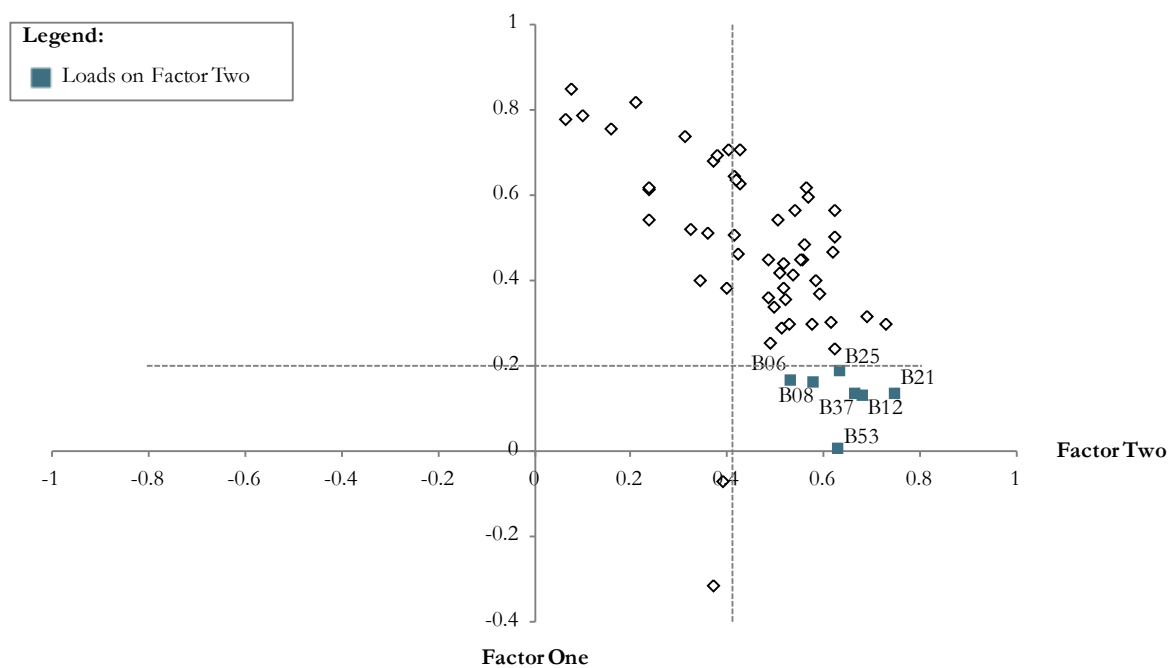


Table 6-4 Defining sorts for Factor One in P-Set A

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A13/F89★	Self-employed online retailer	0.6303	-0.0261
A20/M77	Lawyer	0.7737	0.1366
A52/F88	Christian missionary	0.6512	0.1011

Table 6-5 Defining sorts for Factor Two in P-Set A

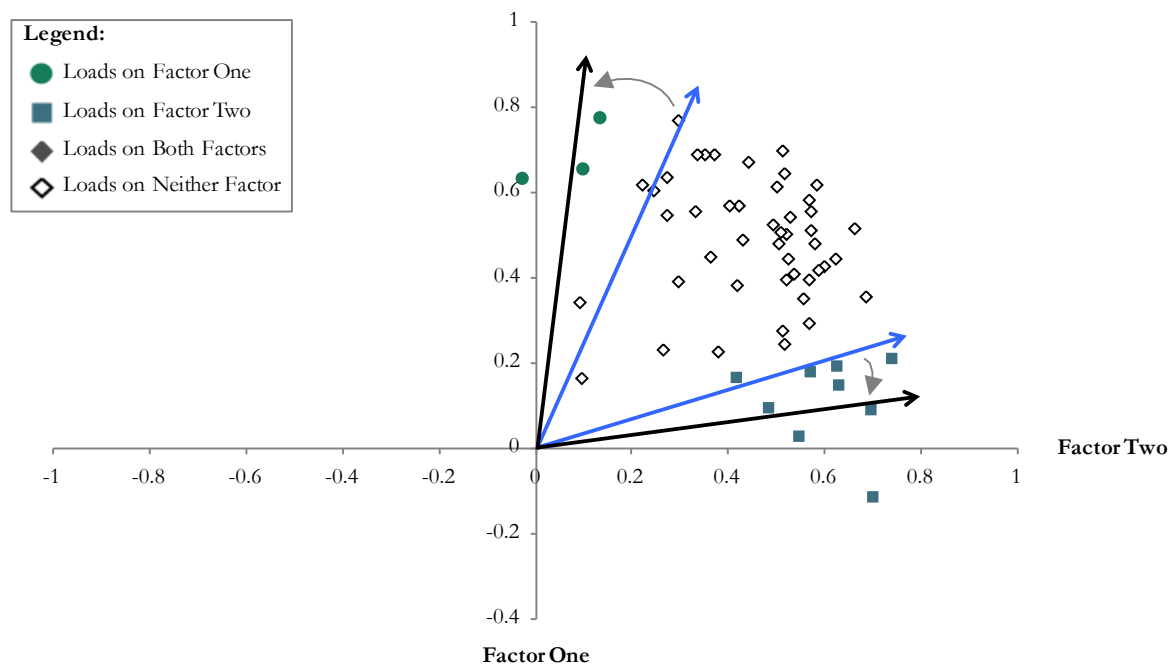
Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A03/F90	Manager in a private logistics company	0.1777	0.5715
A16/F87	<i>Office worker in a state-owned company</i>	0.211	0.7418
A22/F84★	<i>Professional at a state telecom company</i>	-0.1145	0.7018
A32/F88★	Graduate student	0.0886	0.6962
A40/M93	Executive at a state telecom company	0.1643	0.4181
A47/M87	Research assistant in a local government services branch	0.1917	0.6271
A49/M84★	Case manager at district CPC Politics and Law Commission	0.0249	0.5465
A53/F88★	Undergraduate student	0.1472	0.6289
A54/M79	Private entrepreneur and investor	0.0922	0.4863

Table 6-6 Defining sorts for Factor One in P-Set B

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
B16/F84	Public relations manager at a private company	0.8468	0.0783
<i>B31/F82</i>	<i>Research assistant at a university</i>	0.8177	0.2109
B56/F86	Sales associate at a private company	0.7544	0.1572
B58/M78	Manager in a private company	0.7868	0.0991
B59/F79	Lawyer	0.7776	0.066

Table 6-7 Defining sorts for Factor Two in P-Set B

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
B06/M85	Intern at a non-governmental organization	0.1647	0.5312
B08/M88★	Graduate student	0.1597	0.5792
B12/F86	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.1304	0.6807
B21/M75★	University professor	0.1325	0.748
B25/F82	Representative for a chamber of commerce	0.1858	0.636
B37/F88★	Graduate student	0.133	0.6651
B53/F83	Stay-at-home mother	0.0057	0.6308

Figure 6-16 Illustrative vectors of P-Set A factor arrays (stringent boundaries)

However, even using more stringent criteria for the selection of defining sorts, the resulting factor arrays remain correlated to some degree. See Tables 6-8 and 6-9. These correlations will be reflected in the factor interpretations to follow; each boundary discourse contains some elements in common with the other.

Table 6-8 Factor correlations for P-Set A

	Factor One	Factor Two
Factor One	1.00	0.316
Factor Two	0.316	1.00

Table 6-9 Factor correlations for P-Set B

	Factor One	Factor Two
Factor One	1.00	0.3467
Factor Two	0.3467	1.00

6.7 Confounded sorts and a ‘confounded array’

Normally the aim is to interpret factor arrays that have been derived from defining sorts that load significantly and uniquely on a single factor. The reason is to give a conceptually clear interpretation of each factor that is also unambiguously distinct from all others. For the two ‘boundary’ factors, this rationale has guided the factor rotation and identification of defining sorts.

The judgment exercised in determining the best factor structure for interpretation involves trade-offs. In the present study, in exchange for clarifying the boundaries of discourse, I have muddled the middle. The rotated solution is characterized by a large number of confounded sorts. This confounded middle is an important part of the overall story, and therefore it would be helpful to interpret its discourse as well. This can be done by calculating an array composed of confounded sorts.

Formally, this is not a factor array since there is no confounded factor. The factors are orthogonal and zero-correlated; in choosing to clarify the boundaries, I traded away the possibility of a zero-correlated interpretation of the middle. However, acknowledging that this ‘confounded array’ will be significantly correlated with both boundaries, I can go ahead and interpret it to understand better the discourse that takes place between the two boundaries.

Mathematically, the construction of this confounded array follows the same procedure as the construction of the two boundaries. The first step is to select the defining sorts. For consistency I apply the same test used to select the boundary sorts, with the exception that here I want to minimize Type I error on *both* factors. Using the same $p=0.001$ threshold,

defining sorts for the confounded array shall be those whose factor loading on *both* factors is greater than 0.4082. The set of defining sorts for P-Set A and B are listed in Tables 6-10 and 6-11 and highlighted in Figures 6-17 and 6-18.

Table 6-10 Defining sorts for confounded array in P-Set A

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A02/M79	Executive in a private media company	0.4801	0.5053
A04/F77	Analyst in a private corporation	0.4439	0.6211
A06/M81	Producer in a private media company	0.645	0.515
A11/F89	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.5402	0.5278
A18/F81	Analyst in a state-owned enterprise	0.5812	0.5665
A19/F83	Office worker in a non-governmental organization	0.6999	0.5125
A21/M78	CEO of a small IT consulting company	0.6722	0.4407
A27/F81	Manager in an airline company	0.571	0.4232
A28/F87	Office worker in a charity	0.417	0.5889
A30/F83	Self-employed housewife	0.4267	0.601
A34/F82★	Committee member for a district Party committee	0.5057	0.5081
A36/F75	Manager of a real estate branch office	0.4796	0.5808
A39/F86	Economist at a foreign multinational	0.6137	0.5011
A41/F90★	Graduate student	0.557	0.5721
A42/F81★	Manager in a foreign multinational	0.5004	0.5208
A43/F87★	Graduate student	0.5236	0.4913
A44/M81★	Manager at central National Development and Reform Commission	0.4087	0.5381

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A45/F80	Manager in a state-owned bank	0.5166	0.6613
A48/M75★	Policy researcher in public health department	0.4877	0.4314
A51/M84★	Lawyer	0.618	0.5823
A56/M83	Strategy consultant in a foreign multinational	0.5107	0.5714
A58/F89★	English teacher at a university	0.446	0.5245

Table 6-11 Defining sorts for confounded array in P-Set B

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
B03/F88	Sales associate at a private company	0.4112	0.5363
B05/F79	Analyst in a multinational investment bank	0.6463	0.4155
B07/F88★	Professional at an internet company	0.594	0.5671
B09/F84★	Journalist for an English-language newspaper	0.5666	0.5415
B13/M86	Journalist for a regional daily newspaper	0.5641	0.6214
B15/M74	Board member of a state-owned enterprise	0.6349	0.4197
B17/F88★	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.5003	0.6234
B23/F81	Accountant in a non-governmental organization	0.4469	0.5567
B28/F94	Medical doctor	0.4191	0.5079
B30/M86	Stock market trader	0.6285	0.4279
B35/M80★	Host at a state television broadcaster	0.4619	0.4226
B38/M85★	Public servant in a central ministry	0.5401	0.5036
B41/M77★	Editor for an online news portal	0.4477	0.4867
B44/M86	Tradesman	0.4671	0.6204
B46/F83	Executive in a non-governmental organization	0.4498	0.553
B48/M80	IT worker	0.5046	0.4142
B49/M84	Sales associate at a private company	0.618	0.5621
B51/F83	Engineer in a state-owned enterprise	0.4389	0.5186
B54/F86	Professional in a foreign-owned company	0.4828	0.559
B57/F76	Socialite	0.7053	0.4261

Figure 6-17 Defining sorts for confounded array in P-Set A

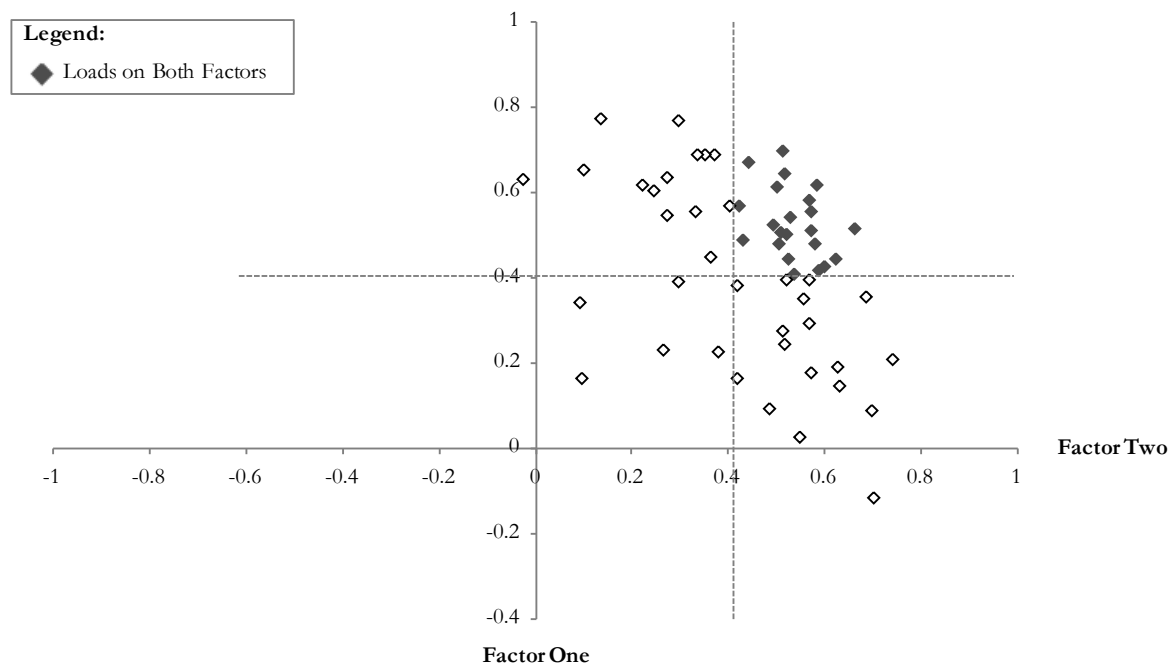
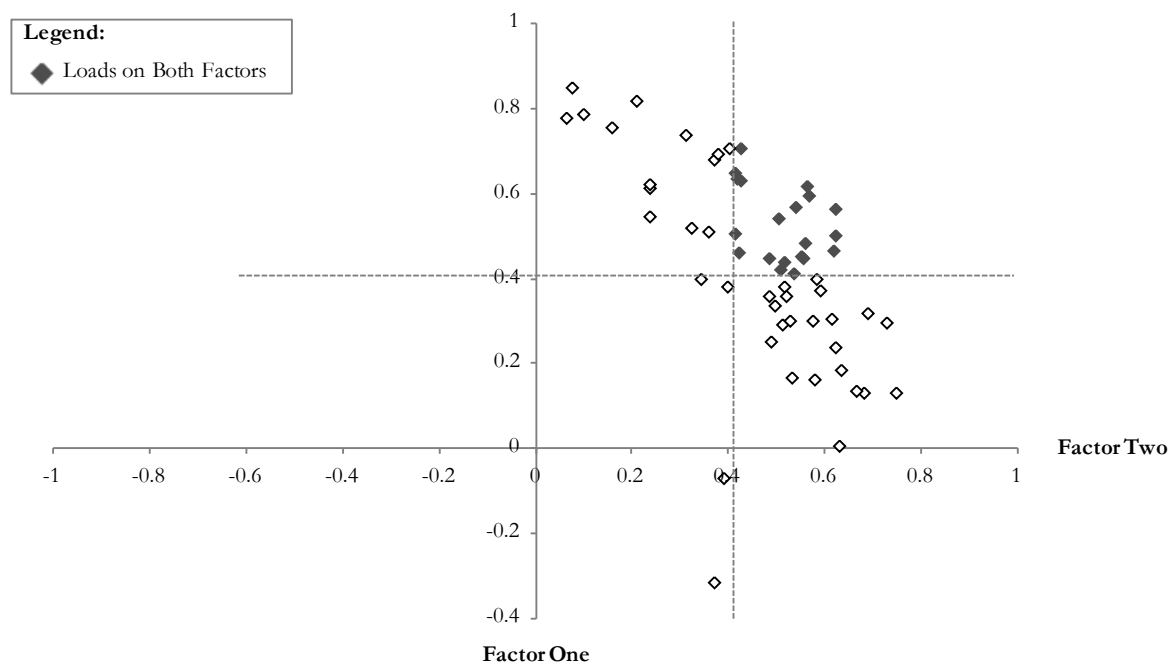


Figure 6-18 Defining sorts for confounded array in P-Set B



6.8 Second-order factor analysis

From simple visual inspection, I hypothesize that the factor structures of P-Set A and B are very similar. It may be that Factor One from P-Set A (hereafter F1(A)) and Factor One from P-Set B (F1(B)) are substantially the same, and likewise for F2(A) and F2(B), and FC(A) and FC(B). (The latter is the array of confounded sorts for each P-Set.) I want to test whether this is indeed the case, for two reasons. First, if the same factors arise in both P-Sets, this is confirmatory evidence that the study has correctly identified the range and structure of discourses within the sample. Second, it would permit the resolution of the two boundary factor arrays and confounding array from both P-sets (six arrays in total) into a single set of three arrays for interpretation.

In Q Methodology, tests of how factors from different P-Sets relate to each other is called second-order factor analysis (Watts and Stenner 2012).⁴ Having generated the four factor arrays representing the boundary factors in P-Sets A and B, I can run a new principal components analysis using only those four cases. If F1(A) and F1(B) load significantly onto the same factor in the new analysis, then those two factors are significantly alike.

The results are reported in Table 6-12. They unambiguously support the hypothesis. Given their second-order factor loadings, there is extremely strong evidence that F1(A) and F1(B) express the same factor, as do F2(A) and F2(B). I can therefore resolve these common factors, F1' and F2', and produce a single factor array for each from its respective pair of defining sorts.

⁴ This nomenclature departs from conventional statistics. Second-order factor analysis generally refers to repeating the steps of factor analysis on the factors that have been extracted from a *single* dataset, in order to discover their hierarchical structure (if any).

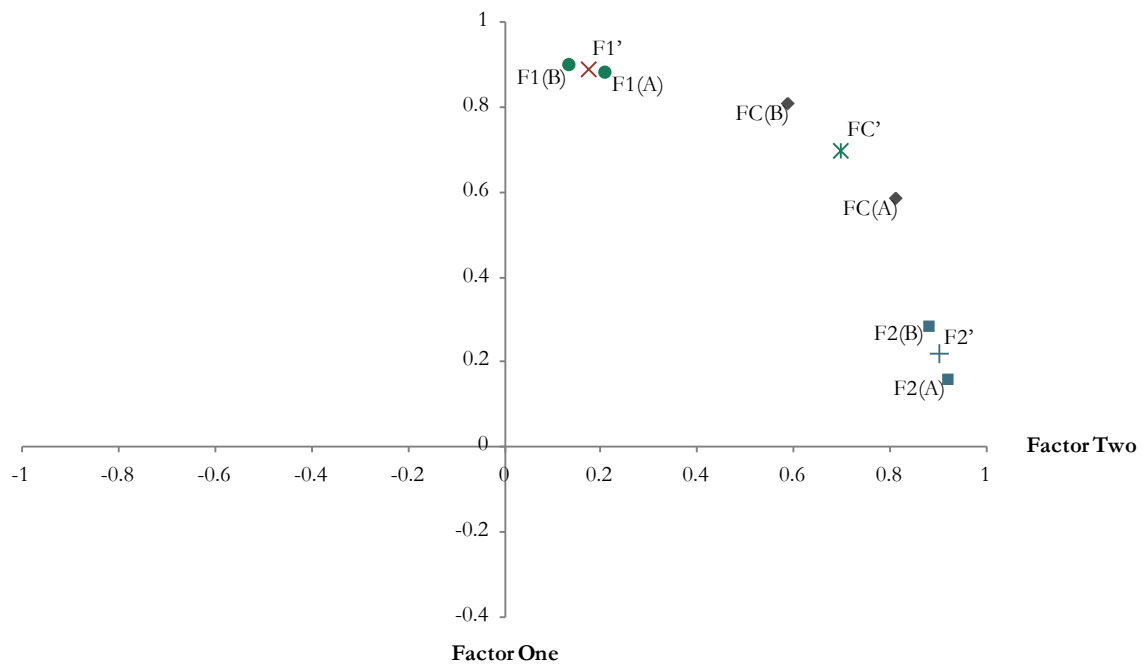
Table 6-12 Second-order factor analysis results for Factor One and Factor Two

	F1'	F2'
F1(A)	0.8794	0.2111
F1(B)	0.8982	0.1359
F2(A)	0.1557	0.9196
F2(B)	0.2813	0.8803

Mathematically, if the two boundary factors from each P-Set are significantly similar, then the two confounded arrays from each P-Set must be significantly similar as well. I confirm this by running a principal components analysis of the two confounded arrays. The (unrotated) solution is presented in Table 6-13, and is consistent with the math. The resulting factor arrays are presented in Figure 6-19 and interpreted in Chapter Seven.

Table 6-13 Second-order factor analysis results for Confounded Array

	FC'
FC(A)	0.9874
FC(B)	0.9874

Figure 6-19 Second-order factor arrays

6.9 Minority factors

While these three factor arrays account for most sorts, a few sorts in the study are poorly represented by them. These sorts are listed in Table 6-14. They are deemed to be ‘minority voices’ because they fail (or barely succeed) to load significantly on either factor, and/or because they load *negatively* on one of the main boundary factors.

Table 6-14 Minority voices from P-Set A and B

Participant ID	Short Description	F1	F2	Rationale for minority status
A05/M86★	Policy analyst for a municipal government	0.1658	0.0948	Does not load significantly on either factor
A14/M85	Editor at a weekly news magazine	0.3419	0.091	Loads with marginal significance on only one factor
A37/F93	Undergraduate student	0.2306	0.267	Does not load significantly on either factor
A22/F84★	Professional at a state telecom company	-0.115	0.7018	Second-highest negative loading on a boundary factor
B26/M83★	Fire inspector for a district government	-0.0693	0.3896	Loads negatively on Factor 1 and marginally on Factor 2
B32/F81	Policy specialist at a weekly news magazine	-0.3167	0.3705	Highest negative loading on a boundary factor

Such minority voices are present in both sets. This raises the question of whether they express common factors but have been orphaned from each other by the structure of the study. To test for this possibility, I add the minority voices, M, from P-Set B to P-Set A, and re-run a principal components analysis on the new P-Set A+M specifically to look for the emergence of minor factors. The abbreviated unrotated factor solution, listing only these minority voices, is reported in Table 6-15.

Table 6-15 Factor loadings for P-Set A+M

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
A05/M86★	Policy analyst for a municipal government	0.1849	0.0116	0.169
A14/M85	Editor at a weekly news magazine	0.3366	-0.1229	0.6087
A37/F93	Undergraduate student	0.3537	0.1164	0.3091
A22/F84★	Professional at a state telecom group	0.3178	0.5128	-0.1629
B26/M83★	Fire inspector for a district government	0.2862	0.553	-0.1092
B32/F81	Policy specialist at a weekly news magazine	0.1197	0.2487	0.5693
P-set A+M >	Eigenvalues % Variance Explained	24.5715 41	3.0937 5	2.4235 4
P-set A >	Eigenvalues % Variance Explained	24.4790 42	2.7645 5	2.2660 4

The first factor is, once again, the dominant factor, and it is virtually identical to the unrotated first factor from the original principal components analysis on P-Set A. The introduction of two new sorts has increased its eigenvalue by only 0.0925.

The eigenvalues for the second and third factors show a somewhat larger increase, of 0.3292 and 0.1575, respectively. With the addition of the two minority voices from P-Set B, the second and third factors now do more explanatory work.

It appears the reason is that I have reunited two separate pairs of orphans. Participant A22 and B26 load significantly on Factor Two, while A14 and B32 load significantly on Factor Three. Both these pairs may represent interesting discourses.

First, consider A22 and B26. Both of these participants are born in the early 1980s, are Party members, and work inside state institutions. Both report modest annual earnings of RMB50,000-75,000. Neither has ever left China for work, study or travel. The interview notes reveal an anecdotal similarity as well. A22 is an employee of a large state-owned telecommunications group. The interview was conducted off-site because non-employees are restricted from ordinary access to the building. The interview with B26 was also conducted off-site, for the identical reason. Altogether, the above characteristics suggest a pair of participants who take particular care, and possibly have limited experience with, expressing political views. Such caution might lead them to shy away from the main range of responses. This may be a case of self-censorship—one intriguing possibility that can be explored by interpreting their minority factor array.

Meanwhile, A14 and B32 represent a genuine reunion. A14 was interviewed face-to-face at the offices of a political affairs magazine in May, 2012. B32, a policy specialist at the same publication, was also interviewed but did not complete the sorting task in the time available. She submitted her completed sort by email two months later, in July.

The fact that these two sorts, separated by three months, stubbornly resisted significant loadings in their respective P-Sets, combined with their common origin, suggests a well-thought-out political position constructed contrary to mainstream opinion—probably with the intent of influencing it. If that is the case, then this would be an interesting discourse to look at, both for its internal consistency, and also to understand what alternative narratives are being constructed and presented to the public.

The above two pairs both produce factors which, by parallel analysis, cannot be distinguished from the results of random data due to their small number of defining sorts (see Table 6-16). Nevertheless, for the reasons outlined above, both merit interpretation. Table 6-17 summarizes the minority factors to be interpreted.

Table 6-16 Parallel analysis for P-Set A+M

Component	Random Data Eigenvalues (95 th Percentile)	P-Set A+M Eigenvalues
1	3.8342	24.5715
2	3.4732	~~3.0937~~
3	3.2362	~~2.4235~~

Table 6-17 Minority factors

Participant ID	Short Description	Minority Factor
A22/F84★	Professional at a state telecom group	M1
B26/M83★	Fire inspector for a district government	
A14/M85	Editor at a weekly news magazine	M2
B32/F81	Policy specialist at a weekly news magazine	

The remaining two minority voices, A05 and A37, do not load on any common factors, no matter how many factors I extract in the PCA model. These may be genuinely idiosyncratic voices, or they may reflect random rather than purposive statement-sorting behaviour. (The statement-sorting task can be long and difficult, and it would not be surprising for at least one participant to abdicate their duty.)

6.10 Final factor arrays

A factor array can be understood as the weighted average of all defining sorts for a given factor, where the weighting is determined by each defining sort's factor loading. It is generated by calculating the Z-statistic of the weighted average score for each statement, and then ranking those Z-statistics from highest to lowest. For ease of interpretation, this ranked list is translated into the identical +5 to -5 scoring distribution with which research participants were presented when they performed their card-sorting task.

Table 6-18 Factor arrays

No.	Statement	FC'	F1'	F2'	M1	M2
1	The law and the legal system should be separate from the government, so that it can be used by the people to limit government power and so that it applies impartially to everyone.	5	5	2	-3	2
2	Economic profits should be shared by everyone in society according to their needs	-2	1	-1	-2	0
3	To govern a country with benevolence and righteousness is to govern justly and fairly. To construct modern China, the country must recover this great wisdom from its ancient past.	3	2	4	1	1
4	"When judges decide important cases, they should accept the opinions of the government.	-4	-5	-2	-2	-4
5	If there were no more Communist Party, China would not be able to stand up.	-3	-3	1	1	-2
6	Only by participating in political life can I develop into a complete person.	0	0	1	3	-3
7	Government should have as small a role in the economy as possible.	1	3	-1	0	-4
8	Large-scale corruption problems exist in all political systems. This isn't a problem with the systems; it's human nature.	0	2	2	-1	4

No.	Statement	FC'	F1'	F2'	M1	M2
9	The best thing for China right now is a single, strong, united political force to lead the country and hold it together through the difficult modernization process.	-1	-3	1	-1	2
10	A small group of intellectuals can change the fate of the country; ideas can change the world.	-2	3	-2	-2	1
11	The more government tries to help people, the less people are able to help themselves.	-1	1	-3	-4	-2
12	We chase after so much unnecessary stuff in our lives that we lose ourselves and have a hard time seeing what's truly important. If we can let go of some of the unnecessary stuff, things will start to get better naturally.	3	2	4	2	5
13	Some people think that 'right' and 'wrong' is for society to decide, or that what is 'right' and 'wrong' can change with the times and with people's views. But this is incorrect. Right and wrong are permanent truths. They aren't for people to decide.	-1	2	-4	-2	-2
14	We cannot change human nature. We cannot remake ourselves into better people. Our basic values and behaviour, good and bad, are decided by social and historical forces.	-1	-1	-3	-2	5
15	The public education system should emphasize teaching youth to respect and obey established norms and traditions.	1	-2	3	2	0
16	The truth is this is a man's world ruled by men. A great source of injustice and unfreedom in society is that women aren't allowed to be full and equal participants in it.	0	1	-1	-3	1
17	If we see that the people have become corrupt and unjust, it is because the government is corrupt and unjust. If we see that the people have become good and just, it is because the government is good and just. Corruption and goodness, justice and injustice: both start at the leadership level.	0	-1	-3	-2	-2
18	Setting aside some differences in lifestyle habits, the basic values of Chinese people and foreigners are approximately the same.	0	3	-1	0	0

No.	Statement	FC'	F1'	F2'	M1	M2
19	I owe a duty to family. I owe a duty to friends. But I do not owe a duty to people I do not know or to 'society', which is a pretty abstract term.	-4	-2	-5	0	-1
20	China must remain united.	3	0	5	5	0
21	In the current environment, we don't need to pay attention to politics.	-4	-2	-5	-5	0
22	It is more important to accomplish the goal than to follow established rules and procedures.	-2	-1	0	4	-3
23	It doesn't matter that ideas like freedom and democracy emerged in other civilizations. Their value is universal. We should share these universal values too.	4	5	3	3	-1
24	In the real world we live in, an important means to achieving meaningful freedom is to make more money and grow the economy.	-1	-2	0	1	-3
25	Only if citizens get to choose their leaders in a fair and open election can they truly be called 'free'.	2	4	-2	-3	-5
26	It's more important to change ourselves—to make ourselves into better people—than to expect government to change.	1	0	0	-4	3
27	A citizen should always remain loyal to his government, no matter how imperfect it is or what wrong it has done.	-4	-4	0	2	-5
28	An effective way to make good long-term decisions for society is to involve all society in those decisions.	2	2	0	3	-1
29	To better develop the country, we need to better integrate with the global economic system.	2	3	2	2	-3
30	If a government is always under the people's supervision, it cannot accomplish great things.	-5	-3	-3	1	1
31	The new consumer economy is eroding our society and values and turning us into slaves of money and capital.	1	1	3	0	4
32	If the country leaves economic problems up to the private sector, the problems will only get bigger.	0	-1	2	4	2

No.	Statement	FC'	F1'	F2'	M1	M2
33	One of society's important responsibilities should be to protect and express equality as concretely as possible.	4	4	3	2	-1
34	We urgently need to reverse environmental destruction in China, even if it means we need to slow down the rate of development.	4	3	1	0	2
35	We need to think less about ourselves and more about the common good.	1	1	2	4	4
36	Things inevitably develop in a positive direction over time.	-1	-2	-1	0	-4
37	Power corrupts. Therefore a good political system must limit power and give people the authority to supervise power closely.	5	5	3	3	-1
38	Inequality is caused by the concentration of political power, which then concentrates wealth.	2	1	-1	1	0
39	In today's world, only strong countries are truly free.	1	-2	1	2	-1
40	People's intrinsic nature is good.	2	-1	4	3	-2
41	Work is the source of all happiness.	0	-1	-1	2	-5
42	The driving force for change must come from the highest political levels.	-3	-4	-4	5	0
43	If we want to improve a country's quality of governance, we should raise the education level of the citizenry.	5	2	5	5	4
44	Our country should defend our own way of life, not indiscriminately copy others'.	3	0	4	4	3
45	One of society's very important goals should be to allow each individual to think and act freely according to their personal goals and dreams.	3	4	1	-2	1

No.	Statement	FC'	F1'	F2'	M1	M2
46	Average Chinese are very easily bought off. What happened to our spirit of criticism? The number of people who goes with the flow is multiplying; those who stick to principles are disappearing. If we want to build a better society, we need to reverse this general mood.	3	3	1	-1	3
47	For right now we need stability and should not cause any trouble.	1	0	3	-1	2
48	There is no such thing as 'freedom'. It is just some people's illusion.	-2	0	0	-3	5
49	Taxing the rich heavily in order to help the poor is unfair.	0	1	-4	0	-2
50	For the sake of the common good, the individual should be willing to sacrifice his powers of speech, press, assembly, demonstration, religion, property and so forth.	-5	-5	-3	-1	-1
51	The slogan 'One World, One Dream' is incorrect. It would lead to the assimilation of everything under a false power. Rather, 'One World, Different Dreams' is what would move the world forward, and give people the right to pursue different ideals.	2	4	-2	-1	3
52	Party competition brings no benefits to our society.	-2	-3	-2	0	2
53	True 'individuals' do not exist. It is only through our various responsibilities toward partners, children, colleagues, and other citizens that we become whole persons.	4	0	5	3	3
54	China should aim to be more self-sufficient and less dependent on international trade.	-1	-1	0	1	-2
55	If you ask people on the street, they all feel that they live life pretty freely. And that's all freedom is, really. As long as the government doesn't interfere with my private life, it doesn't really matter to me what it does to control public speech and actions.	-3	-3	-3	-4	-3
56	Forgetting Chinese history would be a shortcut to building a modern civil society.	-5	-4	-5	-5	-4

No.	Statement	FC'	F1'	F2'	M1	M2
57	People with little or no education should have as much say in politics as highly-educated people	2	2	1	-1	1
58	Political change should be guided by the peasantry.	-2	0	-1	-3	0
59	Most people think the same way and want the same things. Therefore, it makes sense for a single political party to hold power for a long time and promote the shared, fundamental interests of the majority.	-3	-5	0	1	-1
60	A government has the authority to rule over me so long as it exercises power ethically and morally. These considerations—ethics and morality—are more important criteria than processes like elections and selections.	0	-1	0	0	1
61	If a government rules in a way that benefits the majority of people, but hurts a minority, I should still support it.	1	-2	2	-1	1
62	If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.	-3	-4	-2	1	0
63	Religious values should play a bigger role in politics.	-1	1	-4	-5	-3
64	We should let go of trying to 'fix' or 'improve' government or society. If we stop trying to fix things and just let things take their course, everything will turn out naturally.	-3	0	-2	-3	2
65	It is appropriate for government to limit the number of children I may have.	-2	-3	2	-4	3

7 Interpretation and Discussion of Ideological Diversity

The factor arrays discovered in Chapter Six summarize, in numeric form, the various distinct arrangements of statements made by research participants. The task now is to translate each arrangement back into the statements themselves and interpret from each the ‘social reality, as characterized by intersubjective and common meanings’ in which the sorting task was performed (Taylor 1987).

7.1 Construction of factor narratives

McKeown (1998, p. 128) offered an epistemological distinction—between interpretation and understanding—to help clarify the researcher’s task at this step. Interpretation ‘originates from the conceptual organization of the investigator’; it occurs when the researcher approaches the data with a prior framework and works to place the participants’ responses within it.

Understanding is a process of discovering conceptual categories or meanings produced by the research participants themselves. The researcher can never claim to be wholly objective but by choice of method approaches the analysis with an ‘openness to the text’. This openness has elsewhere been labelled the Sontag Rule, after Sontag (1961), who urged researchers ‘to see more, hear more, feel more’ from the research participants before proceeding to interpretation.

To operationalize this sensitivity during the analysis of the factor arrays, I consistently applied a five-step procedure to each:

1. I identified the highest (+5) and lowest (-5) ranked statements within the factor array
2. I identified all statements that this array ranked higher than any other array, and all statements that this array ranked lower than any other.

Steps (1) and (2) highlighted the statements that set this factor array apart. By gathering them together, an overall narrative was determined. Once this narrative had been constructed:

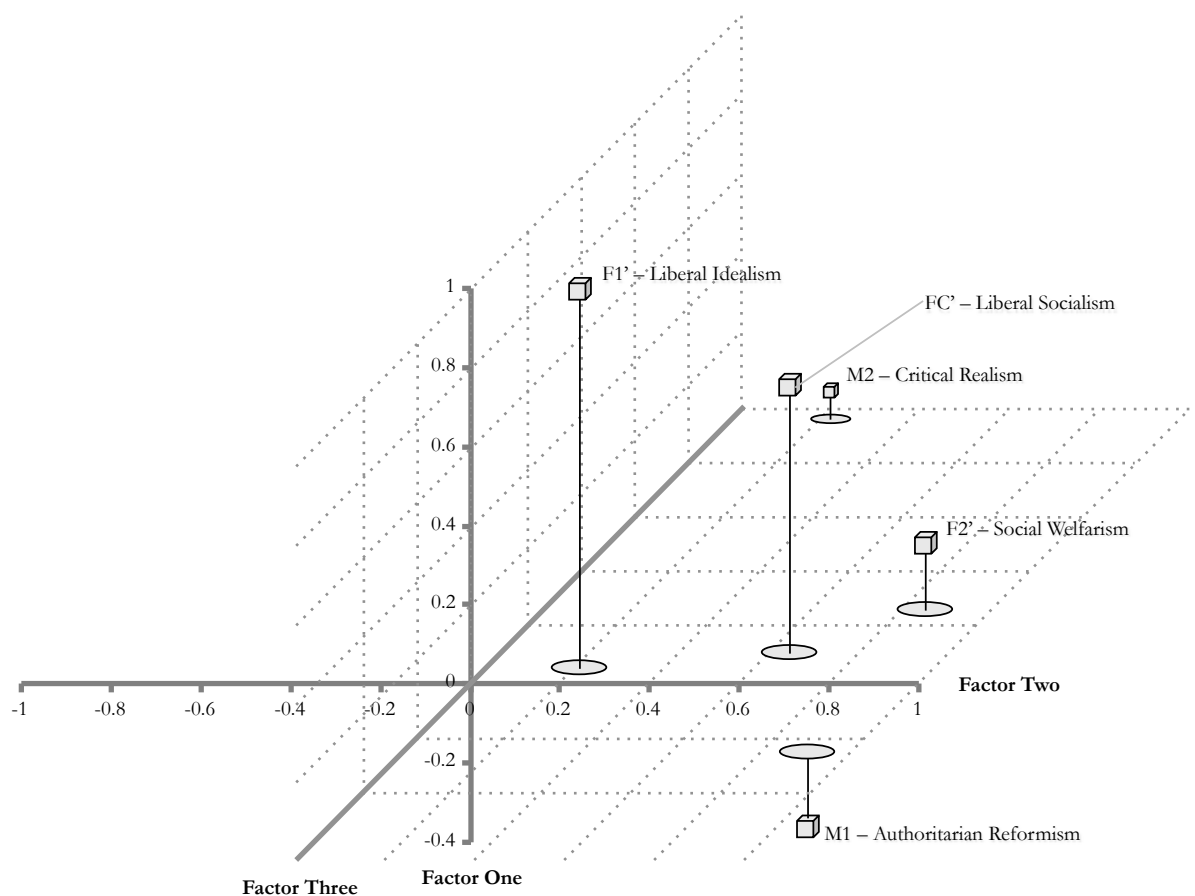
3. Remaining statement scores were considered and added into the narrative.
Statements that supported, disagreed with or nuanced the narrative were all included.
4. Remaining statements were omitted from the narrative if they were judged to neither add to, nor take away from, the elicited understanding.
5. I reviewed notes from the study participants' post-sorting interviews to verify and add depth to each narrative.

7.2 Understanding the discourses

The descriptive labels I give to each narrative are my own and arise from the proceeding interpretations. The labels are intended to help identify and distinguish the discourses but cannot fully capture their nuances.

Likewise, Figure 7-1 (below, and reprinted later as Figure 7-3) is intended to help distinguish the relationships among the five discourses and summarize the discourse space. I explain these spatial relationships at §7.3.

Figure 7-1 The discourse space



7.2.1 F1' — Liberal Idealism

Above all, Liberal Idealism is defined by two ideas. First, it is concerned by the idea of concentrated political power and believes that it should be limited by mechanisms for the people to supervise it (37: +5 / 30: -3) and by the independence of the legal system (1: +5). Judges' decisions in important cases must not be influenced by government (4: -5).

Concentrated political power leads to concentrated wealth (38: +1) and frustrates one of society's very important tasks: realizing people's natural equality (33: +4). Liberal Idealism does not accept the argument that China would founder without the leadership of a single Party (5: -3), nor that a single strong power is required to guide China's modernization (9: -3).

Underlying these ideas is the belief that human nature is perhaps flawed (40: -1), and hard to change (14: -1). Corruption therefore arises naturally within political systems (8: +2) and must be tamed.

Second, it holds that values such as 'freedom' and 'democracy' are universal, rather than particular to a country or culture, and that China too should share in them (23: +5). Lifestyle habits may vary from country to country, but people's fundamental values are similar across national boundaries (18: +3). 'Real freedom' means being able to choose one's leaders in a fair, open election (25: +4). (Liberal Idealists also believe this leads to society making better long-term decisions (28: +2).) Despite what some say, expanding freedom is not just about making more money or growing the economy (24: -2), and it's something much more than the absence of government interference in people's personal lives that they experience now (55: -3). Liberal Idealism strongly rejects the idea that people have sufficiently similar wants and needs that a single political agenda or party could fully represent (59: -5). In that sense, 'One World, One Dream' is the wrong idea. Rather, 'One World, Many Dreams' is what's required to move the

world forward (51: +4). One of society's important goals is to enable each person to pursue his/her own goals and dreams (45: +4). As such, Liberal Idealism also strongly rejects the idea that people should be asked to give up the ability to speak and publish what they want, or assemble, for the 'common good' (50: -5). Religious values should also enjoy expression in politics (63: +1). Liberal Idealists doubt somewhat whether national strength is a precondition for freedom (39: -2).

Individuals' capacity as agents in society should be promoted. Things don't get better on their own (36: -2). Instead, people need to recover a spirit of criticizing the problems they see in society (46: +3). The public education system should develop this capacity in children (15: -2). 'Right' and 'wrong' aren't relative; they're timeless truths (13: +2), and people should not blindly obey government when it does wrong (27: -4). After all, a small group of intellectuals can change the world (10: +3).

Liberal Idealists believe that the government's role in the economy should be as small as possible (7: +3). They have modest confidence that the private sector can solve economic problems (32: -1). They're mildly concerned that government's attempts to help people in other ways may damage their ability to help themselves (11: +1), and they're relatively skeptical of the idea that human nature can be improved anyway (14: -1). Perhaps related to the importance they place on agency, Liberal Idealists favour taking major steps to improve the environment—even if it means slower economic growth (34: +3). While realizing people's natural equality is one of society's very important tasks (33: +4), and supporting some degree of distribution of wealth according to need (2: +1), they also believe it's unfair to tax heavily the legitimate gains of the rich in order to help the poor (49: +1).

Between trying to change ourselves and trying to change government, it's hard for them to decide which is more important (26: 0). But either way, they're quite certain the energy for reform must come from sources other than the formal leaders in the political system (42: -4)

Despite their clear beliefs about what the ideal looks like, Liberal Idealists are mixed about whether participation in politics is important (6: 0), about whether the common good is more important than their personal preoccupations (35: +1), and about whether or not now is the time to cause trouble (47: 0). They are conflicted about whether national unity is an important political objective in itself (20: 0). More fundamentally, they're not sure whether 'freedom' really is attainable (48: 0). Perhaps they shouldn't try to fix things. If they let things take their natural course, will everything turn out fine? They just don't know (64: 0).

7.2.2 F2' — Social Welfarism

'Society' is the unit with which people ought to be concerned. The fundamental idea is this: Real 'individuals' don't exist; people only become complete through their relationships with others (53: +5). As such, their responsibilities to 'society' are real and of primary importance (19: -5 / 45: +1). They must pay close attention to (21: -5), and to a lesser degree participate in (6: +1), politics, and above all the education level of the citizenry needs to be raised in order to improve the quality of political participation and social leadership (43: +5).

From the priority placed upon strengthening the unit of society, it follows that China must remain united (20: +5). At present people really should try to be calm and not add to social disturbances (47: +3). Social Welfarism is in moderate agreement with the principle that if a

policy benefits the majority, people should support it—even if it hurts a minority (61: +2). As concrete examples: it is fair to tax heavily the legitimate gains of the rich to help the poor (49: -4), since realizing people's natural equality is one of society's very important tasks (33: +3); and the one-child policy is an appropriate use of government authority (65: +2).

It's very important that the country follow its own path, and not copy blindly other countries' ways of doing things (44: +4). 'Right' and 'wrong' are defined relative to a particular society, time and people (13: -4). It seems that there are basic value differences between countries that go deeper than lifestyle habits (18: -1). Freedom and democracy are important ideals (23: +3), but freedom is not about electing leaders (25: -2). In truth Social Welfarists are not really sure what freedom is, or if it even exists (48: 0). If it does, it's something more than what people already enjoy, i.e., government non-interference in their private lives (55: -3).

What is the right model for this country? It may be true that without the Party, China would not be able to stand up (5: +1), just as it may be true that a strong, unified political authority is beneficial to China's modernization process (9: +1), and that only strong countries are truly free (39: +1). It's doubtful that concentrating political power causes wealth to concentrate and inequality in society (38: -1). Social Welfarists are conflicted about whether economic integration with the rest of the world weakens or strengthens China (54: 0 / 29: 2). They're also uncertain about whether economic development and wealth are the foundation of meaningful freedom today (24: 0), and whether the economy or the environment ought to be the priority—possibly the latter (34: +1).

Recognizing the benefits of a strong political authority does not mean people should blindly follow their own leaders. Power corrupts (8: +2), and so more citizen supervision is a good idea (37: +3) that wouldn't interfere with government's ability to get things done (30: -3). An independent legal system would also be a good thing, but a lot of other things are more important (1: +2 / 4: -2). Social Welfarism does not accept that inter-party competition is a bad thing in a society (52: -2), nor that society will become disorderly if people have strongly diverging views (62: -2). On the other hand, it's not clear whether involving citizens in long-term decision-making improves those decisions (28: 0).

Whether people actually do have fundamentally different wants and needs is an open question (59: 0). It's a good thing if society enables people to pursue their own dreams and goals (45: +1). On the other hand, 'One World, One Dream' is a good ideal, too (51: -2). Either way, people shouldn't have to limit what they say or publish, or their assembly, for the common good (50: -3). It's not at all clear that if a government acts wrongly, people should still obey (27: 0), or even that a government that acts rightly is 'legitimate' by virtue of those actions (60: 0). Are political outcomes more important than processes (22: 0)?

Properly led, government has an important, positive role to play in solving economic problems created by the private sector (32: +2 / 7: -1), and in helping people (11: -3). The power to change society does not begin in small groups, but in large ones (10: -2). But government shouldn't try to fix everything; people are also responsible for their own situation. Social Welfarists don't agree that wealth in society should be divided up according to need (2: -1).

Underlying Social Welfarism's approach is a strong belief that human nature is basically good (40: +4), and that it can be improved (14: -3). Unfortunately, the new consumer economy is eroding social values and turning people into slaves of money (31: +3). People need to think less about themselves and more about the common good (35: +2). If people would only learn to let go of a lot of the things they don't really need, things would naturally get much, much better (12: +4). This doesn't mean be passive: to improve social welfare, people need to actively participate in making it happen (64: -2). Ultimately, whether society is good or bad is determined by the people, not by the people's leaders (17: -3). The impetus for social reform must also come from the people (42: -4), and not just one class of people like peasants (58: -1). An essential part of society's modernization, then, is to raise the education level of the citizenry so that their capacity for social leadership and political participation improves (43: +5). The Social Welfarist tends to see education as somewhat of a prerequisite to political participation. Of all main factor arrays, he/she most weakly agrees with the idea that people with low education should enjoy the same voice in politics as the well educated (57: +1). Such education should focus on teaching children to respect tradition and the order of things (15: +3), and it is very important that all people strive to recapture old traditional values like *ren* (仁) (3: +4). On the other hand, a value from the more recent Socialist tradition—that work is the source of happiness—is of doubtful merit (41: -1). Knowledge of China's own history is a critically important input into the modernization process (56: -5). (This includes respecting the historical role of religion. Religion should definitely stay outside of politics (63: -4).)

7.2.3 FC' — Liberal Socialism (Confounded)

Liberal Socialism, the confounded discourse, agrees fully with Liberal Idealists in the priority of giving citizens supervision over political power (37: +5), and flatly rejects the notion that

supervision by the people gets in the way of government getting big stuff done (30: -5) or leads to bad long-term decisions (28: +2). Consistent with these ideas, Liberal Socialism strongly supports the idea of an independent legal system (1: +5), opposes interference by government in judicial decision-making (4: -4), and disagrees with the notion that outcomes are more important than the processes that produce them (22: -2). Like both Liberal Idealists and Social Welfarists, Liberal Socialists believe that some form of party competition is good for society (52: -2). They are in equal disagreement with Liberal Idealists that the Party is essential to China's survival and development (5: -3).

Liberal Socialism also agrees with Liberal Idealism's priority upon preserving and promoting individual agency. It agrees quite strongly that people's wants and needs differ (59: -3) and that one of society's main goals should be to enable each person to pursue his own dreams and ideals (45: +3). More than either Liberal Idealists or Social Welfarists, Liberal Socialists frown upon redistributing wealth according to need (2: -2). They firmly reject the notion that value variety causes social disorder (62: -3), or that people should be asked to restrain what they say, publish or how they assemble for the 'common good' (50: -5). They also recognize limits to citizen obedience: a citizen need not be loyal to his or her government when it commits large mistakes or does wrong (27: -4), and the one-child policy is an inappropriate use of government power (65: -2). They believe with the same strength as Liberal Idealists that people need to recover their spirit of criticizing society, in order to help improve it (46: +3)—a task that cannot simply be left to society's leaders (42: -3).

Despite their strong support for individual agency, when it comes to the importance of 'the group' the Liberal Socialists agree much more strongly with Social Welfarists than Liberal

Idealists. Individual agency is not simply about fulfilling one's own wants and desires. Liberal Socialists hold, almost as strongly as Social Welfarists, that 'society' is not an empty concept: it is a concrete part of one's worldview and individuals have definite responsibilities toward it (19: -4). As with Social Welfarists, a core idea is that people's relationships with others are an essential part of becoming complete persons (53: +4). Therefore, it is very important that individuals pay attention to politics (21: -4)—but unlike Social Welfarists the Liberal Socialists are not sure that *participation* in politics makes people more complete somehow (6: 0). They agree quite firmly with Social Welfarists that China must remain united (20: +3), and give approval—albeit lukewarm—for the notion that in the modern world only citizens of strong countries can claim true freedom (39: +1).

Liberal Socialists also lean towards Social Welfarist ideas about social progress. To modernize successfully, it's important that the country follow its own path (44: +3) and it is imperative that people make a careful study of the lessons taught by history (56: -5). Furthermore, modern society is best improved by improving the quality of its people, especially through education (43: +5), but also through a revitalization of some classical ideas of human behaviour, such as *ren* (3: +3). The Liberal Socialists are ambivalent about more recent ideas of human behaviour, such as that labour is the source of happiness (41: 0). (It is also not clear to them whether classical *political* concepts make sense today. They are ambivalent about the idea that the test of a government's legitimacy should be its adherence to ethics and the *dao* (60: 0).)

At a macro level, the Liberal Socialists agree with both Social Welfarism and Liberal Idealism that deeper integration with the global economy is a good thing (29: +2 / 54: -1), and they are

less concerned than the Social Welfarists that the consumer economy is enslaving people to the pursuit of wealth (31: +1).

While the two boundary discourses, Liberal Idealism and Social Welfarism, both place importance upon equality issues, the Liberal Socialists consistently place equal or higher priority upon them. High on the list of society's tasks, they strongly believe, is to protect and promote equality (33: +4). More than either boundary discourse, Liberal Socialists are willing to ascribe responsibility for inequality to concentrations of political power, which in turn concentrate wealth (38: +2). They are also more willing to agree with the notion that people with low education should enjoy the same voice in politics as more educated people (57: +2). Perhaps because of this focus on equality issues, they are more willing than either Liberal Idealists or Social Welfarists to prioritize environmental concerns over economic growth (34: +4).

The final characteristic of Liberal Socialism is confusion about what government and citizens can or should *do*. Whereas the boundary discourses express fairly consistent views on such questions, Liberal Socialism expresses ambivalence or contradictory views. In short, it appears to be 'stuck in the middle'. On the role of government: Liberal Socialism weakly sides with Liberal Idealists on the notion that the government should minimize its role in the economy (7: +1). However, it disagrees with the latter's notion that the more government tries to help people, the less people can help themselves (11: -1). Liberal Socialists are uncertain whether leaving economic problems to the private sector will solve them or make them bigger (32: 0), and unsure whether redistributive taxation is a good or bad idea (49: 0).

On the role of citizens: It can be inferred from several responses that Liberal Socialists are dissatisfied with their present degree of agency and autonomy. They value ‘freedom’ very highly (50: -5), and disagree quite strongly with the notion that freedom consists of the non-interference by the state in their private lives that they presently experience (55: -3). ‘Freedom’ is something more (48: -2). Passivity is no solution. More so than either boundary discourse, Liberal Socialists believe that in order to fix and improve government and society people must work actively toward that end, rather than trust these deficiencies to work themselves out naturally (64: -3).

On the other hand, they seem confounded about whether the deficiencies they see in society originate with government leadership or with the people being governed (17: 0). Both Liberal Idealists (17: -1) and Social Welfarists (17: -3) give the people more responsibility on this question. Both acknowledge the root of corruption to be in human nature (8: +2), whereas Liberal Socialists sit on the fence (8: 0). Put to them another way, they agree—but only weakly—that it’s more important to improve the people than to improve government (26: +1). But if the answer to the origin of society’s problems is indeed ‘the people’, then Liberal Socialism hits a dead end; it has only tepid approval for the notion that human nature is improvable (14: -1). It is pessimistic that a small group of intellectuals could ever change the world (10: -2).

7.2.4 M1 — Authoritarian Reformism

Authoritarian Reformers are firm supporters of a strong government authority. Alone among the manifested viewpoints, they believe that citizens have a duty to obey their government, no matter what faults or errors it commits (27: +2) and quite firmly reject the notion of an

independent legal system that can arm citizens against government power (1: -3). Perhaps because of their confidence in a strong authority, they disagree that corruption is endemic to all systems of government (8: -1). In contrast to the disagreement expressed by all other viewpoints, Authoritarian Reformers agree (albeit weakly) that most people have similar wants and needs, and so it makes sense for a single political party to exercise long-term leadership over society (59: +1). If the people's thinking contains too much variety and difference, society will become disorderly (62: +1). They approve of the notion 'One World, One Dream' (51: -1). Perhaps for this reason, they utterly reject giving religious values a larger role to play in politics (63: -5). Authoritarian Reformers disagree (again, uniquely) that enabling each person to pursue his own dreams is an important goal for society (45: -2). Instead, they assert that people should think less about themselves and more about the common good (35: +4). They also firmly reject the argument that increasing government's role in helping people might somehow diminish people's capacities to help themselves (11: -4).

The government should take a firm hand in the economy as well. Although they do not clearly advocate a big role for government in the economy (7: 0), Authoritarian Reformers believe more than any other discourse that leaving economic problems to the private sector means they'll just get bigger (32: +4). More generally, Authoritarian Reformers appear cautious about recognizing external limits to government priorities or overarching value systems. For example, they are ambivalent about prioritizing environmental protection above economic growth objectives (34: 0), whereas all other discourses express support for this idea. They disagree with the notion that 'right' and 'wrong' might be absolute and prefer to think of them as relative to a specific place and time (13: -2), and are ambivalent about whether people's

basic values may be universally similar (18: 0). They strongly prefer the idea that a country should follow its own path rather than copy the models of others (44: +4).

Government should be strong, but not static. Authoritarian Reformers are also firm advocates of social and political rectification. We cannot just let things take their natural course and expect everything to turn out fine; we need to actively try to fix things (64: -3). One of their central beliefs is that the energy for such fixes must come from the highest levels of political leadership (42: +5). It is not expected to come from other segments of society, such as intellectuals (10: -2) or the peasantry (58: -3).

Nor should authority be unlimited. Consistent with their reformist bent, Authoritarian Reformers disapprove—weakly—of the notion that people should restrict what they say, publish or how they assemble for the common good (50: -1). They are uncomfortable with the proposition that citizens should support government policies that benefit the majority but harm a minority (61: -1). They disagree—albeit more weakly than other discourses—that judges should follow the advice of government when deciding cases (4: -2). They also disapprove—even more strongly than Liberal Idealists—that the one-child policy is an appropriate use of government power (65: -4), and they agree that a good political system includes citizen supervision over the use of power to limit such excesses (37: +3).

It is a core belief among Authoritarian Reformers that China must remain united (20: +5). However, as reformers, they only weakly support the notion that the Party itself is necessary to hold China together (5: +1). They actually express slight disagreement when it is argued in forceful terms that only the Party can lead China through the present period (9: -1), and they

mildly disagree with the notion that now is a time to be calm and avoid causing any disturbance in society (47: -1).

Reform also extends to society. Authoritarian Reformers believe that human nature is not fixed; it's improvable (14: -2). Authoritarian Reformers appear to want to cultivate better citizens—not to oppose authority, but to better support that authority's efforts to build a better society. Authoritarian Reformers steadfastly believe that people nowadays need to pay attention to politics (21: -5). Just as firmly, they believe that raising the education level of the people raises the quality of a country's governance (43: +5). Consistent with this belief, they also support the notion that people with a higher education should enjoy a stronger voice in politics (57: -1), and that public education should emphasize respect for established rules and norms (15: +2)—in other words, make them better participants in the programs set forth by the authority. After all, corruption and injustice do not originate at the leadership level (17: -2). Too much citizen supervision might make it difficult for government to get big things done (30: +1), but this concern must be balanced against the more important insight that involving citizens in government processes leads to better long-term decision-making (28: +3).

While cultivating good citizens matters, the ultimate target of reform remains government. Authoritarian Reformers are unique among the discourses in their opposition to the idea that it's more important to change ourselves than to change government—and they oppose it strongly (26: -4). They do not recognize an urgent impetus to change people's nature or values. They are (again, uniquely) ambivalent to the fear that the consumer economy is eroding society's values and enslaving people to money (31: 0). And they alone oppose the notion that there is some lost spirit of criticizing society that needs recovering (46: -1). They also disagree

with gender-based arguments for value-realignment. Other discourses do not seem to know what to make of the idea that this is a man's world and one of society's failings is that women cannot participate equally within it; Authoritarian Reformers squarely reject it (16: -3). All discourses support the resuscitation of classical values such as *ren*, but Authoritarian Reformers' support is the weakest (3: +1).

For Authoritarian Reformers, the end goal of politics is not the realization of intangible values such as these, but rather something more concrete. Whereas all other discourses reject the idea that 'society' may be too abstract a concept for people to bear responsibility toward it, Authoritarian Reformers are conflicted by this possibility (19: 0). A guiding star for Authoritarian Reformers is that the outcome is more important than the process (22: +4). This is not to say that there is no such thing as 'freedom'. Freedom is a real thing (48: -3), and it is most definitely something more than government non-interference in people's personal lives (55: -4). Real freedom is not about the process by which society's leaders are selected (25: -3). Rather, it's more about finding happiness in diligent work (41: +2) and participating in political life and social relationships to become a complete person (6: +3 / 53: +3). Authoritarian Reformers voice the only discourse that gives cautious support to the idea that in today's world the most meaningful freedom is to earn more money and grow the economy (24: +1). They also give the strongest support for the notion that only strong countries are truly free (39: +2).

7.2.5 M2 — Critical Realism

Critical Realists are realists in two senses. First, they deny that ideals should or do play a central role in politics. 'Freedom' does not exist; it's just an illusion (48: +5). Critical Realism is

the only discourse to advocate this position, and it is among its strongest viewpoints. With the same conviction, this discourse rejects the idea that ‘freedom’ can be achieved by electing one’s political leaders (25: -5) or by making more money or growing the economy (24: -3). It is simply not a political objective. Nor are other ideals. Again unique among the discourses, Critical Realists oppose: the contention that civilization, democracy and freedom are universal values that we should share in (23: -1); the proposition that realizing equality is an important task for society (33: -1); and the idea that participation in political life is necessary to become a complete person (6: -3). The notion that work is the source of all happiness is simply absurd (41: -5), as is the notion that loyalty ought to guide citizens to obey their government regardless of the wrongs it may commit (27: -5). Like all other discourses (with the exception of Liberal Idealism), Critical Realists disagree—quite firmly—that religious values should play a bigger role in politics (63: -3).

Critical Realists are also realists in the sense that they want to deal with society’s challenges pragmatically and base policies and actions on practical rather than idealistic notions. Critical Realists strongly disagree with the notion that conditions naturally improve if we just give them time (36: -4). Actions must be taken. But they should be actions based on an analysis of what is needed in the here and now, rather than on a prior political agenda. Right and wrong are relative to the circumstances (13: -2). Thus Critical Realism opposes blanket prescriptions, such as that either deeper integration with the global economy (29: -3) or greater self-sufficiency (54: -2) is a prerequisite to advancing the country’s development.

The country must follow its own path as the situation demands, not follow the paths of others (44: +3). In the here and now, Critical Realists believe that a strong, unified political authority

is best for guiding China successfully through the challenges of modernization (9: +2), and so party competition would not be beneficial (52: +2). As a concrete example, the one-child policy is an entirely appropriate use of government power in the present circumstances (65: +3), and it takes a strong political authority to enact such a policy. Critical Realism also tends to the belief that citizen supervision will get in the way of getting stuff done (30: +1) and that leaving economic problems to the private sector is a recipe for bigger problems (32: +2). Now is definitely not the time for government to reduce its role in the economy (7: -4). But these pragmatic judgments are not meant to imply that Critical Realists are committed to the Authoritarians' *ideals*. The outcome is *not* more important than the process (22: -3): Critical Realists are strong advocates of judicial independence (4: -4) and an independent legal system (1: +2). Nor do they buy the Authoritarians' philosophical argument that people have similar dreams and so it makes sense for a single party to lead them (59: -1). Instead they agree with the Liberal Idealists that 'One World, One Dream' is a pretty silly idea (51: +3).

Critical Realists' pragmatism leads to agnosticism on the debates over policy ideals that sharply divide the other discourses. Is it imperative that China remains united (20: 0)? Should wealth be redistributed according to need (2: 0)? Should public education teach children to respect rules and tradition (15: 0)? Should the energy for political reform come from above, i.e. the formal leadership (42: 0) or below, i.e. the peasantry (58: 0)? Are values universal (18: 0)? Should we care about politics at all (21: 0)? All these questions debate broader principles which Critical Realists do not recognize or which they do not feel are relevant.

The 'critical' side of Critical Realism stems from its criticisms of human nature and people's behaviour. Its preference for a strong political authority reflects an underlying pessimism with

regard to human nature. Basic human nature and values are fixed by the larger forces of society and history and therefore cannot be improved (14: +5). This is a core belief among Critical Realists—and another point of disagreement with every other discourse. Critical Realists disagree with the claim ‘human nature is basically good’ more strongly than any other discourse (40: -2); this distrust anchors much of their thinking. It is not power that corrupts (37: -1). Corruption arises from human nature, and therefore all systems of government suffer from it (8: +4). Hence (and unlike every other discourse) they’re skeptical of the argument that involving more people in society’s decision-making will lead to better decisions (28: -1)—such thinking, while widespread, misdiagnoses the root of the problem.

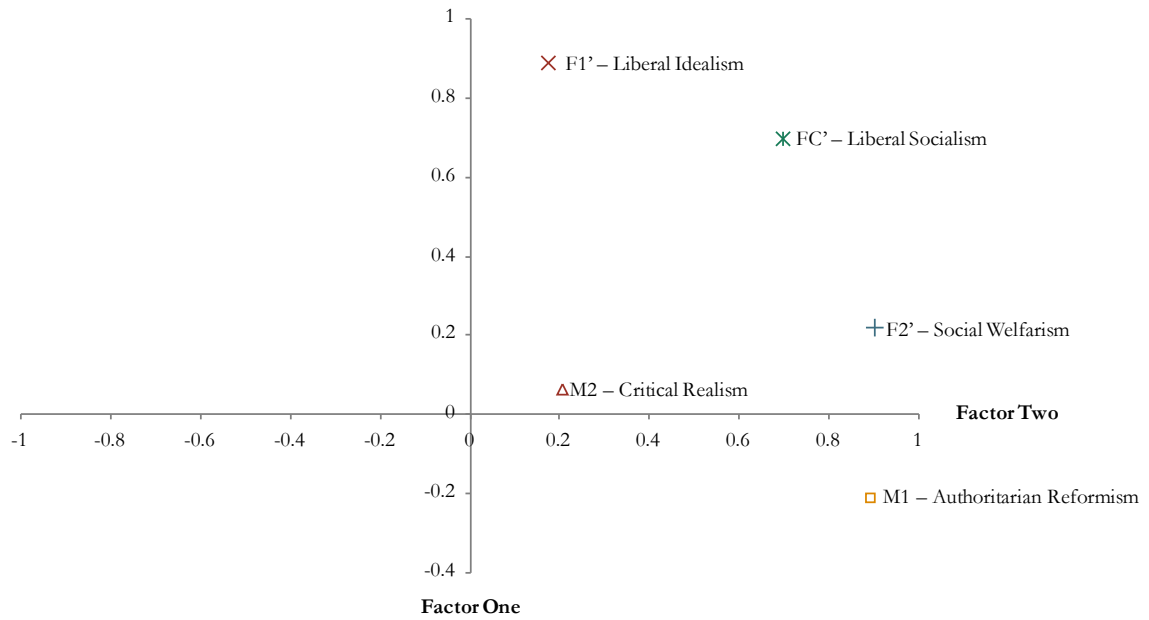
More loudly than any other voice, Critical Realists declare ‘the people’ to be the social actor most in need of improvement. Between changing government and changing themselves, people should definitely focus on the latter (26: +3). The good and the bad we observe in society do not originate from the people in formal positions of authority (17: -2). A central concern for Critical Realists is that people are allowing themselves to be distracted by too many things that don’t matter, to the point where they lose sight of what’s really important (12: +5). More loudly than any other discourse, Critical Realists warn that the consumer economy is eroding society and enslaving people to money (31: +4). People need to think less about themselves and more about the common good (35: +4). If people could learn to do that, that in itself would be a big step forward (12: +5). Society urgently needs to raise the education level of the people (43: +4) and recover a spirit of recognizing and criticizing social problems (46: +3). Like everyone else Critical Realists support the revival of classical values such as *ren*, but consistent with their Realist side such support is the weakest among all discourses (3: +1).

7.3 Relating the discourses

7.3.1 Spatial relationships

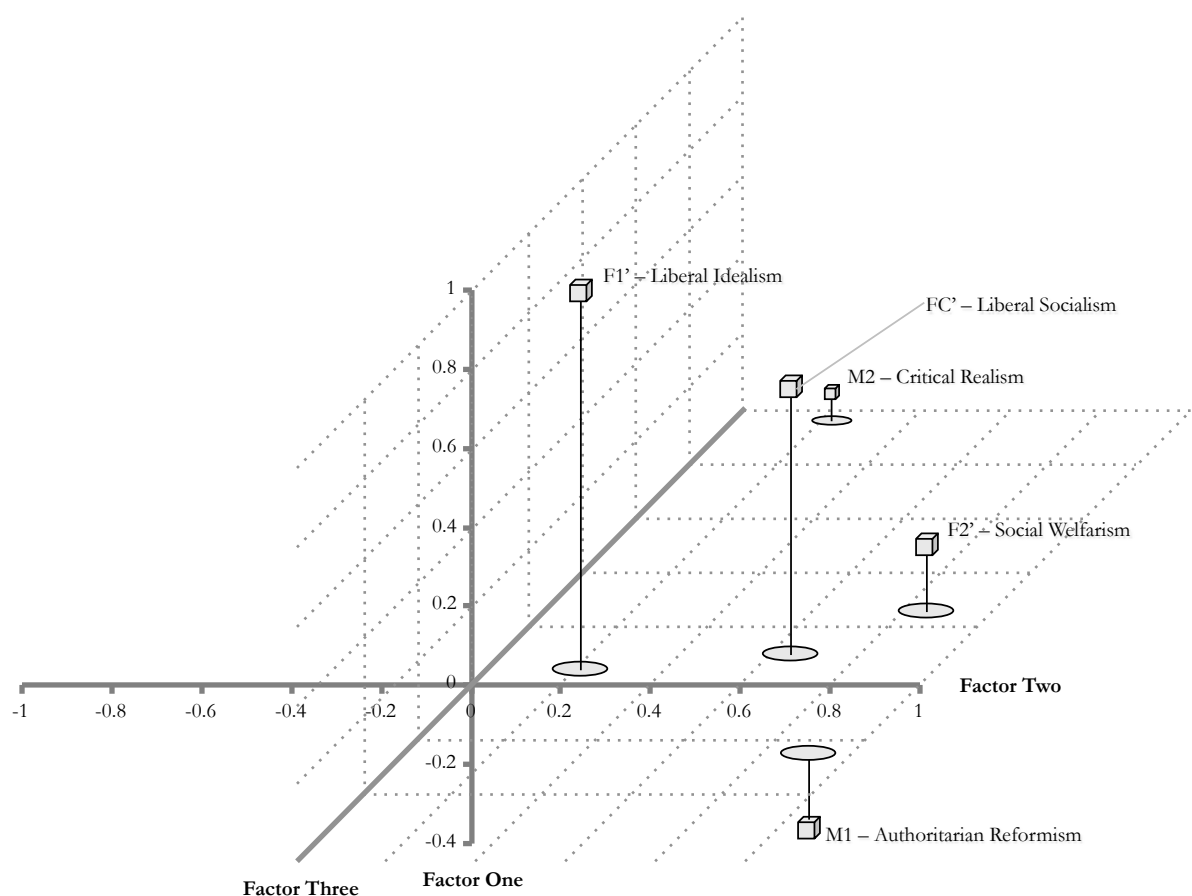
How the above five discourses stand in relation to one another can be visualized in the same two-dimensional plane first presented at §6.3. See Figure 7-2, below. As before, F1' and F2' mark the boundaries of the discourse, and Liberal Socialism is the muddled middle where the majority of the study's respondents lie. M1, Authoritarian Realism, relates strongly with Social Welfarism but negatively with Liberal Idealism. Figure 7-2 makes clear that where Authoritarian Reformism diverges from the Social Welfarist view is in how they each perceive the Liberal Idealist discourse. Social Welfarism does not rank Liberal Idealism's priorities nearly as high, but does not necessarily object to them (hence, the mild positive weighting on Factor One). Authoritarian Reformers are less ambiguous: they take a generally negative stance toward Liberal Idealism's agenda of individual empowerment and greater constraints on authority.

M2, Critical Realism, relates significantly with neither of the two boundary discourses. Its place in the discourse space is unclear.

Figure 7-2 Relationship among factor arrays (discourses) in two-factor space

However, a two-dimensional picture of the discourse space is now inadequate. The original solution had two main factors; the discretionary inclusion of minority views has raised the total to four, and so the relationships among them are four-dimensional. Such relationships are difficult to visualize, but a three-dimensional picture adds considerable clarity. See Figure 7-3.

Figure 7-3 Relationship among factor arrays (discourses) in three-factor space



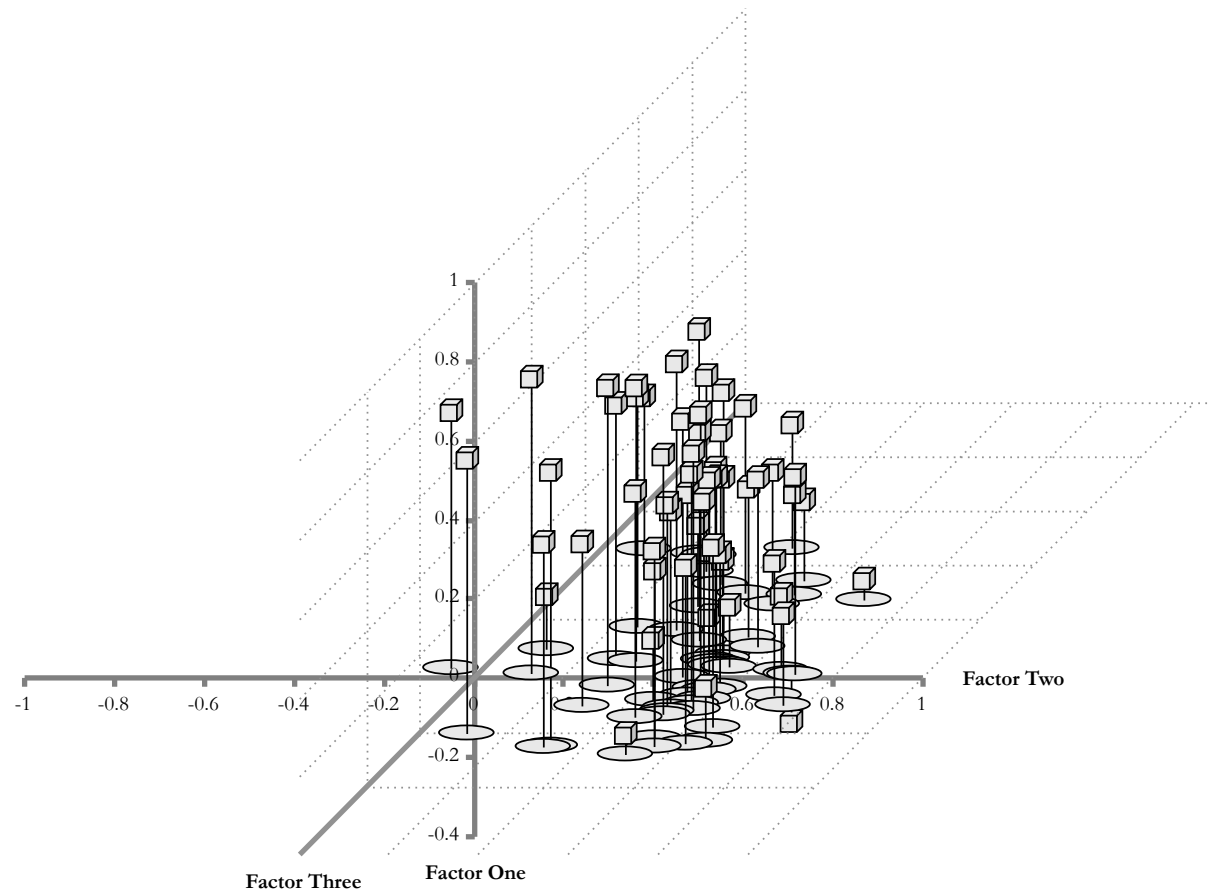
In three dimensions, Critical Realism's relationship with the other discourses is easier to interpret. Although it does not load significantly on either Factor One or Factor Two, it is seen here to represent another dimension of discourse. In figurative terms, Factor Three steps back from the whole conversation taking place between Factor One and Factor Two and poses the meta-question of whether the concepts being debated on that plane matter at all. Critical Realism offers a firm 'No' (Factor Three loading: 0.96). Social Welfarists (0.27), and to a lesser extent Liberal Idealists (0.08), are, on average, open to some of Critical Realism's doubts about whether the ideas toward which they feel affinity actually matter. Authoritarian

Reformism (-0.22) has some faith that they do—that political ideas are important, have real consequences, and therefore are worth fighting over.

It is important to bear in mind that the inclusion of these minority factors is at the discretion of the researcher, to help elucidate the full range of ideological discourses present. As the various criteria applied to factor extraction in §6.3 found, factors retained beyond the first two have weak explanatory power in statistical terms. The main discourse arena is defined by the two boundary discourses, F1' and F2', in two-factor space.

While statistically speaking this third dimension in the factor analysis is indistinguishable from random noise, it does add depth to the analysis of the relationships between the discourses, as shown above. This depth also exists in the raw dataset of participants' individual sorts, which can be seen by taking the earlier two-dimensional plot of P-Set A (Figure 6-7), and rerunning the factor analysis with three factors instead of two. See Figure 7-4. Again, the main story is captured by the Factor One and Factor Two boundaries, and respondents' confoundedness between the two, but there is also some dispersion on both sides of the Z-axis. Statistically it cannot be distinguished from random noise. Conceptually, it could be understood to represent varying opinions about the meta-question of whether debating political questions about the individual vs. society, or about ideals vs. welfare aims, has practical importance.

Figure 7-4 P-Set A factor loadings in three-factor space



7.3.2 Statement-level comparisons

The distinctive ground occupied by each narrative can be clarified further by directly comparing individual statement scores. See Table 7-1 and 7-2. Table 7-1 summarizes the ten most divergent statements for which F1' scores are greater than F2'; Table 7-2 summarizes the ten most divergent statements for which F2' scores are greater than F1'.

Table 7-1 Divergent statements, Liberal Idealism > Social Welfarism

No.	Statement (short form)	Liberal Idealism	Social Welfarism	>>
13	Right and wrong aren't relative; they are timeless truths.	2	-4	6
25	The only truly free are those who elect their leaders.	4	-2	6
51	One world, one dream is the wrong idea.	4	-2	6
10	A small group of intellectuals can change the world.	3	-2	5
49	It's unfair to tax the rich heavily to help the poor.	1	-4	5
63	Religious values should play a larger role in politics.	1	-4	5
7	The government's role in the economy should be as small as possible.	3	-1	4
11	The more government tries to help people, the less people can help themselves.	1	-3	4
18	Basic values of Chinese and other countries are universal.	3	-1	4
1	Legal system should be independent.	5	2	3

Table 7-2 Divergent statements, Social Welfarism > Liberal Idealism

No.	Statement (short form)	Social Welfarism	Liberal Idealism	>>
15	Public education should focus on teaching children to respect tradition and order of things.	3	-2	5
20	China must remain united.	5	0	5
40	Human nature is naturally good.	4	-1	5
53	Real ‘individuals’ don’t exist; we only become complete people through our relationships with others.	5	0	5
59	Since most people have the same wants and needs, it makes sense for a single party to lead them.	0	-5	5
65	One-child policy is an appropriate use of government power.	2	-3	5
5	Without the Party, China would not be able to stand up.	1	-3	4
9	A strong, unified political power is key to China’s ability to lead a successful modernization.	1	-3	4
27	A citizen should obey their government, even when it does wrong.	0	-4	4
44	Our country should follow it’s own path, and not copy other countries.	4	0	4

This view of the raw statement scores clarifies two points.

The first is the conceptual differences between the Liberal Idealist and Social Welfarist core.

Table 7-1 pulls from the full set of 65 statements Liberal Idealism’s principal themes: legal independence, limiting government power, belief in the universality of political ideals and in the importance of individual agency. Table 7-2 does the same for Social Welfarism.

Welfarism’s core ideas—the primacy of ‘society’ as the unit of concern; the particularity of

China's circumstance and political value system; people's underlying sameness and goodness—are all present.

Second, these tables give specific content to the orthogonal nature of the relationship between these two 'boundary' discourses that was first observed graphically at §6.4.1. Only one statement that Liberal Idealism ranks most highly, i.e. +5, appears in Table 7-1, and Social Welfarism meets it with mild agreement. Two of Social Welfarism's highest-ranked statements, #20 and #53, appear in Table 7-2. Liberal Idealism scores both of them a 0, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Liberal Idealists have much stronger opinions on issues that are core to them before getting concerned over these others. Within their respective factor arrays, there are no statements at all with which one discourse strongly agrees (i.e., +3 or higher) and the other strongly disagrees (-3 or lower). First the visual and now the statement-level relationships between these two boundary viewpoints make clear that a classical conception of a linear spectrum of ideological opinions—'left' vs. 'right'—is an inaccurate way of summarizing the political discourse of the emerging middle class. Empirically, the discourse space does not contain the ideological antagonism that such a conception implies.

A somewhat sharper contrast emerges when comparing statement scores from the Critical Realist narrative with the two boundary discourses. Compared to Liberal Idealism (Table 7-3), Critical Realism is less equivocal about its opposition to the role of abstract ideals in politics and, considering statements which Critical Realism scores higher (Table 7-4), clearly takes a more cynical stance toward people's improvability and the usefulness of their participation in politics.

Table 7-3 Divergent statements, Liberal Idealism > Critical Realism

No.	Statement (short form)	Liberal Idealism	Critical Realism	>>
25	The only truly free are those who elect their leaders.	4	-5	9
7	The government's role in the economy should be as small as possible.	3	-4	7
23	Civilization, democracy, freedom are universal values that we should share in.	5	-1	6
29	We need to integrate deeper with the global economy.	3	-3	6
37	Power corrupts, so a good political system gives citizens supervision over it.	5	-1	6
33	One of society's very important tasks is to make our natural equality concrete.	4	-1	5
13	Right and wrong aren't relative; they are timeless truths.	2	-2	4
41	Labour is the source of happiness.	-1	-5	4
63	Religious values should play a larger role in politics.	1	-3	4
1	Legal system should be independent.	5	2	3

Table 7-4 Divergent statements, Critical Realism > Liberal Idealism

No.	Statement (short form)	Critical Realism	Liberal Idealism	>>
14	We can't improve human nature. It's fixed by history and society.	5	-1	6
65	One-child policy is an appropriate use of government power.	3	-3	6
9	A strong, unified political power is key to China's ability to lead a successful modernization.	2	-3	5
48	'Freedom' doesn't exist.	5	0	5
52	Party competition is not good for society.	2	-3	5
30	If a government is always under the people's supervision, it can't get big things done.	1	-3	4
42	The energy for reform must come from the leaders of the political system.	0	-4	4
50	People should give up freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, etc. for the common good.	-1	-5	4
59	Since most people have the same wants and needs, it makes sense for a single party to lead them.	-1	-5	4
62	If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be disorderly.	0	-4	4

Similar points of difference divide Critical Realism and Social Welfarism at the statement level.

Critical Realists react cynically to the latter's faith in the basic goodness of human nature and in the value it ascribes to grand political aims like national unity (Table 7-5). For its part, Social Welfarism can swallow neither Critical Realism's cynical belief in humanity's basic corruption, nor its rejection of abstract political aims like freedom and political participation (Table 7-6).

Table 7-5 Divergent statements, Social Welfarism > Critical Realism

No.	Statement (short form)	Social Welfarism	Critical Realism	>>
40	Human nature is naturally good.	4	-2	6
20	China must remain united.	5	0	5
27	A citizen should obey their government, even when it does wrong.	0	-5	5
29	We need to integrate deeper with the global economy.	2	-3	5
6	To be a complete person I need to participate in political life.	1	-3	4
41	Labour is the source of happiness.	-1	-5	4
33	One of society's very important tasks is to make our natural equality concrete.	3	-1	4
23	Civilization, democracy, freedom are universal values that we should share in.	3	-1	4
37	Power corrupts, so a good political system gives citizens supervision over it.	3	-1	4
15	Public education should focus on teaching children to respect tradition and order of things.	3	0	3

Table 7-6 Divergent statements, Critical Realism > Social Welfarism

No.	Statement (short form)	Critical Realism	Social Welfarism	>>
14	We can't improve human nature. It's fixed by history and society.	5	-3	8
48	'Freedom' doesn't exist.	5	0	5
21	We don't need to pay attention to politics now.	0	-5	5
51	One world, one dream is the wrong idea.	3	-2	5
52	Party competition is not good for society.	2	-2	4
30	If a government is always under the people's supervision, it can't get big things done.	1	-3	4
42	The energy for reform must come from the leaders of the political system.	0	-4	4
64	We shouldn't try to fix things. If we let things take their natural course, everything will turn out fine.	2	-2	4
19	I don't have any responsibility to 'society'—that's too abstract.	-1	-5	4
26	It's more important to change ourselves than change government.	3	0	3

The distinct discourse space occupied by Authoritarian Reform also admits to sharper definition at the statement level. Authoritarian Reform diverges sharply from Liberal Idealism's core notions of legal independence, democratic freedom, and the priority of expressing individuality over harmonizing with the group (Table 7-7). From the other side, Liberal Idealists firmly reject Authoritarian Reform's core commitments to top-down political change and a unitary system for society, and to the priority of obedience over following one's own moral intuitions (Table 7-8).

Table 7-7 Divergent statements, Liberal Idealism > Authoritarian Reform

No.	Statement (short form)	Liberal Idealism	Auth. Reform	>>
1	Legal system should be independent.	5	-3	8
25	The only truly free are those who elect their leaders.	4	-3	7
63	Religious values should play a larger role in politics.	1	-5	6
45	A main goal of society is to enable each person to pursue his or her own dreams and ideals.	4	-2	6
51	One world, one dream is the wrong idea.	4	-1	5
10	A small group of intellectuals can change the world.	3	-2	5
11	The more government tries to help people, the less people can help themselves.	1	-4	5
26	It's more important to change ourselves than change government.	0	-4	4
16	This is a man's world, and that's the main obstacle to freedom.	1	-3	4
46	We need to recover our spirit of criticizing society.	3	-1	4

Table 7-8 Divergent statements, Authoritarian Reform > Liberal Idealism

No.	Statement (short form)	Auth. Reform	Liberal Idealism	»
42	The energy for reform must come from the leaders of the political system.	5	-4	9
59	Since most people have the same wants and needs, it makes sense for a single party to lead them.	1	-5	6
27	A citizen should obey their government, even when it does wrong.	2	-4	6
62	If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be disorderly.	1	-4	5
32	If we leave economic problems to the private sector, they'll just get bigger.	4	-1	5
22	The outcome is more important than the process.	4	-1	5
20	China must remain united.	5	0	5
30	If a government is always under the people's supervision, it can't get big things done.	1	-3	4
50	People should give up freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, etc. for the common good.	-1	-5	4
44	Our country should follow it's own path, and not copy other countries.	4	0	4

Although Social Welfarists and Authoritarian Reformers share many views in common, there are important points of distinction.

The first bears some reflection. See Table 7-9. Social Welfarism is open to the notion of illiberal government actions taken in the name of the greater good, such as the one-child policy. Consistent with the overall picture of the discourse space painted thus far would be for Authoritarian Reform to agree even more strongly; instead it opposes the rationale behind the one-child policy as firmly as Liberal Idealism does. This result is an important reminder that

the participants in this study are not political theorists. Likely, they do not approach the task of sorting through the ideological statements presented to them from a well thought-out ideological stance. Internal inconsistencies, such as this, are to be expected, especially in the case of a minority factor whose narrative is based on only two respondents.

The remainder of statement score divergences are as expected. Whereas Social Welfarism shares Liberal Idealism's notion that legal independence would be a good thing, Authoritarian Reform is clearly opposed (Table 7-9), and even clearer in its contrasting belief that government, not the public, must drive substantial change (Table 7-10). This latter view is the 'reformist' core of the Authoritarian Reform agenda, and both of the main discourses treat it with deep skepticism.

Table 7-9 Divergent statements, Social Welfarism > Authoritarian Reform

No.	Statement (short form)	Social Welfarism	Auth. Reform	»
65	One-child policy is an appropriate use of government power.	2	-4	6
1	Legal system should be independent.	2	-3	5
47	We need to be calm and not cause trouble.	3	-1	4
26	It's more important to change ourselves than change government.	0	-4	4
61	If a policy benefits the majority, even if it hurts a minority, I should support it.	2	-1	3
31	The consumer economy is eroding our values and making us slaves to money.	3	0	3
3	To modernize, China needs to recover classical ideas like <i>ren</i> .	4	1	3
48	'Freedom' doesn't exist.	0	-3	3
8	All systems of gov't suffer from corruption, because corruption arises from human nature.	2	-1	3
45	A main goal of society is to enable each person to pursue their own dreams and ideals.	1	-2	3

Table 7-10 Divergent statements, Authoritarian Reform > Social Welfarism

No.	Statement (short form)	Auth. Reform	Social Welfarism	»
42	The energy for reform must come from the leaders of the political system.	5	-4	9
19	I don't have any responsibility to 'society'—that's too abstract.	0	-5	5
22	The outcome is more important than the process.	4	0	4
30	If a government is always under the people's supervision, it can't get big things done.	1	-3	4
49	It's unfair to tax the rich heavily to help the poor.	0	-4	4
62	If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be disorderly.	1	-2	3
41	Labour is the source of happiness.	2	-1	3
28	The best way for society to make good long-term decisions is to involve citizens in them.	3	0	3
27	A citizen should obey their government, even when it does wrong.	2	0	2
32	If we leave economic problems to the private sector, they'll just get bigger.	4	2	2

7.4 Understanding the discourse space at the statement level

7.4.1 Divergent statements

The factor narratives identified above help to summarize the patterns, divisions and conflicts that arose when study participants were presented with a sample range of ideological statements that had been generated or advocated among ideological professionals.

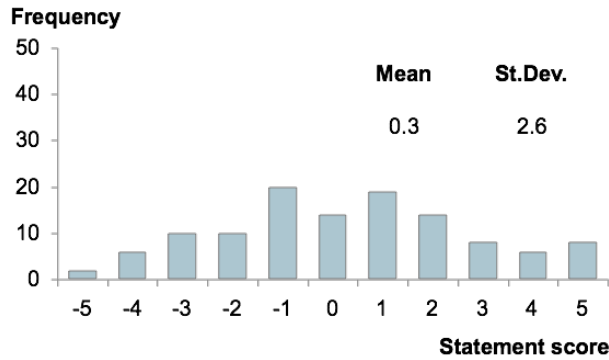
The relevance and usefulness of these narratives as summation devices can be verified by looking at the full dataset of 65 statements and the individual scores assigned to each statement by each of the 117 study participants. The ten most divergent statements across the full dataset, measured by the standard deviation of their scores, are shown in Table 7-11 and Figure 7-5. A now-familiar set of themes emerges. Do political values and ideals matter (#20, #39, #48)? Where should such values and ideals come from? Religion (#63)? Universal norms (#18)? Is human nature basically good (#40) or corrupt (#8)? How important is the leadership of the Party (#5) versus individuals (#10), and how much power should the state have in its role as custodian of the common good (#65)? The discourses that have been identified and narrated above revolve around these divergent statements.

Table 7-11 Most divergent statements across the full study dataset

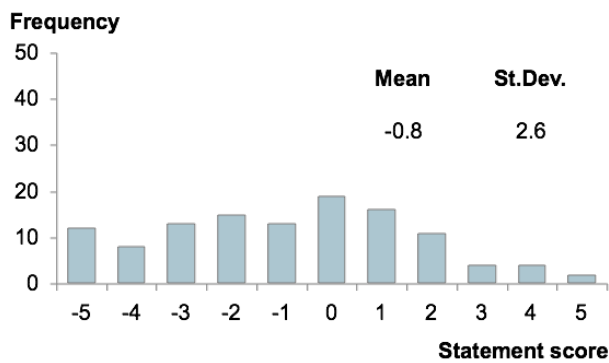
No.	Statement (short form)	Max	Min	Mean	St.Dev.
63	Religious values should play a bigger role in politics.	5	-5	-0.7	2.7
48	There is no such thing as 'freedom'. It is just some people's illusion.	5	-5	-0.8	2.6
8	Large-scale corruption problems exist in all political systems. This isn't a problem with the systems; it's human nature.	5	-5	0.3	2.6
39	In today's world, only strong countries are truly free.	5	-5	0.5	2.6
10	A small group of intellectuals can change the fate of the country; ideas can change the world.	5	-5	-0.9	2.5
20	China must remain united.	5	-5	2.1	2.5
5	Without the Party, China would not be able to stand up.	5	-5	-1.7	2.5
65	It is appropriate for government to limit the number of children I may have.	4	-5	-1.3	2.5
40	People's intrinsic nature is good.	5	-5	1.2	2.5
18	Setting aside some differences in lifestyle habits, the basic values of Chinese people and foreigners are approximately the same.	5	-5	-0.2	2.4

Figure 7-5 Most divergent statements: distribution of scores

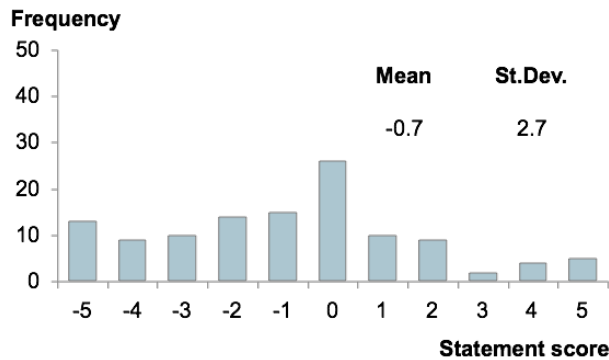
#63. Religious values should play a bigger role in politics.



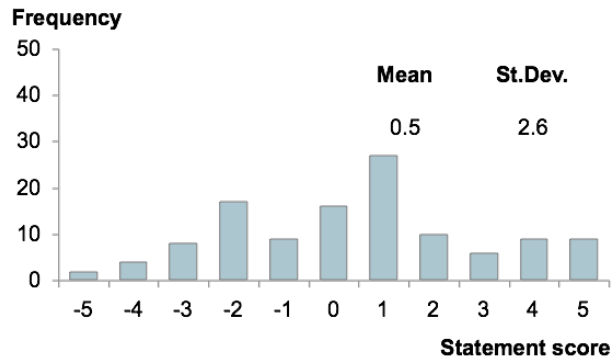
#48. There is no such thing as 'freedom'. It is just some people's illusion.



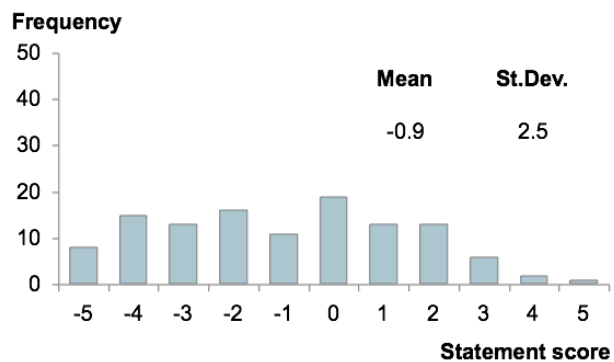
#8. Large-scale corruption problems exist in all political systems. This isn't a problem with the systems; it's human nature.



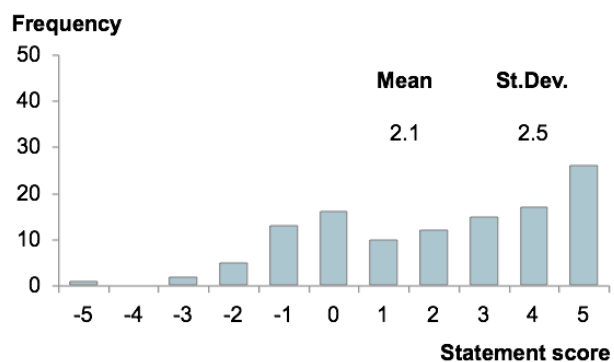
#39. In today's world, only strong countries are truly free.



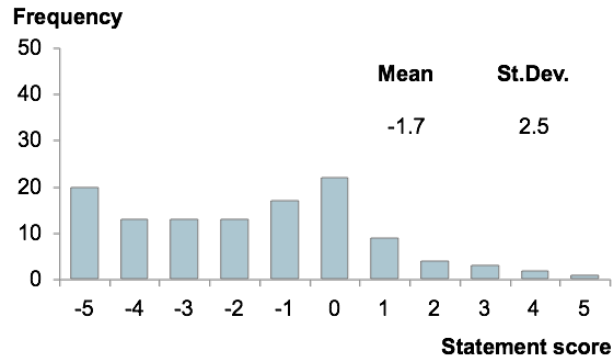
#10. A small group of intellectuals can change the fate of the country; ideas can change the world.



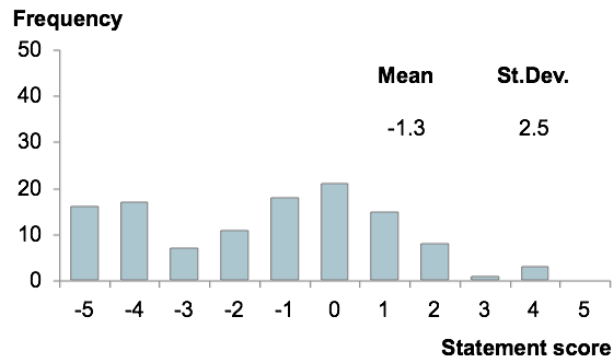
#20. China must remain united.



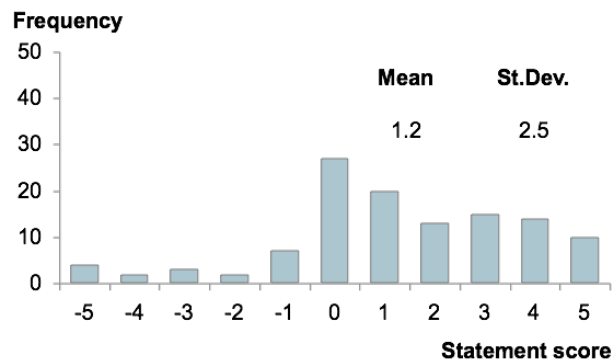
#5. If there were no more Communist Party, China would not be able to stand up.



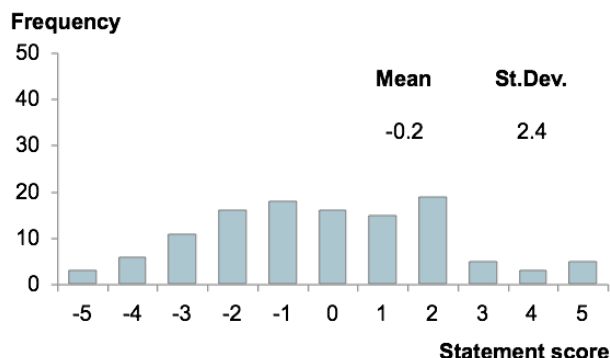
#65. It is appropriate for government to limit the number of children I may have.



#40. People's intrinsic nature is good.



#18. Setting aside some differences in lifestyle habits, the basic values of Chinese people and foreigners are approximately the same.



7.4.2 Convergent statements and shared ideological background

The above factor narratives, and how they stand in conceptual relationship to one another, also help to elucidate the background field of shared assumptions that permeates the research participants' responses.

This background field is specified by the points of consensus across the full dataset of statement scores. Table 7-12 and Figure 7-6 show the ten statements of strongest consensus, defined here as those statements with the lowest standard deviation across respondent scores. This view of the data highlights the common themes that cut across the different factor narratives.

There is a prevailing belief in the need for social change and a role for politics in bringing it about. The need to pay attention to politics (#21) and to better educate society so that people can become more critical and more engaged (#43) is widely recognized. A sense of direction regarding the change that's needed is also broadly shared: namely, toward an improved realization of ideals like civilization, democracy, and freedom (#23)—ideals that are seen as

important and as something superior to what exists presently (#55). Some of the content of these ideals is also common ground: recognition of one's membership in, and responsibilities toward, society (#19, #46); concrete realization of our natural equality as persons (#33); and greater recognition of people's diverse wants and needs (#59). There is also a widely shared view that while humanity's nature and goals may be universal, China's path toward realizing them is distinctive and home-grown (#44). It has to emerge from China's own history, rather than by transplanting changes from abroad (#56).

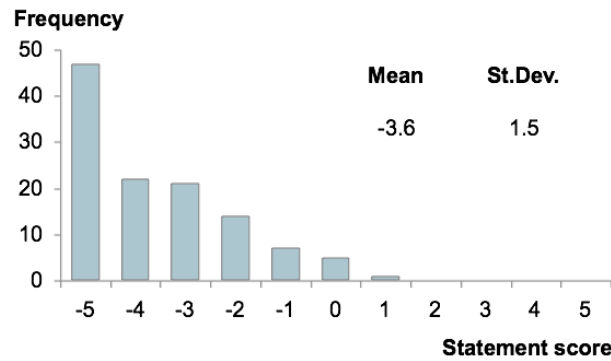
In this statement-by-statement view of conceptual consensus, #56 merits special mention. Presented with the challenging task of discerning their own agreement and disagreement with 65 wide-ranging assertions, the notion that 'Forgetting Chinese history would be a shortcut to building a modern society' repeatedly stood out to respondents. Fully 95% of all respondents disagreed with this statement; 45% in the strongest possible terms available (i.e., scored as -5). The research respondents' ideological opinions are informed by a remarkably strong consensus view that China's modernization must somehow grow out of China's history and culture, rather than depart from it. A central component to each of the social revolutionary projects that marked 20th century China going back to the May 4th Movement has seemingly been rejected and supplanted by a core concept of traditional conservative ideology: organic change.

Table 7-12 Most convergent statements across the full study dataset

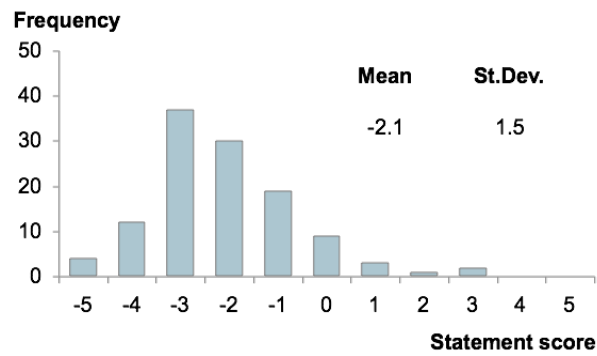
No.	Statement (short form)	Max	Min	Mean	St.Dev.
56	Forgetting history is a shortcut to modernizing.	1	-5	-3.6	1.5
55	People already feel free. Idealized freedom isn't important.	3	-5	-2.1	1.5
21	We don't need to pay attention to politics now.	4	-5	-2.7	1.6
43	To raise the level of social leadership we need to raise the education of the citizenry.	5	-3	3.2	1.6
23	Civilization, democracy, freedom are universal values that we should share in.	5	-3	2.5	1.7
19	I don't have any responsibility to 'society'—that's too abstract.	3	-5	-2.5	1.7
33	One of society's very important tasks is to make our natural equality concrete.	5	-5	2.7	1.7
44	Our country should follow its own path, and not copy other countries.	5	-3	2.0	1.7
46	We need to recover our spirit of criticizing society.	5	-5	2.0	1.7
59	Since most people have the same wants and needs, it makes sense for a single party to lead them.	3	-5	-1.8	1.8

Figure 7-6 Most convergent statements: distribution of scores

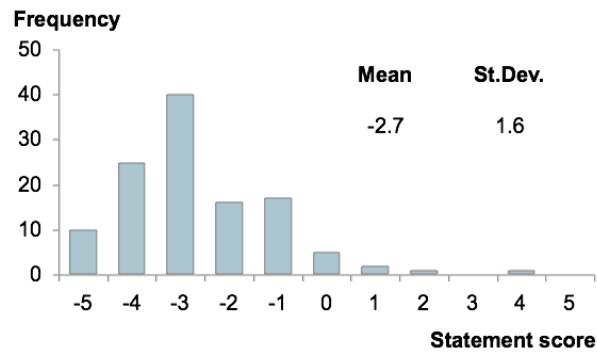
#56. Forgetting history is a shortcut to modernizing.



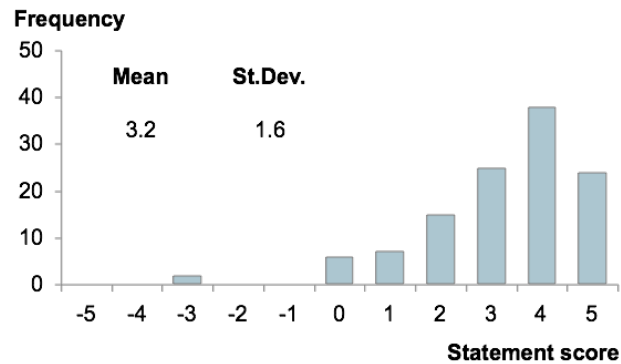
#55. People already feel free. Idealized freedom isn't important.



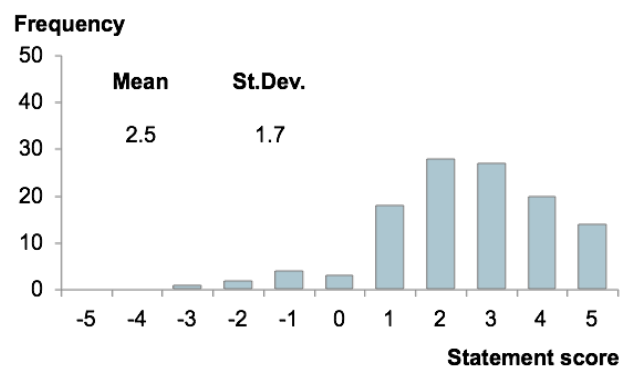
#21. We don't need to pay attention to politics now.



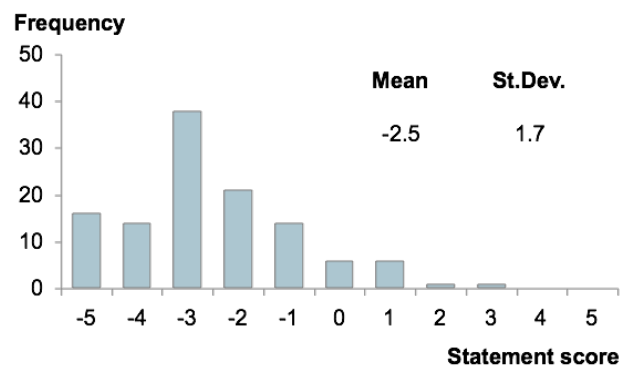
#43. To raise the level of social leadership we need to raise the education of the citizenry.



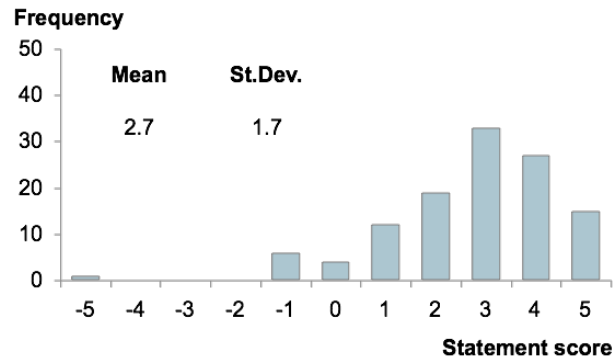
#23. Civilization, democracy, freedom are universal values that we should share in.



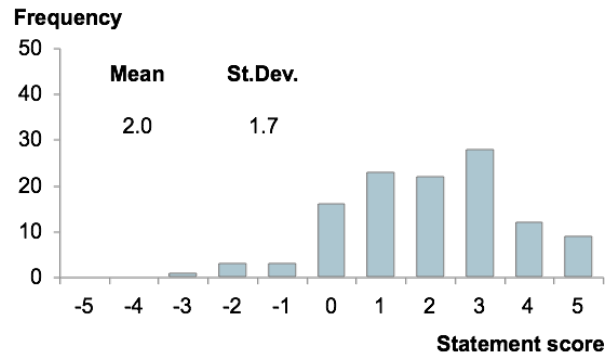
#19. I don't have any responsibility to 'society'—that's too abstract.



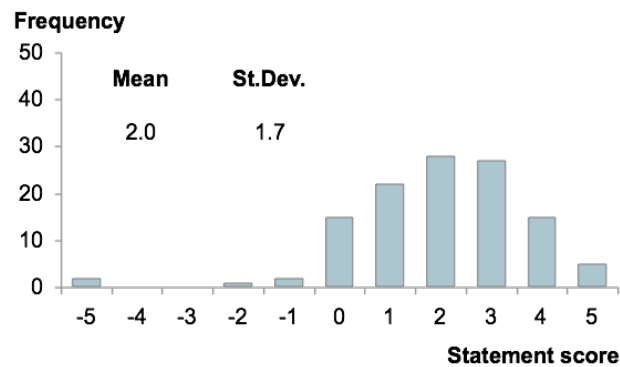
#33. One of society's very important tasks is to make our natural equality concrete.



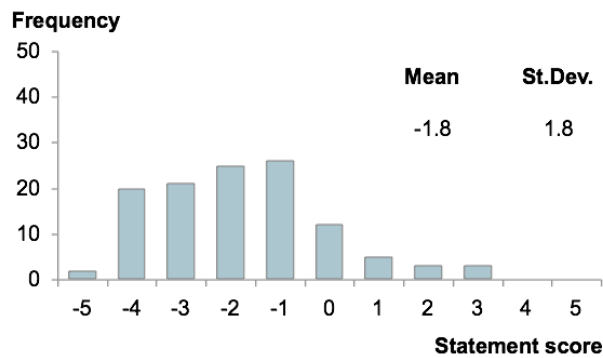
#44. Our country should follow it's own path, and not copy other countries.



#46. We need to recover our spirit of criticizing society.



#59. Since most people have the same wants and needs, it makes sense for a single party to lead them.



7.5 Contributions to recent literature on Chinese ideological diversity

The above typology advances our understanding of the ideological diversity of China's emerging middle class considerably. A recent study by Lin Fen, Sun Yanfei et al. (2015) into how Chinese students are ideologically divided asked nearly 3,000 students across six elite mainland universities to self-identify their political value orientation as either Liberal (自由主义者), New Leftist (左派), Nationalist (民族主义者), other or none. That study highlights the unique contribution of the present approach, which rather than impose a theorized ideological spectrum upon respondents, leaves them free to establish the range and shape of the spectrum via their response patterns. While Lin, Sun et al.'s theorized framework of Liberal versus New Left does correctly predict the basic dynamic within emerging middle class discourse between Liberal Idealism and Social Welfarism, it generates no new insight into what respondents perceive the ideological commitments implied by their self-identification to be, or into the (orthogonal) relationship between the two discourses. Moreover, their framework is oblivious to the minority discourses, Authoritarian Reformism and Critical Realism, which open a second dimension to the discourse space. Their study does recognize a significant proportion of students who declare themselves to be apolitical, a preference with which Critical Realism surely identifies, however as the above analysis reveals even the self-declared apolitical harbour political value preferences. Again, as Arendt observed, the choice to withdraw from the mainstream political discourse is itself a political one—particularly in the Chinese context, where it can be an exercise of liberty in rejection of a totalitarian past where such withdrawal was not an option. The present study helps to elucidate the political value preferences bundled within a dismissal of mainstream discourse.

A second recent study by Jennifer Pan and Xu Yiqing (2015) has some design similarities with my own, however due to data-gathering and -handling differences, it duplicates the shortcomings of Lin, Sun et al. Pan and Xu analyzed over 170,000 responses between August 2007 and March 2015 to a 50-statement web-based survey hosted by the Chinese Political Compass (中国政治坐标系). The statements were selected to cover political, economic and cultural dimensions of political value choice. How the 50 statements were selected is not recorded, and may have been more ad hoc than the distillation of ideological discourses undertaken here. Important core conceptions of each ideology I identified—including, importantly, the Party's ideal-based claims to legitimacy, and Liberal vs. New Left notions about the nature of humanity and society—appear to be missing from the 50-statement set. Alternative perspectives derived from pilot interviews, notably the choice not to take an interest in political questions, are also absent.

The Compass data is also structured differently. Whereas in the Q-sorting exercise research participants explicitly ranked their agreement and disagreement within the full set of statements, in the Compass survey each statement is presented independently. Formally, therefore, it cannot be known whether a respondent's 'strong agreement' to statement X is equal to, less or more than 'strong agreement' with statement Y. The respondent's reference frames for evaluating each may be different. In the Q study, the relationships among the statements are known, and therefore may be analyzed in depth.

Pan and Xu likewise select Principal Components Analysis as the most appropriate statistical method for extracting underlying factors. Their preliminary PCA results are confirmatory of my own. Their Scree test produces a similar plot, revealing sharply diminished explanatory

power after the first, dominant factor. Where their data analysis varies, and in my view errs, is in their retention of a single component for interpretation. Mathematically, the first component extracted via PCA is always the largest, and is frequently dominant. It falls to the researcher to interpret whether preserving that mathematical artefact or rotating the solution in multi-factor space offers the better interpretative lens. In my dataset, the latter was clearly the case, as explored at §6.3. This consideration appears absent from Pan and Xu. Further, by labelling the first component they extracted ‘ideology’ (p.18), they obscure the fact that all subsequent components are also ‘ideological’, in that they likewise represent patterns of political discourse. Discursive data is the only input into the PCA model; discursive relationships are the only output.

Their study confirmed their ingoing Left/Right, liberal/conservative theoretical frame. ‘[I]deology in China today is strongly uni-dimensional. Political conservatism goes hand in hand with economic and social conservatism, while political liberalism is linked to economic and social liberalism’ (p. 31). While this finding does approximate, in simplified terms, the Liberal Idealist and Social Welfarist boundaries to the discourse space identified in the present research, their study once again fails to discover domestic nuances in how the respondents themselves make sense of ideological diversity, to elucidate the relationship among the boundaries and to give voice to the minority discourses that do *not* lie neatly between them.

Without probing more deeply into respondents’ understanding of the political belief commitments or trade-offs they believe they are making when they declare their labels, inquiries into ideological diversity offer a very thin foundation upon which to hypothesize its implications: for regime legitimacy, for the prospects of an emerging middle class coming

together under a common set of political ideas, or for their likely agitation against or support of different reform agendas. By advancing our understanding into their subjective frames, however, my study helps to explore these questions.

7.6 Implications of the discourse space for regime legitimacy

An Official Ideology is articulated and promoted to enhance the legitimacy of a political regime as judged by the people it governs (Bondes and Heep 2013). This study has tested its success in that function in the Chinese case by surveying the diversity of ideological discourses among the population and evaluating the correspondence between Official Ideology and popular sense-making of political value statements. Diversity has been the chosen variable to study, for two reasons: first, because one of the core legitimizing claims within Official Ideology is that the people's fundamental values are united, not fragmented or contesting, and a single Party may therefore represent them; second, because existing theories of regime support tend to treat the Chinese public as a black box that responds uniformly to state legitimization efforts, and challenging that assumption may lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the Party-state's legitimacy gains, losses and trade-offs across ideological constituencies.

7.6.1 The Party's efforts to shape middle class political discourse through its ideological work have borne mixed results

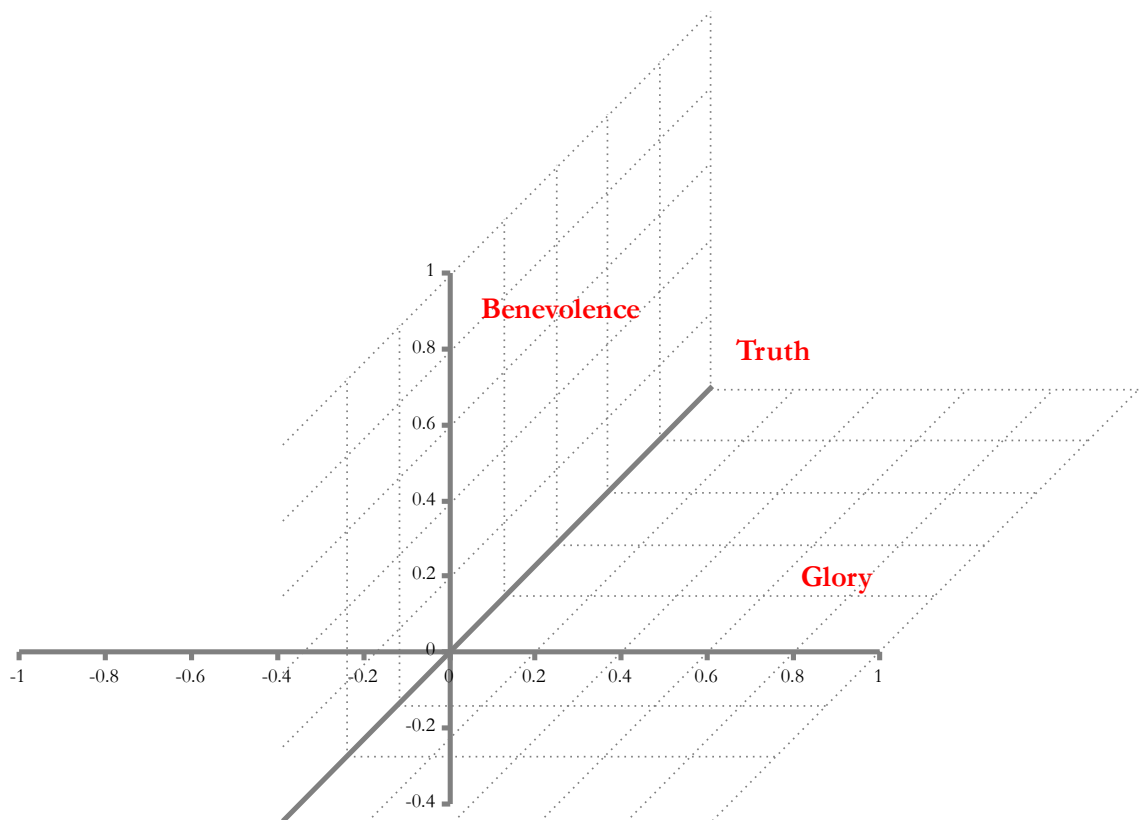
If legitimacy depends in part, as outlined at §2.1.2, upon the beliefs of power's subordinates, then it follows that each of the above discourses evaluates the question of regime legitimacy somewhat differently, according to the distinct political value preferences it contains.

Shue (2004, p. 79) identified three first-order philosophical principles ('values and virtues regarded as self-evidently good'), rooted in Chinese history and political tradition, upon which the Party-state rests its legitimacy claims: Glory, Truth and Benevolence. She argued that simple functionalist analyses of legitimacy, for example that official nationalism has substituted for the now-dead Maoist and Marxist faith to hold the population in thrall, 'grossly misread

the complexity of the lived world of belief most human beings encounter. Such approaches to questions of legitimacy downplay human agency and creativity and ignore the multiplicity of the worlds of value we all inhabit' (p. 81).

My map of the discourse space reinforces the fact of this multiplicity within the emerging middle class. My analysis of each discourse within the space further suggests that, yes, the three principle-based legitimacy claims Shue identified do appeal to the emerging middle class, but the mix or strength of their appeal may vary with their ideological affinities. See Figure 7-7.

Figure 7-7 Illustrative mapping of legitimacy claims into the discourse space



7.6.1.1 *The reach of the Party-state into middle class political discourses*

The Party-state associates itself with the virtue of Glory through its nation-building, through China's rising international prestige and growing economic importance in the world, through military, technological, social and engineering achievements, and the promotion of Chinese culture. These efforts match up especially well with Social Welfarism's preferences for a strong (#39: +1), united (#20: +5) China of big, activist government (#32: +2) that defends China's own way of life rather than copying others (#44: +4). Glory also speaks to Authoritarian Reformism, but within this discourse more glorious than China's hard achievements is China's progress toward the Party-state's ideological vision of socialism. For Authoritarian Reformers, the legitimacy of the present regime is most deeply anchored in the Party's fidelity to its historic mission (#22: +4, #27: +2).

Liberal Idealists' support for the present regime has a very different foundation. The present political configuration, with its concentration of power and emphasis on social unity over individual expression, contradicts Liberal Idealism's preferences for limited government (#37: +5) and citizen empowerment (#25: +4, #50: -5). But the Party-state's Benevolence-based appeal does speak to this discourse. Shue describes present-day benevolence not as direct state handouts but as 'the maintenance of the conditions in which the economy does develop and the people do enjoy more prosperity' (p. 65). Liberal Idealism appreciates state policies that contribute to economic and lifestyle improvement and the expansion of individual choice and agency (#7: +3). Maintaining these benefits depends upon the stability of the present social order; hence, the discourse's reluctance to push for a reconfiguration of government, the legal system or other institutions of power (#47: 0). 'The very experience of domination most often marries objection with acceptance. It is bivalent, and so people are ambivalent' (p. 82). (On

this point, it is possible to draw a clear distinction between the Liberal Idealist discourse found in this study and the tradition of liberal ideology that J.S. Mill would recognize. The latter sees social stresses and ethical conflicts, particularly over conceptions of the good life, as desirable, because they are evidence that society is generating new ideas about how things ought to be (Waldron 2013). That generative activity, in turn, promotes ‘the permanent interests of man as a progressive being’ (Mill 2011, para. 11). For the classical Liberal, passionate social conflict stimulates progress; stability is tantamount to stagnation. Liberal Idealism is placated by China’s expanding zone of personal choice.)

The value preferences of both minority discourses suggest they are more responsive to Truth than either of the boundary discourses. For Authoritarian Reformers these truths are ideological, as revealed by Marxism and interpreted by the Party. For Critical Realism the Truth is scientific rationalism. ‘Seek truth from facts’ (Deng Xiaoping). Legitimacy is contingent upon effectiveness (#8: +4, #27: -5). Critical Realism respects the Party-state for its active role in the economy (#7: -4), for its willingness to buck international trends (#29: -3), for its efforts to save people from their own flawed nature (#12: +5, #31: +4), and for its resistance to foreign pressures that would have it make political reforms in the name of universal ideals (#23: -1).

In making these distinctions in how legitimation efforts fall upon middle class ears, we need to bear in mind two caveats. The first is that the discourses are correlated. Social Welfarism and Authoritarian Resilience are closely connected and share an affinity to the virtue of Glory. Both the boundary discourses share, to differing degrees, some affinity for Critical Realism and for Truth as scientific rationalism. The boundaries, in turn, do not stand at perfect right angles

to each other; they share some political values in common. Both Liberal Idealism (+2) and Social Welfarism (+4) agree that 'To govern a country with benevolence and righteousness is to govern justly and fairly' (#3). And all of the discourses share an ambivalence regarding the Confucian notion that a ruler's authority is legitimate if it is exercised ethically (#60: LI -1, SW 0, AR 0, CR 1). It is incorrect to draw one-to-one lines between the discourses and different bases of legitimation. The question is one of degrees of affinity.

The second caveat concerns correlations within individuals. Very few people associate purely with one discourse. In this study, the majority are 'confounded' Liberal Socialists who agree with much of both boundary discourses and may be ambivalent, undecided or settled in a middle ground between them. My argument is that in order to better understand the legitimacy of the Party-state, we need to become sensitive to the variations in how the public approaches the question. But my research also suggests we should stop short of trying to pigeonhole people or discourses into wholly separate constituencies on the basis of how they answer it.

That each discourse within the revealed space is spoken to by at least one of the first-order principles by which the Party-state seeks to legitimize its rule bodes well for the regime's reach into middle class discourses. Although a diversity of political discourses exists among the emerging middle class, the Party-state's legitimation work has ideological content that can span across it. Returning to the basic question of middle class definition, it seems that we *can* speak usefully of a Chinese 'middle class' as I have defined it. One prerequisite for a 'class' to exist as a politically relevant variable is class consciousness around a common agenda. My findings suggest that, despite the limits on public political discourse in China, a broadly recognizable consensus on some core political questions nonetheless connects the participants in this study

(see §7.4.2). Common ground includes support for citizen participation in government, ambivalence about the moral implications of the growing consumer economy, and strong agreement on the need to realize equality and integrate with the global economy, for example.

‘Absent voices’

The Party-state’s reach into middle class political discourse can also be construed from what research does *not* find—from the absence of discourses that expressly reject all the principles upon which the Party-state rests its legitimacy claims (Freudenburg and Alario 2007). The Party-state’s success in establishing boundaries of ideological discourse is evident in the ideological views that the set of Q statements permitted participants to voice but which none did.

Absent voices can be conjectured by reversing the statement values for the known discourses and interpreting these anti-results. A particularly troublesome voice, given the alignment of Social Welfarism with much of the Official Ideology core, would have been Anti-Social Welfarism. The result is a coherent ‘Atomistic Libertarianism’ that is largely deaf to the Party-state’s legitimization efforts. Recalling Shue’s identification of Glory, Benevolence and Truth as the Party’s triptych of legitimating virtues, the would-be disconnect is plain:

The Party’s efforts to Glorify China would be met by outright opposition to the project of national unity (20: -5) and to the notion of Chinese exceptionalism (44: -4). Modernization is best achieved by forgetting history, not glorifying it (56: +5), and if the process produces instability, so be it (47: -3).

Benevolence, demonstrated by the Party-state's stewardship over economic growth and expansion of welfare programs, would run up against beliefs that government assistance weakens people's ability to help themselves (11: +3), that taxing the 'haves' heavily to help the 'have-nots' is unfair (49: +4), and that protecting and advancing social equality is not a focus of government's concern (33: -3). Atomistic Libertarianism would dismiss as paternalistic calls to raise public education levels (43: -5) or correct social norms from the corrupting effects of the market (31: -3, 12: -4). If government wants to improve society, it needs to start its reform effort at the top (42: +4).

Finally, the Party's claims to be the custodians of Truth would be rejected on multiple grounds. Socialism, Atomistic Libertarianism would say, has fundamentally misconstrued social reality. 'Society' is too abstract a notion for people to owe it anything (19: +5). People do not need relationships and responsibilities to be whole individuals (53: -5). Even setting its philosophical misguidedness aside, the Party has no authority to declare social mores. Right and wrong are rooted in something beyond its authority to decide (13: +4), which is why religious values should play a larger role in politics (63: +4). If there is corruption in society, it begins at the top and filters down from there (17: +3).

Such a discourse, had it emerged in my study, would have posed questions as to the Party-state's capacity to constrain the political values and beliefs of the emerging middle class into a manageable range, and would have represented a significant challenge to the Party-state's legitimization efforts.

Within the discourse space that *has* been found, the Party-state can credibly claim to discern and represent fundamental shared interests of the emerging middle class. The lesson from the data is that there are no hard battle lines amongst them. The presence of an Atomistic Libertarian discourse would have stretched the Party's representation claim. It is doubtful whether the Party-state could credibly reflect Atomistic Libertarian values while still speaking to the discourses that were found. It is reasonable to speculate that any attempt to do so might undermine the Party-state's credibility across the emerging middle class by exposing it to more accusations of inconsistency and hypocrisy.

Were Atomistic Libertarianism to be found, it would likely be a target of Party-state suppression. Were it to spread, it would present the Party with a stark, publicly-felt choice of whom to represent and whom to reject. Such would pose a serious threat to the legitimacy of a one-party system. That the Party-state does not at present appear to face this discourse is counterfactual evidence in support of the efficacy of its ideological work and other legitimization efforts.



The Party-state's apparent success at shaping the identity and subjective political frames of the 'middle class' constitutes a strong factor in favour of the regime's legitimacy going forward. First, simply, because its membership may swell. A variety of structural problems may frustrate China's continued economic growth: an over-reliance on exports; serious environmental degradation; over-investment in assets, heavy industry, and infrastructure; regional lopsidedness; unsustainable increases in debt; and so forth. The heavy-handed corruption-busting displayed by the current leadership may be an earnest attempt to rein in corruption, but it is also likely an earnest attempt to break powerful interests that have captured political

and bureaucratic processes for their own rent-seeking use and made it difficult for the previous administration to rebalance the economy away from these structural ills. If the present Party-state administration proves successful at performing this rebalancing act, then the demographic that it has anointed ‘middle class’, the embodiment of the ‘Chinese dream’, will become much larger (Peerenboom 2014).

Second, because an ideologically moderate middle class seems unlikely to play the revolutionary role predicted by modernization theory. (I say more about this at §7.7.2) This finding is consistent with prior Q Methodology investigations into subjective political views of the Chinese public. Although Blecher (2008) targeted a different demographic (workers) in a different time (1990s) and place (Tianjin), my findings echo his results. The discourse he found to be most prevalent among his research participants, and labelled Market Socialism, shares much in common with the Social Welfarism I identified here. Both entail a commitment to some core socialist values while nonetheless expressing openness to market mechanisms and the political concepts that support them. My overall characterization of the discourse space is also consistent with his. ‘The three major worldviews of these Tianjin workers vary systematically, but they do so within a fairly narrow range. None of them appears to provide fertile ground for radical disaffection or protest’ (p. 260). Blecher goes on to argue that, given the supportive discourse environment, the present regime could tolerate significantly more opening up than was already the case at the time of the study. The failure to find ‘radical disaffection’ in my own study suggests that, nearly two decades on, this argument remains valid. I would, however, emphasize the Party-state’s role in creating that stability. The principal insight today is not that China can endure more opening up and still maintain a stable ideological environment; it is that alongside opening up, the Party-state, through its ideological

work, continues to successfully cultivate supportive political value orientations among studied segments of the population.

My findings on the middle class's political role are also consistent with Benabou (2008), whose theoretical framework of ideology formation and propagation I adopted in Chapter One.

Benabou theorized that in strong states with rich public-sector capital, official ideologies would be favoured by citizens because the cognitive dissonance of rejecting the status quo would be very strong. 'The larger the stock inherited from previous generations, the greater is citizens' incentive to believe that this is a productive asset that will deliver valuable benefits...subjective beliefs both shape social institutions and optimally adapt to them' (pp. 19-21).

Recent findings from the wider literature on Chinese middle class political attitudes also support my narrative. For example, Tomba (2014) has found that urban Chinese property owners are more likely to foster regime support than a state-confronting civil society. I discuss my contributions to this wider literature further at §7.7.

Although this study does not attempt to take a comparative look at ideological programming and middle class identities in other authoritarian settings, the Confounded discourse I identified at §7.2.3 is reminiscent of Alexei Yurchak's critique of modernization theories in the late-Soviet setting. Yurchak claimed that it was a mistake of many Soviet Union watchers to split the Soviet public into two groups: those in favour of and those opposed to the regime. Instead the middle ground, in which people nodded agreeably (or derisively) about the shortcomings of the regime and yet abstained from following their opinions through to a

logical conclusion (namely, active opposition) was a rational place to stand (Hansen 2013). People are capable of sensing such inconsistencies within their own lives, but choose not to resolve them because doing so leads to, at best impractical, and at worst dangerous, conclusions. Yurchak's thesis suggests that the Confounded viewpoint may *not* be an intermediate step between Social Welfarism and Liberal Idealist affinities. It may instead be a rational endpoint—a cognitive equilibrium between what people are prepared to think or speculate, and what they are prepared to do or accept.

7.6.1.2 *Limits to the Party-state's reach*

While the range of their political discourses is such that the Party-state can make its legitimization claims intelligible to them all, and while their viewpoints may converge on some ideological terrain, the emerging middle class harbours a not-insignificant diversity of political views. It is coherent for us to speak of the 'middle class', but that class does not speak with one voice. That diversity has relevance to many analyses, such as regime legitimacy, discussed above, and public roles and orientations toward reform, discussed below at §7.7.

Insofar as the goal of the Party-state's ideological work is to shape middle class political discourse to be fully supportive of the present regime, then the map of the discourse space reveals that it still has much work to do. While the discourses of the emerging middle class appear compatible with an *acceptance* of Party-state rule, they do not convey *devotion* to such rule, nor do they unanimously proclaim its *necessity*.

This is immediately evident from how the different factor narratives evaluate statements drawn from Official Ideology. The study's Q-set contained 14 such statements, and Table 7-13 sums the scores that each factor narrative gives to the Official Ideology subset.

Table 7-13 Affinity with Official Ideology, by Narrative

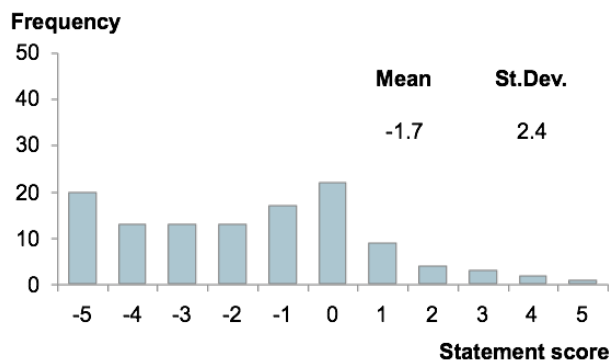
Factor Narrative	Sum of Scores for Official Ideology Statements
Liberal Idealism	-29
Liberal Socialism	-19
Social Welfarism	+10
Authoritarian Reformism	+7
Critical Realism	-7

As the table suggests, from the Party-state's point of view some potentially problematic beliefs are prevalent. See Figure 7-8, which shows the distribution of respondents' scores across a selection of Official Ideology statements. For those statements that most squarely invoke public order, respondents lean with the Party-state, in favour of stability (#47) and safeguarding national unity (#20). Beyond this core issue, however, research participants were skeptical of many Official assertions. They were split down the middle on the question of whether the corruption they observe is endemic to all political systems or whether theirs is especially afflicted (#8). And, more often than not, they disagreed that China needed the Communist Party specifically (#5), that the best thing for China right now was a single strong political authority to drive through the modernization process (#9), or that greater party competition would bring no benefits to society (#52). In summary, a majority of research

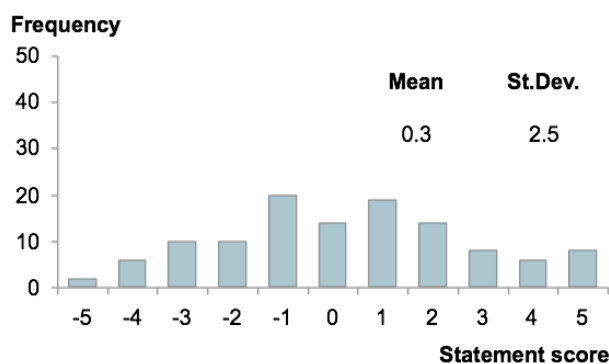
participants supported values of stability and national unity, but a majority also expressed skepticism toward the necessity of marrying those goals with the Party's leadership.

Figure 7-8 Statement-level analysis of respondents' affinity with Official Ideology

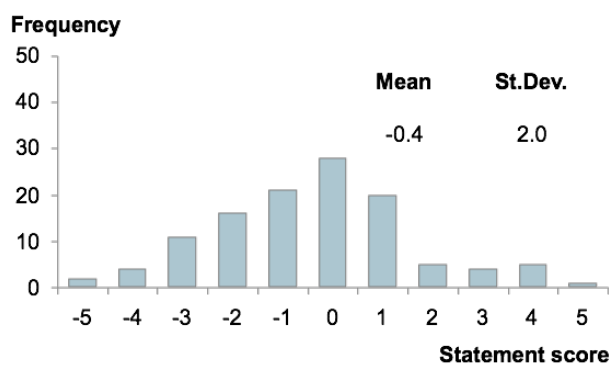
5. If there were no more Communist Party, China would not be able to stand up.



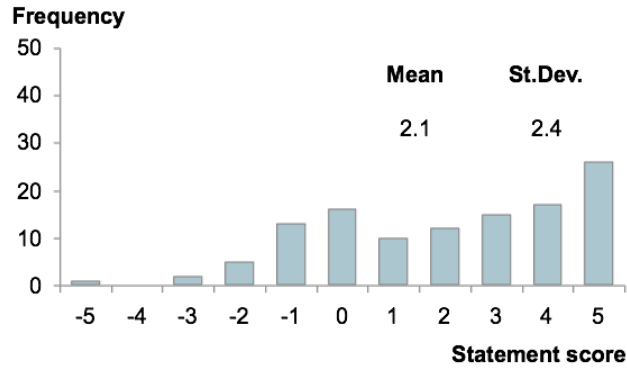
8. Large-scale corruption problems exist in all political systems. This isn't a problem with the systems; it's human nature.



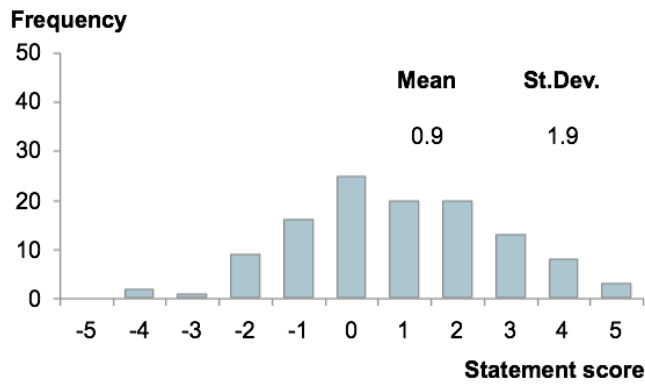
9. The best thing for China right now is a single, strong, united political force to lead the country and hold it together through the difficult modernization process.



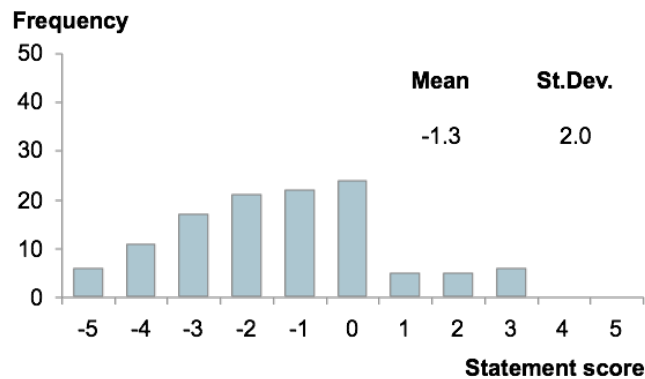
20. China must remain united.



47. For right now we need stability and should not cause any trouble.



52. Party competition brings no benefits to our society.



7.6.2 Corollary: The ‘pragmatism hypothesis’ is indeed inadequate

At §2.2.2, I argued that labels such as ‘moderate’ or ‘accepting’ for the emerging middle class were unsatisfying, since overt behaviours and allegiance may be a pragmatic front for a variety of subjective political views—consent, dissent, resignation, neutral disinterest, calculated patience and so on. To the extent that such variety is found, then ‘regime support’ and ‘regime legitimacy’ may constitute two very different evaluations from the perspective of the emerging middle class. Their overt support and rational self-interest may make them, as a class, ‘allies of the state’, but diverse beliefs regarding the proper use of state power may mean that not all class members consider themselves devotees. The ideological diversity discovered within the class implies that while some members may be relied upon to support the regime through ebbs and flows in its attentiveness to middle-class interests, not all allies may be so reliable. ‘The relations between ideological discourses and social interests are complex, variable ones’ (Eagleton 1991, p. 223). This study fully agrees.

The pragmatism hypothesis simplifies away subjective variations in the depth of middle class allegiance; it substitutes ideological variety, which this study has empirically shown to exist (in a bounded range) amidst the Beijing middle-class, with a uniform archetype. This moderate, conservative archetype may do a good job of explaining the overt political behaviors and responses of the middle class, but at the cost of desensitizing observers to: exquisite complexities within their political discourse; the potential for new and alternative behaviours to emerge from those complexities; and the complications and contradictions the Party-state must navigate in its efforts to shape public political beliefs, meanings and values.

Do these complexities matter? Within the theoretical conceptions of legitimacy and ideology invoked for this study, yes, very much. They matter in Beetham's conception of legitimacy, which I adopt at §2.1.2, and which highlights that only beliefs that are *shared* by both dominant and subordinate can serve as normative justification for the use of power. Popular legitimacy, in turn, matters greatly to the Party-state and bolstering it is a major impetus for the regime's ongoing ideological work and renewal (again, see §2.1.2).

But these complexities also help to explain observations from prior empirical investigations into regime support among the middle class that do not fit within the co-opted, ally-of-the-state story. Alvin So (2013) observes that, while passive or moderate modes of social action dominate the picture of the middle class *qua* class, at the individual level democratic value orientations tend to emerge. For individuals, membership in the new middle class associates positively with life- and social-satisfaction, but (strongly) negatively with authoritarian preferences (p. 182). This recent finding is highly significant, given that Chen and Dickson's original (2008) investigation into the Party-state's co-option of private entrepreneurs found that, while these 'capitalists' demonstrated strong support for the regime, multivariate analysis showed that respondents' subjective political values and orientations overwhelmed overt factors such as Party membership, membership in Party-sanctioned professional associations, and other forms of political embeddedness in the state in determining their level of regime support. More recently, Dickson (2014) has found that the rational, self-interested logic by which the middle class is believed to ally with the state has *upper* limits. A negative relationship between GDP per capita and support for the central state has emerged across China's provinces (and a curvilinear relationship has emerged vis à vis the local state). 'As levels of per capita GDP rise, popular support for central state institutions falls in a linear fashion and

support for local state institutions tapers off and then falls...This goes against the CCP's stated goals, and also against the conventional wisdom that the CCP's legitimacy is based on producing economic growth' (p. 63).

'The cause of these contrary findings will require further investigation' (p. 63), and, in the light of the present study, they lend weight to the notion that, just as the rationalism by which modernization theory presumes that people will increasingly prefer democracy at higher levels of income runs into limits and complexities in genuine cases, so too the rationalism by which archetypal middle class moderates are presumed to accept the status quo fails to describe fully real people who, especially at higher levels of income, may be motivated by a variety of value preferences that the Party-state is not well-positioned to satisfy. The present study shows that this archetype simplifies away significant differences in how members of the class think and believe. While such archetypes may be a useful shorthand for guessing at how a population segment may behave politically, we must always bear in mind that they are just that—a shorthand, a placeholder, until data is collected and analysis is performed that enables us to replace these simplified caricatures of real people with more complex models of political belief and behaviour.

The empirical data on regime support now emerging problematizes the view that the emerging middle class has been captured. That capture has limits. Their discourses admit other possibilities, and the Party-state will need to sustain its ideological and legitimation work in order to combat the appeal of those alternatives. To understand the limits of the Party-state's capture better and to develop more reliable expectations for future outcomes in China's political system, our theoretical models of the emerging middle class must incorporate a more

complex understanding of their subjective value preferences, of the dynamics and direction of change to those preferences, and of the varying degrees of devotion to, or distance from, Official Ideology that are obscured behind a common acceptance of Party-state rule. The present study constitutes progress toward each of these improvements.

7.7 Contributions to the literature on Chinese middle class political attitudes

Implications drawn from my study also nuance, and occasionally diverge, from present research regarding the political attitudes of the Chinese middle class.

7.7.1 Deliver vs. Demand, not Left vs. Right, is a more accurate summary of the middle class ideological spectrum

One of the earlier pieces of post-Reform & Opening foreign scholarship into China's ideological diversity, based on a 1990 survey of mainland adults, found the imagery of 'Left' and 'Right'—with updated implications—to be an accurate descriptor (Nathan and Shi 1996). Although my research has been both broader (by investigating political value preferences rather than specific policy preferences) and narrower (by focusing on the emerging middle class) than this earlier study, my findings have relevance to its conclusions. Nathan and Shi found Chinese society to be split into two broad constituencies: liberals (mainly urban, male, young, well-educated and white collar) and conservatives (rural, female, older, less-educated and blue collar). The former want government to tackle corruption, crime and bureaucratism, and to push political and economic reforms. The latter are mainly concerned with welfare issues, and are anxious about the impact that reforms may have upon jobs, incomes and housing. In the sense that contemporary foreign political discourse understands the term, both constituencies stand on the 'left'. Both want big government. But the former want government to fight against special privilege and inequality, while the latter want government to expand social welfare. The authors argued that the two constituencies hold opposing attitudes to reform. Liberals push political and economic change; conservatives want to slow it down. The broad conclusion they draw from this state of affairs is that the basic logics that shape ideological discourse exist everywhere, which is why it makes sense to summarize the Chinese ideological spectrum as 'left and right with Chinese characteristics'. '[T]he Chinese ideological

spectrum is distinctive in substance but universal in the dynamics that shape it...this finding supports theories of mass ideology' (p. 523).

While my findings may be interpreted to support that argument from the perspective of the public's subjective choice-making, the authors' recognition of a 'mass ideology' gives inadequate weight to the power of the state to collapse the boundaries of domestic discourse through its control of education, media, the legal system and other social institutions. Upon close examination, my research suggests, mass ideology is a theoretical possibility that does not obtain due to local differences in ideological production and exposure. My research also suggests that old labels obscure, rather than illuminate, the nuances with which the emerging middle class divides ideologically. Less confusing and more insightful than the quest for 'left and right with Chinese characteristics', or 'left and right with Indian characteristics', or 'Latin American characteristics', may be to do the empirical work to discover the present native shape of political discourse. My study has shown empirically that 'left and right' is inaccurate, at least with respect to the political value preferences of the emerging middle class, in that it implies a linear spectrum that cannot be found.

Our understanding of China's ideological spectrum would be better served by fresh language that is less burdened by empirical and normative connotations. My findings suggest that 'deliver' and 'demand' offer a more accurate summary of the subjective frames through which the emerging Chinese middle class views politics. Social Welfarists want the Party-state to *deliver* on its rhetoric of advancing human equality, dignity and other socialist values. Liberal Idealists *demand* that official discourse press further with changes to put more emphasis upon their own ideas of progress: rational (to their thinking) reforms to the political system to limit

power and corruption, in recognition of the limitations of socialist ideology, and more open space for individual value preferences to flourish.

7.7.2 ‘Democratic Orientation’ is a less insightful lens than ‘Reform Orientation’

‘Deliver’ and ‘demand’ also capture more accurately the boundary discourses’ orientations toward political reform.

An important question within the Anglo-American, teleological paradigm of politics research is whether China’s emerging middle class will catalyze liberal democratic reform as predicted by modernization theory (Shue 2013). Substantial research has been invested into this question (see §2.2.2), with mixed results. One recent study, referencing repeated findings from large attitudinal surveys that a majority of the Chinese public both (a) approve of democracy and (b) consider China to be one, attempts to discover what subjective conception of the word ‘democracy’ the Chinese public hold (Lu Jie and Shi Tianjian 2015). The authors conclude that the majority understand ‘democracy’ through the frame (or ‘guardianship discourse’) that the Party-state has set, as a paternalistic meritocracy characterized by the selection of ‘competent and virtuous politicians...who are willing to listen to people’s opinions, sincere in taking care of people’s interests, and capable of identifying the best policies for their society’ (p. 25). By deceiving the public to understand democracy in these terms, and by presenting the regime to the public as consistent with this definition, the Party-state is able to recruit latent public support for ‘democracy’ in service to its own legitimacy.

My research suggests two problems with this result that my own findings can help address.

The first is its explicitly normative tone. The authors contend that the Party-state is

perpetrating a deceit upon the Chinese populace. It is hijacking the term democracy and masking the true nature of its exploitative power and governance model within it.

If we relax the assumption that one ideological tradition ought to be privileged over another (a question I consider at §9.3.2), then it is not at all clear that this normative evaluation is helpful. In her study of urban Chinese consumer culture, Davis (2005, p. 697) noted that ‘the task of field research is to remain open to the multi-vocal speech of participants themselves...I give priority to the speech of the residents themselves and do not assume the predominance of either exploitation and deception or agency and empowerment...the consumer culture that individuals create through their personal commentary and social discourse cannot *a priori* be presumed to be illusory or exploitative’.

Davis is right: priority must be given to the speech of the people being studied. While liberal theorists may be disgruntled about the appropriation of the term ‘democracy’—which in the liberal context is intimately associated with a commitment to limited power—by political regimes characterized by their concentration of power, participants in my research conveyed no sense of alienation from the choices they made in their sorting task. They engaged in the task earnestly, investing one to two hours of time contemplating the statements before them and discerning their own disposition toward each. In the absence of some Archimedean point from which to objectively judge their choices, the results must be respected as valid, considered views.

The second problem is how political science operationalizes the term ‘democracy’ for survey purposes: in the case of Lu and Shi, as a five-item index assembled from the Asian Barometer

Survey (ABS II, Mainland China), comprising five statement-pairs probing attitudes toward how leadership is chosen (elections vs. concern for the people), how people's opinions should be made known (free speech vs. attentive government), how people's interests should be reflected in policy decisions (majority vote vs. responsive government), how interest plurality ought to be dealt with (open competition for power vs. attentive government), and how leadership is legitimized (elections vs. merit). As this approach rightly recognizes, 'democracy' is not one concept, but a bundle of concepts. Yet their bundle is incomplete. In addition to the five aspects referenced in the ABS II, in liberal thought 'democracy' also comprises at least five more: liberty (equating the ruler with the people), rationality, participatory self-development, education and equality (Freedman 1996). No thorough theoretical defence for their particular subset is given in Lu and Shi's work; it was, rather, a practical bundle determined by the available data. To the best of my knowledge, no study has yet been done which either (a) comprehensively maps and operationalizes the liberal concept-bundle that is 'democracy' and then surveys public affinities to its constituent parts or (b) comprehensively maps and operationalizes domestic Chinese notion(s) of democracy for the same purpose.

I make no attempt to map Chinese notions of democracy here. Lu and Shi's guardianship discourse seems to be a good starting point, albeit earlier studies suggest it to be broader, encompassing notions of fairness, responsiveness, egalitarianism and stability as well (Nathan and Shi 1996). As for comprehensively operationalizing the liberal notion, my work comes close, perhaps, although such was not the focus of this study. Positive statements advocating liberal aspects of democracy include: #10 (rationalism), #25 (liberty via electoral choice), #28 (process over outcome), #37 (responsible/limited power), #43 (popular education), #51 (individuality), and #57 (political equality). Other aspects could be expressed in the negative,

via disagreement with statements drawn from other ideological discourses, for example #27 (loyal obedience), #30 (popular oversight weakens government), #50 (stability at the cost of individual expression) or #52 (party competition is harmful).

However, in my study I avoided the term ‘democracy’ almost entirely. More insightful than testing for popular approval of the term itself or some subset of its contents is to unbundle those concepts and let the surveyed public recombine them into their own preference-agendas—agendas that may or may not align with the teleology of modernization theorists. The better question is not ‘Will China democratize?’ but ‘What is its path of change or reform?’ The derivative of that question is not ‘How is the public oriented toward democracy?’—the answer to which, as observed in §2.1.3 (Consistent-, Critical-, Superficial- and Non-Democrat), can leave more questions than answers—but ‘How is the public oriented toward reform?’ That question, which this study does inform, takes us closer to a normatively neutral understanding of the change agendas the public may or may not agitate toward or support.

My typology of the discourse space makes the range of reform agendas clear. As I suggest above, the dominant choice that the emerging middle class sees for itself vis à vis the Party-state is to press it to *deliver* on its promises or *demand* that it promise to reform further. *Deliver*, the Social Welfarist view, is the path of mostly organic change. Chinese society must draw upon Chinese history and ideals to discern the best pathway of improvement. Stability is key, and strong government is needed to solve economic problems and raise social welfare and education so that people produce fewer social problems. Corruption is an issue with the present political order, however, and to address corruption more citizen supervision over

power and more legal independence may be needed. *Demand* is the reform path for Liberal Idealists, which they believe to be objectively progressive. It is a pro-democratic path, in the liberal ideological sense: legal independence and competition for power are systemic changes needed to help curb corruption, and foreign ‘universal’ values of individuality, self-development and rationality are affirmed. However Liberal Idealists lack the conviction to act themselves. Their discourse is a petition, not a revolution. Extending this main typology to the minority discourses, Authoritarian Reformism advocates *Reconstruction*. ‘It’s not that we disagree with the Party’s leadership; it’s that we fear it is unstable’, explained one participant.¹ *Reconstruction* is the belief that progress is to be made by shoring up the role of the Party-state in the economic sphere and in promoting socialist values, and being unafraid to upset Party or social order if it means putting either on a more stable path. Process takes a back-seat to outcomes for the *Reconstruction* agenda. Critical Realists say *Deconstruct*. Recognize the emptiness within the esoteric normative debates that preoccupy these other agendas, and get grounded in the demystified practicalities of political life. That is the way forward. Different circumstances may call for a different order of things, but right now a strong hand is needed to guide China’s economic and social development, so accept the reality of Party-state leadership. The most urgent reform is self-improvement: to become better educated contributors to Chinese society, and to substitute slavish participation in the consumer economy with useful participation in one’s community.

Within this typology of reform orientations, liberal notions of democracy have a constituency and a possible future, but we are also left with some sense of the live alternatives. And once the term ‘democracy’ is demoted from the criterion to a characteristic, ‘deceit’ seems a

¹ Participant B35/M80★. See Appendix §11.2.

misplaced descriptor. Social Welfarists know they are getting more authoritarian leadership when they press an already strong state to deliver on its promises. Liberal Idealists know they are advocating a significantly reconfigured political reality when they demand more urgency be put upon reforming legal or leadership selection processes. The dispersion of agreement and disagreement over the unbundled conceptions they were presented with suggests that people are reasonably aware that Chinese democracy and liberal democracy are two very different things, and that they hold sincere preferences for one or the other as they understand them.

7.8 Summary of main findings

Shue (2004) argued that the Party-state derives its legitimacy not from its ‘technical capacity’ but rather from its ‘political capacity’ to create and maintain a stable political environment. Doing so involves fostering belief amongst the public, through a wide range of often subtle methods, that the Party-state is realizing their values and ideals on their behalf, for them.² The validity of such a claim is difficult to prove (Sandby-Thomas 2014), however my study shows how empirical evidence can be amassed to support it. The boundaries of ideological diversity amidst the emerging middle class—whose whole life has been lived during the Reform and Opening period—and the lack of belief configurations that put priority upon challenging the present regime, suggest that the Party-state has so far had some success at moulding a public political discourse space in which the core ideological conceptions and political ends it promulgates are the default lens for society as well. It further suggests that this discourse space might be sustainable so long as the Party-state continues to produce and disseminate its preferred set of authoritarian intuitions through the various state apparatuses it controls.

My study also limits the above claim. The stable environment of legitimacy which the Party-state maintains through its political capacity is not one of homogeneous belief, but rather of bounded difference. Interest in fundamental regime reforms, such as legal independence or direct elections, can be part of that stable environment so long as those who approve of such ideas defer to present leadership to know best when and how to experiment with them.

² See, for example:

Perry, Elizabeth J. (2002). “Emotion Work in the Chinese Revolution.” *Mobilization* 7(2): 111-128.

8 From Q to R: Dynamics and Drivers of Ideological Diversification

Up until here, the dataset has been analyzed with a view toward mapping the landscape of ideological discourses present among the research participants. Whereas traditional statistical techniques (or ‘R Methodology’ (Stephenson 1953)) involve finding correlations between variables (say, ‘income’ and ‘support for an independent legal system’) across a sample of subjects, the present study has found correlations between subjects (the research participants) across a sample of variables (the ideological statements). ‘Q Methodology’s generalizations refer to subjective structures, not demographics’ (Brown 2009). Put another way, whereas traditional statistical work on political attitudes seeks to survey people in order to place them into a predetermined typology, the goal of the present study has been to discover empirically what that typology ought to be.

Having now discovered the typology, an important further question is to understand why a person expresses closer affinity to some discourses than others, or what personal characteristics might predict their ideological affinities. The supplementary data collected on each research participant makes it possible to hypothesize answers to this question via traditional regression techniques. Step one is to calculate the correlation between each participant’s own statement scores and the representative factor array for each of the identified discourses. Step two is to regress these correlations (as dependent variables) on the demographic data (as independent variables) collected for each participant.

Formally, the results of such a regression analysis can be used to make statistically significant claims about how ideological affinities relate to personal characteristics *of the research participants*, but they cannot be used to make statistically significant claims with respect to broader populations, such as ‘the emerging Chinese middle class’. That is because the research

participants were selected according to the requirements of a Q Methodology study, and those requirements conflict with two preconditions for generalizing regression results.

First, the broader population was not sampled randomly. As described in Chapter Three, Q Methodology employs purposive sampling. The present study employed a chain-referral sampling technique. The sampling process began with theorized demographic drivers of ideological diversity, and referral pathways were purposefully explored or abandoned as required to saturate the sampling frame. To be generalizable to a broader population, regression analysis requires that the sampling method be independent of the theorized relationships.

Second, the sample size, the n , is below the generally accepted minimum size needed to draw generalizable conclusions from a regression, particularly from multivariate models that test, in this case, 12 independent variables. Q is a small-sample methodology, and not well-suited to large sample purposes.¹ The present study, with 117 participants, already qualifies as large by Q Methodology standards. Various methods exist to determine the bare minimum ‘representative sample’ size for a regression analysis, but one general rule of thumb is $n > 50 + 8m$, where m is the number of independent variables in the dataset (i.e., $n > 50 + 8(12)$, or $n > 146$) (Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007).

¹ A more efficient approach toward a large- n dataset of ideological affinities would be to design a parsimonious survey instrument that (a) uses the typology of discourses from the present Q Methodology study as its theoretical framework and (b) bases the survey questions on those statements that have here been found to produce the greatest divergence among the discourses. I sketch the outlines of such an instrument at §9.5.

Formal caveats aside, the survey responses that have been compiled for this study comprise a rich dataset of attitudes across a wide set of important political questions from a group of respondents of major interest to the study of Chinese politics. It is also a uniquely multi-layered dataset, comprising not only respondents' attitudes on a set of 65 discrete political statements, but also what trade-offs they prefer to make between them.

Although the total n of the response group and the total volume of demographic data collected from each participant was optimized to do Q rather than R methodology work, as a practical matter the same data can (in the absence of better data) be used to form strong working hypotheses, and to challenge existing hypotheses. While $n=117$ falls below the rule of thumb threshold for multivariate regression modelling with many independent variables, it is more than adequate for testing statistical significance in simple univariate models (Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007). Such tests are a good starting point for grounding hypotheses about how the broader population behaves. And while respondents were not randomly sampled, the chain-referral sampling method employed is similar to convenience-sampling techniques used in other studies of Chinese political attitudes for which either (a) the sensitivity of the questions asked precludes the cold-calling approach implied by random sampling or (b) the specificity of the questions asked surpasses the data available from the World Values Survey, Asia Barometer and other large public datasets.

While the survey-based dataset compiled for the present study cannot claim to be representative of the broader population, it is nonetheless true that several demographic characteristics and categories that present scholarship says may matter to ideological preference formation—income, international experience, Party membership, home region, and

others—are well-represented. Certainly, on the specific question raised by this study—namely, what demographic characteristics relate to, or may predict, affinity with the ideological discourses identified above—it is the best data available with which to begin providing the answer.

8.1 Hypothesizing relationships from simple linear regression

From the magnitude and sign (+/-) of the simple linear regression coefficients, I can make empirically-grounded hypotheses about the relationships that may exist between certain participant characteristics and their ideological affinities. Some of these are consistent with well-established expectations from the literature on Chinese political attitudes, others less so. For comparing my hypotheses with the literature I pay particular attention to the two recent empirical works on ideological diversity in China, by Lin Fen, Sun Yanfei et al. (2015) and Jennifer Pan and Xu Yiqing (2015), introduced above at §7.5.²

The theoretical range of values for both the coefficient and constant in all the proceeding regression analyses is from -1.00 to 1.00. A value of 1.00, perfect correlation, would indicate that participants with the identified characteristic(s) scored all 65 statements identically to a given narrative's factor array of scores; -1.00 would indicate that such participants scored all 65 statements exactly opposite to a given narrative. In Table 8-1 (see below), the coefficient describing the relationship between the characteristic of 'having studied or worked abroad' and Liberal Idealism, 0.115, indicates that the statement scores of a participant who has studied or worked abroad were found to correlate 11.5 basis points closer to the Liberal Idealist narrative than those of a respondent who had not.

² See:

Lin Fen, Sun Yanfei, et al. (2015). "How Are Chinese Students Ideologically Divided? A Survey of Chinese College Students' Political Self-Identification." *Pacific Affairs* **88**(1): 51-74.

Pan, Jennifer and Xu Yiqing (2015). "China's Ideological Spectrum." *Massachusetts Institute of Technology Political Science Department*. Research Paper No. 2015-6: 1-34.

Table 8-1 Simple linear OLS regression results

	Ideological Affinities (Dependent Variables)				
	F1' Liberal Idealism	F2' Social Welfarism	FC' Liberal Socialism	M1 Author. Reformism	M2 Critical Realism
Gender	0.015 (0.03)	0.027 (0.03)	0.005 (0.03)	0.001 (0.03)	0.003 (0.03)
<i>Constant</i>	0.473*** (0.03)	0.465*** (0.02)	0.624*** (0.02)	0.253*** (0.02)	0.230*** (0.02)
Age	0.009** 0.00	-0.001 0.00	0.003	-0.002 0.00	-0.001 0.00
<i>Constant</i>	0.215* (0.09)	0.504*** (0.07)	0.529*** (0.07)	0.306*** (0.07)	0.255*** (0.07)
Income (logged)	0.040** (0.01)	-0.018 (0.01)	0.024* (0.01)	-0.019 (0.01)	-0.004 (0.01)
<i>Constant</i>	0.029 (0.15)	0.696*** (0.12)	0.361** (0.12)	0.477*** (0.13)	0.287* (0.12)
Perceived class	-0.004 (0.01)	-0.012 (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)
<i>Constant</i>	0.505*** (0.06)	0.552*** (0.05)	0.645*** (0.05)	0.265*** (0.05)	0.238*** (0.05)
Non-Han Chinese?	-0.03 (0.07)	0.052 (0.05)	0.034 (0.06)	0.056 (0.06)	0.032 (0.05)
<i>Constant</i>	0.485*** (0.02)	0.479*** (0.01)	0.625*** (0.01)	0.250*** (0.01)	0.230*** (0.01)
Non-Party Member?	0.053 (0.03)	-0.028 (0.02)	0.027 (0.02)	-0.035 (0.03)	-0.009 (0.02)
<i>Constant</i>	0.445*** (0.03)	0.502*** (0.02)	0.608*** (0.02)	0.278*** (0.02)	0.238*** (0.02)

Ideological Affinities (Dependent Variables)					
	F1' Liberal Idealism	F2' Social Welfarism	FC' Liberal Socialism	M1 Author. Reformism	M2 Critical Realism
Ever studied/worked abroad?	0.115*** (0.03)	-0.014 (0.02)	0.052* (0.03)	-0.074** (0.03)	0.063* (0.02)
<i>Constant</i>	0.428*** (0.02)	0.489*** (0.02)	0.602*** (0.02)	0.289*** (0.02)	0.201*** (0.02)
Ever travelled abroad?	0.152*** (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.099*** (0.03)	-0.079** (0.03)	0.017 (0.03)
<i>Constant</i>	0.374*** (0.03)	0.497*** (0.02)	0.556*** (0.02)	0.310*** (0.02)	0.220*** (0.02)
Non-Beijing hukou?	-0.021 (0.03)	-0.072** (0.02)	-0.063* (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.007 (0.03)
<i>Constant</i>	0.494*** (0.03)	0.523*** (0.02)	0.662*** (0.02)	0.281*** (0.02)	0.228*** (0.02)
<u>Perceived home</u>					
vs. Beijing or Coastal China:					
- Dongbei	-0.172** (0.06)	-0.035 (0.05)	-0.100* (0.05)	0.073 (0.05)	0.028 (0.05)
- Xibei	0.033 (0.08)	0.074 (0.06)	0.076 (0.06)	0.034 (0.07)	0.051 (0.06)
- Zhongnan	-0.034 (0.04)	0.014 (0.03)	0.036 (0.03)	0.035 (0.03)	-0.049 (0.03)
- Xinan	0.05 (0.07)	-0.128** (0.05)	-0.025 (0.05)	-0.138** (0.05)	-0.009 (0.05)
<i>Constant</i>	0.497*** (0.02)	0.488*** (0.02)	0.626*** (0.02)	0.250*** (0.02)	0.237*** (0.02)

Ideological Affinities (Dependent Variables)					
	F1' Liberal Idealism	F2' Social Welfarism	FC' Liberal Socialism	M1 Author. Reformism	M2 Critical Realism
<u>Occupation</u>					
vs. Office worker:					
- Mgr/Professional	-0.004 (0.04)	0.019 (0.03)	0.006 (0.03)	0.045 (0.03)	0.023 (0.03)
- Entrepreneur	0.055 (0.06)	-0.008 (0.05)	0.035 (0.05)	-0.027 (0.05)	-0.033 (0.05)
- Student	-0.089 (0.13)	-0.063 (0.10)	-0.073 (0.10)	-0.004 (0.10)	-0.042 (0.10)
- Investor	-0.132** (0.05)	0.054 (0.04)	-0.093* (0.04)	0.090* (0.04)	0.025 (0.04)
- Other	0.056 (0.18)	-0.038 (0.14)	0.082 (0.14)	-0.084 (0.15)	0.068 (0.14)
<i>Constant</i>	0.504*** (0.03)	0.468*** (0.02)	0.638*** (0.02)	0.224*** (0.02)	0.222*** (0.02)
<u>Economic Sector</u>					
vs. Private Sector Firm:					
- Government or Party Department	-0.154*** (0.04)	0.036 (0.03)	-0.099** (0.03)	0.089* (0.04)	0.023 (0.03)
- SOE	0.019 (0.05)	-0.033 (0.04)	0.009 (0.04)	-0.024 (0.04)	0.054 (0.03)
- Work Unit	-0.084 (0.05)	-0.025 (0.04)	-0.070 (0.04)	0.028 (0.04)	0.057 (0.03)
- Non-Profit	-0.053 (0.09)	-0.103 (0.07)	-0.250 (0.14)	-0.031 (0.07)	-0.113 (0.06)
<i>Constant</i>	0.525*** (0.02)	0.490*** (0.02)	0.660*** (0.02)	0.241*** (0.02)	0.211*** (0.02)

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Gender. Gender appears to say very little about ideological affinity. No gender relationship is statistically significant at the p<0.05 level. The strongest relationship found is between women and Social Welfarism. Before controlling for any other variable, women correlate 2.7 basis

points more closely with Social Welfarist views than do men. These findings are broadly consistent with Pan and Xu, whose analysis of some 172,000 responses to an online survey of ideological preferences found the ideological orientation of women and men to be similar. However they appear contrary to other research results. Lin, Sun et al. find that male Chinese students are 3.3x more likely to self-identify as ‘Leftist’ than females, and 1.72x more likely to self-identify as ‘Liberal’. It may be that issue-specific or label-specific gender splits blur once they are situated within a broader ideological discourse.

Age. Age also appears to play a weak explanatory role. This is to be expected, since by research design the dataset comprises a rather homogeneous age group (mainly people between the ages of 20 and 40 in 2012). Within this ‘emerging’ age bracket, a significant positive relationship can be seen between age and affinity for the Liberal Idealist narrative: controlling for nothing else, each year in age relates to an additional 0.9 basis points of correlation with the Liberal Idealist view. This suggests a learning effect may operate on ideological preferences. Younger people have less life experience to problematize the ideological messaging they have received through state-controlled education curricula and media. The coefficients suggest that as they get older, their support for those narratives whose content is closer to formal Party-state messaging—Social Welfarism and Authoritarian Reformism—gradually declines, while their support for alternative viewpoints, Liberal Idealism, or the extent to which they find themselves confounded, rises. This finding again is consistent with Pan and Xu, who find a positive relationship between age and ‘liberalism’ between the ages of 14 and 40 (and a year-by-year transition from ‘liberal’ to ‘conservative’ views thereafter).

Income (logged). Every doubling of income is associated with a statistically significant increase in respondents' support for the Liberal Idealist narrative of 4.0 basis points. This is consistent with both comparison studies. Much of the Liberal Idealist core—support for an independent legal system, the importance of due process, and stronger recognition of individual preferences, for example—contains views with which a rational person may find greater affinity as their financial capacity to exercise choice increases and as their insecurities over being unable to support themselves diminish. A weaker but still significant relationship is found between logged income and the confounded Liberal Socialist view. The coefficient signs for the other narratives are consistent with the above logic but not found to be significant.

Subjective social class. No statistically significant relationships were found to ground a hypothesis about the relationship between one's sense of their own social class and their ideological preferences. This is not surprising since, as with age, the present study by design preferred participants who fell within a particular range of subjective class scores. As noted at §5.2.3, exactly two-thirds of respondents (78/117) ranked themselves as middle class according to the ten-point scale they were presented.

Ethnicity. Likewise, simple linear regression suggests no hypothesis for the relationship between ethnicity (in the simplified binary case of Han versus non-Han Chinese) and ideological preferences. A larger-*n* study with greater representation of diverse ethnic groups would be required to discover possible linkages.

Party membership. The present dataset does represent this variable well: 32% of participants (38/117) were Party members, versus 64% (75/117) non-members and 3% who did not say. I

found no significant relationships between Party membership and ideological affinity, although the signs of the coefficients are consistent with expectations based on the content of the narratives. Non-members appear more likely to espouse Liberal Idealist or confounded Liberal Socialist viewpoints; members appear more likely to align with Social Welfarism or Authoritarian Reform views. The membership variable has a near-zero impact on affinity to Critical Realism, consistent with the latter's nihilistic stance toward political participation generally. The absence of a statistically significant relationship is rather surprising: Lin, Sun et al find a strong relationship between self-identification as 'Leftist' and Party membership, for example. On the other hand, Harmel and Tan (2012) find no relationship between Party membership and support for one-Party rule or 'multipartyism' once other variables are taken into account. Together the above results lend support to the notion that for many, Party membership may be a pragmatic pathway rather than an ideological commitment (Dickson 2007). Robust relationships are more likely to be found when testing for lip-service responses than for personal political convictions.

Study, work and travel abroad. Research participants were surveyed as to whether or not they had ever (a) studied or worked abroad, and if so for how long, and (b) travelled abroad, and if so how many times. Preliminary analysis showed that the most significant changes across categories occurred in the simple binary transition from having never studied / worked / travelled abroad, to having done so at least once. Therefore, both the study/work and travel variables were recoded into this binary form.

Responses to these two questions and their simple linear regression coefficients are similar. (In the multiple regression analyses performed at §8.2 below, one or the other has to be dropped

from each model to avoid multicollinearity.) Large, significant positive relationships were found between work, study and travel abroad and affinity with the Liberal Idealist and Liberal Socialist narratives. This makes sense since many of their core notions, for example independence of the legal system, are inconsistent with the norms expounded by Official Ideology but prevalent in many other countries. It suggests that spending time traveling or living in another country where different norms prevail may impart some understanding and affinity for those norms upon the traveller or expatriate. He or she becomes socialized in a different ideological context. The signs of the coefficients across the different narratives are all consistent with this interpretation. It is somewhat surprising that while work, study, and travel abroad relate negatively to support for Social Welfarism, unlike for the other main narratives this relationship is not statistically significant. I explore the dynamics behind these differences via multivariate regression at §8.2.

Hukou residency. The role of place in shaping one's ideological affinities is also suggested by the presence in the dataset of a highly significant negative relationship between support for Social Welfarism and possession of a non-Beijing hukou residency permit. Respondents whose residency is officially registered outside Beijing appear to be less socialized into Social Welfarist norms than those who are Beijing residents.

(As an aside, the regression coefficients help to confirm the rationale for the study's site selection. Beijing is empirically shown to be a maximizing case (an acid test) where ideological affinities across the discourse space—and especially for official ideological notions—are stronger than in other regions.)

Perceived home. It is harder to draw clear hypotheses from the relationships found between participants' self-reported home region and their ideological affinities. Versus participants who consider their home to be in Beijing or within China's developed eastern provinces, those people (9/117, or 8%) whose home is in the Dongbei region (including Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning) correlate a full 17 basis points less with the Liberal Idealist point of view, and are less confounded (i.e., Liberal Socialist) as a result. This is consistent with Pan and Xu, who find the Dongbei provinces to be among the mid- to most-conservative, and in general find a positive relationship between 'liberalism' and level of development (measured by per capita income, trade openness, and urbanization rate) of the respondent's home province.

Respondents (8/117, or 7%) from the Xinan region (Guizhou, Sichuan, Yunnan, Tibet, Chongqing) score almost 13 basis points lower on the Social Welfarist view and 14 points lower on the Authoritarian Reformist view. This would seem to be inconsistent with Pan and Xu. Caution must again be raised about the adequacy of a small *n* dataset, particularly for regressing a categorical variable with multiple possible responses. The study was conducted in Beijing and focuses mainly upon Beijing residents. Nevertheless, these results suggest that significant regional variation in ideological affinity exists across the mainland, which is a frequent finding in studies of mainland political attitudes. Regional variation is also found among ideology's producers. In a review of mainland scholarship on legitimacy, Zeng Jinghan (2014) finds significant correlations between authors' research locations and their arguments. Scholars in economically successful regions are less likely to worry about inequality, economic sustainability, corruption and inadequate political participation as causes of falling legitimacy. Scholars from poorer regions spend more time arguing the importance of improving bureaucratic efficiency and transparency. China is a large, diverse natural laboratory, and political ideation varies significantly from region to region.

Occupation. It is likewise difficult to form strong hypotheses about a relationship between occupation and ideological affinity. Only self-described Investors—participants whose primary job is to buy and sell assets—exhibit statistically significant differences from the ideological affinities of the reference occupation group, Office Workers. The negative relationship between Investors and Liberal Idealism, accompanied by the positive relationship between Investors and Authoritarian Reformism, hints at crony capitalism. One may hypothesize that Investors rely upon privileged access to Party-state officials to identify lucrative investment opportunities. Rather than find affinity with Liberal Idealism for the legal securities it advocates, Investors disapprove of it because the transparency implied would make many insider transactions more difficult to conduct.

This hypothesis, too, must recognize small-*n* problems. Self-described Investors comprised only 2% of respondents; idiosyncratic factors not captured in the dataset may account for their preferences.

Economic sector. A much stronger hypothesis can be made about the relationship between the economic sector in which one works and ideological affinity. Both the private sector and the state sector are well represented in the dataset. An employee of a government or Party department (20/116 or 17% of respondents) coheres 15 points less well with the Liberal Idealist narrative than their private-sector counterparts (59/116 or 51%). This result is significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. A strongly significant, positive relationship is also found between employment in a government or Party department and support for Authoritarian Reformism. Employees in state-owned enterprises (15/116 or 13%), however, seem to have

affinities similar to their private-sector colleagues. The above suggests that economic sector may, similar to the other place-related variables above, shape ideological tendencies by socializing people into different attitudinal norms. Government or Party departments may be environments much more favourable to Social Welfarist discourse than the private- or state-owned enterprise sectors, because the subject matter of the former is state-related public policy and regulation rather than commerce.

8.2 Hypothesizing relationships from multivariate regression

Multivariate regression tests the significance of the above relationships while controlling for other variables. As noted above, multivariate models increase the small- n problem.

Nonetheless they do help identify which of the above simple linear relationships may be spurious, and which are more likely to prove robust across larger, more comprehensive datasets.

8.2.1 Liberal Idealism

Three separate multivariate regression models were run against participants' correlations with Liberal Idealism. See Table 8-2. The manual model produced the best R-squared (0.29) and adjusted R-squared (0.22). Given the ideational complexity of the phenomenon being explained, these values seem appropriate. In the multivariate model, logged income ceases to relate significantly (i.e., the association suggested in the univariate model is found to be spurious), because its effect on Liberal Idealist affinity is captured by other factors added into the model (i.e., the things that income affords), such as travel abroad. Travel abroad remains a significant positive influence in the multivariate model. Work and study abroad do not, for the reasons of multicollinearity cited above. The influence of the Investor occupation also falls out. In the manual model, a significant positive relationship remains between age and Liberal Idealism. Regional identification with Dongbei also remains significant in the manual multivariate model; controlling for other factors, the region one grew up in may have some persistent influence on Liberal Idealist discourse preferences.

For comparison I also ran two automated regression models, a backward stepwise model which begins with all variables and drops them from the model one-by-one starting with the

weakest explanatory factor until only significant factors remain, and a forward stepwise model which begins with an empty model and adds variables one by one beginning with the most significant.

Both yield identical results in this case, and suggest a parsimonious model wherein affinity for Liberal Idealism turns mainly on whether or not the participant has ever travelled abroad and the economic sector in which they are employed. Those who work in a politicized environment, namely a government or Party department or a legacy work unit, score significantly lower on Liberal Idealism than those employed in the private sector, holding all other variables in the model constant.

Table 8-2 Multivariate regression results for Liberal Idealism (F1')

Regression Models of Affinity with Liberal Idealism			
	Manual (a)	Backward Stepwise (b)	Forward Stepwise (c)
Age	0.006* 0.00		
Ever travelled abroad?	0.097* (0.04)	0.109** (0.04)	0.109** (0.04)
<u>Economic Sector</u> vs. Private Sector Firm:			
- Gov't or Party Dept.	-0.096* (0.04)	-0.141** (0.04)	-0.141** (0.04)
- Work Unit	-0.084 (0.05)	-0.096* (0.05)	-0.096* (0.05)
<u>Perceived home</u> vs. Beijing or Coastal China:			
- Dongbei	-0.120* (0.06)		
<i>Constant</i>	0.282** (0.08)	0.447*** (0.04)	0.447*** (0.04)
R-squared	0.292	0.210	0.210
Adj. R-squared	0.216	0.186	0.186
Residual degrees of freedom	103	97	97
BIC	-50.3	-65.7	-65.7

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

8.2.2 Social Welfarism

Three separate multivariate regression models were also run against participants' correlations with Social Welfarism. See Table 8-3. Different respondent characteristics were found to relate with affinity for this discourse, two of which were statistically significant across all three models. The first is hukou residency. Household registration outside Beijing (65/117, or 56% of research participants) was associated with a 9 to 10 basis point downward difference in correlation with Social Welfarism, controlling for the other variables in the models. This relationship was found to be significant at the $p < 0.001$ level (in part due to the sufficiency of data on this particular question) in each of the three models tested. A significant negative relationship was also found between logged income and support for Social Welfarism. Every doubling of income is associated with a decline in discourse affinity of about 2 basis points.

From the above it seems that support for Social Welfarism is going to: (a) relate positively with hukou registration in Beijing, which may be understood as a proxy for proximity to, and perhaps the intensity of exposure to, the ideological messaging of the Party-state; and (b) vary negatively with income, or in other words with the volume of wealth and assets one possesses with which to make one's own choices, design one's own life, and live independently of state or community support.

Both the backward and forward stepwise regression models retained the participants' home region as a statistically significant explanatory category. Controlling for hukou and income, respondents from the Xinan region were found to correlate 11 basis points less with Social Welfarist views than the baseline group, which includes Beijing and developed coastal China. This could be an artefact of idiosyncrasies in the dataset (only 8 out of 117 respondents, or

about 7%, cited Xinan as home), but it is consistent with the finding that hukou registration is significant. Both factors suggest that location matters, and I hypothesize that it is due to the intensity, quality, or some combination thereof with which different ideological messages are produced in different regions.

Table 8-3 Multivariate regression results for Social Welfarism (F2')

Regression Models of Affinity with Social Welfarism			
	Manual (a)	Backward Stepwise (b)	Forward Stepwise (c)
Non-Beijing hukou?	-0.091*** (0.03)	-0.096*** (0.02)	-0.096*** (0.02)
Income (logged)	-0.020* (0.01)	-0.019* (0.01)	-0.019* (0.01)
<u>Perceived home</u> vs. Beijing or Coastal China:			
- Xibei		0.100 (0.06)	0.100 (0.06)
- Xinan		-0.110* (0.05)	-0.110* (0.05)
<i>Constant</i>	<i>0.770***</i> (0.11)	<i>0.772***</i> (0.11)	<i>0.772***</i> (0.11)
R-squared	0.141	0.212	0.212
Adj. R-squared	0.124	0.179	0.179
Residual degrees of freedom	100	96	96
BIC	-122.5	-121.0	-121.0

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

8.2.3 Minority discourses

Multivariate results for Authoritarian Reformism (Table 8-4) are consistent with how it has been framed above, i.e., as a relative of Social Welfarism that is more clearly opposed to some of the core assertions of the Liberal Idealist. As with Social Welfarism, correlation with the Authoritarian Reformist discourse is negatively associated with hukou registration outside Beijing. Unlike Social Welfarism, it is also significantly, negatively associated with work or study (not merely travel) abroad. It would seem that time spent working or studying abroad makes a person more skeptical of the Reformist thesis that presently prevailing political norms can be improved without being replaced.

Affinity with Critical Realism is uniformly weak across most research participants—multivariate models for this perspective generate the lowest constants of all the five discourses discerned by the study—and therefore highly significant regression results are not to be expected. See Table 8-5. Once again there is some evidence that work and study abroad impact ideological thinking, and once again home region seems to matter. Given that most interviews were conducted in Beijing, the persistent finding across *all* discourses of a significant relationship between perceived home and ideological affinity suggests that this influence occurs during formative stages of life and/or formal schooling when participants are (likely) still living in their home regions. The study did not collect sufficient biographical details on each participant to test the roots of this relationship.

Table 8-4 Multivariate regression results for Authoritarian Reformism (M1)

Regression Models of Affinity with Authoritarian Reformism			
	Manual (a)	Backward Stepwise (b)	Forward Stepwise (c)
Non-Beijing hukou?		-0.062* (0.03)	-0.069* (0.03)
Ever worked abroad?	-0.049 (0.03)	-0.079** (0.03)	-0.058 (0.03)
Ever travelled abroad?	-0.047 (0.04)		-0.050 (0.04)
<u>Perceived home</u> vs. Beijing or Coastal China: - Xinan		-0.148* (0.06)	-0.138* (0.06)
<i>Constant</i>	0.310*** (0.02)	0.344*** (0.03)	0.377*** (0.03)
R-squared	0.079	0.151	0.185
Adj. R-squared	0.063	0.125	0.142
Residual degrees of freedom	114	97	95
BIC	-115.7	-99.8	-94.7

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 8-5 Multivariate regression results for Critical Realism (M2)

Regression Models of Affinity with Critical Realism		
	Backward Stepwise (a)	Forward Stepwise (b)
Ever worked abroad?	0.056* (0.02)	0.056* (0.02)
<u>Perceived home</u> vs. Beijing or Coastal China:		
- Zhongnan	-0.059* (0.03)	-0.059* (0.03)
- Xinan	-0.094 (0.05)	-0.094 (0.05)
<i>Constant</i>	<i>0.220***</i> (0.02)	<i>0.220***</i> (0.02)
R-squared	0.120	0.120
Adj. R-squared	0.092	0.092
Residual degrees of freedom	97	97
BIC	-129.6	-129.6

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 8-6 Multivariate regression results for Liberal Socialism (FC')

Regression Models of Affinity with Liberal Socialism			
	Manual (a)	Backward Stepwise (b)	Forward Stepwise (c)
Non-Beijing hukou?	-0.073** (0.03)	-0.089*** (0.03)	-0.066* (0.03)
Income (logged)	0.013 (0.01)		
Ever travelled abroad?	0.077* (0.03)	0.090** (0.03)	0.067* (0.03)
<u>Economic Sector</u> vs. Private Sector Firm:			
- Gov't or Party Dept.		-0.095** (0.03)	
- Work Unit		-0.077* (0.04)	
Constant	0.469*** (0.12)	0.650*** (0.03)	0.637*** (0.03)
R-squared	0.160	0.271	0.192
Adj. R-squared	0.135	0.224	0.167
Residual degrees of freedom	99	94	97
BIC	-107.5	-108.1	-111.6

8.3 Regression insights into the dynamics of the discourse space

Regression analysis offers clues about dynamics in the discourse space that Q Methodology analysis cannot elucidate, but which become evident when comparing the constants for the Liberal Idealist and Social Welfarist multivariate regression models. The Liberal Idealist constant is quite low (0.28 to 0.45, depending on the model); independent variables, when found to relate to discourse affinity, tend to adjust the correlation upwards. The reverse is true for the Social Welfarist perspective. The constant is high (0.77), and statistically significant independent variables tend to modify affinity downwards.

The constants suggest that Social Welfarism ought to be understood as the default or initial viewpoint within the emerging middle class. When they experience ideological diversity—either abroad, or through changes in income, employment or job sector, or as they grow older—their affinity for Liberal Idealist views, which began at a low base, can rise rapidly. The regression coefficients suggest that support for Social Welfarism also falls with these experiences, albeit more slowly—hence, the large number of participants who report confounded views (Liberal Socialism—and not ‘Social Liberalism’, since as suggested here their confoundedness is the product of Liberal Idealist views inserting themselves into their Social Welfarist understandings). This overall dynamic makes sense, given that the political norms espoused by the Party-state through the institutions of governance, education and media it controls align more closely with the Social Welfarist perspective. A person growing up in this milieu needs to reach beyond these contexts in order to be socialized into alternative political notions.

In figurative terms: members of the emerging middle class plot somewhere along the Social Welfarist axis initially, and as they accumulate diverse ideological experiences and/or transition into new socioeconomic categories, their affinities rotate counter-clockwise into Confounded and then Liberal Idealist space.

8.4 Implications for the Party-state's ideology work

At §2.1.1.2 I noted that one measure of the success of the Party-state's ideological work is the extent to which coercive measures are not required to achieve policy objectives that impose substantial public burdens. The data gathered in this study strongly suggests a corollary to that statement, namely that the Party-state's ideological work and suppression of alternative ideological discourses are necessary to maintain a supportive public environment in which more coercive measures are rarely required.

The regression results strongly suggest that public political ideological affinities are susceptible to influence by exposure to alternative ideological traditions. The landscape of the emerging middle class's ideological affinities is a dynamic one, ideological drift away from official political beliefs is taking place, and the Party-state's legitimation and censorship efforts help keep that landscape within manageable boundaries.

This dynamism problematizes claims by some scholars of post-communist societies that China has completed its political transition from totalitarian communism into a new stable form.

Tudoroiu (2011, p. 426) argues that 'the transition is in fact over. [The Party-state] is 'now a stable, 'hard' neo-communist regime that has fully developed its ideological and organizational structures and patterns. Furthermore, it is not confronted by any major challenge...'. To the contrary, the public ideological space is unsettled and betrays a momentum toward alternative political norms propelled by ongoing socio-economic modernization processes. While an analysis of internal Party-state processes is beyond the scope of this study, it seems unlikely that regime rigidity is feasible amidst this societal condition.

Nor is it appropriate to characterize the discourse space as presenting a legitimacy crisis, as the analysis at §7.6 has shown. Yes, the ideological terrain is contested, making ongoing ideological work necessary, but that is hardly remarkable. ‘The state in China today strives continuously, agonistically, as all states must strive, more or less perpetually, against antagonists, to validate and revalidate their authority’ (Shue 2004, p. 82). My study strongly supports this view.

In light of the dynamism I observe, the Party-state’s renewed emphasis on ideological work programs is a predictable response. It appears that the Party-state has correctly perceived the risk of ideological drift and is taking steps to redress it—whether to consolidate its own aggressive monopoly on power, or to benevolently shepherd the masses along the socialist road, is itself perhaps a matter of ideological perspective. Either way, the dynamics of the discourse space suggest that the variety of recently observed ideological programming trends play a necessary role in countering the emerging middle class’ exposure to ideological alternatives. These include the ‘new authoritarianism’ (新威权主义), as Xiao Gongqin (2015) describes it, of the Xi-Li administration; ongoing investments in the Party-state’s digital censorship capabilities (Ding Sheng 2015); the reinvention of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences into a compliant think tank (Sleeboom-Faulkner 2007); and the new language of a ‘Chinese dream’ (中国梦), introduced by Xi Jinping in the first month of his presidency, that attempts to marry socialist claims to Truth with Chinese civilizational claims to Glory into a single rhetorical device (Callahan 2015).

Of course, ideological work is not the only factor that influences diffuse regime support. The necessity of ongoing ideological work will only be reinforced by other factors that political science has found to relate to regime legitimacy, for example official corruption (Guo Xuezhi

2014) or performance gaps between official rhetoric and social reality (Duckett and Langer 2013). One example of the latter is social welfare programs. The previous Hu-Wen administration raised public expectations over improvements in social welfare and social insurance, such as healthcare (Chen Lichuan 2004). However it remains a service for which public concerns over access, affordability, corruption and inequality remain very high. The health care case also serves as an important reminder that not every important policy area within Chinese politics is tied into the official ideological program. On healthcare, a variety of competing ideological viewpoints are presented in state-run media, ranging from heavy state sponsorship to radical free market policy positions. This contest persists despite the obvious importance of the health care issue to most Chinese. There are limits to what ideological work and ideological affinities can help to explain about regime support.

9 Wider Implications and Research Agenda

This study has explored ideological diversity amidst China's emerging middle class, with the intent of improving our understanding of the legitimacy of the present governing regime and the likely political roles of a theoretically important constituency.

My analysis and findings also allow me to make several concrete statements on related matters in Chinese politics and in the field of political studies more generally.

9.1 ‘Legitimacy’ can be subjected to scholarly investigation

At §2.1.2.2, two methodological challenges to the study of legitimacy were identified. The first regards construct validity: Does the study measure what it claims to be measuring? Individual studies may inform the ‘partial legitimacy’ that resides in a certain case or agent relationship, but it is not clear if or how such studies may be summed up to tell us what we really wish to know, namely, the overall legitimacy that the political system as a whole does or does not enjoy. The second challenge was more fundamental: Can studies of legitimacy ever get at the shared background beliefs or judgments of a population? Public opinion surveys—a common pathway toward such knowledge—might not inform the question of legitimacy because they ‘ultimately [fail] to determine whether revealed attitudes are truly *grounded in judgments* about the legitimacy of a political system’ or ideological program (Sandby-Thomas 2014, p. 586). The conclusion drawn elsewhere by these arguments is that legitimacy is too unwieldy a social variable to submit to good political scientific work. Political studies ought to abandon the testing of regime legitimacy in favour of analyzing legitimization activities.

My study has shown how both these objections can be met. It *is* possible to capture on-the-ground subjective understandings that higher-level quantitative surveys miss, and to elucidate from them not a partial legitimacy but the global discourse space that the public occupies when expressing its support (or lack thereof) for the present political order. En route I have also demonstrated how it is possible, following Freeden (1996), to distil an official ideological program into a complete set of core and peripheral convictions, rather than essentialize it into a few formal, discrete elements. The latter invites doubts as to whether Official Ideology, as it exists and operates upon society, has indeed been tested in a study that makes claims about its legitimacy. The combination of Freeden’s method of ideological analysis and Q’s method of

subjectivity analysis makes it possible to present contesting ideologies to research participants and gain access to the range of sense-makings that they forge from them with a clarity and completeness that has not yet been achieved in the literature on the Party-state's legitimacy.

'Inquiries as to whether or not [a] regime is legitimate too easily conclude with a judgment which has either no explanatory future, or no descriptive content' (Barker 2001, p. 23). That is not the outcome of my study. My findings in support of the regime's legitimacy are not a summary statistic from a quantitative survey, but rather a considered conclusion, drawn upon review of the full range of ideological narratives found among the emerging middle class. These findings are not a dead end; they are a rich starting point for further inquiry. I focused upon the emerging middle class, but the research design could be re-applied to understand better the differences in subjective sense-making of urban versus rural, of different regions in China, of white-collar versus peasants, of different age groups and so on, to paint a more complete picture of diffuse regime support across different layers of society. Longitudinal work—repeating these studies in future time periods to understand the relative rise and fall of ideological affinities in response to political, economic, social or generational change—would inform theories of modernization and regime resilience with better data and insight into how the public's thinking actually changes.

'Legitimacy', the question of whether dominant and subordinate share beliefs about the established rules for exercising power, is an important angle from which to study the endurance of the Party-state regime. Yes, the partial legitimacy problem can be solved. Yes, we can avoid over-essentializing ideologies, represent their cores and assess public affinities with them. Yes, we can augment descriptive statistics with empirically-grounded narratives that

convey the bundle of beliefs and value trade-offs that together amount to support for the present political order. We can innovate around these methodological roadblocks.

9.1.1 From methodological to theoretical innovation

The ability to explore subjective public understandings in a rigorous way has application to other theoretical models of regime legitimacy. One such model is discourse ethics. Habermas' (1986) original thesis of discourse ethics—that normative values can be grounded in our human nature as social, discursive beings, and that they have validity if they arise out of a public, unconstrained discourse—is, he has since conceded, not universal but rather contingent upon the existence of a public culture that presumes social institutions should be based on the free consent of those affected by them. There, discourse theory often hits a dead end, because 'the kind of public opinion data political scientists generate cannot do justice to the dynamic and holistic belief systems that interest political theorists' (O'Donovan 2012, p. 138).

As I have attempted to demonstrate, this is not necessarily the case. Methods exist to elucidate empirically the holistic belief systems within which the public operates, and submit them to scrutiny to test whether, for example, a public culture in which popular consent confers legitimacy does in fact exist. Realist theorists argue that the political realm is an inherently contested one, and that it is simply incorrect to suppose that discourse participants could converge upon anything like a universal set of norms or values (Galston 2010). Disagreement is a fact of politics, from policy preferences up to conceptions of justice or comprehensive doctrines. This broad assertion is, my study shows, testable, and at a minimum must be qualified. I found the discourse space of China's emerging middle class to be devoid of many

potential disagreements, and characterized more by a mutual reluctance to disagree too strongly with the core views of others. This empirical finding could enable political theorizing in at least two directions. It could be a launching off point for an effort to validate the normative views of the emerging middle class on discourse ethics grounds, given the hints of a shared public culture among them. Alternatively, it could stimulate discourse theorists to clarify the preconditions that vest a shared public culture with normative powers. Does aggressive state monitoring of, and interjection into, public discourse invalidate that shared public culture as a possible font of normative values—even among a population segment that is generally quite savvy at distinguishing officially scripted speech from spontaneous public voices? Put another way, does deliberative democracy need deliberative democrats? Or can a population in a nondemocratic society nonetheless share a political culture in a meaningful way such that the settled values upon which they agree are conferred normative weight? My research provides the sort of empirical insights into discourse spaces that enable scholarship into this question to go forward in China.

9.2 State-centric approaches, while parsimonious, forego important insights

The question of whether ‘legitimation’ or ‘legitimacy’ is the more fruitful path of research is one site of a larger debate in the field about whether a state-centred or state-society paradigm is more informative for the study of Chinese politics. How important is an improved understanding of how society thinks to improving our theoretical models? The holistic belief sets of the public are very complex and fuzzy ideational constructs. Elucidating them is an exercise in respecting the limits of clarity—limits imposed by the vagueness of unreflective intuitions and hunches that pervades most people’s political thinking. We can invest enormous energy into making sense of how people think politically (legitimacy), or we can invest less energy and understand what causes them to think that way, by investigating what the Party-state does to shape the lens through which they inform their own political conceptions (legitimation).

A state-centric approach remains compelling. ‘The dominant Leninist state has persisted precisely by crowding out competing visions for organizing politics’ (Gilley 2011, p. 532). The ideological discourse map I have drawn through my research—essentially a deep-dive into how Chinese society thinks, politically—supports that view, both in its boundaries and in the evident bias toward the Social Welfarist perspective. It seems that opening up has highlighted, and perhaps quickened, ideological diversity and conflict, but affinity with Social Welfarism (a discourse broadly consistent with the core assertions of Official Ideology and the present political arrangement) is a default—perhaps anchored by the Party-state’s control over education curricula, media and information (i.e., its legitimation efforts). Meanwhile the diversity appears to generate confounded thoughts more so than clear allegiance to ideological alternatives. Yes, as people gather experiences with other ideological traditions, their intuitions

drift towards them and conflict with official lines. Political values and ideas that are anathema to the Party-state reside among the emerging middle class. But thinking has not drifted so far as to yield a diametrically opposite discourse, nor has it generated clear intuitions toward action against the status quo. A state-centric view might be that the present landscape of ideological discourse is an inevitable and acceptable trade-off by the Party-state between opening up to better leverage global economic, technological and other resources, and maintaining sufficient legitimacy to sustain one-party rule.

However, if we abandon the investigation of society's subjective responses to the legitimization efforts of the Party-state, we forgo an improved understanding, aided by this study, of *how* those legitimization efforts generate regime stability by shaping and constraining the political sense-makings of society. We also limit our insight into at least three other important dimensions to contemporary Chinese politics. The first has to do with technological change, present-day communications technology and people's participation in ideological production. It is an oversimplification to focus only on the legitimization efforts of the Party-state and ignore the technologies that enable every person now to produce and disseminate ideological messaging. If we are to continue to theorize and investigate how the transition from a pre-Internet age of monopolized mass media to a networked age of social media influences the political system, then we need to keep open a wide window toward possible sources of political value and belief change. The second has to do with changes in popular support over time. Present support for the regime is consistently high. When that changes—and it seems reasonable to assume that at some point it shall, in one direction or the other—how will political science account for that change? Will it be by reference to changes in the Party-state's legitimization efforts? That explanation will be, more accurately, a correlation. It will treat

society as a black box into which new legitimization activities disappear and out of which new levels of support issue. But the ‘why’ of that observed change will be inside that black box. To understand it, we need to understand the ideas, beliefs and values that state legitimization efforts do and do not foster. The third dimension that we sacrifice, closely related to the second, is an understanding of how the legitimization efforts of the Party-state interact with the variety of competing ideological messages to which society is exposed. Will future changes in regime support be better explained by changes in legitimization efforts or by changes in the content, variety or intensity of exposure to other ideological programs, perhaps through rising travel and exchange with other countries, continued economic modernization, migration or other factors?

The best answer may be both. Shue (2013) points out that the state/society dichotomy is often overstated in Chinese political studies. Closer to reality would be a research paradigm that recognizes the interactive, relational, evolutionary nature of the relationship between these two spheres. My study, by performing a deep dive into subjective social views and finding there evidence of both the reach of the state (i.e., a bounded discourse weighted toward a Social Welfarist default) and its limits (i.e., a drift toward Liberal Idealism related to contact with alternatives), adds empirical support to the call for a balanced approach.

9.3 Ideology matters

The final motivation for this study, outlined at §2.3, was to draw from the vast, diverse natural laboratory that is China some lessons that can inform the field of political science generally.

Chief among these is the reminder that ideology is an important object of political science research. Bell's (1960) post-WWII thesis—that ideology had become irrelevant because politics was reduced to technical questions of how best to deliver economic growth and material prosperity—is, the case of China makes plain to 21st century scholarship, wrong. Fukuyama's (1992) slightly different argument—that ideology still mattered, but that one ideology (Western liberal democracy) had defeated all rivals—is also disproved by my data from the China case.

This reminder is timely. A recent comparative study of Chinese versus Anglo-American political science literature found that the former takes a far greater interest in ideological research than does the latter (Zeng Jinghan 2014). Are gaps between Official Ideology and social reality reasons to discredit ideology as a meaningful factor in political science, or evidence of ideology's capacity to shape citizens' subjective sense-making and thereby buttress social and regime stability amidst growing political stresses?

The map of the ideological terrain this study has drawn suggests the latter. Anglo-American politics research should take a cue from Chinese peers and stoke a more active interest in researching the role of ideology in shaping political behaviour, outcomes and possibilities.

9.3.1 To advance both, political science needs to keep theory and ideology separate

My findings in the China case here lend further support to the realization that classical modernization theory was itself coloured by a strong ideological preference for liberal democracy, and that in practice public support for authoritarian governance can be compatible with economic, social and technological development. There doesn't appear to be any necessary correlation between socioeconomic transition toward market economics and public affinity for liberal democracy. The emerging middle class sought out by this study are the acid test for modernization theory in China: they are well-educated, have significant consumption power and choices, and frequently encounter ideological variety through travel, study and work abroad. They work in a variety of white-collar jobs, in Party, state and private-sector organizations. Among them, affinity for collective welfare, skepticism of individuality pursued for its own sake, and support for a strong state with the authority and capacity to steer society, remain prevalent and popular. The bounded diversity of their ideological preferences, more than three decades into China's Reform and Opening, suggests that the universality of liberal political values is an ideal within one ideological tradition rather than an absolute hallmark of human progress.

The present study supports the rising evidence from the China literature that ideological preferences are not dictated by rising levels of income, nor in the spread of market mechanisms through the economy, nor in the consumption of foreign goods or information technologies (Ding Sheng 2015). Rather, ideological discourse is its own domain of social phenomena, sensitive to but not wholly determined by changes in these other domains. Distinct domestic ideological affinities can be established deliberately and sustained within a population, even as that population exchanges intensively with other populations advocating

very different and more widely supported political conceptions. Hyun and Kim (2014) make a similar point by reference to the rise of social media in China. Any expectation that new information or communication technologies will embed subjective preferences in favour of openness, participation or other anti-authoritarian sentiments must be evaluated in the ideological context in which such technologies are situated because, as the case of China seems to illustrate, well-resourced and -organized states can influence the direction of attitudinal change such technologies engender. The same technologies that empower individuals in one ideological context may be instruments to maintain social stability and political legitimacy in another.

Gramsci (1891-1937) theorized that ideology sets the boundaries of what it is possible to imagine politically and put into practice within a given state.¹ If that is true, then the discourse landscape of the emerging middle class is evidence that, at least so far as they are concerned, more than a liberal democratic future is possible for China.

Two important implications follow for political science. The first is that, given this range of imaginable futures, it is important for politics research to maintain a clear distinction between normative arguments about what should happen and theoretical arguments based on what the research suggests could happen. These two modes are frequently blurred in reference to China.² As noted at §2.3, a powerful narrative was built atop the 1989 Tiananmen massacre to

¹ Gramsci, Antonio (1891-1937) (2000). *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*. Edited by D. Forgasc. New York: New York University Press.

² See, for example:

Garton Ash, Timothy (2005). *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West*. London: Penguin UK.

impart an aura of social scientific inevitability to a liberal democratic transition. As the Party-state consolidated its authority and successfully redirected or suppressed revolutionary impulses in society, the analytic lens shifted from forecasting its expiry date to understanding better its resilience. ‘Authoritarian resilience’ remains the dominant analytic frame for understanding the evolution of China’s political system today. Embedded within the concept of resilience is the notion of inexorable, external change forces that will ultimately erode the authoritarian regime’s capacity to withstand them.

So far as middle class discourse would indicate, this conception is insufficiently open about China’s political future. A more consistent analytic frame would be one of ‘authoritarian renewal’. Renewal connotes an enduring vitality. It invites inquiry into not only the persistence of the Party-state but its strengthening, along ‘hard’ institutional and ‘soft’ subjective measures. It invites comparative study into how democratic and authoritarian political systems each manage to persist through ebbs and flows in popularity and efficacy of successive administrations. And it invites theoretical research into the consequences of permanent ideological difference for liberalism’s universalist projects (e.g. human rights) and for international relations generally.

Shifting analytic frames will help make transits between theoretical and normative modes of scholarly argument more explicit. The latter is inevitable. As Noakes (2014, p. 259) observes, ‘regimes, be they democratic or authoritarian, tend to reproduce types of political science that are self-strengthening’. In democratic societies, political science displays a ‘spirit of normative

Rowen, Henry S. (2007). “When Will the Chinese People Be Free?” *Journal of Democracy* **18**(3): 38-52.

entrepreneurship' (p. 240). It sees its primary role to be to critique power and authority. In China, by contrast, the role of political science research today is generally understood to help improve the functioning of the Party-state (Yu Keping 2005). Given that the spectrum of political possibilities, at least in the minds of the emerging middle class, encompasses both these normative agendas, political science will be best served by an analytic frame that gives *prima facie* credence to each, explores the implications of each, and challenges each to be more explicit about the ideological assumptions and choices it seeks to embed in society.

To elaborate this third point: shifting analytic frames need not diminish the strength or frequency of normative critiques. There are many good reasons to vigorously criticize China's present political system, and the present study lends clarity and strength to at least one classical liberal critique. See §9.3.3. What shifting frames does do, however, is explicitly shift the theoretical and evidence burden onto critics to explain why authoritarian renewal will fail. The present study has removed one argument from that list, at least for the present: namely, that a middle class will emerge with an inevitable commitment to anti-authoritarian political values. This rationale is widely given, either explicitly or implicitly, for example in research into rising incidents of public protest. Granted, the demographic and therefore discourse space of protestors may be different than that which my study has investigated, but at the very least this study's findings should engender skepticism toward a link between popular protest and popular anti-authoritarian affinities until a similar study can be done to answer that question.

9.3.2 Anglo-American research emphasis on democratization leaves other political possibilities under-explored

The second implication of the middle class discourse space for ideology research is that, relative to their *prima facie* viability, Anglo-American research under-invests in theoretical and empirical work regarding China's non-liberal-democratic ideological programs.

This situation again is exacerbated by the adoption of authoritarian resilience as the main analytic frame. It presupposes a liberal democratic alternative. To explore other political pathways is inconsistent with that supposition and deeply unpopular in the Anglo-American literature. Nevertheless, the discourse space suggests that non-liberal ideological programs can find support among the emerging middle class. On that basis alone they merit investigation. At least two additional reasons weigh in favour of investing more resources into understanding them better.

The first is to advance political theory. As noted at §3.3, one helpful distinction between ideology and political theory is that the former aims to shut down debate and fix political conceptions in order to advance an agenda, whereas the latter aims to engender creative inquiry and explore the full variety of political agendas possible. China is a vast natural laboratory of human social behaviour. If that laboratory produces novel political ideas and those ideas garner a degree of social reality, then, to the extent one is committed to valuing diversity, we ought to see the ideological distinctiveness being generated in China as a good thing. It may be good in itself, if diversity is held as a first-order value, or perhaps good instrumentally, as a contributor to civilizational resilience in the way that polyculture biological populations are more resilient to shocks than monocultures. Either speaks to the merits of studying this distinctiveness more thoroughly.

The second is the dearth of domestic investigations. The political science academy within mainland China is committed to supporting and improving state ideology, not exploring or validating local ideological diversity (even in its non-liberal forms). Yuan Weishi (1931-), a historian, described the debate among mainland academics between Chinese Liberalism and the New Left as a ‘storm in a teacup’—fierce to those who wage it, but of little relevance outside their small circle. Xiao Gongqin likewise diminished the practical importance of their disputations: the public has next to no awareness of it, he argued, and present-day intellectuals lack the stature that their peers from the 1980s enjoyed to bring their debates to public attention (cited by Chen Lichuan 2004, p. 26).

Clearly, my study shows, such characterizations are incorrect. The small circle. Xiao Gongqin well the range of views of the emerging middle class. That demographic has not reached any clear consensus of political belief. If intellectuals at both boundaries of middle class discourse do, however, they stand a real chance of attracting a broad middle-class constituency to their consensus. The notion of a Chinese ‘Third Way’ that spans the Chinese Liberal emphasis on individual empowerment and the New Left concern for collective wellbeing takes on new credibility when viewed in the context of the emerging middle class’ discourse space (Xu Jilin, Liu Qing et al. 1999). As Li Chunling (2012, p. 186) observes, ‘The new middle class...holds a contradictory sociopolitical attitude. On one hand, they view state authoritarianism unfavorably, preferring a more democratic state; on the other hand, they display the highest levels of satisfaction with their current living standards and thus want to avoid sociopolitical change...Such contradictory attitudes imply that the Chinese middle class may be inclined to choose the Third Road.’ Whether such a Third Way would more likely to be Qin Hui’s (1999)

proposed consensus around more individual liberty plus more social equality, or a Conservative Liberalism that advances individual liberty within boundaries that respect China's traditional social forms (Chen Lichuan 2004), is a good question that merits serious theory work and research. It might yield a new sustainable political form that is neither authoritarian nor liberal democratic as understood today, or it might supply a crucial missing link for a stable and peaceful transition from the former to the latter.

At a minimum, my research says, such possibilities deserve serious consideration, and neither Chinese nor foreign political science has yet to tackle them in a rigorous way.

My own hypothesis, based on the foregoing analysis plus anecdotal experience gained through approximately 150, 1-2 hour interviews (including the pilot phase) with middle class members, is that a Third Way consensus in the confounded middle of the discourse space is *not* a likely equilibrium point for the future political role of the emerging middle class. Intelligent and well-educated, most research participants took part in this study with enthusiasm, or at least curiosity, and the majority asked to see the final results. They wanted to know what ideological types I discovered, and the type to which they and their friends belonged. That curiosity, married with the very real differences in value emphasis between the boundaries of the discourse space, strongly suggest to me that, given the opportunity, they will develop more settled views in favour of one or the other boundary discourse.

Nor is co-option along the lines of the present functionalist, rational bargain likely to endure. Beijingell-eddle class discourse space betrays both the reach of the state (i.e., a bounded discourse weighted toward a Social Welfarist default) and its limits (i.e., a drift toward Liberal

Idealism related to contact with alternatives). Beyond Beijing, the default hypothesis must be that the state's reach is shorter, and its limits more limiting. To retain an allegiance that spans the middle class discourse space, the Party-state will need to widen its bargain, in response to (a) ideological drift away from Social Welfarist orientations and (b) changing socio-economic circumstances. '[R]uling ideologies can actively shape the wants and desires of those subjected to them; but they must also engage significantly with the wants and desires that people already have, catching up genuine hopes and needs, reinflecting them in their own peculiar idiom, and feeding them back to their subjects in ways which render these ideologies plausible and attractive' (Eagleton 1991, pp. 14-15).

Ideological drift will make it harder for the Party-state to hold onto its middle class base of true devotees with present-day Official Ideology, particularly as middle class demographics change. This study's data suggests that youthfulness relates positively with Liberal Idealism. Others agree: '[L]iberalism and support for democracy may be on the rise among the middle class as more young people enter it in the futureology, particularly as middle class demographics change. This study's data suggests that youthfulness relates positively with Liberial Idealist boundary.

Meanwhile, generational change plus changing socio-economic circumstances will make it harder for the Party-state to hold onto allies who support the status quo out of self-interest. Wright (2010) points out that, by 2050, no living middle class members will have memory of the Party-state's Mao-era policies against which to compare government's role and performance in their lives. Today, sharp contrast with the Party-state's socialist past helps the regime to elicit middle class acceptance of its functionalist bargain. By 2050, that contrast will

be lost, and how well the Party-state serves middle class interests will be measured against recent administrations and contemporary international comparators. Given the difficult policy challenges the Party-state faces now and over the next few decades—the transition to a knowledge-based, consumer economy; the management of ballooning public debt; environmental erosion; sharply rising income inequality; and so on—present-day allies may find ample cause to develop self-interested disloyalties.

As socialist memory dissipates from the population, and as Chinasts will be measured against recent administrations and contemporary international comparators. Given the difficult policy challenges the replaced by a more complex pattern of varying devotion, co-optation and contestation more consistent with the revealed diversity of their ideological discourse.

Differences in political belief will become more sharply defined and deeply felt. Those most dependent on or embedded in the Party-state may remain devoted partners, and maybe even regenerate that devotion in their offspring. Those at the upper end of the income spectrum will bifurcate into co-opted allies and dissatisfied independents. The latter will, at an ideological level, be frustrated by the suppression of divergent beliefs—such as the importance of religion (#63), varying conceptions of freedom (#48, #39, #25), or the importance of an independent legal system (#1). And at a pragmatic, self-interested level the well-off may end up on the losing end of taxation reforms. If the income patterns amidst today's advanced economies are any indicator, inequalities will rise and the middle class will hollow out as capital investment eliminates many semi-skilled jobs. To placate the ranks of those made worse-off than before, the Party-state may need to practice a more aggressive form of wealth redistribution than the present generation of co-opted capitalists have known. Pragmatic responses by the well off may include deserting China (in greater numbers), participating in the

renewal of the Party-state according to a more acceptable bargain, or to resist the state.

Those most dependent on or embedded in the Party-state are most likely to settle for an ambiguous mixture of misery and marginal pleasure when the political alternatives appear perilous and obscure, it is equally rational to rebel when the miseries clearly outweigh the gratifications, and when it seems likely that there is more to be gained than to be lost by such actions' (Eagleton 1991, p. xiv).

The Party-state political alternatives appear perilous and obscure, it is equally rational to rebel.

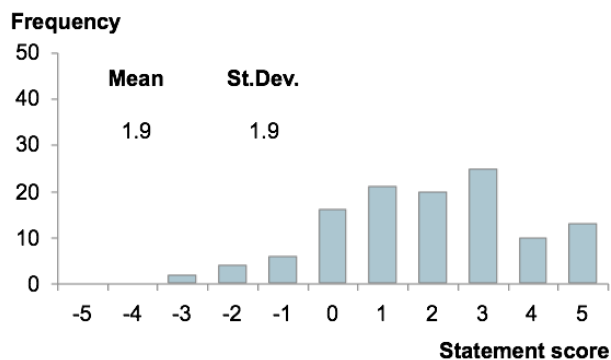
9.3.3 Amidst the emerging middle class, prospects for Confucian ideology are dim

The verdict from this study is more pessimistic toward another instance of China's ideological distinctiveness, Confucianism. The Q-set included ten Confucian concepts, assembled primarily from the political program of Jiang Qing. The response pattern for each of the statements is remarkably similar. See Figure 9-1. The majority of respondents either disagreed or didn't have a strong view either way. The latter suggests that Liu Junning (2000) may have been right: some ideological alternatives may garner less public support than others, simply because their contents are more abstract and difficult to relate to. The one statement drawn from Confucian discourse with which respondents did consistently agree was #43, whose message of self-cultivation may have been easier to grasp than some of the esoteric commitments that underpin a Confucian political program (e.g. a transcendent authority). Liu goes on to argue that liberal programs are therefore advantaged versus other ideological traditions in the contest for public support, because liberal conceptions of individual choice-making, self-development, property rights and so forth best appeal to people's immediate wants. My data is ambiguous on that claim. But it is clear that Confucianism garners little

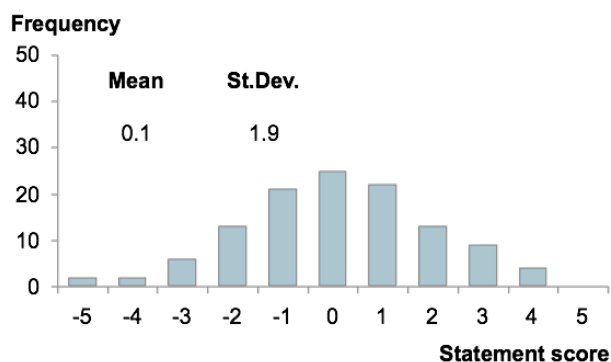
affinity from my respondents. It may yet prove a viable, important political pathway, but if so will find its base of support elsewhere—perhaps among cultural elites.

Figure 9-1 Statement-level analysis of affinity with Political Confucianism

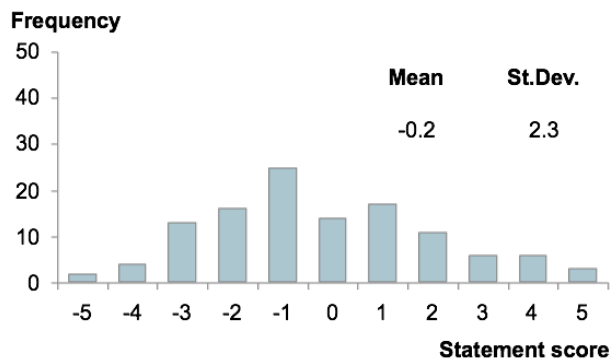
#3. To govern a country with benevolence and righteousness is to govern justly and fairly. To construct modern China, the country must recover this great wisdom from its ancient past.



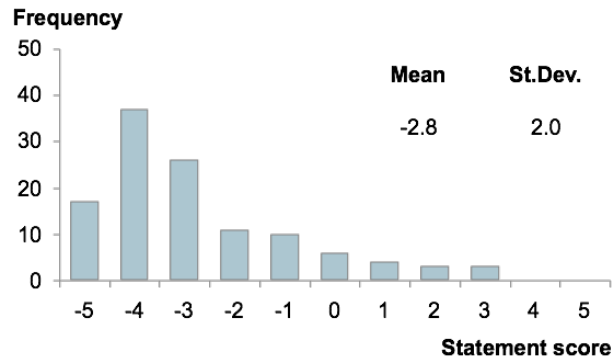
#15. The public education system should emphasize teaching youth to respect and obey established norms and traditions.



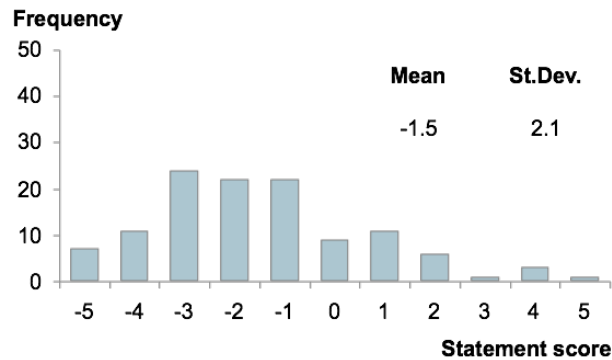
#17. Corruption and goodness, justice and injustice: both start at the leadership level.



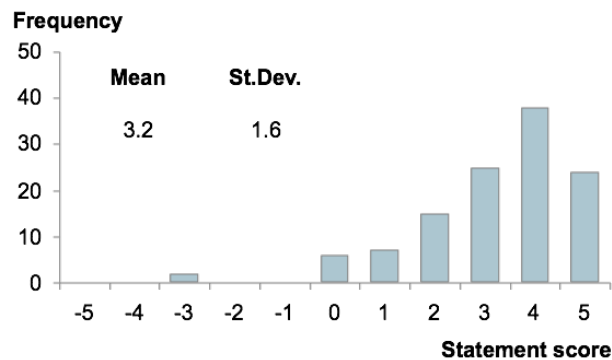
#30. If a government is always under the people's supervision, it cannot accomplish great things.



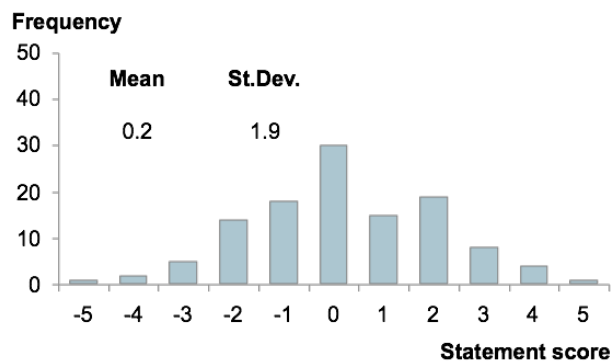
#42. The driving force for change must come from the highest political levels.



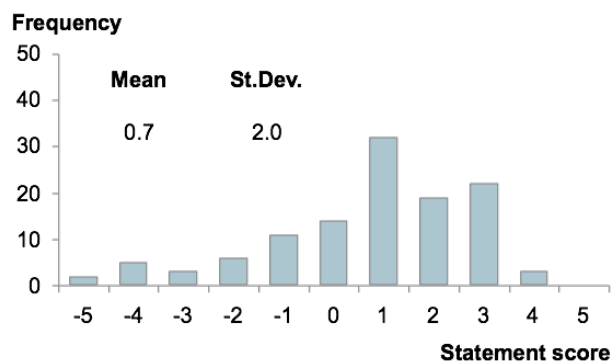
#43. If we want to improve a country's quality of governance, we should raise the education level of the citizenry.



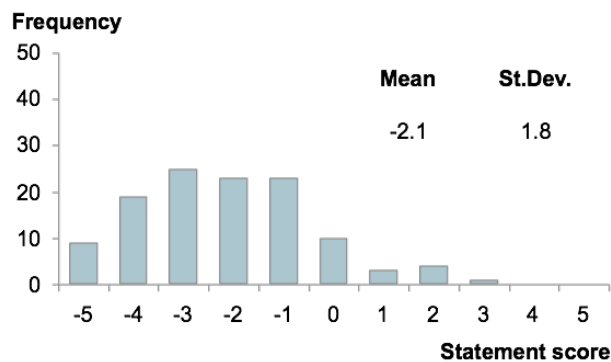
#60. A government has the authority to rule over me so long as it exercises power ethically and morally.



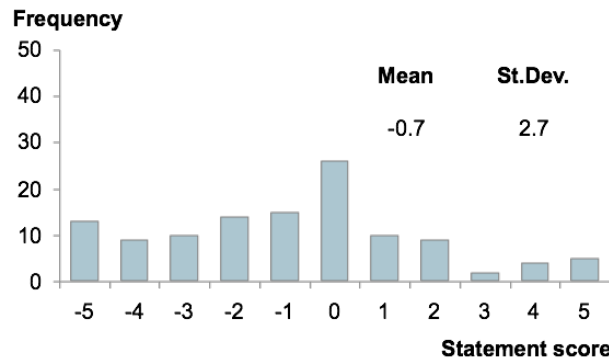
#61. If a government rules in a way that benefits the majority of people, but hurts a minority, I should still support it.



#62. If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.



#63. Religious values should play a bigger role in politics.



9.3.4 From the perspective of classical liberal ideology, the emerging landscape of middle class discourse makes the cost of authoritarian rule in China plain

None of the above is to diminish normative contributions of Anglo-American political science to the study of China. The implication to be drawn from this research is, rather, that scholarship ought simply to be more explicit when speaking in that voice, so that arguments are built atop a firmer evidence base, and so that gaps in both evidence and in ideological coverage are more transparent and more readily addressable.

While the distinction between normative argument-making and political theorizing can be made more explicit, neither mode of scholarship need uncritically accept any ideological agenda as valid simply because it garners some measure of public support. Public support may confer legitimacy, but of course political science is concerned with many other qualities of a political system: its stability, efficacy, sustainability—qualities that may be related to legitimacy but are also distinct in their measure and effect. In his seminal work on paradigms and how paradigms change, Thomas Kuhn (1996) observed that support for the dominant paradigm tends to remain strong right up until the end of its useful life. That is why paradigm collapse

tends to be poorly predicted by majority opinions or views. Ideologically-driven critiques help to draw attention to problems and deficiencies that might otherwise be overlooked.

To the extent that alternative value systems might matter, ideological critiques of any status quo constitute an important intellectual contribution: they help to highlight the costs and trade-offs imposed via the adoption of the dominant ideological frame so that the people who bear them may give them sober consideration. Absent ideological contest, such costs are likely to remain hidden or under-appreciated.

In the China case, for example, my own and other research shows that many people value the expansion of a private sphere in which individuals can make choices that determine their own career, spouses, place of residence, possessions and so on.³ What about choice in the public sphere? Is the emerging middle class progressively more free, as evidenced by its expanding powers of private choice, or is it more captive than ever, as evidenced by its pursuit of, and identification with, a ‘middle class’ aspiration that the governing regime has explicitly shaped and stoked through its control of education, media, censorship and other tools of ideology production?

My own study has highlighted one of the consequences of the Party-state’s persistent ideological programming and censorship: the absence from the discourse space of viable ideological views, like Atomistic Libertarianism, that would reject the status quo and describe a

³ See, for example:

Yan Yunxiang (2009). *The Individualization of Chinese Society*, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology, Volume 77. Oxford: Berg.

very different social and political reality than that which any one-party state could deliver. This absence constitutes a deadweight loss to China's domestic ideational wealth. This loss is analogous to how a monopoly company imposes a deadweight loss to social utility by holding supply below demand. The map of the ideological landscape of the emerging middle class makes explicit the bloom of political culture and political discourse that has *not* taken place. Is China in some way lessened, limited or weakened by the boundedness of emerging middle class discourse? My research shows this to be a wholly valid question. It will fall to the competitors of Official Ideology to see that it gets the consideration it deserves.

9.4 Q Methodology research agenda into Chinese politics

Finally, having demonstrated the usefulness of a Q Methodology approach into studying the subjective realm of China's political environment, I argue that additional applications of the method are warranted.

The most obvious next step is to delve more deeply into some of this study's more noteworthy statement-level response patterns. Research participants' consistently strong disapproval of the statement, 'Forgetting Chinese history would be a shortcut to building a modern civil society' (#56), provokes a number of questions. Why does learning and respecting history leap out at them from amidst many other seemingly important political values? What are the specific ideas, experiences or narratives that underlie widespread rejection of this declaration? Is it, for example, rooted in transference by their parents of memories of the Cultural Revolution, or in an older Confucian conservatism? At first blush such questions seem more sociological than political. However, understanding more deeply the ways in which the emerging middle class thinks about and defers to 'history' as it relates to modernization would enable deeper insight into the Party-state's historicizing work—for example, its recent loosening of research into the Republican era (Zhang Qiang 2013)—and a more precise understanding of the different ways the public responds to official rhetoric that evokes history.

A second obvious step is to investigate directly into the range of subjective conceptions of the word 'legitimacy' (合法性)—both among the Chinese public and, access permitting, Party and state officials. The literature suggests a variety of bases upon which to build regime legitimacy: ideological, nationalistic, economic or welfare performance. What meanings do the actual actors and audience of legitimation efforts make of the term? Such a study would be a helpful

way to compare theorized drivers of regime legitimacy with officials' own understanding(s) of why they are performing them and the public's own understanding(s) of why such performances merit approval or disapproval.

A third avenue of future Q Methodology research would be to investigate subjective sense-making, again among officials and the broad public, of core conceptions within Official Ideology. A fruitful starting point would be 'stability' (稳定性). 'There may be good reasons for the CCP regime to nurture and push forward a stability discourse, but it is difficult to grasp the extent to which this corresponds with what the people think and want...To put it differently: to what extent is stability a value in Chinese society that is shared by the people and hence justifies the official claim to one-party rule?' (Schubert 2014, pp. 597-598). Q Methodology is well-equipped to answer this question. My own research, which did not focus on the stability discourse specifically, nonetheless contained statements that evoked stability as a value, either implicitly (#5, #20, #27) or explicitly (#9, #47). A statement-level analysis of responses to them suggests, again, a range of views. A fuller, more focussed study could help political science understand how different pro-stability arguments—economic, social, territorial—are heard by different aspects of the public according to their particular viewpoints.

Looking more generally at the field of Chinese social science research, the possible applications of Q Methodology to improve the rigor of research results are many. In a recent issue of *Modern China*, Wang Xiyang and Nehring (2013) give an account of 'culturally situated understandings' of dating among Beijing youth, by performing small-*n* purposive sampling (similar to Q Methodology) then generating common themes and concepts from transcribed

and coded interviews. While the study successfully identified some specific issues that arise in dating—relationships across different social classes, relationships between those who do and do not possess Beijing residency permits, and the commodification of relationships into gendered and consumption-oriented roles—it fails to present an overall picture of the different ways young Beijing residents understand dating and how their approach to, or resolution of, such issues relates to those conceptions. A two-step research design, the first comprising a few interviews to distil the concourse of ideas about dating, and the second comprising a Q study in which young Beijingers sort through that concourse, might have elucidated the comprehensive landscape in which to situate the authors' list of issues—at little additional research cost.

9.5 From Q to R (From Diversity to Prevalence)

The purpose of the present study has been to understand better the diversity of viewpoints that exist within the emerging middle class regarding the values and principles that ought to guide China's politics. These conceptual insights do not need large-*n* research for validation. However, we may wish to move beyond the question, 'What is the *range* and *content* of ideological diversity within this group?'—for which Q Methodology is well-suited—to ask, 'What is the *prevalence* of each viewpoint?' This is a separate question that requires a large-*n* study from which generalizations about a population can be made.

Good surveys require prior qualitative work: to draft questions and response categories, to run pilots and confirm how questions are being understood by respondents, and to weed out redundancies. A prior Q Methodology study supports this task by grounding the survey in 'functional realities' (Brown 2009). Response categories are supplied empirically, by the population under study, rather than by convention or theoretical modelling, and therefore are closer to the conceptual distinctions that the people to be surveyed actually make.⁴ For example, a survey built atop the present study can test for prevalence of Critical Realist views—an unconventional discourse that is also under-theorized in the literature. Moreover, because the relationships between response categories are known, questions can be designed and results interpreted in ways that take those relationships into account (Baker, Van Exel et al. 2010). The result is surveys that may produce models with greater explanatory power—

⁴ For examples of surveys built using response categories discovered via Q Methodology, see:

Sullivan, John L., A. Fried, et al. (1992). "Patriotism, Politics, and the Presidential Election of 1988." *American Journal of Political Science* **36**: 200-234.

Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth, A. Fried, et al. (1991). "Mixing Methods: A Multistage Strategy for Studying Patriotism and Citizen Participation." In *Political Analysis*, edited by J. Stimson. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. pp. 89-121.

higher R-squared values—than surveys that are not similarly grounded in the functional reality of the subjective phenomena under study (Brown 2002).

9.5.1 Approaches to grounding a survey in Q Methodology findings

Three broad approaches for grounding a survey in the findings of a Q Methodology study appear most commonly in the literature: indexed responses or scale creation, after Brown (2002); profile correlation or miniaturized Q-sorts, after Danielson (2009); and self-categorization or narrative choice, also after Danielson. The indexed responses approach involves selecting representative statements from each discourse and converting them into Likert items to be scored one-by-one by respondents in a manner similar to traditional psychometric questionnaires. Respondents' discourse preferences are revealed by summing or averaging these scores across the representative statements. The miniaturized Q-sort approach likewise begins by selecting a representative subset of statements from the full set, but then asks respondents to sort them as in a traditional Q study interview. Their discourse preferences are revealed by correlating their miniature sorts with idealized miniature sorts representing each discourse. The third approach involves summarizing each discourse's narrative into one or two paragraphs, then asking respondents to reveal their preferences directly by scoring or ranking the narrative summaries put before them.

A full review of these approaches is beyond the scope of this brief discussion. There is no settled view in the literature as to which is preferred. The choice depends in part upon the research question being asked and practical parameters of the survey to be administered. I summarize the relative advantages of each approach, as I judge them, in Table 9-1.

Table 9-1 Relative strengths of three Q-Methodology-based survey techniques

Considerations	Indexed Responses	Miniaturized Q-Sort	Narrative Choice
<u>Theoretical</u>			
- Preserve holistic nature of narratives	-	X	X
- Preserve original Q statements	X	X	-
- Permit multiple or confounded views	X	X	-
- Maintain veil regarding narrative types	X	X	-
<u>Practical</u>			
- Simplify insertion into larger surveys	X	-	X
- Maximize speed and simplicity	X	-	-
- Enable self-scoring and discussion	X	-	X

An X in a given row indicates that I deem the approach indicated to outperform the other(s) in that regard.

9.5.2 Illustration using the present Q Methodology study

For the purposes of this illustration, I proceed with the indexed responses approach. It is the most familiar to traditional attitudinal surveys, the most straightforward to administer and the least taxing upon respondents. For these practical reasons, I consider it the most versatile vehicle for carrying Q Methodology insights into subsequent survey-based research.

The core task is to identify a subset of statements for each discourse that are representative of that discourse. There is no settled procedure for identifying a representative statement from a Q Methodology study, but it is generally understood that it should score (a) strongly and (b) distinctly on the discourse it is meant to represent (Lai Jinshei, Kupst et al. 2007). There is likewise no rule as to the number of statements required to represent each discourse. I have settled on four statements per discourse, or 16 statements total, which is one-quarter the size of the original set. I judge this number sufficient to contain most major themes and manageable for both survey administrators and respondents.

I developed the following procedure, comprising mechanical steps followed by my own judgment, to extract representative statements for each discourse:

1. I identified all statements that scored strongly on the discourse in question. I deemed a 'strong' score to be +/- 4 or 5.
2. I eliminated statements that also scored 'strongly' on any of the other three discourses.
3. The remaining statements are deemed to score both 'strongly' and 'distinctly' on the discourse in question. Using these statements as a starting point, without being strictly limited to them, I then selected two positively-scored statements and two negatively-scored statements by applying my own judgment along four criteria:
 - a) Centrality. Do the statements together convey the essence of the discourse?
 - b) Clarity and breadth. Are the topics addressed by the statements clear and distinct from the other representative statements I've selected?
 - c) Discourse relationships. For example, when evaluating the distinctiveness of a strong Liberal Idealist statement, I considered first its score on the Social Welfarist discourse (and vice versa), since the distinction between those two discourses is the most fundamental to representing the discourse space properly.
 - d) Divisiveness. In close cases, I chose statements found to produce higher degrees of disagreement, as summarized in §8.4.1. (This is why, for example, I selected statement #18 for inclusion over #23 as a representative statement for Liberal Idealism.)

The results are summarized in Table 9-2.

The 16 representative statements are then randomly shuffled, renumbered and converted into Likert items to be scored on a 5-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Figure 9-2 illustrates the resulting survey tool.

Table 9-2 Discerning statements, positive and negative, by discourse

No.	Statement	+/-	L.I.	S.W.	A.R.	C.R.
Liberal Idealism						
1	The law and the legal system should be separate from the government, so that it can be used by the people to limit government power and so that it applies impartially to everyone.	+	5	2	-3	2
18	Setting aside some differences in lifestyle habits, the basic values of Chinese people and foreigners are approximately the same.	+	3	-1	0	0
50	For the sake of the common good, the individual should be willing to sacrifice his powers of speech, press, assembly, demonstration, religion, property and so forth.	-	-5	-3	-1	-1
59	Most people think the same way and want the same things. Therefore, it makes sense for a single political party to hold power for a long time and promote the shared, fundamental interests of the majority.	-	-5	0	1	-1
Social Welfarism						
20	China must remain united.	+	0	5	5	0
53	True 'individuals' do not exist. It is only through our various responsibilities toward partners, children, colleagues, and other citizens that we become whole persons.	+	0	5	3	3

No.	Statement	+/-	L.I.	S.W.	A.R.	C.R.
13	Some people think that ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ is for society to decide, or that what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ can change with the times and with people’s views. But this is incorrect. Right and wrong are permanent truths. They aren’t for people to decide.	-	2	-4	-2	-2
49	Taxing the rich heavily in order to help the poor is unfair.	-	1	-4	0	-2

Authoritarian Reformism

22	It is more important to accomplish the goal than to follow established rules and procedures.	+	-1	0	4	-3
42	The driving force for change must come from the highest political levels.	+	-4	-4	5	0
11	The more government tries to help people, the less people are able to help themselves.	-	1	-3	-4	-2
26	It’s more important to change ourselves—to make ourselves into better people—than to expect government to change.	-	0	0	-4	3

Critical Realism

14	We cannot change human nature. We cannot remake ourselves into better people. Our basic values and behaviour, good and bad, are decided by social and historical forces.	+	-1	-3	-2	5
48	There is no such thing as ‘freedom’. It is just some people’s illusion.	+	0	0	-3	5
36	Things inevitably develop in a positive direction over time.	-	-2	-1	0	-4
41	Work is the source of all happiness.	-	-1	-1	2	-5

Figure 9-2 Example Q-Methodology based survey instrument

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Don't Agree	Strongly Don't Agree
1	We cannot change human nature. We cannot remake ourselves into better people. Our basic values and behaviour, good and bad, are decided by social and historical forces.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	The driving force for change must come from the highest political levels.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	Taxing the rich heavily in order to help the poor is unfair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Most people think the same way and want the same things. Therefore, it makes sense for a single political party to hold power for a long time and promote the shared, fundamental interests of the majority.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	There is no such thing as 'freedom'. It is just some people's illusion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	Things inevitably develop in a positive direction over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	For the sake of the common good, the individual should be willing to sacrifice his powers of speech, press, assembly, demonstration, religion, property and so forth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	The more government tries to help people, the less people are able to help themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	True 'individuals' do not exist. It is only through our various responsibilities toward partners, children, colleagues, and other citizens that we become whole persons.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	The law and the legal system should be separate from the government, so that it can be used by the people to limit government power and so that it applies impartially to everyone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Work is the source of all happiness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	Some people think that 'right' and 'wrong' is for society to decide, or that what is 'right' and 'wrong' can change with the times and with people's views. But this is incorrect. Right and wrong are permanent truths. They aren't for people to decide.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	It's more important to change ourselves—to make ourselves into better people—than to expect government to change.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	China must remain united.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	Setting aside some differences in lifestyle habits, the basic values of Chinese people and foreigners are approximately the same.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	It is more important to accomplish the goal than to follow established rules and procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Once the survey is administered and results collected, index scores representing each respondent's preference for each discourse can be calculated. Following Brown (2002), the procedure to calculate this index score for, say, Liberal Idealism is:

1. Convert the Likert scores for each of Liberal Idealism's representative statements (statements #4, #7, #10 and #15 from the survey) into ordinal scores from 1 to 5 (5 = Strongly Agree);
2. Reverse the scores for statements #4 and #7, since preference for Liberal Idealism is expressed by *disagreement* with these statements;
3. Multiply the respondent's scores by the absolute values of the original scores given within Liberal Idealism's factor array; then
4. Sum these four products together (alternatively, average them) to yield the respondent's raw index score on Liberal Idealism.

See Table 9-3.

Table 9-3 Calculating raw index score for respondent X on Liberal Idealism

	A	B	C	D
No.	Step 1: Convert Respondent X's Scores (illustrative)	Step 2: Reverse Scores for Affinity-via- Disagreement	Recall Original Study Scores from Liberal Idealism's Factor Array	Step 3: B x C
#4	4	2	-5	10
#7	5	1	-5	5
#10	1	1	+5	5
#15	3	3	+3	9
Step 4: Sum → Raw score				29

Once all raw index scores are calculated, they should be normalized into T-scores.

Normalization is necessary since variation in the range of original factor scores for each discourse's representative statements means that the possible range of raw scores is not the same across all four discourses.

The normalized index scores can be interpreted as revealing the respondent's relative preference for each discourse.

10 Concluding Summary

The question that framed this study was:

Is there ideological diversity amidst Beijing's emerging middle class? If so, what is its variety and content, and what does it say for the legitimacy of the Party-state, the political role of the emerging middle class and for politics in China generally?

It is, admittedly, more than one question, and part of my task here has been to show how the latter questions follow from the first. Is there ideological diversity amidst Beijing's emerging middle class? The answer is yes, and I have offered a unique map, both conceptual and visual, to describe its variety and content. The map is defined by two main boundary discourses:

Liberal Idealism, which (at the cost of much of the nuance I have found) may be summarized as an affinity for a more rule-based political system that puts higher priority upon respecting and encouraging individuality; and Social Welfarism, which wants to see a more effective state and greater emphasis by both state and society upon welfare concerns. They are not opposing, but rather orthogonal, discourses, and most research participants are confounded, to varying degrees, between them. Those whose ideological affinities step outside these boundaries appear to do so due to differences in whether or not they deem the debate taking place within them to be worthwhile. Traditional notions of an ideological spectrum ranging from 'Left' to 'Right' are misleading in the contemporary Chinese case; 'Deliver, 'Demand, 'Reconstruct' and 'Deconstruct' would be a more accurate spectrum of subjective ideological views, albeit limited to the question of political reform.

What does this picture of the ideological discourse space say for the legitimacy of the Party-state? Again I have taken a unique approach to answering this question, by making it possible to evaluate the similarities and differences between the beliefs which dominant (represented by Official Ideology) and subordinate (represented by the illuminated discourse space) hold

regarding their power relationship. The discourse-by-discourse results of this comparison are broadly positive for the Party-state. At the Social Welfarist boundary, several core beliefs of Official Ideology are strongly supported. At the Liberal Idealist boundary, although several beliefs challenge important aspects of Official Ideology, a statement-level analysis betrays an ambivalence about acting upon those beliefs and an acceptance of the Party-state's legitimacy claims.

The overall shape of the middle class discourse space is likewise positive for the legitimacy of the present regime. That shape is best summarized as 'bounded difference', and the boundaries of emerging middle class beliefs are what permit the Party-state to coherently claim to represent the shared, fundamental interests of its members. Although an analysis of the legitimization activities by which the Party-state shapes those boundaries was outside the scope of this study, it can be inferred from the overall picture my research respondents painted, as well as from the discourses that have *not* been found, that such activities are effective.

It follows that the emerging middle class can, at present, be expected to behave in a manner closer to the Party-state's conception of its role as a 'force for stability, good governance, and economic progress' than as the force for regime change predicted by modernization theory. However, that inference needs to be carefully qualified. The diversity of the discourse, and more importantly the dynamic toward Liberal Idealism (which needs to be verified by larger-scale quantitative work), suggests that the emerging middle class could nonetheless become a strong voice pushing reform—toward a more effective welfare state and/or toward a more rule-based polity that values individuality more highly. Put another way, nothing I have found suggests that stasis is a viable option for the present Party-state. Hannah Arendt observed that

the sort of ambivalence toward political action that characterizes Liberal Idealism is common.

That does not necessarily diminish the latent revolutionary potential of the discourse.

‘Freedom, which only seldom—in times of crisis or revolution—becomes a direct aim of political action, is actually the reason that men lived together in political organization at all’ (Arendt 2006, p. 145). The Party-state will have to work continually to renew its legitimacy amidst such potentialities.

Finally, what do my findings on the ideological diversity of China’s emerging middle class contribute to political studies more broadly? First, I demonstrate the feasibility and value of researching a question like legitimacy from society’s point of view. Second, I make a case for the importance of ideology as a facet of political analysis. Ideology helps us to understand not only how the Party-state thinks, but how the public thinks as well, and it helps us to articulate the possibility and validity of authoritarian, democratic, and other political futures, from both sides of the power equation.

Along the way to answering these questions, I have attempted to make two more general contributions. The first is to political theory, by offering a fresh analysis of contemporary ideological programs in mainland China. My attempt to do so here is, so far as I can tell, the first to apply Freedman’s method of ideology analysis to mainland Chinese political discourse. While necessarily abbreviated and incomplete, it is also more specific and systematic than many previous summations.⁶⁵ By planting some stakes in the sand, I hope this attempt can

⁶⁵ The closest recent comparison is Frenkiel’s effort to compare New Left and Liberalism. See: Frenkiel, Emilie (2013). “Parler Politique: Les Différents Courants Intellectuels En Chine.” *Le Banquet* 31(February).

catalyse debates and refinements that take our understanding of China's professional ideological discourses forward.

I have also attempted to make a contribution to research methods. Q Methodology is a powerful tool for uncovering subjective variety. It seems especially well-suited to a generative mode of research, where the principal aim is to discover new types and categories, versus confirmatory research that seeks mainly to test hypotheses. In a rapidly changing environment like China, there are endless situations where the former mode is fruitful. It is therefore surprising that published applications of the method in Chinese politics research are so scarce.

One barrier, it seems, is that some specifics of how data should be handled and analysed in a Q Methodology study are poorly understood and actively debated, even by regular practitioners. At the risk of being rather plodding at times, I have therefore tried to make each step in the process clear and to make explicit where my own judgment was needed and what principles I followed in exercising it. The result is, I hope, a fully transparent and repeatable Q study that can also serve as a how-to manual of sorts for other researchers. I hope it helps to bring Q Methodology more fully into the mainstream toolkit of politics research.



Research objectives and contributions aside, this whole work is an expression of my own belief that to try to understand ideological diversity is an inherently worthwhile thing to do. A single ideology, be it the Official Ideology of the Party, or the Liberalism of J.S. Mill, has as its goal to end debate over the question of what the guiding values and principles of the polity should be. It is to declare the contest, the game, finished, and anoint one's favourite fundamentals the victor. But this ending is artificial. To endorse it, we must veil ourselves

from the reality of other possibilities. Concepts like ‘order’ or ‘freedom’ do not submit to any one definition. Their meanings change over time, as the means and values of society change. In a world of increasingly intensive global connectivity, to understand one another better we must constantly work to unfix our understanding of the terms that lie at the core of our own ideological affinities. We must not silence the voices we can’t accept. We must actively recruit them into the conversation. We must actively deny the illusion of final outcomes. To understand one another better, we must see politics not as a finite ideological contest to be won, but as an infinite game wherein the purpose is to prevent the conclusion of play.

11 Appendices

11.1 Partial list of concourse sampling sources

Common texts

Confucius: The Analects
Book of Mencius

Newspapers

People's Daily 人民日报 (editorial pages), <http://opinion.people.com.cn>
Guangming Daily 光明日报, <http://www.gmw.cn>
Southern Weekly 南方周末, <http://www.infzm.com>

Journals and magazines

Qiushi 求是, <http://www.qstheory.cn>
Caijing 财经, <http://www.caijing.com.cn>
Caixin 财新, <http://www.caixin.com>

Party-state speeches and reports

Mao Zedong 毛泽东, quoted in Nathan (1985, p.64)
Wen Jiabao 温家宝, <http://archive.caing.com/2008-03-03/100086235.html>
Jiang Zemin 江泽民, quoted in Brady (2008, p.46)
Wang Yi 王毅, quoted in Cheng (2008, p.391)
National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference 中国人民政治协商会议全国委员会, <http://www.cppcc.gov.cn>

Public intellectuals and bloggers

Li Dazhao 李大钊, quoted in Kelly and Reid (1998, p.101)
Xu Zhiyuan 许知远, <http://www.bullogger.com/blogs/xuzhiyuan>
Fang Lizhi 方励之, quoted in Sausmikat (2003, pp.378-379)
Han Han 韩寒, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/twocold>
Li Chengpeng 李承鹏, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_46e7ba4101017oxo.html
Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波, <http://www.2008xianzhang.info/xiaobo>
Ai Weiwei 艾未未, <http://www.bullogger.com/blogs/aiww>
Wei Jingsheng 魏京生, quoted in He (1996, p.58)
Liu Yu 刘瑜, <http://rendaliuyu.blog.163.com>
Yan Fu 严复, quoted in Max Ko-Wu Huang (2008, p.191)

Social media

Liu Ping 刘萍, <http://www.weibo.com/p/1005051859163942>

11.2 List of research participants, with short descriptions and factor loadings

Each participant's ID is encoded as: [P-Set: A or B] [Count] / [Sex] [Birth year: 19XX].

★denotes a Party member.

Table 11-1 Factor loadings for P-Set A

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A01/F80	High school mathematics teacher	0.4501	0.3636
A02/M79	Executive in a private media company	0.4801	0.5053
A03/F90	Manager in a private logistics company	0.1777	0.5715
A04/F77	Analyst in a private corporation	0.4439	0.6211
A05/M86★	Policy analyst for a municipal government	0.1658	0.0948
A06/M81	Producer in a private media company	0.645	0.515
A07/F89	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.5459	0.2746
A08/F75	Freelancing business consultant	0.69	0.3729
A09/M75	Software engineer at a state oil company	0.3936	0.5201
A10/F80	Stay-at-home mother	0.6886	0.3355
A11/F89	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.5402	0.5278
A12/F84	Accountant	0.6351	0.2723
A13/F89★	Self-employed online retailer	0.6303	-0.0261
A14/M85	Editor at a weekly news magazine	0.3419	0.091
A15/F79	Self-employed artist	0.5537	0.3318
A16/F87	Office worker in a state-owned company	0.211	0.7418
A17/F79	Manager in a state-owned enterprise	0.3803	0.4167
A18/F81	Analyst in a state-owned enterprise	0.5812	0.5665

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A19/F83	Office worker in a non-governmental organization	0.6999	0.5125
A20/M77	Lawyer	0.7737	0.1366
A21/M78	CEO of a small IT consulting company	0.6722	0.4407
A22/F84★	Professional at a state telecom group	-0.1145	0.7018
A23/M88★	Office worker in a state-owned company	0.2249	0.379
A24/F84★	Overseas account manager in a private company	0.3947	0.5685
A25/F82★	Laboratory assistant at a university	0.3571	0.6872
A26/F89★	Undergraduate student	0.3933	0.2972
A27/F81	Manager in an airline company	0.571	0.4232
A28/F87	Office worker in a charity	0.417	0.5889
A29/F91	Undergraduate student	0.2447	0.5186
A30/F83	Self-employed housewife	0.4267	0.601
A31/F84	Office worker in a public hospital	0.352	0.5564
A32/F88★	Graduate student	0.0886	0.6962
A33/M86	HR manager in a private company	0.6179	0.2205
A34/F82★	Committee member for a district Party committee	0.5057	0.5081
A35/M88★	Graduate student	0.6065	0.2464
A36/F75	Manager of a real estate branch office	0.4796	0.5808
A37/F93	Undergraduate student	0.2306	0.267
A38/F87	Chemist at a state standards institute	0.2923	0.5694
A39/F86	Economist at a foreign multinational	0.6137	0.5011

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
A40/M93	Executive at a state telecom company	0.1643	0.4181
A41/F90★	Graduate student	0.557	0.5721
A42/F81★	Manager in a foreign multinational	0.5004	0.5208
A43/F87★	Graduate student	0.5236	0.4913
A44/M81★	Manager at central National Development and Reform Commission	0.4087	0.5381
A45/F80	Manager in a state-owned bank	0.5166	0.6613
A46/M87★	Doctoral student at the Central Party School	0.275	0.5119
A47/M87	Research assistant in a local government services branch	0.1917	0.6271
A48/M75★	Policy researcher in public health department	0.4877	0.4314
A49/M84★	Case manager at district CPC Politics and Law Commission	0.0249	0.5465
A50/M86	Journalist for a national daily newspaper	0.6872	0.3498
A51/M84★	Lawyer	0.618	0.5823
A52/F88	Christian missionary	0.6512	0.1011
A53/F88★	Undergraduate student	0.1472	0.6289
A54/M79	Private entrepreneur and investor	0.0922	0.4863
A55/F90	Self-employed online retailer	0.5685	0.4031
A56/M83	Strategy consultant in a foreign multinational	0.5107	0.5714
A57/M75★	University professor	0.7669	0.2947
A58/F89★	English teacher at a university	0.446	0.5245

Table 11-2 Factor loadings for P-Set B

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
B01/F86★	Greeter at an entertainment complex	0.399	0.5847
B02/F88	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.3167	0.6901
B03/F88	Sales associate at a private company	0.4112	0.5363
B04/F91	Graduate student	0.5198	0.3249
B05/F79	Analyst in a multinational investment bank	0.6463	0.4155
B06/M85	Intern at a non-governmental organization	0.1647	0.5312
B07/F88★	Professional at an internet company	0.594	0.5671
B08/M88★	Graduate student	0.1597	0.5792
B09/F84★	Journalist for an English-language newspaper	0.5666	0.5415
B10/F89★	Office worker in a private company	0.2986	0.5292
B11/M83	Project manager at a Chinese multinational	0.3572	0.5207
B12/F86	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.1304	0.6807
B13/M86	Journalist for a regional daily newspaper	0.5641	0.6214
B14/F83	Sports agent	0.3586	0.4844
B15/M74	Board member of a state-owned enterprise	0.6349	0.4197
B16/F84	Public relations manager at a private company	0.8468	0.0783
B17/F88★	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.5003	0.6234
B18/M89★	Undergraduate student	0.2973	0.7275
B19/F86★	Graduate student	0.3373	0.4958
B20/F86	Scientist at a state-owned technology firm	0.6945	0.3808
B21/M75★	University professor	0.1325	0.748

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
B22/F82★	Entrepreneur	0.3693	0.5903
B23/F81	Accountant in a non-governmental organization	0.4469	0.5567
B24/M90	Undergraduate student	0.2526	0.4884
B25/F82	Representative for a chamber of commerce	0.1858	0.636
B26/M83★	Fire inspector for a district government	-0.0693	0.3896
B27/M82	Social media manager at a state media company	0.4003	0.3442
B28/F94	Medical doctor	0.4191	0.5079
B29/F88★	Unemployed researcher	0.2394	0.6219
B30/M86	Stock market trader	0.6285	0.4279
B31/F82	Research assistant at a university	0.8177	0.2109
B32/F81	Policy specialist at a weekly news magazine	-0.3167	0.3705
B33/M76	Entrepreneur	0.7071	0.4008
B34/F83★	Editor for a national daily newspaper	0.6128	0.2374
B35/M80★	Host at a state television broadcaster	0.4619	0.4226
B36/F81	Professional in a state-owned enterprise	0.6199	0.238
B37/F88★	Graduate student	0.133	0.6651
B38/M85★	Public servant in a central ministry	0.5401	0.5036
B39/F82	Office worker in a foreign multinational	0.3036	0.6155
B40/M89	Buddhist monk	0.2898	0.5109
B41/M77★	Editor for an online news portal	0.4477	0.4867
B42/F79	Yoga instructor	0.3814	0.5171
B43/F90	Professional at a private corporation	0.6803	0.3695

Participant ID	Short Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
B44/M86	Tradesman	0.4671	0.6204
B45/F85	Office worker in a state welfare office	0.3813	0.3981
B46/F83	Executive in a non-governmental organization	0.4498	0.553
B47/F80	Presenter at a state television broadcaster	0.2989	0.5753
B48/M80	IT worker	0.5046	0.4142
B49/M84	Sales associate at a private company	0.618	0.5621
B50/M87	Journalist	0.736	0.3131
B51/F83	Engineer in a state-owned enterprise	0.4389	0.5186
B52/F87★	Office worker at central National Development and Reform Commission	0.5097	0.3613
B53/F83	Stay-at-home mother	0.0057	0.6308
B54/F86	Professional in a foreign-owned company	0.4828	0.559
B55/F75★	Writer	0.5439	0.2387
B56/F86	Sales associate at a private company	0.7544	0.1572
B57/F76	Socialite	0.7053	0.4261
B58/M78	Manager in a private company	0.7868	0.0991
B59/F79	Lawyer	0.7776	0.066

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