The London School of Economics and Political Science

Citizenship as Social Representations: Forging Political Mindedness in Rural China

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Abstract

This thesis investigates social representations of citizenship in rural China. The research combines socio-cultural and political psychology to explore the transmission and appropriation of a culturally distant concept. It is assumed that knowledge transmission is contingent on communities' levels of openness and closure to the outside world, dependent on social identity and influenced by the local cultural discourses. The thesis expands the socio-cultural psychology of knowledge encounters through a model that integrates social identity and cultural discourses on the social representational process.

The research consisted of a comparative field design, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Using multistage sampling, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire were conducted in five different villages in Wenzhou, China, each situated in a different position of the openness/closure continuum. Purposive sampling was used to select sites and quota sampling was used to select participants.

It was found that social representations of citizenship centre on a dyad of political rights and individual rights and interests. Communities' levels of openness/closure influence people's normative evaluations of citizenship: democratic virtues are less valued in closed communities. Village leadership was found to affect people's knowledge and practice of citizenship. Identification with the shared civic identity led ordinary villagers and leaders to converge in normative evaluations.

Cognitive polyphasia was found in local cultural discourses, which channel people's normative judgements and affect the representational process. Citizenship as social representations awaken people's political mind and as embodied cognition drives citizenship phenomena. While no formal knowledge of citizenship was found, rural residents regularly exercise civic rights and duties. The impact of external influence on social representations of citizenship suggests that in time modernisation will minimise regional differences. The thesis concludes that the political landscape in rural China is changing and civic education remains a pressing political issue for the people and government of China.

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Introduction: Contextualising Citizenship Studies in Rural China

This research investigates citizenship awareness in rural China in order to shed light on the political future of China's rural democratisation. Four questions are posed: a). what are the social representations of citizenship in rural China; b). how do distinctive social identities, such as leadership and Party membership influence people's representations of citizenship; c). how is the West-originated concept of citizenship appropriated and recreated in China's rural communities? In other words, how do the prevalent discourses in rural Chinese society, including communism, universal equality, community autonomy and democracy affect social representations of citizenship; and, d). what impacts do social representations of citizenship have on rural political life.

The research aims to demonstrate the burgeoning of citizenship awareness in rural China, showing its underlying social and cultural psychological mechanisms while exploring its political implications. The research questions rose gradually throughout my years' interest in and research on China's rural democratisation. My rising discontent with the increasingly saturated explanatory power of the conventional political and sociological perspectives urged me to explore this issue from a novel angle, and to develop a more comprehensive approach that emphasises human agency, while also accounting for the macro-level social factors. A social psychological approach appears to suit the research better than any other.

Theoretically, this thesis aims to articulate different existing theoretical paradigms in contemporary social psychology. The general framework of the approach is developed through Jovchelovitch's *Knowledge in Context* (2007). For two basic reasons, the ideas developed in her book are very important to me. Firstly, I dealt with the meeting of ideas resulting from two different cultural and political approaches, western and contemporary Chinese. At the same time a huge diversity characterises contemporary Chinese political thinking, and my present work aims also to reveal how in a particular setting, new social agents have appeared. The interconnection between changes in the setting and changes in thinking, and concomitantly changes in interconnections between social members and their interconnection with their communities and the state are especially drastic and notable in the rural world.

Such an approach necessarily involves different levels of explanation; firstly, in the sense of Doise (1986) in dealing with large-scale social phenomena such as social changes. Also, as recently proposed by Elcheroth, Doise, and Reicher (2011), new theoretical approaches will be adapted from recent studies in political psychology, especially those attempting to integrate social representation theory (SRT), social identity theory (SIT) and discursive theories. Responding to their proposal, Staerklé (2011) appeals for consideration of historical and cultural factors in social representation

research on political phenomena. As an attempt at such integration, this research brings together also sociological, political and economic insights.

1. The Problem

Citizenship awareness is a relatively new and increasingly important phenomenon in rural China. Despite the fact that "citizenship" was brought into China in early 1900s, this concept remained alien to the public until China's opening-up in 1979. Introduced as an integral part of democracy, this notion inspired China's Democratic Revolution (1840-1949 AD) and measures to encourage civic participation was institutionalised and carried out in certain areas in the country during the Republic era (1912-1945 AD) (Li, 2005). Nevertheless, "citizenship" was mostly a conceptualisation of the elites and institutional setups aspired to democracy including importantly citizenship education rarely influenced the vast majority of the rural population. With China's switch to the Marxist road later in 1940s, the nation's enthusiasm for communism overpowered the then political leaders' wish for establishing a liberal regime in the country. Concomitantly, "democracy" and hence its close associate — "citizenship" were belittled due to their liberal origin; and most of the related institutional arrangements were abandoned. Indeed, the democratic revolution in early 1900s resulted in fundamental changes in China; nevertheless, "citizenship" or "citizen" remained to be an alien concept to most Chinese people and it was a fancy notion appeared only in legal documents and academic discussions but not in public discourse.

The revival of the notion of citizenship in China is after 1978 and its connotations changed slightly. Initially, this concept was brought to the country from Japan in spite of its Western origin and the relevant institutional setups at the time largely took after the Japanese example. With its opening-up, China came into direct contact with the western world. The country's great transformation meanwhile confronted the predominant communist ideology with liberalism. The result is an increase of public consciousness for individual rights and a subsequent surge of citizenship movements nationwide. Unlike the democratic revolution in 1900s which was led by the elites, citizenship movements this time are pushed from the bottom although they are ultimately derived from reforms initiated by the government.

In rural China, the long historical tradition of local administers supporting peasants' petitioning "rulers" on a moral basis to a certain extent gave peasants a sense of agency, which however gave people neither leverage nor courage to negotiate with rulers. It is ultimately the implementation of the village self-governance policy that gave rise to the rapid growth of citizenship awareness and the subsequent increase in rights claims in rural Chinese society. The village self-governance policy

is a state policy that entitles Chinese peasants[1] the right to directly elect a chairman, vice-chairman and members of village committees. Although village self-governance is officially conceived of through democratic election, decision-making, management and supervision, it has rarely been practised beyond elections in rural communities (Kennedy, 2002; Zhao & Fang, 2013). In spite of widespread questioning and pessimism (Manion, 2009; O'Brien & Li, 2000; O'Brien & Han, 2009), empirical evidence shows that political practices of self-governance have generated an awareness of citizenship among Chinese peasants, which has increased rapidly in recent years (Guo, 2003; Pastor & Tan, 2000; Zhang, Wilking & Yu, 2010; Zhao, 2011), and which has spawned enormous speculation about the possibility of a democratic future for vast rural China (Horsley, 2001; Manion, 2009; O'Brien & Han, 2009; Shi, 1999; Tan, 2006).

1.1 Empirical Gaps

Current studies on Chinese citizenship are characterised by a focus on urban China, an uncritical application of Western theories, and analyses regularly examining sociological and/or political levels. Much scholarly endeavour has been devoted to a close scrutiny of the status quo of Chinese citizenship while monitoring its development. However, three critical issues are largely left unattended, thus creating an incomplete and even somehow distorted notion of Chinese citizenship.

First, despite the fact that studies on citizenship in China proliferate (see for example, Brandstädter, 2011; Fang & Yang, 2012; Goldman, 2002; Goldman & Perry, 2002; Harris, 2002; O'Brien, 2002; Zhang, Wilking & Yu, 2010), rural China is often overlooked. The disproportional attention to urban China often leads to a false impression that either the Chinese rural population is a negligible group, or that citizenship phenomena in rural China deserves no particular attention. On the contrary, however, rural Chinese society is the frontier of citizenship struggles and the rural population constitutes 45.23% of the entire Chinese population (Institute of Population and Labor Economics, CASS, 2014). In effect, it was not until 2010 that the urban population rose to about the

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[1] The difference between 'peasant' and 'farmer' is that the former is a concept related to social class (Qing, 2000) and the latter to social stratum. In effect, currently most Chinese rural residents do not farm and many of them work in cities. However, they are still officially registered as peasants. The term is used in most Chinese studies to capture this characteristic. I keep the term 'peasant' in this research also to stress that this group is socially deprived in comparison with urban citizens in many aspects of social life. It does not harbour any derogative connotations associated with the English language. Although the most recent policy (introduced in 2014) rules state that eligible peasants can register as urban residents if their wishes, but most of them refuse to make the change because it means to renounce their claims to farmlands and village collective benefits. The rural-urban division still exists.

same size (49.95% of the whole population) as the rural population due to the result of the country's massive urbanisation. In 1949 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded, urban residents accounted for only 10.64% and it remained to be under 20% until 1981, two years after China's 'opening up'.[2]

Meanwhile, the numerical majority has often been the exploited group, and for the most part, the silent group since the beginning of Chinese recorded history. The situation did not change until 1988 when the Chinese government launched a project aiming for rural democratisation. Since then, citizenship in rural China has become a notable social phenomenon. With the *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China* having enfranchised peasants at a grassroots level and institutional support in place for advancing the rural civil society, claims over right and collective actions have escalated rapidly in rural areas, especially in recent years.

Second, the problem of institutional incompatibility is routinely overlooked, and studies on Chinese citizenship tend to uncritically apply models from liberal-democratic societies to a very different social system. Researchers have often displayed normative presumptions about civic virtues and use Western criteria to evaluate political behaviours in relation to civil society. Assessments are made and prescriptions are given without considering the contingencies of institutional environments. Also ignored in the institutional approach is the fact that the concept of citizenship was conceived in market economies. However, economic forms are closely connected with forms of governance, as proposed by economists to organise political practice (Hayek, 2006/1944; Kornai, 1992).

China's distinctive political and economic environment has produced unique Chinese citizenship and citizenship phenomena. Among all the distinctive country-specific characteristics, disparity between rural China and urban China is perhaps the most notable one. This, however, is under-researched. The rural-urban differences are ultimately originated from the varied institutional setups. Although politics is in general beyond people's influence due to China's political system, Chinese peasants are deeply involved in local politics unlike urban residents. Peasants are encouraged to manage their own village affairs and are provided with strong institutional support for political participation. Though rural residents have endearing experiences of consequential voting, they are aware of the fact that their political influence is confined to within their own village. Dwelling in this unique political milieu, Chinese peasants' civic practice cannot be fully captured by Western models of citizenship.

Third, institutional investigations both at the political level and sociological level suffer from blindness towards people's agency. Indeed the strong Chinese government dominates the country's

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[2] Figures were cited from *Almanac of China's Population 2011*.

politics and controls its transformational processes (Gilley, 2011). Nevertheless, the rapid growth of the civil society and the resulting contest between state and society cannot be ignored. Although the growth of civil society in China has drawn extensive scholarly attention,[3] so far few researchers have paid adequate attention to the underlying social psychological mechanisms. Social psychological factors that shape people's political behaviour and strategies are omitted from the broad narrative of China's emerging civil society. It is however ultimately motivation, rather than institutional incentives, that drive people to engage in the social and political world, which in turn shall lead to the reconfiguration of a political landscape.

Fourth, institutional investigations usually have an implicit agenda for effective governance. Despite the fact that globally, the discourse of governance has shifted from steering to an on-going accommodation (Goodin, Rein & Moran, 2008, pp. 7-25), the strong Chinese government has prevented scholars from taking seriously the fact that the ruler and the governed are indeed in constant negotiations for producing social structural shifts. When Gilley (2011) proposed to "kick the society back out", his intention was to remind people of the fact that popular paradigms in the West such as the state-society model and society-centred models are not applicable to China, and the political future of China remains in the hands of the state.

While he rightly points out the danger of an uncritical application of Western models to studying Chinese politics, he overlooks the fact that changes never occur in isolation. It is precisely the "grassroots organisations, right defenders, and political dissidents" —the "premature" focus of scholars as he deems (Gilley, 2011, p.533) —, that have brought about tremendous political changes in China through their restless appeals for government responsiveness.

The state-society model may not be pertinent in explaining politics in China, but to understand political changes in contemporary China, it is necessary to take society into consideration. Contrary to Gilley's 2011 proposal, research on the bottom-up social forces appears to be particularly important when the state occupies the centre of discourse. Highlighting the state may risk a negligence of society; hence confuse the ends with the means. Institutions such as the state are developed to serve people but not vice versa. Also, they are as much a result from the interplay of existing powerful social forces as they create and regulate such forces.

The political reality in China calls for special attention to these societal dynamics. After China's gradual shift from a "redistributive" state to "enterpreneurial" (Burowoy, 1996; Eyal & Szelényi, 1997; King & Szelényi, 2005; Nee, 1996; Wu, 2008), the people have gained more leverage for political involvement. As a result, collective actions and social movements have exploded in recent

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[3] A number of research centres concerning this issue were established, such as Center for Civil Society Studies in Peking University and Centre for Civil Society and Governance in the University of Hong Kong.

years. Critical engagement with politics has become a national trend in the age of the Internet. Driven by social psychological dynamics, Chinese people consciously or unconsciously engage in the reconfiguration of the political landscape. To better understand Chinese citizenship and to expand our thinking about its implications, a bottom-up social psychological examination of such processes is crucial.

Besides the above empirical gaps, the bottom-up social psychological approach to citizenship this project takes is also an attempt to explore the complex relations between social mentality and this abstract yet *objective* social world.[4] To be precise, this study examines the reciprocal influences between state, market and society as the most powerful social forces in the modern world and social representations of citizenship to capture people's political mindedness as the public responses to overwhelming external powers.

Despite the fact that state, market and society are identified as three useful concepts to understand and address social and political problems by contemporary scholars, and have been combined with one another to address social issues, few researchers have integrated these three concepts into their empirical studies (Hall & Trentmann, 2005). The possible reason is that because whichever concept or approach is already powerful enough to account for social problems, they are used as such by specialised teams of researchers composed for instance of respectively only economists, or sociologists, or political scientists. Also, these teams often compete with one another rather than to seek integration. In addition, an integration of these powerful approaches in addressing one single social problem or phenomena seems to be over-complicated and excessive.

Citizenship awareness is a phenomenon that cannot be explained sufficiently without considering all three factors. It is highly susceptible to the influence, of not only the state but also the market and society; to their embraced discourses, to be precise. An important aspect of this investigation is to display the intermeshing and competing influences of state, market and society on people's political minds to shed light on China's political evolvement, which may extend to other modern societies subject to the same discourses.

Discourse is an elusive concept that lacks a consensual definition; and researchers of different disciplines attend to varied aspects of discourse. This research does not take up the social psychological definition of discourse as concrete forms of texts and talks. Instead, discourse in this study is used in a Foucauldian sense referring to abstract forms of specific and repeatable relations among signs that link objects, subjects and statements (Foucault, 1972). In this sense, discourse is

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[4] By objective social world, I refer to social influences on individuals as substantive and consequential. It does not mean that information used in influence attempts and/or knowledge in the social world are bona fide representations of the world. In fact, information and/or knowledge are mostly if not completely subjective.

composed of several levels, with ideology at the most abstract level, people's daily communication at the most concrete level and all kinds of cultural conventions in between. In this research, discourse is mostly discussed at the more abstract levels, i.e. conventions/traditions and ideology. . Therefore, attitudinal and rhetorical aspects of language use (Billig, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) is not the focus of this study although relevant techniques are used to analyse data. However, what this project emphasise is also not discursive formation of these discourses, but their constructive power on people's political mind and practice.

1.2 Theoretical Gaps

Social representation, social identity and discourse are identified to crack the empirical puzzles. Integrating these concepts, however, raises a number of theoretical questions. The first problem is the integration of Social Representation Theory (SRT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). Despite the fact that empirical studies have repeatedly shown that social identities are highly relevant to social representations in the social world, hitherto, no theoretical concepts in both SRT and SIT have been pinpointed as the basis for articulating these two theories. Second, as "encountering the knowledge of others" (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p.127) has become a pressing and common social phenomenon which often causes problems in the modern world, more research is needed to further the original insights of a psychology of knowledge encounters beyond Jovchelovitch's attentive concern for community building. Global power hierarchies and those within the communities are surely determinants of the knowledge construction, nevertheless the cognitive processing of knowledge encountering, which is bases upon communal as well as individual experiences, is also crucial for understanding both the process and outcome of such encounters and their possible influences on communal life.

Third, despite the fact that the discursive dimension has been very much emphasised since the very construction of SRT (Moscovici, 2008/1961), SRT research has largely hinged upon semantic interpretations of texts (including transcribed talks); meanings are completed with unfolding texts. A forward-looking strategy in analysis is certainly crucial to decipher the mysterious processes of how abstract ideas and concepts become objectified, which constitutes a major interest of SRT research. Meanwhile, some "sociological imagination" (Mills, 1959) helps to reconstruct the social forces that drive and propel a social re-presentation of specific ideas and concepts and also to re-abstract such processes. This is important because social individuals inhabit a world that is imbued with social constraints more than communal conventions. On the one hand it is never enough to emphasis human agency; on the other hand, neither should social institutions and the overwhelming power of globalisation be overlooked. Although the extent to which agency is constrained remains arguable, it is widely agreed that social animals are far from being *free* in any sense. Such

reconstruction and re-abstraction, however, requires additional discussions on discourse at the ideological level, which is often understated in semantic analysis.

In sum, this research aims to answer the following problems in the literature. Empirically, it concerns bottom-up social forces in China's rural communities, the political prospect of rural China, and, the reciprocal interactions between social mentality and external conditions. Theoretically, it is an attempt to bring together social representation, social identity and discourse to address large-scale social phenomena. Currently, these three all-encompassing concepts are often applied to researching social processes and problems respectively. Methodologically, it is an exploration to bring together methods often used in other disciplines with established psychological techniques in social psychological investigations, and to apply analytical techniques informed by other disciplines to social representation research.

2. Contextualising Citizenship Studies in China

Citizenship has its origin in Western ideology. It was introduced into China by Chinese scholars in the early twentieth century in order to mobilise Chinese people and liberate China from Western colonialism and also to establish a nation state that adopted Western democratic politics. Despite the fact that a communist instead of a liberal regime was eventually founded in China, the official definition of citizenship in China largely follows the Western formulation. Although Chinese citizenship is intended to be an imitation of its Western prototype, in practice it is a distinctive variation resulting from the contextual interaction between state and society. Its distinctiveness is particularly clear in rural China where the village self-governance policy encourages Chinese peasants to participate in politics. This political contradiction requires special consideration for China's specific internal and external political environments and the existing local knowledge in addition to the classical theorisation of citizenship when examining citizenship in rural China.

2.1 Fluid Citizenship

Modern citizenship is widely understood to be a legal status under the authority of a nation state (Janoski & Gran, 2002; Olsen, 2008; Saward, 2006; Smith, 2002). It is firstly related to political inclusion and exclusion and to the recognition of membership by a particular recognised political entity. Although, it is increasingly challenged by scholars' theorisation on a "cosmopolitan citizenship" (Habermas, 2003) ideally supported by a "great international federation" (Kant, 1915) and by people's practices in extending citizenship beyond territorial boundaries (Linklater, 2002), nation states remain to be the primary legitimate resource for claims for, and protection of, citizenship. However, within every nation state, citizenship is not popularised to every individual resident. Modern citizenship is innately in conflict with universal human rights in this sense.

With human rights having become the ethical principles that govern many people's life choice (Doise, 2002), and the enforceable domain of human rights expanding with the ever-faster pace of globalisation, the tension between citizenship and human rights is becoming more evident and important in this "global village". Citizenship can no longer satisfy people's uplifting vision of universal equality. The tension between the human rights and citizenship rights has become indispensable in understanding people's perception of citizenship in many places. Indeed, efforts to transcend the rather narrow nation-state-based citizenship are rarely seen in rural China. The conflicts between state-issued citizenship rights and human rights are present all the same. In fact, such tension is particularly relevant when studying social representations of citizenship in rural China given that the idea of equality among individuals is a conventional belief in China, but Chinese peasants are institutionally discriminated against.

Modern citizenship is comprised of rights endowed and protected by nation states and corresponding obligations towards protectors. The still on-going global transformation "from subjectship to citizenship" (Smith, 2002, p. 107) initiated by anti-monarchical revolutions in the West has brought about more emphasis on rights compared with the past. Marshall (1950) proposed three types of citizenship rights that still guide contemporary citizenship research: civil rights that highlight individual freedom; political rights that centre on political participation; and, social rights that concern welfare and security for equal sharing and dignified living. On the other hand, discussions about obligations and civic virtues revolve around effective governance (Isin & Turner, 2002). To understand a local comprehension of citizenship, people's perception of both citizenship rights and obligations should be closely examined.

Admittedly, citizenship today carries far more complex connotations since inception. It has become an increasingly important social phenomenon involving restless political struggles for rights and recognition (Honneth, 1995; Taylor, 1994) that is beyond any static description. The conventional reading of citizenship as a status is premised on the presumption of the certainty of citizens' identities (Saward, 2006). However, in practice the individual is neither fully autonomous nor 'whole'. Instead, many people have to struggle with their ascribed social identities and suffer from social exclusion resulting from their group identities. Identification is contested, and constructed rather than automatically acquired, which brought about Saward's critiques of the conventional notion of citizenship as disembodied and disembedded. The body and its associated emotions and desires dissolved in the view of the rational individual, and identity work is separated from particular contexts (Saward, 2006). Discourses that compete for individual loyalty and mobilise social movements for rights and identity claims are also ignored. However, the embodied experience is of particular importance for citizenship studies, because top-down bureaucratic categorisation does not entail identification. Instead, it may evoke dissatisfaction and resistance

within social agents, which may lead to all forms of fights for rights and recognition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987).

2.2 A Social Psychological Approach to Citizenship: Capturing the Social Dynamics

The latest development of citizenship is characterised by negotiations initiated by social groups with the state and other predominant groups, generating a social psychological interest in the contextual and embodied aspects of citizenship. The subjective versus objective dimension (Condor, 2011; Sindic, 2011) is proposed, and membership and human agency are highlighted (Condor & Gibson, 2011; McNamara, Muldoon, Stevenson & Slattery, 2011). The possibility of inconsistencies between objective citizenship ("the bureaucratic classification, and consequent treatment, of a particular polity") status, and subjective citizenship ("an individual's personal awareness of, and possibly investment in, their own polity membership") status[5] is taken into account in investigations into identity work around citizenship (Condor, 2011, p. 194). Such a formulation connects the body, contexts and civic actions, and allows for human agency in the change of inter-group dynamics and a bottom-up contextual examination of the image of citizenship.

Along this embodied line, social psychologists further explored the ideological impact on political participation based on the political typologies of citizenship: liberalism, communitarianism and republicanism (Condor & Gibson, 2011). Liberalism emphasises individual rights; Communitarianism places stronger emphasis on the community rather than the individual; whereas, Republicanism seeks a balanced emphasis on both individual and group rights, and explores the potential of conflicts and contests in constructing or expanding such rights (Isin & Turner, 2002). Among these three types, communitarian citizenship is the most akin to Chinese politics in theory, despite the fact that it describes civic practices in social democratic states in the West. In principle, Chinese citizenship can be categorised to some extent as communitarianism in that it stresses community development. Invented in the post-war era, these typologies although insightful cannot capture the development of citizenship in this rapid changing world. Globalisation has challenged the integrity of any of these three ideologies by directly presenting and juxtaposing the other two and somehow conflicting value systems in people's daily life. Explorations on these encounters and their political repercussions are more pertinent to contemporary citizenship and warrant further attention.

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[5] The distinction between objective citizenship and subjective citizenship is not made in the sense that one is a social reality and the other is merely illusionary, but rather where one is an artefact and the other is a mental representation. In effect, objective citizenship is essentially normative citizenship and subjective citizenship is as real and influential to individuals as objective citizenship.

To research how people deal with their encounters with foreign cultural knowledge, which may have significant influence on their life, social psychology offers a number of theories. Among them, Social Representation Theory is the one that directly addresses this issue. SRT is a theory that concerns how the public translates ideas and concepts with their shared vocabularies and make them relevant to their life (Moscovici, 2008/1961). This process of producing socially-shared knowledge through anchoring new knowledge in the pre-existing knowledge system is known as social re-presentation and the products of which as social representations. These transformed concepts that are communicated in society in turn become new elements in mental repertoire that function as resources to understand alien knowledge and produce new knowledge. More studies were later produced to discuss the pragmatic functions of social representations. Evidence shows that social representations are normative, regulating people's attitudes, behaviour and likely emotions (Moscovici, 2001). As changes in collective attitude and behaviour modify the social world, social re-presentation and its product – social representations – are consequential. The new developments expanded SRT's applicability to studying social phenomenon other than knowledge production within groups, rendering it especially relevant to researching social policies and other large-scale social events that involve more than one social group, which were traditionally regarded as sociological and political topics. The connection it built between social psychological mechanisms and the manifest social phenomena enables an in-depth examination of the impact of human agency on the social world. It provides a useful framework for my research on the bottom-up social forces in rural China because these forces emerged as the public responses to state power and they in turn alter the local political dynamics.

Social representation primarily concerns the group process of social re-presentation and its ideological consequences. Within this theoretical framework, there are other more nuanced mechanisms involved that influence social representational processes. Among them, social identity is the most important. The varied social representations for the same concept precisely result from differing group interests as Moscovici's (2008/1961) seminal work on psychoanalysis showed. Meanwhile, this issue has been dealt with exhaustively by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and its development –Self Categorisation Theory/SCT (Turner, et al., 1987). SIT addresses people's actions stemmed from their group membership and their motivations for group behaviour. Its emphasis on group members' insistency in the consistency of group ideology provides accounts for the phenomena of different re-presenting at both the intergroup level and intragroup level. SCT on the other hand further explores the intra-individual process of social identity. Both theories offer insight into group phenomena and to manifestations, processes and underlying cognitive mechanisms.

As to the cognitive processing of knowledge when two knowledge systems encounter one another, neither theory has really dealt with this due to their particular empirical interests. However, cognitive polyphasia — a concept proposed by Moscovici (2008/1961) in SRT— promises an examination of this phenomena. Cognitive polyphasia refers to the state of co-existence of different types of knowledge within individuals, upon which people draw to make sense of the world. A number of studies have demonstrated that the state of cognitive polyphasia also exists at the community level, among others (Jovchelovich & Gervais, 1999). Cognitive polyphasia, however, does not rule out the possibility of an achievable consensus by social groups seeking to attend to particular interests or a universalistic framework shared by every social member.

This universalistic framework perhaps should be sought in our embodied experiences rather than in pure reason, as many philosophers contend (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). What is universal to the human race is our basic biological structure, and along with it, our embodied encounters with the world. Our sensory experiences with the world generate knowledge, which in turn acts as the basic principle according to which we judge the validity of knowledge; meanwhile, knowledge is made relevant to life through people's embodied practices. These processes resonate anchoring and objectifying: the two steps to familiarise the unfamiliar in social re-presenting (Moscovici, 2001). Representations in practice are embodied above all. Therefore, to study how controversial knowledge that involves significant intergroup conflicts and intrapersonal identity struggles is accepted by people, embodied social representation should be examined.

Indeed, SRT provides an overarching theoretical framework to integrate a number of theories attending to varied levels of explanation, yet the important factor of discourse should not be ignored. One significant feature of the modern world is that social relations and social conducts are regulated by, and mediated through, discourse (Wetherall, Taylor & Yates, 2001). SRT in itself is essentially a theory that examines the manufacturing and consequences of discourse, as knowledge is value-laden and embodies particular ideologies.

3. Citizenship Awareness in Rural China

The present study on citizenship in rural China centres on investigating Chinese peasants' knowledge of citizenship: their citizenship awareness. In accordance with modern citizenship, I define citizenship awareness as a mental status of a person who as a member of certain communities, most often nation states, sometimes the international community, and occasionally groups devoted to particular courses, is conscious of his/her membership and the rights and/or responsibilities that come with membership, and is ready to defend and fight for his/her legitimate claims to rights. It is highly political. Citizenship phenomena are ultimately about the recognition of memberships and deemed associated rights, the denial of which generates defenses and pleas (Honneth, 1995). This

thesis will discuss in detail the historical origins, the process of knowledge formation, the underlying social psychological mechanisms and the consequences of rural citizenship awareness. Before going into social psychological discussions, it is necessary to examine the Chinese rural milieu.

3.1 State, Market and Civil Society in Rural China

Modernisation has changed rural societies drastically. Community conventions are no longer the only, or even the major, social norms that people adhere. Local social protocols can no longer govern residents' daily practices. Rural communities have been increasingly involved in the state politics and global marketisation: they subject to the state regulation and actively participate in worldwide commercialisation. As a result, people's thinking, their thinking about citizenship in this case, is modified by the state and market in addition to the local community.

Citizenship awareness has complex relations with the state, market and society. It relates to state as a polity, not only because citizenship so far is largely claimed under the authority of the state, but also because the state-advocated knowledge regarding citizenship is instilled in, and often internalised by, people through various media such as institutions like schools. Meanwhile it is subject to market principles. Just like modern states opt for covert "meta-physics" of power by preaching "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 1988), the "invisible hand" of the market modifies social mentality unnoticeably through its powerful discourse of exchange. The principle of reciprocity concedes to that of exchange both in people's economic life and social life. People and even the self, as well as social relations, can be and often are, evaluated in terms of economic value.

The impact of the market on citizenship awareness is circuitous and bidirectional. Commercialisation reduced discrimination and produced equality among people to a large extent because people's desires for commercial gains generated a need and actions to include every potential costumer and treat them equally (Montesquieu, 2005/1748). Equality among people allows for the possibility of associations between people and across communities, which is widely known to be a fundamental unit for right defenses and claims in politics (de Tocqueville, 2010/1835-1840). Equality is also the most important component of modern citizenship and implies an inclusion of all community members. When commercialisation freed people from a feudalistic ideology that favours class segregation, politics which was regarded to be the privilege of the elite classes over a long history was forced open to each and every individual. Adam Smith (2005/1759) also pointed out a positive outcome of commercialisation: social competitions propelled by market principles cripple Sectarian fanaticism, creating a social environment favourable for a diversity of cosmology as well as tolerance for such diversity. Although market economies are plagued with all kinds of

problems, commercialisation has provided structural opportunities for the burgeoning of modern citizenship and mentally prepared social members for political participation.

The commercial ethics pose a threat to people's psychological wellbeing and to the sound development of society. Indeed, commercialisation dismantled feudalist class segregation; it did however, create another type of separation –the separation of capacity (mainly material) and taste– which perhaps raises more anxieties in people because such differentiation is no longer perceived to be justifiable and unchangeable. Rousseau (2005/1754) associates commerce with enslavement because it submits people to imitation and dependence. Polluted by the notion of luxury, social beings have lost self in others' opinions, plunged into the creation and accumulation of material values, look forward to be enslaved by higher bidders and indulge in the feelings of being envied for owning what Adam Smith (2005/1759) named 'frivolous objects'. Such vision of freedom in commercial societies deeply concerned Rousseau (2005/1754); the loss of independent thinking and even consciousness is the most vicious origin of inequality. Unlike imposed social structures that subdue people physically by force, it erodes people mentally by seduction. Vigilance on servitude is slackened and people are tempted to celebrate it instead of fighting. This is perhaps the most detrimental aspect of commerce; it annuls the fundamental human right of freedom in a devious way.

Also, the unprecedented division of labour and the concomitant specialisation in every field of production in the commercialisation process has atomised and alienated social beings, tearing traditional social ties without providing a substitute (Hegel, 2005/1821; Marx, 2005/1843). As a result, social orders are disrupted. The unrest however leads, not to new social orders, but to social turmoil because the *collection* of social individuals who have their own "particular aims" (Hegel, 2005/1821) is usually unable to form any consensual goal and/or concerted action to reform the social systems unless they are forced to the consciousness of their status of slavery. Psychological pathology and the lack of social solidarity prevent people from recognising their inherited rights, estranges the civil society from politics, and undermines the cause of emancipation. Some people may argue that commerce facilitated by industrialisation entails a worldwide link of every social member, producing enormous opportunities to create bridging capital. Compared with bonding capital (not equivalent to, but resonating traditional ties in that it is personal and emotion-laden), bridging capital is indicated by Putnam (2000) to have a more direct relation with civil society. However, he also argues that these two types of social capital strengthen one another, and the decline of one leads to the decline of the other. In addition, these *capitals* have little therapeutic function and can hardly alleviate people's anxieties resulted from psychological isolation.

Just like the market, the state directly modifies people's political mentality through discourse and indirectly via its interactions with society. Through the unified educational system, the state

cultivates both people's consciousness of being a member of the state and their knowledge of being a good member. Such consciousness and knowledge may not be explicitly phrased in terms of citizenship and be recognised by people as citizenship. Nevertheless, they can be translated into the state-endorsed civic virtues that are associated with particular attitudes and behaviours.

In modern societies, media is another important means to spread state discourses. For older generations who are not trained in modern educational institutions, the media is the basic instrument to *socialise* them. For the institutionally socialised generations, it is an extension of, and a supplement to, formal educations. While authoritarian states are bashed for manipulating public opinion, the extent to which democratic states differ remains questionable. Admittedly media censorship in democratic societies is boycotted, yet real noises are rare due to the media's inherent motive to cater for public tastes so as to draw as much attention as possible. In practice it is always the government who set the keynotes of all public discussions (van Dijk, 1993). Even if the statements, be it political, economic or social, released to the public are concessions reached by all parties, the content is agreed upon by all participating elites; no fundamental interests are violated. Fierce opposition from larger societies may also be reported, however they are conditioned by an engagement with available official statements and points are only argued using official terms. In fact, disagreements are premised on an agreement upon the legitimacy of the pre-stated issues and terms. Through creating and controlling grand discourse, the state shapes social mentality and channels public thinking into its desired directions. The state discourse on citizenship indeed functions as a compass of individual citizens' civic practice.

The state also effects people's citizenship awareness through its influence on civil society. Civil society is largely conceived of by contemporary scholars as the bottom-up social force to counterbalance the expansion of state power and to prevent the latter from transgressing individual privacies and rights. Stemming from people's increasing consciousness of civic rights and actions result, the growth of civil society is often accompanied by a reduction of state power. Civil society is a style of living that connects social individuals to one another, rather than merely as an abstract concept (Putnam, 2000; Schudson, 2005/1996). The stronger it is the more enthusiastic people may be incentivised by collective empowerment to engage in politics.

Its positive correlation with democracy (Putman, 2005/1996) often obscures its dependence on the state. Skocpol (2005/1996) noted that civil society would not have burgeoned and developed in America without governmental support for associations. On the contrary, the major civic orgainsations in the US are confined to within those that were sponsored by the government in the 1960s. This compelling evidence suggests that the relationship between civil society and state is more complex than it appears. The reliance of civil society on the state is particularly true for contemporary China. The cure for the congenital deficit of civil society in China is widely

recognised to be a cultivation of orgnisational/associational culture. Nevertheless, civil society forces can only grow with the state's permission and support in China no matter how much impact the bottom-up social forces demonstrate. Appearance and developments are conditioned on official permission and bureaucratic constraints.

Among the three universes, civil society perhaps bears the most intricate relationship with citizenship awareness as demonstrated above. It is the very site for cultivating citizenship awareness and its strength determines people's political involvement. Certainly civil society has other functions too, but it is, however, its political function that this research focuses upon because building a strong society to check political powers and protect people's interests appears to be a more important and pressing issue at present. The more developed the civil society, the more likely people are to stand up to the state. Meanwhile, it must be noted that the development of civil society and thus people's political mindedness is contingent upon the state and market, as has been illustrated.

Admittedly a lot more can be discussed regarding the complex interactions between state and market, which have also influenced civil society and concomitantly people's citizenship awareness. They are however not the focus of this project, nor is the actual interactive processes among the state, market and civil society. They are not treated as social institutions, and specifically, as particular establishments and/or rules, but rather as sources of and resources for thinking. The way they regulate social relations and practices and modify social thinking is not conceived as people's face-to-face interactions with substantive bodies too, but as discursive construction.

3.2 Echoing 'Citizenship' as a Western Concept: Historical Legacies

In correspondence with the state, market and civil society are the state discourses of communism and village self-governance, the market principle of exchange and communal conventions in contemporary rural China. Since the foundation of the new China in 1949, the rural society has gone through two discernible stages: the centralisation of power from 1958 to 1982 and the decentralisation of power after 1988, with some transitional periods in between. Each stage underlines a state policy: People's Commune System for the former, and Village Self-governance for the latter. By having peasants perform stipulated political practices, these policies altered rural social mentality. Social institutions in practice constitute a basic element that influences people's cognition and behaviour (Lahlou, 2008). Although the Commune system was substituted with Village Self-governance, the memory of communist practices is collective and remains influential, especially when it echoes the state ideology of communism. Meanwhile, the tension between top-down construction and bottom-up resistance is intense in rural China, with the self-governance policy having guided rural life. In the state's attempt to construct "socialist good citizens", official

institutions like elections and the *Organic Law* have been appropriated by villagers to defend and expand their individual rights and interests (Brandtsädter, 2011; O'Brien, 2002).

Indeed, the strong Chinese government dominates political processes and directs people's thinking. However, currently official discourse constitutes only one resource, although maybe the predominant one, that contributes to the formation of social representations of citizenship in rural China. Other resources include ingrained narratives of community autonomy and universal equality, and democracy as highlighted in the country's transformations.

Apart from communist conventions that fit into the state nationalist discourse and the apparent contradictory modern idea of individual rights introduced and supported by the village self-governance policy, there are still two influential narratives co-existing in contemporary rural China: community autonomy and universal equality. Community autonomy is in effect a rural tradition that has a long history; whereas universal equality was a political slogan that was often used to mobilise people to overthrow prior dynasties in Chinese history, which was used by the Chinese Communist Party (Party, hereafter) during the Chinese civil war from 1931 to 1949. These discourses are deep-rooted in rural China, and have been internalised as social conventions by the rural community to guide their daily practices.

China's great transformation is another important social factor that deeply marks social representations of citizenship. All drastic changes that characterise what Polanyi (1957) terms "the great transformation" and what Burawoy (2000) terms "the second great transformation" can be found in contemporary China. Globalisation has propelled the Chinese government to launch a state project to reform China's economic system. An economic system with more capitalist characteristics established to substitute a purely socialist economy. Marketisation confronted the idea of social reciprocity with the principle of social exchange, which simultaneously generated society's self-protection, which in turn facilitated the growth of civil society forces (Polanyi, 1957). Consequently, political and social reforms were installed and a radical reconfiguration of power, capital and social structures results. Unlike the early-developed countries that accomplished transformations independently, China's reforms are under much international pressure, especially from post-socialist discourse (Burawoy, 1996). With the acceleration of globalisation, the ideology of liberalism is globally spread and is widely celebrated, along with the popularisation of the idea of democracy.

The transformational logic that advocates individual rights, a liberal market that minimises governmental interference, and equality based on people's economic status has become an important element in rural China. It motivated people to openly express and passionately pursue their individual rights and interests. Encouraged by the government's increased political tolerance and institutional support for village self-governance, Chinese peasants has become a most proactive

political group and responded actively to the top-down construction of citizenship. In the interplay between state and rural society, a civic identity and also social representations of citizenship, which deviate from the official planning, began to emerge.

The concept of citizenship is virtually originates from the West and it was introduced into rural China via the village self-governance policy; two questions arise. The first question concerns what kind of social representations of citizenship were produced in rural China. The second question concerns how representations are produced. These questions are important because social re-presentation of citizenship in rural China involves two contradictory value systems - communism and liberalism - with the former emphasising the collective, and the latter the individual. These two questions lead to an important theoretical question as to whether the meeting of two systems of knowledge necessarily results in foreign knowledge being assimilated by the existing knowledge. Since the system of categories is usually enriched as life experiences multiply, it is theoretically possible that the new social representation will bear some characteristics that distinguish it from the existing categories, and thus become an independent new category.

Another theoretical question arises as to the order of anchoring and objectification. It stems from the contradiction between the social representational process indicated in the literature, and the political reality in rural China. The notion of citizenship was completely alien for Chinese peasants until the self-governance policy was implemented, although some of its basic ideas such as autonomy and equality are not new. The way villagers come to understand citizenship is mainly through their political practices of village self-governance and through voting, instead of public communications, in particular. The question that remains is: does the social representational process necessarily follow the sequence of anchoring and objectifying implied in the literature?

According to Moscovici (2001), anchoring is to build links between new knowledge and existing knowledge; and objectifying is to enrich the new knowledge with the reality and eventually turn it into a new reality. These processes essentially link back to embodied cognition; in particular, the process of objectifying ultimately involves embodied cognitive processing. The question then becomes the order of, and relation between, doing and knowing. This rather old and neglected philosophical question however bears huge significance to the modern world. Some evidence in rural China suggests the possibility of a reversed order of anchoring and objectifying.

4. The Emergence of Citizenship Awareness in Rural China

All these empirical and theoretical questions help to illuminate the ultimate empirical concerns of this research: the influence of social representations of citizenship on rural political life, and more importantly, the future of China's rural democratisation. A popular political discourse in China is that the relatively less-educated or uneducated peasants are unable to engage in democratic practice

because they are incapable of rational thinking. Chinese peasants however have demonstrated perfect judgements on political issues that concern themselves, just as highly educated elite students. Their judgements are not impaired by low self-esteem, even though many of them do not believe in their own reasoning capacity.

As a group, Chinese peasants are intelligent. They are knowledgeable, regardless of their lack of schooling compared with urban residents. They have vast knowledge and skills they need for living, importantly ethical standards and social etiquettes aside from farming (Stafford, 2013), and are aware of what is occurring in their area. They know how to make use of their votes strategically and are definitely aware of citizenship rights and obligations, and of more rights than they actually exercise. Their knowledge makes them active fighters for rights, which is in stark contrast to their 'better' educated urban counterparts who in general fall short of political actions. They are wise enough to use the state discourse to combat the governmental transgressions and to expand their rights and interests. Indeed, their knowledge has changed the political landscape of rural China.

Meanwhile, they are also subordinate to the overwhelming powers of state and market. Their endearing political thinking is heavily dependent on the strong central government and overwhelming marketisation. Eventually the political future of China's rural democratisation is determined by the interplay among peasants as a group of conscious citizens, the state as the absolute ruler, and the market as a powerful intruder, but not by a single force.

This research is driven by my sociological concern for the citizenship phenomena in China, but draws heavily on social psychological insights. I noticed an important aspect of human agency lost in both sociological and political studies regarding this issue, and that aspect falls into the area of social psychology. This thesis consists of seven sections.

Chapter 1 proposes a social psychological approach in studying citizenship. Social representation theory is used as the basic theoretical framework to investigate the subjective dimension of citizenship, as this theory directly deals with knowledge transmission and recreation. Discourses and social identity are incorporated into the general framework as moderators of the social representational process of citizenship.

Chapter 2 explains the methodological considerations of this project. The research design takes a critical realistic ontology, and is inspired by abductive epistemology, and dialogicality. It is an attempt to articulate different levels of explanations in social psychology when researching citizenship. Mixed methods are used to complement one another and also for the purpose of methodological triangulation. The selection of fieldwork sites and the recruitment of participants are introduced and explained along with procedures of data collection. A research framework is also presented.

Chapter 3 demonstrates the citizenship phenomena in rural China and explores social representations of citizenship in rural Chinese society. Interview data are combined with survey data to explore citizenship content from ideational, behavioural and normative aspects. The commonality hypothesis of social representations of citizenship is tested using survey data.

Chapter 4 investigates the impact of social identity on the social representational process of citizenship. It is a continuation of Chapter 3 and aims to demonstrate specificities of social representations (SRs) of citizenship. Discourse analysis is conducted with interview data to explore differences in rights practice between the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group. Survey data then are analysed to examine the relationships between the 'good' citizen representations and village leadership as well as Party membership. Exploratory techniques further examine the specificities of SRs and look for other group identities that influence the 'good' citizen representations.

Chapter 5 discusses the impact of predominant discourses in the social representational process of citizenship. As a concept originating from western democratic societies, 'citizenship' is subject to the influence of local discourses from the spheres of state, market and society after its introduction to China. These discourses include communism, community autonomy and universal equality. Another influential discourse is democracy which is gaining more and more momentum. Historical traditions of, and values behind, these discourses in China are explained first. The hypothesis is that these discourses act as anchoring variables of 'citizenship'. Canonical correlation analyses are conducted to examine their interrelationships with the 'good' citizen representations.

Chapter 6 explores the political implications of social representations of a 'good' citizen. Narrative analysis is conducted with interview data to identify the relationship between people's citizenship awareness and their political behaviours and the underlying social psychological mechanism. Survey data examine the relationship between peasants' village self-governance practice and social representations of the 'good' citizen.

Chapter 7 reviews findings of each empirical chapter and discusses them in the light of various theories. The discussion centres on relationships between inconsistency and inconsistency tolerance, between thinking and doing, between anchoring and objectification and between structure and agency.

The conclusion begins with a summary of the project and proceeds to a discussion about the application of the research findings in policy-making and the generalisability of the theoretical model in researching complex large-scale social phenomena. Limitations of this project are reflected upon and lastly, future research directions are delineated.

Chapter 1 Cognitive Polyphasia in a Noisy World:
A Trinity of Social Representations, Social Identities and Discourses

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the current project. To begin with, existing approaches to citizenship are reviewed; a comparison between some potential approaches is made afterwards. The theoretical advantages of the social representation approach to studying citizenship are discussed later. Within the social representation framework, a theoretical model that brings together social identity and discourse is then proposed to study social representational processes. "Cognitive polyphasia" in the SR approach is proposed as a concept that enables a theoretical link between social representation, social identity and discourse.

It is necessary to emphasise again that discourse in this research is not used in the sense of psychological discourse (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) or rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1997). Rather, it is used in Foucauldian sense as abstract forms of specific and repeatable **relations** among signs that links objects, subjects and statements (Foucault, 1972). It comprises not primarily language, or texts and talks in Potter and Wetherell's term (1987); but rather relations that are constantly demonstrated through media of all kinds. Discourse hence is not only persuasive (Billig, 1997), but can often be mandatory because no one can really free themselves from social networks inherited in human society. Defined as such, discourse was operationalised and measured as an important component of the theoretical framework above all in the current research. Its theoretical nature should not be overridden by the specific discursive methods applied to empirical evidence.

1.1 Approaches to Citizenship

Citizenship has a long tradition in social sciences and has become a multidisciplinary enterprise recently. Reflections on the extensive citizenship research undertaken over the past decades suggest that citizenship research revolves around three axes: content, extent and depth (Isin & Turner, 2002). Citizenship content is the specifications of benefits and duties that are encompassed in the civic membership; extent refers to the principles governing inclusion and exclusion; and depth denotes the extent to which citizenship is practised (ibis, p.2).

Among these three aspects, citizenship extent is the most attentively researched. Distribution of citizenship rights and/or duties across social groups engages most of scholarly endeavours in recent years and has given rise to enthusiastic multidisciplinary research, as a result of the thriving social movements for recognition across the world. Social movements are essentially public outcries for an expansion of rights, the cause of which is rooted in rights distribution.

Beyond the three axes of citizenship, researchers also investigate the rules that nation states make to bestow citizenship on people and attribute rights and/or duties to social groups, as well as the

norms that nation states require their people to observe to keep their nationalities. Civic virtue is another topic that scholars seriously consider in relation to civil society and with regard to its influence on the relationship between state and society.

Heated debates on public policies regarding citizenship reinvigorated social psychological interests (Condor, 2011). Less engaged with the macro-level discussions, social psychology with its particular interest in human mind and behaviour contributed to the field of citizenship a valuable micro perspective, and brought psychological dynamics behind citizenship phenomena to the fore. 'Identity' became the most recent research focus. Topics investigated include: social construction of the civic membership (Gibson & Hamilton, 2011), the relationship between civic identity and civic participation (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Passini & Morselli, 2011; Sindic, 2011), and the impact of perceptions of citizenship on intergroup differentiation and on the construction of civic identity (Renedo & Marston, 2011). Social psychologists' investigations into subjective citizenship status opened up a new research area that allows a dialogue between macro-structure and social minds. Nevertheless, in spite of interdisciplinary attempts, psychological research on citizenship remains rather isolated from other traditions currently. Even 'identity', the only common term social psychology shares with other disciplines, has very specific disciplinary connotations.

A potential field which may link social psychology with other disciplinary traditions is the social psychological impetus behind civic practice. Civic practices range from the daily exercise of rights and duties to milder forms of critical engagement and onwards to radical forms of social movements, or even revolution. Social movements in particular have attracted extensive attention. This project on citizenship awareness is derived from my concern for its political implications. Citizenship awareness in this research is conceived not only as consciousness of citizenship knowledge but also as readiness to engage in civic actions. Insights from sociological research on social movements can be borrowed to construct a more comprehensive model that takes both macro-level factors and psychological factors into account when studying citizenship movements. Social changes, social structure and also discourse are identified as the three determinants of social movements (Zhao, 2006). Reflected in social minds, social changes correspond to social norms, social structure to people's self-positioning in relation to state and to other social members, and discourse to the ideological underpinnings of social movements and rhetoric construction of group morale.

Social representation theory allows an incorporation of sociological insights into social psychological investigations by emphasising the social production of norms while also acknowledging the role of group membership and discursive strategies in this process. Also, SRT maintains that social perceptions are consequential and can bring about social changes. The functional aspect of SR is originated from its subjectivity and its underlying human agency. With

regard to citizenship, subjective citizenship status may lead to changes in objective citizenship status.

1.2 A Social Representation Approach to Citizenship Awareness in Rural China

Apart from the possibility it provides for bringing together political and sociological research, social representation theory is also chosen because of its relevance to the empirical concerns at hand, its epistemological stance and its theoretical power.

Social representation theory is a theory of "beliefs and social bonds". It aims not to describe them, but importantly to "discover new phenomenon" deriving from them. It is, at the same time, a social psychological theory of knowledge, which is concerned with "common-sense thinking and with language and communication" (Moscovici, 2001, p.280). Seemingly irrelevant, these two views Moscovici conceives of SRT are in fact connected because beliefs are in themselves a type of knowledge —knowledge that is shared and co-constructed by social members. SRT embraces a historical approach because social representations are never static but are always in-the-making in public communications. As the social world is largely constructed by beliefs and changes taking place with any change in beliefs, social representations are also consequential.

1.2.1 Interaction, Social Identity and Discourse in Social Representation Approach

SRT has been applied to the study of diverse social phenomena that involve the common sense knowledge which significantly influences people's daily practices (Wagner, Duveen, Farr, Jovechelovitch, Lorenzi-Cioldi, Marková & Rose, 1999), such as madness (Jodelet, 1991), medical beliefs (Jovchelovitch & Gervais, 1999), GM food (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000), and identity perception (Howarth, 2002). Citizenship in rural China constitutes one such social phenomenon. Currently in rural China, citizenship has become influential knowledge. Originating in the West, the concept of citizenship has been localised by Chinese rural residents to guide their political participation. Their citizenship knowledge develops out of their political experiences and in their interactions with other people including political leaders and with the specific institution such as the village self-governance policy and the local government.

Interaction is the epistemology of SRT (Marková, 2008). This epistemological position implied in Moscovici's original research on psychoanalysis was made clear in his later works explaining the triad relationship between *Ego*, *Alter*, and *Object* (Moscovici, 1972, p.1884). His rationale is clear and clever: our knowledge of an object is rooted in our interactions with the object and with other people. It is, however, our interactions with other people that eventually define the nature of the object. It is also clear in his initial research (Moscovici, 2008/1961) and later theorisation (Farr & Moscovici, 1984; Moscovici, 2001) that interactions at both levels involve contextual factors

because interactions fundamentally are contingent on the available elements of the environment. Contingency upon interactions characterises citizenship awareness in rural China. Its appearance originated from the state policy of village self-governance, and its growth is highly dependent on the state.

Theoretically, the social representation approach achieves the articulation of levels of explanation. Attitude, behaviour and norm constitute the basic dimensions for SR research. Besides, SRT necessarily involves two theoretical constructs at the broader level that are of particular relevance to China's social reality: discourse and social identity. In Moscovici's (2008/1961) pioneering work on the spread of psychoanalytical ideas in the French public, he identified three types of transmission: diffusion, propagation, and propaganda. With correspondence to each of these three communicative modes are three social groups of French society at the time: the urban-liberal community, the Catholic group and the communist segment. His study on the processes of knowledge transmission has placed discourse and social identity at the centre of social representations.

At the time his work came out, the two concepts of discourse and social identity were not as influential (if at all) as they are now in social sciences. In addition to contributing a powerful theory to social psychology, he has also indicated in his empirical study these two most important social phenomena in the modern world. Modern societies are indeed "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991). With technology having reinvigorated the way people communicate with and psychologically relate to one another, big social groups with particular ideologies have emerged. Symbolic means such as texts and flags are strategically used to construct shared group identities, and to spread group goals and group norms among group members.

Rhetorical strategies are employed to maximise persuasive effects (Billig, 1996). By presenting group goals as common interests of group members and group norms as a necessary means to guarantee the attainment of group goals (Brown, 2000), group members' behaviours are regulated, their goals are clarified, and their identification for the affiliated groups is strengthened. Subsequently, groups grow. The appearance and development of big groups is consequential. They change political dynamics between state and society, forcing the government to shift from coercive governance to interactive persuasion.

1.2.2 Intersectionality and Multivocality in Contemporary China

The intertwining relationship between discourse and social identity is especially evident in contemporary China. In the process of China's Great Transformation, individuals often possess multiple group memberships (Fang, 2009) as a result of the polyphasic belief system. Inhabiting multiple group identities, on the other hand, further complicates social thinking. Contemporary

China is characterised by high degrees of multivocality and intersectionality. The Chinese government launched reforms to meet the challenge posed by the international community. In addition to the heightened ideological criticism since the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe in 1991, China also bears the tangible developmental pressure imposed by state powers embodying this ideology.

What reforms brought about was more than the strengthening of the state power. Along with it was the breaking down of the monopoly enjoyed by the communist ideology. Liberal ideology has spread across the country as a result of economic reforms and through people's consumption of western products and the western life style they represent. In the meantime, the increased political tolerance has encouraged political expressions, and the growth of social groups. Facilitated by public communications, the varied and discursively articulated group goals are spread in society and become numerous subnarratives.

Meanwhile, China's all-around reform has resulted in a deep social structural reshuffle in the country. 'Class' – the once most important group identity for Chinese life – is no longer relevant to people. The social stratum replaced it to become the most significant indicator of social differentiation (Lu, 2002). The re-segment of the social world and concomitantly the establishment of new standards for social evaluations produced much uncertainty and thus generated massive confusion and anxieties within social members because seeking for ontological certainty is a basic human instinct (Buss, 2012). People are thrown into constant negotiations with other social members as well as themselves for group memberships and all the social implications that come along with those memberships. The multiple memberships they hold sometimes conflict with each other, producing intersectionality agonies (Dube, 2010).

Originally constructed in gender studies, intersectionality is now recognised by social scientific researchers to be a powerful theoretical tool for capturing the interlocking oppressive institutions and facilitating political struggles for social justice (Collins, 2007; Crenshaw, 1991; Knapp, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Intersectionality in effect reflects multivocality at the intra-individual level, and it ultimately is rooted in the multivocal social world. The surging fanaticism in individual interests and distinction has exacerbated individual agonies because this philosophy of life embodies the liberal ideology and contradicts traditional Chinese values.

The two dimensions of discourse and social identity are subsumed in, but not specifically addressed by, SRT; they are, however, particularly relevant to understanding social phenomena in China, especially for issues like citizenship. They are found to be decisive factors in citizenship movements in previous research, which makes social identity theory and theories of discourse necessary complements to SRT in this investigation of citizenship awareness in rural China. They offer explanations at different levels and/or of varied emphases from SRT explanations.

Although both theories produce accounts at the group/social positional level, SRT and SIT have varied theoretical concerns. SRT focuses on intra-group communications gearing towards a unified group ideology; whereas SIT concerns intergroup interactions and intra-group processes driven by group membership (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). Theories of discourse, on the other hand, depart from SRT both in terms of the explanatory level and of the theoretical concerns. Explanations that discourse analysis produces range from the intra-individual level to the ideological level. Also, topics of discourse analysis concerns cover symbolic phenomena at all levels, from usages of language to ideological construction (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

1.2.3 Cognitive Polyphasia and Knowledge Encounters in the Modern World
The latest development of SRT, i.e. the rediscovery of the concept of cognitive polyphasia, has opened up another research area for SRT. This concept is, in effect, a major inspiration of this project. Apart from its applicability to community research proposed by scholars who are concerned with community building such as Jovchlovitch (2007), it is also useful when understanding and extrapolating the thorny problems of the clash of ideologies and "the clash of civilisations".

The clash of civilisations is argued by Samuel Huntington (1993) to be the primary feature of global politics in the post-Cold War world. His hypothesis was made after the Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and built on the "end of the history" prophecy (Fukuyama, 1992). To what extent Western ideology has unified the world remains highly controversial, especially when China has arguably risen to become a new world power in more recent times. His envision of increasing interaction between "peoples of different civilisations" and of the resulting increasingly intensified cultural identity accurately captures a very important aspect of social reality.

This aspect of reality however goes beyond Huntington's initial articulation at the inter-national level. It happens at the intra-national level too, because globalisation has produced a global trend of geographic mobility. Immigrants and emigrants disseminate the cultural values they carry with them around the world. While they learn host countries' cultures and transmit them back to their home countries, they also import their original cultures to the host countries. A new loop of transmission and acquisition starts when they move to the next stop. However, what they transmit has become the combination of their original cultures and their later-acquired cultures in the second and subsequent loops. The same logic applies to the intra-national immigration. Communal beliefs are spread around with each loop. Geographic mobility is meanwhile accompanied by intense identity struggles. Felt at the intra-individual level individual identity struggles, in practice, reflect conflicts of cultural identity. As a result, they are often expressed in the form of intergroup conflicts in society.

Huntington stops at a prediction of a modern world characterised by massive cultural conflicts. The hypothesis of cognitive polyphasia, however, allows a deeper investigation into the reified illustrations of "the clash of civilisations": encounters of different knowledge systems in social life as well as in private life. Encountering knowledge of another kind has become many people's daily experience. Citizenship awareness in rural China has resulted from rural residents' encounters with the Western concept of citizenship, and it embodies the clash of civilisations and ideologies. Cognitive polyphasia further postulates that social individuals have the cognitive capacity to learn knowledge which may belong to different systems and to accommodate distinctive modalities of knowledge which may even contradict one another. More importantly, people are able to appropriate different knowledge to deal with varied real-life problems. The question remains as to why some knowledge is chosen over others in addressing specific problems.

In this chapter, I will discuss in detail the theoretical insights that inspired the current research. Taking social representation theory as the theoretical scaffold, I incorporate into it also a social identity approach including social identity theory and self categorisation theory and theories in discourse. I propose a triad model of social representation, social identity and discourse to investigate large-scale complex social phenomena such as citizenship. Cognitive polyphasia is proposed as the theoretical underpinning that enables an integration of these three broad theoretical approaches. I also propose an exploration of embodied social representations, because empirical evidence shows that this is where these three aspects of social life converge.

1.3 Social Representation Theory: A Dynamic Approach to Social Phenomena

In contrast to most social psychological studies that extend intra-individual and/or interpersonal psychological mechanisms to explain social processes, SRT takes a reversed approach. It postulates that the social is the primary resource of individual psychology but not vice versa. Social psychological mechanisms at the group level therefore are more powerful and more pertinent explanations for social processes and can better predict people's behaviour.

SRT deals with the actual process of knowledge transmission, its outcomes and its social repercussions. It emphasises the-group-level social psychology, and focuses on social groups' acquisition of new knowledge and the impact of new knowledge acquisition on group members' attitudes and behaviour specifically. The phenomena to which SRT is applied are often of an ideological character because transmitting ideas across social groups inevitably involves fitting alien knowledge into the predominant group belief(s).

Another important characteristic of SRT as *a social theory* is that it is a geniune bottom-up approach, which distinguishes it from other theories, especially theories on knowledge. It can be argued that all psychological theories take a bottom-up perspective given that they all centre on the

agent. What makes SRT unique is that it is a theory on agency, and on *contingent agency* that is conditioned by *contexts* to be precise. While it attributes the central role to people rather than external powers such as state as in many other social theories, it also recognises constraints the community pose on individual thinking. Communities have its own historical trajectory and thus ethos. Historical processes therefore are as important as contextual factors. The theoretical emphases of SRT can well capture the feature of citizenship phenomena in rural China. As is a large-scale social process pushing from the grassroots, representing 'citizenship' in China is essentially a process of knowledge acquisition by a people with a long history and a process of local beliefs combating intrusive ideology.

1.3.1 A Revolution in Knowledge Studies

Since Moscovici elaborated his ideas about social representations in his research on psychoanalysis (Moscovici, 2008/1961), 'social representation' has been institutionalised as a new term derived but also deviating from Durkheim's notion of collective representation. Social representation shares with collective representation a presumption regarding the social origin and social functions of representations. It differs from the latter in its emphasis on the changing nature of representations, on the connection it builds between the abstract social phenomena and the concrete individual representation, and on its emphasis on human agency. The invention of the theory allowed social psychology to venture into the field of knowledge studies that was previously predominated by philosophy and sociology. SRT offers an innovative perspective on conventional understandings of knowledge, on the understanding of the relationship between science and common sense in particular (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000; Marková, & Jovchelovitch, 2008; Moscovici 2001; Wells, 1987).

Science had long been regarded as the opposition to common sense. The former was considered to be systematic knowledge that was either deduced from transcendental philosophical meditations or abstracted from massive and intricate empirical evidence. It was characterised by rationality and abstractness, hence it was considered general and global. Common sense, on the contrary, was considered to be heuristic and intuitive, case-based and exemplar, and local and particular. The stark contrasts between science and common sense presupposed the superiority of science over common knowledge and of intellectuals over common people, which implied an evolutionary progress from common sense to science. This view devalues common sense, dismisses body and emotion and denies the primary role of ordinary people in the creation of knowledge.

Moscovici's elaboration of the relationship between science and common sense reversed this evolutionary vision. Contrary to Bourdieu's view of the production of science as a process of unfamiliarising the familiar (Bourdier & Wacquant, 1992), Moscovic argues for a process of familiarising the unfamiliar (Moscovici, 2001). Science, according to Moscovici, should not be

prioritised. It is only useful when it is used by people. Diffusion of scientific knowledge in the public is not "vulgarisation", but a process of recreation and regeneration. Common knowledge is not only the foundation of scientific research, but also acts to redress, redirect and regenerate science. Lay people are the inventors of common knowledge, and they are fully capable of rational thinking. They selectively choose to relate relevant alien objects to their already familiar concepts, and transform them into everyday language and daily practices. In this re-presenting process, scientific knowledge is sifted in accordance with its their relevance to people's daily experience and is then reshaped in public communication. It is people, rather than intellectuals, who decide the fate of common knowledge, and community life is guided by social representations that communal members collectively created, but not by scientific knowledge that intellectuals invented.

1.3.2 Social Representations: Bridging Intra-Individual and Social Processes

Moscovici's social representation theory aims at redefining the discipline of social psychology, and has inspired researchers to explore the power of ordinary thinking and to look at the historical, cultural and contextual factors in social psychological phenomena and processes over the past fifty years. Social representations are described by Moscovici as "system(s) of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication" (Moscovici, 1973, p. xi). This is to argue that the world is made sense of through the lens of relevant social representations (Farr & Moscovici, 1984), which provide "a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their worlds and their individual and group history" (Moscovici, 1973, p. xi).

Beyond these ontological descriptions, social representations have a more significant epistemological implication. They "should be seen as a specific way of understanding, and communicating, what we know already" (Moscovici, 2001, p.31). Because "they always have two facets … the iconic and the symbolic facets" (*ibid.*), they always seek to equate "every image to an idea and every idea to an image" (*ibid.*), to look for a correspondence to a new image or idea that intrudes into individuals' social life. Existing social representations are appropriated by individuals and transformed into individual representations. These representations are later confirmed, or modified and adapted in public communications, leading to the formation of new social representations. Each closure of a loop between the social and the individual signifies a change, big or small, in social mentality and that change will bring about changes in the social world sooner or later. The human society evolves with closures of the loop between social mentality and the social world.

1.3.3 Re-presenting Citizenship: Reconstructing Intra-Individual and Social Processes

SRT sees social re-presenting processes as being at the core of social changes and it has been applied to citizenship studies in recent years. While SRT has been applied to study rights and duties (Passini & Emiliani, 2009), researchers primarily focus on descriptions of the status quo of phenomena, paying little attention to the dynamic "re-presenting" processes, which constitutes a major interest of SRT. Nevertheless, the representational process is perhaps more important for researching contemporary citizenship because it projects on to citizenship and changes its nature, and the changing nature of citizenship can no longer be captured by the conventional theoretical approaches.

In addition, social processes around citizenship at the present time are largely embedded in bottom-up social movements. If 'subjectship' characterised citizenship in pre-modern times, then incessant struggles and fights for rights and recognition are its prominent characteristics in the twenty-first century. Citizenship is no longer a settled series of rights and obligations defined by the government, but an expanding set resulting from people's constant negotiations with the authority. While embeddedness in the public is a feature of modern citizenship, it is also the starting-point of social representing.

Embeddedness in the public links societal processes with social representing. In practice, they are simultaneous processes and cannot be separated from each other. Societal processes of all scales are only sustainable when people keep engaged. This requires continuous communication among participants so that the movements can be consistently recharged. The process of communicating is the process of re-presenting, which, however, is grounded on established communicative codes or existing social representations in Moscovici's sense. Since social representations not only function as codes for public communication but also act as the reference for people's social and even private behaviour, all societal processes therefore are heavily dependent on prevalent social representations. They are driven by existing social representations and in turn produce new representations. These new representations prepare new societal processes. Each closed loop, from social representations to societal processes, indicates the birth of a new social representation or social representations. Evolution of the social world is fundamentally propelled by infinite repetitions of this loop.

SRT in particular has looked at the formation of new social representations because this process has a universal implication for social evolution. Moscovici (2001) identified two stages in social representational processes: anchoring and objectification. Anchoring is a process in which foreign or disturbing objects or ideas are linked to and settled down within existing systems of categories. It consists of two aspects: find a matching category; and readjust the given object or idea to fit within it, which is eventually achieved by transforming the matched categories. These two aspects are respectively correspondent to cognitive operations known as classification and naming. Through

these two steps of anchoring, the threat alien ideas pose is diminished, and along with it people's resistance to these ideas.

An important facet of anchoring is evaluation. It is also one significant consequence of anchoring. An evaluation of the new object or idea is packaged in its allocation into the graded hierarchy of the system of categories. Cognitive categories are in no way products of cold reasoning, but are imbued with emotions and normative rules underpinned by cultural principles that are socially constructed. This means when a new object or idea is placed somewhere in the system, associated attitudes and rules of behaviour that guide an individual's future actions are also attributed to them. This is the critical step for social representations in achieving their normative power.

Meanwhile when the new object or idea is allocated a place, it has to be named in order to be talked about and communicated. The act of naming something is to declare its legitimacy and acceptance of it as an independent entity. Through this verbal act, certain new characteristics are attributed to the previously unknown something, and it obtains a distinctive feature. The result is that this new something is no longer foreign but becomes describable and talkable for those who share the same representation (Moscovici, 2001).

On the other hand, objectification is a process that saturates the unfamiliar with reality. Abstract ideas are concretised in communication and practice. They are transmitted through talks and actions in social interactions, and are crystallised in perceivable objects and institutions. An iconic quality is gradually gained by the abstract concept in the process of objectification. Eventually an image is produced and the concept becomes visible in minds. The vision's associated emotions and attitudes in return orient our responses to events and ideas that revolve around the concept. Objectification involves three stages: individual performance of the concept; institutionalisation of behaviours around and beliefs about the concept, and the formation of an image shared by the social group concerned. Moscovici himself seems to put more emphasis on the final stage of objectification, i.e. the formation of an image, perhaps because of its most outstanding collective characteristics, as he writes: "…a *society* makes a selection of those to which it concedes figurative powers, according to its beliefs and to the pre-existing stock of images" (italics added) (*ibid.*, p.50).

Leaving aside performing ideas which involve more individual decision-making, having abstract ideas institutionalised or selecting figurative powers, however, takes time and involves considerable negotiations among different interest groups in society and among the contradictory voices within individuals. Objectification, therefore, is a historical and social process. In any society, no matter how homogeneous it is, there are at least distinctions, and hence tensions, between the ruler and the ruled and between the public and the individual. Objectification is therefore a process by which a minimal consensus in society is reached, and this process is contingent upon the dynamics among

social forces. Even a minor redistribution of power among interest groups alters the route of this process and influences the final outcome.

Indeed, objectification is easily affected by social powers that existed at the time, but their influences often become apparent only years later. There is always a time lag between the happening of important social events and the manifestation of their influences. In other words, the impact of major social events, such as the invention of important scientific theories, are usually demonstrated only years after they happened (Duveen, 2008). Once an idea is institutionalised and a shared image is produced, it obtains its independence and becomes an object that leads to expanded conversations about and practices around it, and a reality to be talked about, practised and lived in. Meanwhile, the image produced does not freeze at birth, but evolves with the coming of new ideas and representations, and dies out if or when it becomes irrelevant to daily life and is no longer supported by institutions.

1.3.4 Social Representations of Rights: A Social Phenomenon in the Modern World

By articulating the processes of anchoring and objectifying, Moscovici transformed the once explanatory concept of "collective representation" into the phenomenon of "social representation" that subsumes both intrapersonal and social processes. In addition to making the concept of social representation applicable to researching large-scale social processes, Moscovici contributed a unique bottom-up perspective that highlights the importance of studying the agency of people to social sciences. If SRT is ground-breaking in reversing the false vision of "infectious, deficit and wrong" common knowledge, and therefore the image of an incompetent populace (Moscovici, 2001, p.228), it is becoming even more important and pertinent for studying contemporary social phenomena. This is because the contemporary social world is largely politicised and is characterised by people's increasing rights awareness. This rights awareness in addition has been projected to the social world to form "emancipated representations" (Moscovici, 1988) in society, which have generated numerous social movements that are centred on rights claims in many places.

At the time SRT was conceived, the world was rather fragmented. There were limited interactions between counties. Each state was still quite unique in terms of their rather distinctive conventions and independent traditional thinking, although there were intricate intellectual links between countries belonging to the same civilisation. Interactions with other civilisations mostly happened at the state level as official foreign affairs. They were rarely present in people's daily life. Meanwhile, that time also witnessed drastic changes in every field of society. It perhaps was this dynamic that drove Moscovici (1988) to propose three types of social representation that relate to the nature of society: hegemonic representations, emancipated representations and polemical representations.

Hegemonic representations are established representations inherited from the history and are widely accepted in society. Due to their far-reaching influence and deep-rooted historical origins, they are usually mandatory and highly resistant to attempts to change them. They are, nevertheless, not unchangeable. Emancipated representations are representations that modify and help dissolve hegemonic representations. They are representations that hinge on social groups. They are empowering because every group possesses the interpretation right of their own and exchanges their ideas with other groups. Like emancipated representations, polemical representations are characterised by group memberships, but they involve conflicts and antagonism between social groups. Moscovici does not further theorise the three types of representation. However, this theorisation has significant implications for the contemporary world of heterogeneity and needs to be developed.

A distinction between different types helps to focus research, detect social problems and predict social evolutions, because each type has some specific social functions that serve for different social aims. Hegemonic representations are necessary for social solidarity, emancipated representations for social innovations or reforms and polemical representations for social revolutions. They co-exist in almost every society to a certain extent, from history to the modern time in particular, although the relative weight of each type varies. Also, importantly, they can change into one another under specific conditions. Hegemonic representations can be challenged by new ideas introduced into society and eventually disappear, or be replaced by emancipated representations with people starting to discuss and question their relevance. Emancipated representations, on the other hand, can become controversial when laden with interests contended by more than one social group, and then turn into polemical representations, producing divisions between social groups and intergroup conflicts.

Perhaps throughout the human history, no other themes such as rights has such everlasting vitality. The whole of human history, to a great extent, can be considered to have revolved around rights. Contending for rights to power is a major theme of human society throughout history. Since they appear in varied forms in different social systems, social representations of contending rights to power vary accordingly. In peaceful pre-modern times, they are often hegemonic. In times of conflict, they are mostly polemical, and at the present time they are more characteristic of emancipated representations. For the biggest part of human history, segregations between social classes, ethnic groups and sexes (among others) are considered to be legitimate. The privileges of certain classes, groups and sex are hegemonic. Since the French Revolution in 1789, the ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity have spread across the world, and such class or group divisions have been increasingly regarded as unacceptable by most people. Social representations of rights became polemical between the ruling class and the ruled classes, and eventually brought about an

end to the old systems that privilege certain groups while suppressing others in most places of the world.

In the modern world, social representations of rights have changed into being emancipatory, allowing the interpretation rights of all social groups. The change was enabled by the dramatic development of information and communication technology and the rapid improvement of transportation in technical terms. On the other hand, the fast pace of globalisation has resulted in the interdependence of all countries in the world, and has also confronted communities at all levels with alien ideas and ways of thinking.

The ubiquitous media, and people's increasing geographic mobility, have made intellectual clashes and knowledge encountering, whether real or imaginary, common in everyday life via a number of means. Consequently, the world has transited from a globally heterogeneous one which consisted of numerous rather homogeneous communities at all levels, to a globally more homogeneous one that consists of extremely heterogeneous communities even at the micro level of the neighbourhood. The power distance between social groups is greatly diminished, but the number of social groups as well as the differentiation between them has increased. All these changes can be reflected in and accounted for by changes in social representations of rights.

1.4 Hypothesis of Cognitive Polyphasia: Empirical Relevance and Theoretical Thrust

In this modern age, the legitimacy of any existing hierarchy can be questioned and can be challenged. The concept of social class bears little relevance to the contemporary life. Equality is not only required between social groups, but also between systems of knowledge within and also beyond political boundaries. As a result, the encounter of knowledges, or "the clash between civilizations" in Huntington's terms, has become an important social issue that has attracted much scholarly attention. With regard to the attention paid to this particular phenomenon, social psychology's interest in this issue has a rather different origin and the aspiration of social psychologists is also distinctive. SR researchers in particular are oriented towards the real-world conflicts that people face on a daily basis and they aim for some potential solutions for achieving social harmony in communities, particularly communities within nation states. The concept of cognitive polyphasia provides a platform for discussing the issue of knowledge encounters.

1.4.1 The Clash of Civilisations or Encounters of Knowledges?

Social psychologists taking the SR approach do not presuppose an end to the polarised ideological war between communism and liberalism. Instead, ideologies are regarded as embedded in cultures, which may appear less structural but which nevertheless underlie cultural thinking. They are still relevant not only because the tension between communism and liberalism still exists and intensifies

from time to time especially with China's recent rise, but also because cultures in themselves are ideological and normative. Also, I would argue that ideologies are situated on a continuum, and communism and liberalism are even not necessarily the ends of this continuum. Indeed, the tension between the individual and society perpetuates human history. The dichotomy of liberalism and communism with their respective emphases on the individual and society captures this tension well. In this sense, contentions between these two ideologies are unlikely to disappear as long as the tension between the individual and the social exists.

Besides this, there is a danger of separating civilisation from ideology. The act of division in itself is ideological. The dichotomy of communism versus liberalism constitutes only one among many other ways of scholarly dissection of the social world. Claiming to be neutral, other dichotomies widely used in cultural studies, such as analytic versus holistic thinking (Nisbett, 2003), or high-context versus low-context culture (Hall, 1981), or independent self versus interdependent self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), are in effect not less ideological. As long as human beings continue to categorise the objects and ideas we encounter in life, ideological wars will never end. Theoretically, this is an incessant war given that categorisation seems to be the basic cognitive skill that human beings rely on to understand the world and to survive. Although violent military conflicts are rare in the contemporary world, ideological wars demonstrate themselves in other milder forms such as cultural interactions. The false separation of ideology from civilisation only undermines people's alertness to the danger of mono-thinking and hence of hegemony. SRT in contrast embraces "contradictory and manifold thinking" (Marková, 2008).

Within an SR perspective, "the clash of civilisations" is one among various levels of knowledge encountering. In research on knowledge encountering, an emphasis on the equal rather than hierarchical characteristics of knowledge systems is foregrounded. Cognitive polyphasia has been rediscovered and now is considered crucial for explaining the co-existence of heterogeneous cultures,[6] and also as a theoretical foundation for respect for the multivocality of the social world (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Moscovici theorises "the hypothesis of cognitive polyphasia" as a state of the co-existence of "distinct modalities of knowledge, corresponding to definite relations between man and his environment" (Moscovici, 2008, p.190). These modalities provide alternative rationales for people in varied social contexts to make sense of the world.

Despite the fact that Moscovici coined this term to refer perhaps more to a cognitive process that occurs intra-individually, researchers nowadays associate it more often with groups and communities (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Provencher, 2011). Indeed, polyphasic thinking regarding one

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[6] I use culture here to refer to all community-based knowledge, which does not necessarily correspond to particular political territories.

same object or idea can exist both in a community and within a person (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Contemporary societies in particular show an exponential growth of the phenomenon of cognitive polyphasia as the result of unprecedented "atomised opinions" (Billig, 2008) and hybridised communities (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

While the state of cognitive polyphasia has been repeatedly demonstrated to exist at all levels, from individual to group, from small communities such as a neighbourhood to larger ones like a country or the globe, "cognitive polyphasia" has been largely treated as a social phenomenon which can account for other complex phenomena. Rarely has it been taken as a real theoretical "hypothesis" as Moscovici intended; one that allows further explorations with regard to its conditions and qualification. The phenomenon has been amply verified, yet "conditions which facilitate, hinder, provoke or lead to transformation of different ways of thinking and knowing…" (Marková, 2008, p.479) are still to be investigated. This yet-to-be explored hypothesis, however, seems to be a promising theoretical inspiration that helps refocus and revitalise SR research, as is evidenced by the special issue on cognitive polyphasia in *Papers of Social Representations* in 2012 (see, for example, Dina, 2012).

A recent review by Claudine Provencher (2011) suggests a reconnection to Moscovici's original intention and an exploration of the underlying mechanisms. She tries to combine the model of cognitive polyphasia with Eagly and Chaiken's heuristic-systematic model of decision-making, which takes into account both relatively stable individual attributes of ability, and need for cognition, and also more contextually dependent factors of motives and personal relevance. Notwithstanding some incompatibility in epistemology, as she herself is aware of, this trial has nevertheless demonstrated a possibility and feasibility for future efforts. Epistemological considerations serve to consolidate research planning but not to confine research imagination. Knowledge inventions essentially originate from combinations of categorical knowledge. Epistemological positions, which are derived from knowledge creation, are in themselves categorical knowledge and should serve for the purpose of knowledge innovation.

In contrast to many researchers' assumptions that research with regard to cognitive polyphasia is confined only to SR research, this phenomenon has been widely studied in the US, albeit with different theoretical names in differing academic structure and for distinctive purposes. Relevant studies have revolutionised the field of cultural psychology, with the once influential paradigm of individualism versus collectivism replaced by the model of cultural frame switch (Chiu & Hong, 2006; Hong, et.al., 2000). Indeed, in this age of polyphasic representations individuals are more likely to be equipped with more than one cultural mind due to the pervasive influence of globalisation. It is hardly a coincidence that the Implicit Theory —a development of the model of frame switch — shares some same basic presumptions and interests with SRT, and particularly with

the hypothesis of cognitive polyphasia. They both presume the existence of a subjective world which consists of modalities of knowledge, (mutually contradictory or not), believe in the impact of these modalities on people's perception, and postulate that these modalities are selected to deal with problems people face with under specific conditions.

Both the combination of SRT with the cognitive model of decision-making and the model of culture frame switch concern the rules that govern people's choices of knowledge in specific circumstances. Both of them demonstrate some underlying mechanisms that affect people's choice of knowledge, while neither of them attends to principles that govern knowledge creation. The combined model lists four intra-individual factors without discerning conditions of co-variations (Provencher, 2011), and the frame-switch model relies merely on contextual stimuli (Hong, et al., 2000). Obviously their studies are derived from their interests in the selection of knowledge. However, the state of cognitive polyphasia allows also the possibility of knowledge creation by merging modalities or categories. This is a new area that awaits exploration.

1.4.2 Cognitive Polyphasia and Multiple Memberships

An important aspect that is largely overlooked by researchers interested in cognitive polyphasia is its close relationship with social identity. Although social representation is widely recognised to be dependent on group membership and efforts to combine SR and SI proliferate, so far SRT and SIT remain two distinctive theories. A combined use of SR and SI in research on complex social processes and phenomena seems to be intuitively attractive but theoretically unwarranted. The reason is possibly because of a lack of theoretical concept that enables a link between these two approaches. Cognitive polyphasia is such a concept.

1.4.2.1 Multivocality and Intersectionality in the Modern World

Often it is taken for granted that the state of cognitive polyphasia in the modern world is closely related to globalisation (Gillespie, 2008; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Indeed, the increasing cultural encounters that people experience have driven a rapid growth of polyphasic representations and have also allowed a manifestation of the polyphasic human mind. However, neither the growth nor the manifestation is possible without a mediation of social identity. In modern societies, and in contemporary China in particular, social identity plays a significant role in facilitating the polyphasic re-presentation of the social world.

The modern age has witnessed an explosion of diversity in social identity. The infinite division of the social world resulted in a surging number of social groups. Group membership multiplies, and social movements explode. The multifold dissection of the social world has also led modern people to assume often more than one subjectively significant memberships. While family lineage and sex

remain the basic references by which people group themselves, class has become rather irrelevant and has been replaced by occupation in most places. This shift means more than a growth of social groups, especially when specialisation has become an irreversible trend. More importantly, compared with class, group memberships in relation to professions are often loaded with more personal feelings and can generate more defensive reactions because of their closer association with personal capacity, which diminishes the justification to account for personal inferior social status with external attribution.

In addition to the basic traditional social identity as a family member, the nationalism surge beginning at the end of the eighteenth century has resulted in an embrace of national identity across the world (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983). With the world being redefined in terms of nation states, social identities based on language, ethnic groups, race and religion are strengthened at both national and international levels. The top-down attempt to eliminate group differences across the political territory may instead engender intergroup conflicts. By making countries rely on one other and international contacts necessary for survival, globalisation while creating an appeal for a global identity can also intensify the confrontation between states, especially the power states and the deprived states, and sharpen people's self-awareness of their national identity (Smith, 1995).

Also, modern people often voluntarily join various social groups. The increase of political tolerance worldwide and the break of traditional social ties led to the mushrooming of social organisations across the world. Associations can be organised around any shared interest, in politics, in sports, in cooking, in gardening and so on. Associations of such are not merely confined within nation states, but sometimes extend beyond territory boundaries. They sell themselves by upholding appealing group goals, and gain group members' allegiance by encouraging the practising of group values and fulfilling alleged promises. This is as true of recognised organisations at macro levels, especially political groups such as nation states and parties, as of non-political small social groups such as sports clubs. To sustain themselves, they also need to keep renovating group manifestos and setting up new goals, which often implies that new opponent groups are chosen to combat with (Brown, 2000). Opinions become more diversified and distinctive, with the social world being infinitely divided and with social groups competing for prospective members.

1.4.2.2 Bidirectional Relationship between Social Representation and Social Identity

Manifestos of groups at all levels often conflict with one another because their particular group goals are always oriented towards another group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Accordingly, group norms that govern group members' attitudes and behaviour vary and may be contradictory. Social individuals bearing multiple memberships have to accommodate these potential contradictions and ideas of different origins that sometimes may contradict one another, and to learn to use knowledge

of a particular kind to meet different situational requirements. Consequently, individual thinking becomes polyphasic with each individual's group memberships multiplying, and as a result of the demanding modern world. To be a qualified modern person, we have to learn to be adept at playing roles of all kind depending on the context. We should be able to perform as a child, a student, a professional, a gendered person, a national, a global citizen and so on. Social representations for a variety of roles enable successful role-playing and allow for intersubjective contacts. At the same time, they also give rise to the anxiety of intersectionality in complex situations when more than one identity is activated and conflicts with another.

Social identity work is even more intense in countries under reforms or countries which have experienced reforms more recently, such as China and Russia. Reforms fundamentally aim to redistribute group interests, the result of which is a reshuffling of the social structure (Zhao & Fang, 2013). Social identity in this process can become highly contentious. Reforms at the macro level often show as intensive identity work at the social level and within social members. On the one hand, people may have new group memberships conferred upon them and be forced into social identity processes. On the other hand, they may actively engage themselves in activities seeking new group memberships; this is because social structural changes are often accompanied by variations in evaluations for group memberships, and old memberships may become depreciated or even stigmatised in this process. Reactions towards major social changes produced by reforms include also collective actions for positive ingroup distinctiveness involving social creativity; and direct social competition with outgroups. These social movements are most often seen in countries during the aftermath of wars, where the legitimacy of the new order is questionable and individual mobility is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Indeed, possessing multiple subjectively significant memberships is common for modern people. Social identity that derives from group membership, which premises on social categorisation and which navigates people's social behaviour (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; 1986), allows and facilitates the state of cognitive polyphasia. It underpins polyphasic thinking and promotes heterogeneity in society. Having multiple social identities implies a multifold dissection or categorisation of the social world with regards to group. Each group is associated with particular representations, representations shared by ingroup members and possibly also alternative representations from outgroups (Gillespie, 2008; Staerklé, 2013). Since tensions may exist between identities, contradictions can exist between representations too. A polyphasic mind can be a noisy one, with several voices debating one another. Noisier is the multivocal social world. Social identity also drives people to learn knowledge of various kinds. The state of multiple memberships requires a mastery of knowledge of diversity, so that specific group roles can be fulfilled and different problems centring on group identities can be dealt with properly and efficiently.

The relationship between social identity and social representation, however, is not monodirectional but bidirectional. Polyphasic social representations in the social world and within people's minds react back to their multiplied group memberships. The world of heterogeneity provides people with infinite options to think about and to pursue. The market principle works in the field of ideas too. Contentions for a bigger share of the market are largely determined by advertising battles preaching group ethoses between social groups. Competitions between ideas lead to people's varied identifications for some, but not other ideas. Given that ideas of perspective reflect enunciators' self-positioning in the social network and hence are always associated with social groups, identification for ideas often results in identification for specific social groups.

In addition, a polyphasic re-presentation of the social world altered people's beliefs regarding 'social mobility' and 'social change'. These two terms in SIT are not used in sociological sense but "refer instead to the individuals' belief systems about the nature and the structure of the relations between social groups in their society" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 35). They determine the mode of inter-group interactions. The increased information exchanges between social groups, and the diffusion of varied representations for all social groups across the world, have lowered subjective barriers between social groups. Through these contacts, real or imaginary, alien groups are demystified and superior groups are disenchanted. Boundaries between groups, including that between dominant groups and disadvantaged groups, are perceived as less impermeable, and existing social hierarchies as less legitimate than in pre-modern times. The consequence is interdependence between individual mobility and the objective social structural constraints. On the one hand, intergroup confrontations are reduced in societies allowing individual mobility, because people's belief in social mobility encourages them to rely on their own efforts to attain desirable group memberships. On the other hand, social movements claiming for group rights surge particularly in societies where the chance for individual mobility is very limited because the legitimacy of the existing social structure is questioned.

Meanwhile, polyphasic representations alleviate inter-group tension. Exposure to polyphasic representations of social groups can engender polyphasic thinking within individuals. Polyphasic thinking of out-groups, especially of stigmatised groups, helps reduce inter-group discriminations and therefore inter-group conflicts and confrontations, this is because social contacts, even imaginary contacts can decrease inter-group hostility (Hewstone & Swart, 2011).

1.5 Discourse: Connecting Social Representation and Social Identity

Theoretically, the concept of cognitive polyphasia warrants a combination of SRT and SIT/SCT when researching large-scale complex social phenomena. They intertwine as social processes. For one thing, how we represent the world is largely dependent on our self-positioning in the social

structure. For another, where in the social structure we place ourselves is influenced by the representations existing and being communicated in our daily life. In practice, social representations and social identities cannot exist independently from each other. Their mutual influences are essentially mediated by discourse. As manifest social processes, they hinge on discourses circulated in society, and on predominant discourses in particular.

Modern societies are highly politicised with party systems dominating world politics. Knowledge, no matter how neutral it appears to be, is dependent on politics and supported by particular ideology. This is as true of scientific knowledge as of common knowledge. Common knowledge in particular is politically dependent and is largely determined by social identity. Political discourses not only make individuals' comprehension of social knowledge possible (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011), but also structure it, by providing frameworks and setting keynotes for public discussions (Billig, 2011; van Dijk, 1993).

Meanwhile, social identity in modern societies is more or less political. The social groups concerned always try to maximise, if they cannot monopolise, the power of interpretation to ensure group solidarity and also to establish superiority to other groups to achieve positive distinctiveness. Discursive techniques are deployed by each and every group to maximise the persuasion effect. Consequently, social representations as processes and as the product of battles for the right to final interpretations are inevitably discursive.

Indeed, discourse penetrates the whole process of internalisation of social knowledge, especially in the modern world of multivocality and intersectionality. Social representations are characterised by their dialogicality within and between social groups as well as social individuals (Franks, 2004; Gillespie, 2007; Marková, 2003). As a communicative process, it "normally takes place between the partisans and opponents of different points of view" (Moscovici, 2001, p. 276). As a product of communication, it attaches importance to the nature of society and emphasises "idea(s) of differentiation" and its origin in "networks of people and their interactions" (Moscovici, 2001, p. 256). Anchoring, as an intrapersonal process to find a match among the available categories of knowledge, is ultimately a process of self-positioning. It is to choose an identity and place the self in the social network that is considered to be the most relevant, and to engage in self-stereotypical thinking with regard to the ingroup prototype.

Objectification, as a process that leads to a consensual prototypical image, is always subjected to the influence of discourse. Consensual opinions about the image of certain ideas or beings is achieved by social communications that are to a great extent coordinated by language, which is by no means neutral and value-free. They are not ahistorical or represent merely prevailing political trends, but also reflect political preferences inherited in the influential ideologies of different ages. These historical elements are powerful in shaping public opinions. They enable a stable evolution of

societies and are often demonstrated as resistance to changes. Groups representing the historical conventions are targeted as major opponents by groups aiming at social changes, and are actively or passively involved in discursive combats.

The transformation of a representation into reality is highly susceptible to manipulation (Moscovici, 2001). Social forces, in their contest to influence and even shape public opinion, resort to various discursive means to win adherents (Billig, 1996; Donati, 1992; Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 1973; Gamson, 1988; Hajer & Laws, 2008; Illouz, 2008; Potter & Wetherell, 1999; Snow & Benford, 1988). Such a contest is crystallised in the new social representation that emerges out of it. Any social force, even if it eventually succeeds in dominating public opinion, cannot fully exclude marks left on the relevant social representation by other competitors. Rather, it can only be successful if it manages to feed into established conventions that crystallise influential historical discourses and reconcile with social groups embracing these conventions. Social representations are, indeed, the battlefield of discourses.

1.6 Conclusion

In summation, the increasingly complicated world calls for an integrative approach to studying social phenomena, and a triad model of social representation, social identity and discourse based on the assumption of cognitive polyphasia is a potentially useful tool for studying knowledge transmission and its aftermath. It is used as the theoretical framework for this project because citizenship awareness in rural China is ultimately a result of the encounter between Chinese knowledge and Western knowledge.

Chapter 2 Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods used in this research. It starts with the epistemological consideration that informs the general design of this research, from which I derived the methodology and methods. Following that consideration, the research design is presented. An explanation of data collection is then introduced. The chapter closes with a discussion regarding the generalisability of the current research.

2.1 Social Constructionism and Critical Realism in Current Research

The current research is inspired by social constructionism (SC) and critical realism (CR). Empirically, this project is aimed at investigating social representations of citizenship in rural China and their political implications. Theoretically, it aspires to explore the underlying social psychological mechanisms behind the process of social re-presentation. Based on my literature research on SR studies and studies on village self-governance, and my previous research on the self-governance policy (Zhao, 2011; Zhao & Fang, 2013), I found that social identity and discourse play important roles in the emergence and development of citizenship awareness in rural China. My preliminary work led to two components of the design of this project, which aims at demonstrating both the process of social construction and the underlying mechanism: a qualitative investigation for theory construction; and a quantitative investigation for pattern detection and prediction. A retroductive strategy is adopted in the design of the research.

2.1.1 Epistemological Tension and Connection between Social Construction and Critical Realism

A mixed use of SC and CR will possibly incur criticism because of the epistemological tension between these two approaches. Confining oneself to a particular approach, however, appeared to be unhelpful. It is worth quoting Moscovici's comments on the relationship between the researcher's creativity and the discovery of new phenomena: "I did not believe —and I still do not believe — that *a good epistemology or a good ideology* leads to creativity" (emphasis added) (Moscovici, 2001, p. 280). The same conviction has motivated me to apply these two approaches in combination in my research.

SC and CR are often juxtaposed as two competing epistemological approaches (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Each has its own thrusts, but each is questioned and criticised for certain theoretical claims too. SC recognises human agency (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 2001; Searle, 1996) and CR stresses the regularity of the social world (Bhaskar, 1989; 2004; Danermark EkstrÖm, Jakobsen & Karlsson, 2002). To combine these two approaches, it is important not to

interpret regularity in the conventional naturalist sense as absolute and objective laws which are constant across contexts. Rather, regularity should be understood as the general law. In other words, specific regulations can be agent-dependent and context-contingent but the social world is always patterned.

Despite the epistemological debates between these two approaches, social constructionism and critical realism converge at the ontological presumption that the world is real. How they disagree with each other is with regards to the nature of reality. Social constructionism is concerned with subjective reality, and critical realism is interested in objective reality. Their differing research interests lead to a divergence in research aims, and hence research strategies. Nevertheless, these two approaches are compatible given their shared ontological assumption. Also, like SC, CR recognises the relational and emergent characteristics of the social and views phenomena as the starting point of research. In effect, these two approaches complement each other in research. SC, particularly the phenomenological genre within this tradition (Schütz, 1967), is dedicated to exploring phenomena, which paves the way for SC investigations into underlying mechanisms. Many SC studies presume the regularity of social world in practice, such as Moscovici's study on SRs of psychoanalysis. When he identified three political groups and then attributed a specific communication style to each of the three social groups, he assumed that social identity gave rise to specific communication patterns. It is my conviction of a socially constructed yet patterned social world that leads me to adopt an abductive design of the current research and to take into account both agency and regularity.

Inspired by the abductive methodology, this research on citizenship awareness proceeds in two phases: phenomena detection and then theory construction (Chiasson, 2005; Haig, 2005; 2008a; 2008b). It is firstly a phenomenological study, aiming at understanding the status quo of citizenship awareness in rural China. Given the huge diversity across China, it is designed as a cross-regional comparative study to identify possible typologies. Beyond the context-specific phenomena, I believe in generative mechanisms and in different-level causalities, which can be biological, psychological and social. To explore the social psychological mechanisms underlying the awareness of citizenship is the second goal of this research. The cross-regional design is therefore also intentional; for the identification of underlying mechanisms through cross-regional comparison to make a wide generalisation.

2.1.2 Social Construction-Critical Realism and Agency-Structure in the Current Research

Aside from the ontological and epistemological underpinnings, this research builds on the agency-structure debates in social sciences. Instead of arguing for a particular side, I am convinced that agency and structure complementarily shape human behaviour. Social structures provide platforms

for human actions, but also confine human behaviour. In return, human actions react upon the structures, modifying and changing the structures via active or passive engagement with the social world (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1977). The focus of this research is on the role of agency in the forging of citizenship, and it is discussed in relation to its interactions with structural factors. Social construction, the construct and the consequences of social representations of citizenship are all examined to explore the mutual influence between structure and agency. The construction as a process, the construct as the manifestation, and the consequences as the tangible impact are all seen to be accomplished in interplays between the state construction and the social reactions and also between structural affordance and psychological adaptation. A historical perspective implied in social constructionism is adopted in this research.

In rural China, although citizenship awareness may be demonstrated in different forms, this awareness is generated by the same social factors: state, society and market. They are the three major social forces which propel citizenship awareness in rural Chinese communities. However, their influence on people is seldom coercive via sanctions, but persuasive via discourses; discourses that either elicit people's ingroup identification or feed into their self interests. Prominent discourses from these three arenas in rural Chinese society are excavated from historical, sociological and political research, and operationalised and included in the questionnaire in order to explore the influence of each discursive resource on citizenship awareness; in other words, to investigate the anchoring of 'citizenship' in these three different discursive fields.

2.2 Levels of Explanation in Social Psychology and the Current Research

The different-level causalities that CR argues for (Danermark et al. 2002) resonate in the levels of explanation in social psychology proposed by William Doise. His theorisation of the then predominant psychological theories was driven by his contemplations regarding the differences in general research interests between American psychologists and European psychologists at the time, and his reflections on the reductive characteristic of social psychology (Doise, 1986), which have an enduring significance for the discipline of social psychology. It illuminates the current research.

According to him, social psychological theories are constructed in correspondence to social psychological mechanisms at different levels. Just as social phenomena cannot be reduced into individual phenomena, social psychological phenomena cannot be explained sufficiently by mere psychological mechanisms. They are driven by mechanisms at different levels. As a result, an articulation of levels provides more sufficient explanations for social psychological phenomena. This idea of articulation inspired the current research to integrate theories attending to mechanisms at different levels to provide more sufficient accounts for citizenship awareness in rural China.

2.2.1 Four Levels of Explanation in Social Psychology

Doise (1986) distinguishes four levels of explanation in social psychology: the intrapersonal level; the interpersonal and situational level; the positional level and the ideological level. Research conducted at the intrapersonal level explains the principles that govern people's organisation of their experiences of the social world. Research that centres on the interpersonal and situational processes examine the dynamics of interpersonal interactions whereby social status is outside of the picture. Explanations at the positional level introduce a power hierarchy into interactive situations and differentiated attitude and behaviour are accounted for in terms of differences in social status. Finally, research investigating the ideological influence explains differentiation in behaviour and mental representations in terms of the general beliefs that people being studied have about social relations.

While each level stands on its own and speaks to causalities at different levels, social psychology as a discipline has its own levels of explanation. Complex social psychological processes cannot be sufficiently accounted for by mere intrapersonal explanations or explanations at the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels like lab experiments (Tajfel, 1972).

Three decades ago when Doise argued that "it appears to be impossible to arbitrate between rivals" due to the diversity and specificity of theoretical approaches (Doise, 1986, p. vii), he also appealed for an articulation of levels. He commented: "no social psychological theory can exhaustively define the conditions for its application and the explanatory principles proposed always call upon others" (Doise, 1986, p. 146).

Three decades later, with explanatory breadth having been widely taken as a basic criterion to justify and compare between theories, powerful theoretical approaches strive to exceed particularity and achieve a certain degree of universality. Nonetheless, few trails are successful. For instance, Higgins (1996; 2012) elegantly extends his accessibility theory to explain not only perception but also emotion and motivation. However, it can hardly explain large-scale social phenomena. Grand theories like social representation theory and social identity theory do possess the capacity of explanatory breadth; however, explanatory breadth is often achieved at the expense of explanatory depth. To achieve both, an articulation of theories at different levels is a possible solution.

2.2.2 Levels of Explanation in the Current Research

An important consideration of this research is to articulate levels of explanation in social psychology to increase the theoretical power of SRT in explaining large-scale complex social phenomena. In order to do that, insights from sociology and political science are also brought together because political issues such as citizenship are often derived from the official practices initiated within the government.

This warrants a state-perspective in political studies, which is particularly important when studying Chinese politics due to China's specific political system (Gilley, 2011). As a result, the research design is a dual-process design, taking both top-down and bottom-up processes into account. The dual-process design is also consistent with the epistemological stance of dialogicalality of SRT (Marková, 2003).

2.3 Research Design

The research consisted of a comparative field design, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Socioeconomic variations in China are huge. While some villages have become highly urbanised strangers societies open to external influences, some remain traditional acquaintance societies[7] and are closed to the outside world. To examine the possible variation, a comparative study is warranted. Considering social re-presentation of citizenship occurred in the encounter of Western knowledge and Chinese knowledge and is subjected to the interplay between endogenous discourses with exogenous discourses, exposure to external influence is decided to be the criterion for selecting sites.

The degree of exposure often overlaps the modernisation level. Industrialisation and urbanisation –the two processes in modernisation– provide people with facilities to access outside information and also generate people's need for involving the outside world in their lives. One consequence of modernisation is the change of people's references for behaviour and thinking. Community was no longer the only or even primary resource of reference. The impact of the outside world grows in general and outside influence often dominates in highly modernised communities. Different degrees of modernisation denote differed degrees of influence that external discourses exert upon local communities, which inevitably affects the social representational process and may result in varied regional social representations. Given that modernisation proceeds at different speed across the country, villages at different stages of modernisation are selected for the purpose of comparison.

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[7] Traditional rural Chinese society is known as an acquaintance society, which is characterised by an overlap of consanguinity and regionalism. In acquaintance societies, relation, face and rules govern people's social behaviour (Fei, 2007/1948).

Overseas connections is decided to be an extra criterion for selecting sites,[8] because personal connections with the external world are likely to influence whether, and to what extent, people's thinking is affected by exogenous discourses. Especially in places where many people work in Western countries, overseas connections leads to a possible direct conflict between liberal thinking and communitarian thinking, which might result in different SRs of citizenship from other places.

Sites chosen along the dimension of modernisation (low, medium and high) and the overseas connections can be seen as situating on a developmental (not necessarily progress) sequence. The site with a large number of overseas connections can be considered to be on the most developed end because the future will only witness more and easier access to global discourses that bypass state regulation due to rapid globalisation. Thus, the comparative study is also a quasi-longitudinal study. Variations among communities may shed light on the future trajectory of China's rural democratisation.

2.3.1 Research Methods

Mixed methods are used in this research to achieve analytical breadth and depth (Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). The combination of qualitative and quantitative elements is consistent with the epistemological stand of the current research. They are used for two purposes: a.) complementing each other in demonstrating the phenomenon under study and its underlying social psychological mechanisms; and, b.) methodologically triangulating the research findings of each part.

2.3.1.1 Projective Tests: Free Association and Figure Drawing Test

Originating in psychoanalysis, projective tests were originally used as a tool for detecting personality. In contrast with self-report tests, projective tests are credited for "bring(ing) the unconscious to light" (Neri, 2003, p.346); and therefore minimise biases caused by factors such as social desirability and the given structure provided by survey or interview questions. The

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[8] The urban connection is not considered to be an independent criterion for selecting sites because most rural residents have family members or friends working in cities, with whom they keep frequent contact. The decreased employment in agriculture and the increased trend of consumerism in China drove huge peasant immigration to cities. Statistics released by Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China show that the total number of immigrant peasant workers has risen to 2,527,800,000 in 2011, accounting for over 38.5% of the whole rural population of the year. This number is increasing rapidly each year. In addition, the impact of the urban connection on social representations of citizenship is similar to domestic modernisation in that it implies the same discourses.

development of this methodology has expanded the use of this tool to test also cognitive and social-emotional functioning. The basic hypothesis of this methodology is the projective nature if drawings (Flanagan & Motta, 2007).

Free association is an important projective method that has been widely applied to other areas of psychology to research the human mind by "collecting thoughts" (Nelson, McEvoy & Dennis, 2000). In psychological research, participants taking a free association task are often required to produce words that they think are related to the specific presented cue (Nelson, McEvoy & Dennis, 2000). The cues can be in various forms including the most often used forms of words and images.

Compared with other more structured linguistic approaches such as interviews and focus groups, free association allows participants more freedom to interpret stimuli when giving answers. While more structured approaches confine participants' thinking within a specific frame implied in questions, free association does not set any thought-boundary. Hence, data collected from free association can be more informative, although potentially less structured.

Free association was devised for individual clinical diagnoses, and is now very often used in social representation research to explore consensual apprehensions of particular concepts that are circulated in society. Doise, Clemence and Lorenzi-Cioldi reviewed previous social representation research that uses association tasks and summarised two ways of approaching data extracted from association tasks. After compiling the collections of words produced by all participants into dictionaries, some researchers look for "universes common to different stimuli"; and some others explore the structure of SRs by analysing the organisation of the words produced (Doise, Clemence and Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993: 15).

Free association in this research was initially planned for four purposes, in using the stimulus word 'citizen': a.) to examine the familiarity of the concept of citizenship to rural residents; b.) to retrieve pertinent expressions for interviews and the questionnaire from the association tasks; c.) to detect common conceptions of 'citizenship'; and, d.) to explore the structure of SRs of citizenship. However, only the first purpose was achieved.

Another projective test adopted in this research is a figure drawing test. This task required participants to draw dots instead of actual figures like in standard Human Figure Drawing in a coordinate. The dot in the centre represents self and participants were asked to place other dots which stand for their parents and kids (if there is any), relevant political figures and their fellow people around themselves. The purpose of this task is to unearth participants' mental representations of the social hierarchies, and the whole idea of citizenship is essentially based on one's self-positioning in relation with others and the state. The drawing test was used only in the pilot study to provide some background understandings of citizenship in rural China.

2.3.1.2 Qualitative Interviewing

Interviews are widely used in social sciences to understand the meaning of the respondents' life worlds by inquiring their personal experiences (Seidman, 1998). Qualitative interviewing is defined by de Leeuw (2008) to refer to interviews conducted with topic guides that are analysed qualitatively to distinguish from researcher-administered structured questionnaires. Qualitative interviewing according to Gaskell (2000) includes semi-structured/in-depth interviews with a single person and focus groups with a group of people. Here, it is extended to narrative interviewing because both rely on self-reports; both are intended for meaning understanding; and, both are analysed qualitatively (Interviews in the following text are used in this sense).

The richness and depth that can be obtained by interviewing guarantees its position as a basic research method in social scientific research (Weiss, 1994). Compared with other qualitative methods, qualitative interviewing has the unique advantage of flexibility (de Leeuw, 2008), allowing researchers to tailor questions accordingly in the field and to probe participants when more information is needed (Weiss, 1994). In cultural psychology, it is taken as a useful means to establish or discover the perspectives or viewpoints of the researched (Farr, 1982). Social representation research theory in particular relies heavily on qualitative interviewing for data collection due to the central role of "language and communication" that Moscovici (2001) accords to social representation.

Interviews are used for multifold purposes. Gaskell identifies five usages of qualitative interviewing in social sciences. It can be used independently and also in combination with other methods. Independently it can be used to provide thick descriptions of the respondents' social milieu, to generate theoretical frameworks and to verify or falsify hypotheses. When used in combination with other methods, it can serve to improve questionnaire construction and provide contextual information for quantitative data interpretation (Gaskell, 2000).

In this research, interviews are used both as an independent method and as an auxiliary technique of questionnaire construction and survey data interpretation. It is firstly used to understand SRs of citizenship in rural Chinese communities (Chapter 4), the influence of social identity in representing 'citizenship' (Chapter 5), the appropriation and recreation of the West-originated concept of citizenship in rural Chinese communities (Chapter 6), and the political implications of citizenship representations (Chapter 7). A topic guide that centres on people's knowledge of and practice around citizenship is presented in Appendix 1.

Secondly, qualitative interviewing is used to check the validity of the intended theoretical framework and to develop the questionnaire. A retroductive research strategy is adopted. Interview data were briefly examined against the proposed theoretical model following the first field visit. The initial analysis shows clear impacts of social identity and discourse on social representations of

citizenship, which confirms the validity of the hypothesised model and its relevance for studying citizenship awareness in rural China. Interviews are also used to improve survey design. They are conducted before surveys to examine the relevance of survey questions to rural residents and to adopt local expressions in survey questions. Finally, an analysis of interview data provides contextual knowledge for interpreting the survey data.

2.3.1.3 Survey

The survey method is a technique widely used to collect data in social sciences. A survey is "a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities" (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer & Tourangeau, 2009, p. 2). Different from qualitative interviewing, questions asked in surveys are structured and unchangeable. Questionnaires are usually developed based on the researchers' conceptualisation of the issues under study. Participants are asked exactly the same questions and their answers are routinely chosen from a list of provided answers. In contemporary research, open-ended questions are now often used in questionnaires, however, the proportion remains low and they are eventually coded into numerical forms for statistical analysis.

Quantitative analysis ultimately produces qualitative descriptions, and the qualitative descriptions of "the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members" (*ibid*.) however, are constructed based on the information gathered from representative samples. Descriptive and analytic statistics are two types of analysis applied to survey data. The former is to describe the "size and distribution of various attributes in a population" and the latter is to measure the correlation between variables (*ibid*.). Quantitative investigations on social representations depend heavily on the survey method.

The capacity to generalise findings of survey research to the larger population from which samples are selected accounts for the popularity of the method in social sciences. Surveys are often regarded as useful tools to investigate large-scale social phenomena. By displaying the patterns or regularities of the phenomena, surveys serve for a more important function: in testing various hypotheses and theories, which are intended to generalise to large participant pools. It is widely used in psychology and the developments of survey methodology initially drew on psychological research, cognitive research in particular (Krosnick, 1999).

The survey method is arguably methodologically superior to qualitative methods for a long time and is still regarded as a preferable and more "scientific" method in some social scientific fields. However, researchers have increasingly realised its unavoidable pitfalls, such as the constructive effect of the researcher on the researched by imposing limitations on freedom in response. As a result, quantitative research more recently involves qualitative investigations before surveys for constructing more contextually sensitive and relevant questionnaires. Crosschecking the external

validity of survey investigations and further understanding quantitative findings with qualitative data is also recommended.

This project heavily relies on the survey method. It is used to explore the normative dimension of SRs of citizenship and also importantly to construct models and test hypotheses. Different components of the questionnaire are designed to answer different research questions. Four hypotheses are tests based on the survey data. Firstly, the commonality and specificity hypotheses of SRs citizenship in China's rural communities are tests in Chapter 3 and 4. Secondly, the hypothesis of a correlation between social identity and social representations is tested in Chapter 4. Thirdly, the association between discourse and social representations is examined in Chapter 5. And survey data are further used to differentiate the explanatory power of each factor. Finally, the correlation between social representations of citizenship and rural residents' political participation in self-governance is tested in Chapter 6. It is used in combination with the interview to provide a comprehensive understanding of SRs of citizenship in rural China.

2.3.2 Stimulus Words and Questionnaire Used in the Current Research

This section explains the choice of stimulus words and the design of the questionnaire.

2.3.2.1 Choice of Stimulus Words

Choosing stimulus words for free association, interviews and the questionnaire is vital for this research for two reasons. Firstly, there is not a standardised equivalent expression for 'citizenship' in Chinese because citizenship is an exogenous concept at the first place. Secondly, the government has been secretive about citizenship for political reasons and subsequently citizenship can be a completely alien concept to people, but there can be other expressions that capture the characteristics of citizenship.

Lacking a standard term for citizenship is consequential. It handicaps communications about this concept and citizenship issues are rarely discussed in public communications. Activists often equate citizenship with *gongmin quan* (rights of citizens) intentionally for political purposes, the meaning of which however does not fully capture the connotations of this concept; obligations are excluded, for instance. Another phrase – *gongmin zige* (can be understood both as the status of a citizen and citizen qualifications), which, though encapsulates the two components of citizenship, does not circulate in public communications because it sounds redundant and technical and hence irrelevant to people's daily life. Also, *gongmin zige* obscures the central role of citizen, while prioritising the state. Using the inaccurate expressions of *gongmin quan* or *gongmin zige* as stimulus words or in interviews and the questionnaire is therefore problematic.

Gongmin (literally "*gong*" means public, and "*min*" means the people) – the corresponding legal term for 'citizen' in Chinese – is chosen. The main reason for this choice is because 'citizen' is the carrier of citizenship rights and responsibilities and it is the iconic facet of 'citizenship'. Researching social representations of citizenship necessarily involves an exploration of civic virtues. Also compared with *gongmin quan* or *gongmin zige*, *gongmin* is a much more familiar term for Chinese people. It is the official legal term used in China's *Constitution*.

However, it is still not a good stimulus because though it is heard in media from time to time, it lacks practical functions for rural life and is not used in daily communication in rural communities. Although younger people may have heard it in school, for many rural residents, especially for older generations, it is still an alien term. Its lacking a pragmatic basis, in addition, makes it difficult to engage participants in interview.

The term *cunmin* (villager) was decided as the alternative stimulus word if participants do not respond to *gongmin* (either because they do not know this concept or they are not interested in talking about it). Theoretically, it is a lower-class concept of 'citizen' and is in people's daily language. Villagers first of all are Chinese citizens, enjoying rights and having obligations to fulfil just like urban citizens. Secondly, *cunmin*, in effect, is the closest to 'citizen' in the western sense; villagers have substantive voting rights to choose their own leaders and are officially encouraged to participate in village self-governance.

In contrast to urban citizens, rural residents have real power to influence local governance and they act as conscious citizens in self-governance, especially in the three yearly elections. Since the elected leaders make village development plans and also decide the budget and allotment of the collective economy if there is any, elections are often very competitive. As a result, every voter is mobilised and involved in this event. It always attracts attention and generates intensive discussions in rural society. Through voting, villagers' opinions are valued and through self-governance their political capacity is cultured and improved, which in turn increases their active political participation. Villagers are more active citizens than urban residents.

My initial speculation of the inefficiency of *gongmin* as a stimulus word and the relevance of *cunmin* (villager) was proved in the field. Association tasks almost produced no information. And in interviews, villagers were genreally not interested in the citizen topic but were keen on sharing their thinking about village politics.

After pilot studies it was decided that *zhongguo ren* (Chinese) replace "*gongmin*" in the questionnaire for two reasons. Firstly, qualitative interviewing showed that most people were not familiar with *gongmin* and many did not respond to the *gongmin*/citizen-phrased questions. Secondly, those who responded to the citizen questions often automatically replaced it as "we" (me

as an urban resident and they as rural resident) or "Chinese". Their understanding of 'citizen' as 'Chinese' is consistent with the scholarly definition of 'citizen': a legal status in particular polities.

It meanwhile confirmed the theorisation of Chinese citizenship. Previous studies show that *guoren* (literally means people have the same nationality, but is the formulaic expression to address the entire Chinese people) is the most widely used and accepted term in China that is equivalent to *gongmin* among several alternatives (Goldman and Perry, 2002). This particular term is now replaced by *zhongguo ren* (Chinese person) and used as such in the current study. At the group level, "Chinese people" is indeed the same group membership as Chinese citizen and thus shares its legal connotations.

Beyond the theoretical consideration, concerns about whether *cunmin* (villager) and *zhongguo ren* (Chinese person) can replace "citizen" in collecting data still arise given that there are varied representations associated with these two terms. Indeed, both terms may invoke sentiments such as senses of belonging or nostalgia, which the neutral legal term "citizen" may not render; hence leading the interview to a different direction as the research intends. Participants may not initiate political discussions as the researcher wishes when responding to these two terms. To pronounce the legal and political connotations of these two terms and to minimise other emotions associate with them, interview and survey questions are carefully designed to incorporate a priming mechanism. The primary proposal of social priming effects is that exposure to specific information can activate its relevant representations, which in turn influence behaviour and judgements that follow (Model, 2014). What behind social priming effects is the accessibility principle of cognitive processing (Higgins, 1996). That is, people apply the most accessible representations of relevance to respond to external stimuli.

It is the social priming effect that makes the interchange of "citizen" with "villager" and "Chinese person" in the current research feasible. Political questions were asked before the core citizenship questions with both interview and survey participants and the entire interview as well as survey were strictly confined with only political questions. This is to activate participants' political mindset and direct them to respond to stimuli word "villager" and "Chinese person" as intended. Qualitative interviews always began with knowledge about the term "citizen". When participants failed to respond to this word, questions about rights would be thrown; and it was not until then that the word "villager" would be introduced to the conversation. Probing questions about their actual political participation would be raised if participants still did not respond and the questions of rights and villagers' rights would be asked again afterwards, ensuring enough stimulation and a continuing priming effect. Although the general rights question was adopted in social representation research on citizenship without even bringing in a qualifier like "citizenship" or "civic" (Passini & Emiliani, 2009), the same cannot been done in the current study. Asking people to list rights might be

challenging because it is too general which was often considered an irrelevant concept. Adding the qualifier "villager" meanwhile brought the remote concept close to people's daily life. Subsequently, more information might be obtained. It was even so with "duties".

With regard to survey, the core citizenship scale phased as "Chinese person" was not introduced until after participants answered to their political participation and their opinions about governance. All were to ensure the activation of political mindset and the civic identity. Also, as the scale aims at exploring the normative sphere of social representations of citizenship which involves enormous top-down construction, it is sensible to employ "Chinese person" which is often officially used to replace "citizen" in political discourses preaching civic virtues in the questionnaire.

The reason why the term Chinese is chosen in questionnaire but in interviews, the term villager is used requires an explanation. This is primarily because of the varied tasks that qualitative interviewing and the survey are planned in this research. Interviews aims to elicit information about people's knowledge about and practice around 'citizenship'; whereas surveys focus more on people's normative perception of a 'good' citizen. Certainly, despite the fact that the stimulus words "villager" and "Chinese person" were obtained from the pilot study and in spite of every effort to ensure the occurrence of social priming effects, using them as proxies for "citizen" will inevitably decrease the robustness of the research. Yet, under strict control, it should be a sacrifice worth making in the absence of linguistic familiarity. After all, considering the vibrant citizenship phenomena, it is more than wrong to conclude that there were no social representations of citizenship in rural China simply because peasants could not use the particular technical word of citizen to talk about citizenship issues, which might as well be the reason why Chinese peasants were politically discriminated as incapable of democratic practice and citizenship in rural China has been largely under-researched.

2.3.2.2 The Design of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this research (See Appendix 2.) is adopted from Willem Doise's research on social representations of citizenship in ten countries (unpublished manuscript). [9] Questions were modified after qualitative interviewing (Presser, Couper, Lessler, Martin, Rothgeb & Singer, 2004). His original questionnaire is developed on the three assumptions of social representation theory implied in the two basic processes of objectification and anchoring in social representational processes. First, people share certain meanings for a specific social issue; second, individuals may have different positioning in a specific field of social representations and the variations in individual positioning are structured; and third, shared meanings require common frames of reference and the

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[9] The questionnaire was kindly provided by Willem Doise in private correspondence.

field of social representations is always anchored in other representational fields (Doise, et al., 1993).

In consistence with these three assumptions and guided by the specific research questions of this project, the questionnaire used is an adapted version of Doise's original questionnaire, which takes contextual factors into consideration. General constructs of the scales are preserved, but specific questions are tailored to the Chinese context. Four sets of questions about democratic centralism, village self-governance, human rights and democracy are designed to test the discursive influence on social re-presentation of citizenship and to address the issue of the anchoring of 'citizenship'. These four sets of questions are derived from the three discursive systems of state, society and market. They propose varied relationships between state and society as well as between people.

The tailored questionnaire comprises four major sections: village self-governance, state and society, knowledge of international society and personal information. The ordering of the sections follows the social priming principle and approaches from the familiar to the less familiar. Village self-governance is put in the first section to activate participants' political mentality by recalling and reflecting their daily political practice and thus prepare them for answering the successive sections on the less relevant topics of communism, civic virtues, human rights and democracy.

2.3.2.2.1 Section One: Village Self-Governance

The village self-governance section comprises four sets of questions: 4 items for knowledge, 10 for practice, 7 for perception and 21 for normative evaluations. The hypothesis is that social representations of citizenship is anchored in the existing representational system which importantly includes representations of village self-governance and they in turn influence the motivation for seeking information of and excising self-governance. The knowledge and practice questions while function as dependent variables of SRs of citizenship provide background information to interpret data as well. With regard to knowledge, it involves primarily basic rules of the election (See Appendix 2, Q1-Q4); and as for practice (See Appendix 2, Q5, Q6 & Q13), the sole focus is given to the election because studies have repeatedly shown that village self-governance is rarely practised beyond elections although democratic management, supervision and decision-making are also its official components (see for example, Manion, 2009; Zhao & Fang, 2013). For this reason, items about the other three principles are included only in the evaluation scale, which contains items about elections too.

The scale is devised in accordance with the four principles of the village self-governance and used as the anchor for SRs of citizenship in the current research. Participants were asked to use a four-point scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4) to express their opinions towards the listed statements about village governance (See Appendix 2, Q14). An option of "don't know"

is provided. It was found in the pilot study that people sometimes found it difficult to answer certain questions, especially for the older generations who often had only daily-life knowledge. Answering the unfamiliar questions could give rise to much anxiety within them and a forced answer meanwhile can be of low validity. For these people and for people who have other concerns, the freedom to opt out releases the tension and discomfort resulting from answering the questions, which can also help keep them engaged with the survey by moving to the next question without anxiety. Cronbach's alpha of the village self-governance scale is 0.83.

Another set of questions in this section deals with people's perception of this policy (See Appendix 2, Q7-Q12). It aims to explore participants' beliefs about the state-society power relationship by having them answer to questions about decision-making in village self-governance. This is the sphere where social forces directly confront the state power (Zhao & Fang, 2013). Self-positioning in political life is important because citizenship is essentially a reflection of the state-society relationship (Isin & Turner, 2002) and how people position themselves in relation to the state largely determines their rights and duties practice.

2.3.2.2.2 Section Two: State and Society

To further investigate participants' conception of the state-society relationship, Section Two is devised to directly address this issue. It comprises three sets of questions. The first part contains five questions and attends to the legitimacy of the government in using law enforcement to intervene in society and the reach of the state power (See Appendix 2, Q15-Q19). Again, this part is designed to examine people's self-positioning in relation to the state. The second part of this section is a scale of Chinese communist ideology, which acknowledges both the egalitarian principle of communism (Marx and Engels, 2008/1848) and the governmental-organising principle of democratic centralism. Participants were asked to choose from strongly agree (1), rather agree (2), rather disagree (3) to strongly agree (4) to respond to 17 statements about village governance (See Appendix 2, Q20). Again, the don't-know option is provided. Cronbach's alpha of this scale is 0.79. This scale is used as an anchor of SRs of citizenship.

The third part of this section is a four-point Likert scale of 'good' citizen. This scale addresses the issue of the objectification of 'citizenship'. A socially established image of good citizens is the outcome of social re-presentation of citizenship because cognitive operations of selecting and categorisation involved in objectification inevitably result in cognitive bias including stereotyping and normative evaluations (Doise et al., 1993). 20 items about behavioural characteristics that define good citizens were presented and participants were asked to choose from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4) to respond to the first 19 statements (See Appendix 2, Q21). The last item in this scale is an open-ended question, but as few participants provided answers, it was dropped in

analysis. The don't-know option is not provided in this scale because the pilot study showed that rural residents had little problem answering these questions. This scale selectively keeps Doise's original items constructed around basic principles for interpersonal interactions and community life. Among these items, some echo certain salient values in Chinese culture and some other are specified in Chinese *Constitution*. Items reflecting popular political discourse are devised and included in the scale. After all, the state always tries to impose an ideal image of citizen on its people and it in effect often has a big impact. Cronbach's alpha of this scale is 0.88.

2.3.2.2.3 Section Three: Knowledge of the International Society

Section three on knowledge of the international community consists of two scales and both are used as anchors for SR of citizenship. The first scale on democracy presented a list of six features of democracy adopted from Doise's construction. These questions were selected with a consideration for political sensitivity of the questions and after the difficulty level of the questions for Chinese villagers was assessed in the pilot study. Certainly the scale cannot capture every aspect of democracy, especially when practical reasons are present and if checked against the lists provided by scholars taking varied approaches (see for example, Dahl, 1972; Tilly, 2007). Yet with the constraints, the questions chosen to a certain extent reflect the three basic traits of democracy identified by O'Donnell: political freedom, legal equality and rule of law (O'Donnell, 2005: p. 3). Meanwhile, the criterion of "mutually binding consultation" that Tilly (2007: p. 15) proposed was also taken into account in the selection. Respondents were asked whether they think the listed features very important (1), fairly important (2), not important enough (3), or not important at all (4) for defining democracy (See Appendix 2, Q22). A don't-know option is provided. Cronbach's alpha of this scale is 0.75.

The second scale is adopted from Doise's human rights violation scale (Doise, 2002). His construction is in line with the basic principle of Universal Declaration of Human Rights that recognises 'inherent dignity of and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family'. The specific questions were constructed around the aspiration of "freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want" that UDHR proclaimed. As Doise acknowledged that these are in effect largely 'the European values' (Doise, 2002, p.29), the revision of the scale took Chinese social and political reality into consideration. 15 scenarios involving human rights violation were presented and participants were asked to indicate their beliefs about the extent to which these scenarios relate to human rights violation, using a four-point scale: extremely relevant (1); fairly relevant; (2) not relevant enough (3) and not relevant at all (4) (See Appendix 2, Q23). Cronbach's alpha of this scale is 0.87.

2.3.2.2.4 Section Four: Personal Information

The last section of Personal Information comprises two parts. The first part on demographic features has seven items, including age, gender, educational level, current vacation and city-related working experience. Leadership status and party affiliations are included to examine the role of social identity in social re-presentation (See Appendix 2, Q24-Q30). The second part on private life including leisure and social interaction contains five questions and is aimed for two purposes: providing background information for understanding participants' answers and examining the impact of external influence on their political mentality if possible (See Appendix 2, Q31-Q35).

2.3.3 Operationalisation of Research Questions and Data Analysis

The four research questions are further broken down. Each research question is answered by a combined use of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative content analysis is applied to examine themes emerging in interview data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, ANOVA, cluster and crosstab and analytical statistics including canonical correlation analysis and logistic regression are used to analyse survey data, using SPSS and Stata.

2.3.3.1 Research Question 1: Social Representations of Citizenship in Rural China

The first research question of what the social representations of citizenship are in rural China is broken down into two questions: a.) what is the commonness of SRs of citizenship among rural residents regarding citizenship content; and, b.) is there commonness and disparities in citizenship representations across rural society.

Semi-structured interviews and surveys are used to answer these questions. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with ordinary villagers as well as with village leaders in villages at different modernisation stages to investigate their perceptions of citizenship and their political experiences. Questions centre on their knowledge about being a citizen, specifically, rights and responsibilities they think citizens and villagers have. Common understandings of, and practice around, citizenship are firstly examined in interview transcriptions.

Normative evaluations of civic virtues are then examined using survey data. The scale of good citizens is used to test the commonness and specificities hypotheses of SRT. In addition, they are used in identifying the commonness and in looking for specificities in individual positioning.

2.3.3.2 Research Question 2: Identity Work in Representing Citizenship

The second research question of the influence of important social identities, such as leadership and the Party membership on people's representations of citizenship is aimed at investigating the role of social identity in social re-presentation. These two specific group identities are chosen because of

their salience in rural society. Rural society is rather homogeneous and village leadership and Party membership are the only conspicuous memberships that distinguish people. Economic status, which is important for urban residents, is perceived less important in rural communities. Rural residents live almost the same lives due to the infrastructural constraints. Analysis focuses on intergroup differences/commonness. Discussions about intergroup convergence/divergence are also conducted for an investigation of the specificity of SRs.

Discourse analysis is conducted with semi-structured interview data to examine convergence/divergence between village leaders and ordinary villagers in their rights practice. ANOVA analyses are then conducted with the 'good' citizen index to test the association between village leadership and the 'good' citizen representations as well as the association between Party membership and the 'good' citizen representations. After that, cluster analysis is conducted to explore the differences in individual positioning. Crosstab analyses are also conducted on top of clustering to explore other group identities that influence the 'good' citizen representations.

2.3.3.3 Research Question 3: Anchoring "Citizenship" in Rural China

The third research question of where in the rural Chinese representational system the concept of citizenship is anchored aims to investigate the role of predominant discourses in the social representational process of citizenship. Specifically, this investigation explores the impact of communist ideology, the rural tradition of community autonomy, the universal equality principle and the idea of democracy on the 'good' citizen representations. Since these four discourses are produced respectively in the spheres of state, society and market, an exploration of their relationship with the 'good' citizen representations helps to illuminate the respective impact of state, society and market on the social representational process citizenship.

Historical, sociological and economic research is reviewed to provide some contextual background of the anchoring of citizenship in rural China. Rural residents' relevant civic practice is then presented. Canonical correlation analyses are conducted to examine the correlations between the 'good' citizen representations and discourses of democratic centralism, village self-governance, human rights and democracy. Comparisons are made to discriminate the relative impact of each discourse on the construction of the 'good' citizen.

2.3.3.4 Research Question 4: Consequentially Citizenship Representations

The fourth research question answers to the political implications of SRs of citizenship. Again, both interview data and survey data are used and the analysis proceeds in two stages. The first stage is a narrative analysis of interview data. Individual political experiences are analysed. The analysis is

then discussed in light of the findings of the other research questions to explore the underlying social psychological mechanism.

The second stage of the analysis is to examine the relationship between the 'good' citizen representations and village self-governance practice. Logistic analyses are conducted with the 'good' citizen indices and questions about village self-governance participation.

2.4 Conducting the Studies

In correspondence with the methods introduced above, three studies are presented: a pilot exploratory study using association tasks and social positioning tasks, a qualitative interviewing study and a survey study. Data collection was conducted between June and September in 2012 in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province (see Image 2.1). Wenzhou presents especially fertile territory for comparative studies. It is an affluent area in general but polarisation within the area is severe. There are very rich communities that are highly industrialised and open to the outside world and there are also very closed communities that follow traditional practices and adhere to traditional values. This area presents a microcosm of national diversity, mirroring the nationwide developmental trend.
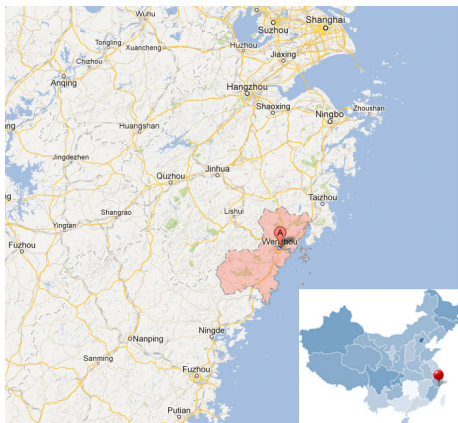
Image 2.1 *Map of Wenzhou*

Multistage sampling is employed, and fieldwork sites are selected using purposive sampling at the first stage. The selection criterion is the degree of exposure to external influences, which often overlaps the modernisation level. With regard to evaluating modernisation, popular measurements include "Inkeles index system of modernization", Human Development Index and The Millennium Development Goals. The one used here is developed by the research group for China Modernisation Strategies from Chinese Academy of Sciences. Taking China's development into account, the research group proposed two stages of modernisation. The first stage is characterised by industrialisation and urbanisation, and the second knowledge economy and digitalisation. Ten indicators are used for evaluating the first stage, including importantly GNP per capita, the proportion of labour employed in agriculture and adult literacy. An evaluation for the second stage

comprises 16 indicators, including the popularisation of televisions and the Internet. Given that knowledge economy is largely absent and information technology is hardly popularised in China's rural areas, the selection of field sites was made primarily based on the first-stage indicators of urbanisation and industrialisation. Urbanisation in particular reflects the radiation effect of cities — the information hubs —, upon rural communities.

Meanwhile, because certain indicators are used more often at the regional level, including the proportion of urban population, infant mortality, medical services available and life expectancy, and rural Chinese communities do not vary much in some other dimensions, such as adult literacy and popularisation of university education, they are not considered in selecting the sites. Also, in rural China there seldom are precise records; figures reported hence are often ranges instead of precise numbers. Yet, it hardly affected the selection because in the evaluation system what matters the most is threshold numbers and all figures are processed as ordinal variables in the current research. After all, the research is not aimed at evaluating modernisation in rural China and the differentiation is only made for the purpose of comparison. What should be emphasised here is that despite huge variations, modernisation levels in rural China are generally low and categorisation made here (high or low modernisation) is in a relative but not an absolute sense.

Five sites are chosen for semi-structured interviews, which are further grouped into three types of modernisation: low, medium and high, and another five sites were selected for surveys. Overseas connection is chosen as an extra criterion for selecting sites because it represents the community's direct contacts with the West. These communities are likely to be more influenced by Western ideas. Together with modernisation levels, they constitute a continuum of exposure to external influences. A village with a large number of overseas connections is selected and seen as the most open society because of its direct contacts with Western ideas, although less modernised than urbanised villages.

2.4.1 The Exploratory Pilot Study: Free Association and the Drawing Task for Social Positioning

The exploratory free association tasks were conducted in two different villages in June 2012 when exploring possible fieldwork sites. The study was forced to terminate due to the complete failure of the task in the field. Altogether 15 people (M=9; F=6) were invited and the non-dialogic task was mistaken for intellectual tests and was intimidating for respondents. Most people refused to participate in the study after the stimulus word 'citizen' was presented and the requirements of the task were explained. They claimed to have no knowledge of this concept at all. A few of them took some time to think about it, but failed to produce any word.

Although participants' lacking experience may have contributed to the failure of this study, villagers' unfamiliarity with the concept was striking. The conclusion that 'citizenship' is a foreign

concept to rural residents was drawn from the pilot study. For this reason, 'citizen' possibly is not an appropriate stimulus word for interviews and surveys.

Social positioning tasks were also conducted in the pilot study to produce mental representations of people's self-positioning in relation to the state. It is important because 'citizenship' is essentially a social contract between the state and its people, revolving around their power dynamics. Participants were asked to draw their relative positions to political leaders including the president or prime minister, the mayor and the community leader, to their kin including their parents, their siblings and their kids if they have, and to their fellow community members on a coordinate. Two groups of ten participants were invited, with one group comprising solely Chinese nationals and another nationals from different democratic countries, in order to make a comparison.

2.4.2 Study 1: Interviews

Interviews were conducted between July and August in 2012. Pilot interviews were conducted in June 2012. An official who had just finished his term as a county leader and four peasants living and working in cities were interviewed. Five villages are then selected according to modernisation levels and they are re-grouped into three categories: low, medium and high modernisation (see Table 2.1). The selection of and grouping for interview sites made here were rather crude based on village leaders oral reports about GDP by agriculture, GDP by industry, the proportion of labour employed in agriculture, infrastructural facilities of the villages and the distance of the villages to the city. Pictures of the sites are presented below (see Image 2.2-2.6).

Table 2.1 *Village samples for interviews*

Village	Modernisation Level	Industrialisation Level /Economic Composition	Urbanisation Level
1	Low	Relatively low/migrant workers + self-supply farming	Relatively low
2	Low	Low (no industry)/plantation + small business	Medium
3	Medium	High/ small-scale manufacture+ self-supply farming	Relatively low
4	High	High/ house release + employment in the tertiary industry (no farm land)	Relatively high (on the outskirts of the city)
5	High	High/ employment in the tertiary industry (no farm land)	High (on the outskirts of the city)

Image 2.2 *Pictures of Village 1*

Image 2.3 *Pictures of Village 2*

Image 2.4 *Pictures of Village 3*

Image 2.5. *Pictures of Village 4*

Image 2.6 *Pictures of Village 5*

Altogether 27 participants were formally interviewed,[10] including 18 males and 9 females (for descriptions, see Appendix 5), and 25 interview participants are recruited from the five selected villages using quota sampling (see Table 2.2). The recruitment of interview participants followed the saturation principle, i.e. the recruitment stopped when no more new information was elicited. Political status, age and gender were controlled. Additional in-depth interviews were conducted with another two people in different villages for their special political experiences. Choosing them was also for the purpose of balancing the village leaders' and ordinary villagers' perspectives. Their interviews do not follow the topic guide but centre on their personal experience. Although balances between sexes and age groups are controlled, the proportion of middle-aged men is still substantially greater than other groups due to the high refusal rate of females and the massive labour migration in rural China.[11] The sample however well reflects the composition of village residents.

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[10] The total number of interviews is much higher. Excluding informal interviews that were not recorded, I interviewed over 200 rural residents. Interviews were conducted in natural settings because of the difficulty in recruiting participants for planned interviews and also in order to make people feel confident to talk about unfamiliar topics and to gather their genuine answers. Interviews were done when people were sewing, doing small chores, eating, or simply relaxing at home or in the crop field. As a result, most participants dropped out of the interview after finishing their work and going to other activities. These are those who finished the interviews.

[11] Female villagers often reject interviews, reiterating they "don't know much and can't express well" and insisting that I should interview their husbands instead.

Table 2.2 *Semi-structure interview participants*

		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	14	56%
	Female	11	44%
Age group	30-39	3	12%
	40-49	8	32%
	50-59	10	40%
	60 and over	4	16%
Educational attainment	Illiterate	6	24%
	Primary school	3	12%
	Middle school	7	28%
	High school	3	12%
	Unknown	6	24%
Party membership	Party member	7	28%
	Non-Party member	18	72%
Village leadership status	Incumbent village leaders	7	28%
	Former village leaders	2	8%
	Ordinary villagers	16	64%
Village affiliation in relation to the modernisation level	Low modernisation	7	28%
	Moderate modernisation	6	24%
	High modernisation	12	48%
Total		25	100%

I was introduced to village leaders by friends in each site. The first interview in each site was with village leaders, either the village chair or the party secretary. Except for the questions about citizenship, questions about the village and the local life were also asked (see Appendix 3 for the questionnaire on the basic information of the village).

2.4.3 Study 2: Survey

Surveys were conducted between August and September in 2012. A pilot study with 15 villagers was conducted in July 2012. The aim is to look for possible problems respondents as well as interviewers may experience during survey interviewing. The five villages selected are situated along the continuum of exposure to external influences. Four villages are selected along the dimension of modernisation, another village is chosen because of its substantial overseas ties, which makes it the most open community among all despite the moderate modernisation level.

A questionnaire on the village modernisation (see Appendix 3) was filled out by village leaders in the survey. Because not all respondents answered all questions, some indicators were abandoned, such as the proportion of college graduates and educational attainments of age groups. These figures did not make much difference because educational attainments do not vary much in rural China and few college graduates return their villages. In the end, six indicators were taken into account: GNP per capita, GDP by agriculture, GDP by industry, the proportion of labour employed in agriculture, the popularisation of televisions and the popularisation of the Internet.

Expect for individual questions about GNP per capita, the popularisation of televisions and the popularisation of the Internet, the proportion of labour employed in agriculture is examined by questions about villagers' occupations in combination with questions about the population composition of the village (See Appendix 3, Q2). Questions about the village finance together with questions about the village land address the issues of GDP by agriculture and GDP by industry (See Appendix 3, Q1 & Q4). What should be mentioned is that the threshold figure for GNP per capita in the evaluation system proposed by the CAS research team is the international standard of $6261, which is unpractical for rural China, the figure hence was instead examined in the unit of Chinese currency. As for the popularisation of television and the Internet, the standards are made as 50% (of all households) given that while television ownership is common in rural China, using the Internet is hardly a common practice (See Appendix 3, Q7). With the setting of standards as 0, numbers above are computed as 1 and below as -1. A categorisation of the villages investigated is presented below with the scores they get in the modernisation evaluation (see Table 2.3).

Again, I would like to emphasise that the categorisation here is in a relative sense and in general the modernisation level in rural China is low. It should be noted that although the modernisation score of Village 10 is not the highest (the same as Village 8), Village 10 was still taken as the most open community because over half of its population is working in the West and the community is directly exposed to the Western influence. This means that the transmission of the West-originated concept "citizenship" to this village can be both through direct contact with Western societies and through the mediation of urban China, which may make it different from other communities.

Table 2.3 *Village samples for surveys*

Village	Exposure to External Influences	Scores for Modernisation
6	Low	-4
7	Relatively low	-2
8	Medium	2
9	Relatively high	6
10	High	2

Pictures of surveys sites are presented below (Image 2.7-2.11)

Image 2.7 *Pictures of Village 6*

Image 2.8 *Pictures of Village 7*

Image 2.9 *Pictures of Village 8*

Image 2.10 *Pictures of Village 9*

Image 2.11 *Pictures of Village 10*

Survey participants are chosen using quota sampling. Balances between village leaders and ordinary villagers, between age groups and between sexes are considered. Altogether 200 participants are recruited (see Table 2.4). The numbers of participants from the five sites are, respectively: 40, 39, 39, 41 and 41. A total of 122 are male, 76 are female and two did not report their sex. A total of 21 are village leaders and 179 are ordinary villagers; 60 participants are under 40, 42 are between 40 and 50, 33 are between 40 and 50, 34 are between 50 and 60 and 23 are over 60; and, 8 participants did not report their ages.

Table 2.4 *Survey participants*

			Village					
			6	7	8	9	10	Total
Gender	Male	Count	30	23	21	24	24	122
		% of Total	15%	11.5%	10.5%	12%	12%	61%
	Female	Count	9	16	17	17	17	75
		% of Total	4.5%	8%	8.5%	8.5%	8.5%	38%
	Unknown	Count	0	1	1	0	0	2
		% of Total	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1%
Age group	18-39	Count	14	7	6	14	19	60
		% of Total	7%	3.5%	3%	7%	9.5%	30%
	40-49	Count	13	6	11	8	4	42
		% of Total	6.5%	3%	5.5%	4%	2%	21%
	50-69	Count	11	14	18	14	10	67
		% of Total	5.5%	7%	9%	7%	5%	33.5%
	70 and above	Count	1	10	3	5	4	23
		% of Total	0.5%	5%	1.5%	2.5%	2%	11.5%
	Unknown	Count	0	3	1	0	4	8
		% of Total	0.0%	1.5%	0.5%	0.0%	2%	4%
Educational attainment	Illiterate or barely read and write	Count	7	16	10	9	4	46
		% of Total	3.5%	8%	5%	4.5%	2%	23%
	Primary school	Count	17	13	10	10	7	57
		% of Total	8.5%	6.5%	5%	5%	3.5%	28.5%
	Middle school	Count	11	3	14	8	19	55
		% of Total	5.5%	1.5%	7%	4%	9.5%	27.5%
	High school or equivalent	Count	3	4	3	9	4	23

	diploma						
		% of Total	1.5%	2%	1.5%	4.5%	2%	11.5%
	College or above	Count	1	1	1	5	7	15
		% of Total	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	2.5%	3.5%	7.5%
	Unknown	Count	0	3	1	0	0	4
		% of Total	0.0%	1.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2%
Party membership	Party member	Count	15	5	2	1	10	33
		% of Total	7.5%	2.5%	1%	0.5%	5%	16.5%
	Non-Party member	Count	24	32	34	40	31	161
		% of Total	12%	16%	17%	20%	15.5%	80.5%
	Unknown	Count	0	3	3	0	0	6
		% of Total	0.0%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3%
Village leadership	Village leader	Count	5	8	2	0	6	21
		% of Total	2.5%	4%	1%	0.0%	3%	10.5%
	Ordinary villager	Count	34	32	37	41	35	179
		% of Total	17%	16%	18.5%	20.5%	17.5%	89.5%
	Unknown	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total		Count	39	40	39	41	41	200
		% of Total	19.5%	20%	19.5%	20.5%	20.5%	100%

I was introduced in villages by friends. Each participant was given a small present in return for their participation. Village leaders in each site did an extra questionnaire about the basic information of their village. The questionnaire was also used in interview villages. Surveys were assisted by local volunteers, and they were trained before surveys using a protocol book written after the pilot study. Face-to-face interviews were administrated with illiterate participants and most senior participants. Literate participants were given paper and a pencil to fill out the questionnaire by themselves.

2.5 Validity and Reliability

Methodology triangulation is used to check the reliability and validity of research findings. Validity checks proceed with each stage of analysis. Firstly, each study starts from the qualitative analysis, and is then followed by hypothesis tests, the results of which are discussed in relation to qualitative research. Secondly, all findings yielded by particular methods are cross-checked with findings produced by other methods. Thirdly, each participant's account is examined against others' accounts and ordinary villagers' reports are complemented with village leaders' reports. Fourthly, statistical tests are conducted with scales used in the survey to check internal reliability, lastly, findings are always re-examined in new investigations.

2.6 Research Framework

In accordance with four research questions, different streams of data are used and different analytical methods are adopted. A research framework is presented below.

Table 2.5 *Research framework*

Research Question	Data Resources	Data Description	Analytical Techniques
1. What are the social representations of citizenship like in rural China?	Interviews	Citizenship content	Qualitative content analysis
	Survey	The index of a 'good' citizen	Descriptive statistics, ANOVA
2. How do important social identities, such as leadership and Party membership influence people's representations of citizenship?	Interviews	Citizenship extent and depth	Discourse analysis
	Survey	The index of a 'good' citizen, questions on political orientation and demographic information	Cluster analysis, ANOVA
3. Where in the rural Chinese representational system does the concept of citizenship anchor?	Historical research	Historical traditions of communism, community autonomy and universal equality	Semantic analysis
	Survey	The index of a 'good' citizen, the index of democratic centralism, the index of village self-governance, the index of human rights and the index of democracy	Canonical correlation analysis
4. What impacts do social representations of citizenship have on the rural political life?	Narrative Interviewing	Political actions oriented to rights claims	Narrative analysis
	Survey	The index of a 'good' citizen and questions on village political participation	Logistic analysis

Chapter 3 Social Representations of Citizenship in Rural China: Commonality and Regional Differences

This chapter and the chapter that follows discuss commonalities and differences of social representations of citizenship in China's rural communities in light of political, sociological and social psychological theories of citizenship. Citizenship is often researched from three aspects: content, extent and depth (Isin & Turner, 2002); this chapter focuses on content. The analysis proceeds in two stages and combines interview data and survey data at both stages in order to enable a more comprehensive understanding. The first-stage analysis mostly draws upon qualitative data to explore the ideational and behavioural dimensions of citizenship. The second-stage analysis mainly relies on survey data to accomplish two tasks: a). to examine the normative dimension of citizenship; and, b). to test the commonality and specificity hypotheses inherited in SRT, using the index of 'good' citizen.

Doise, Clemence and Lorenzi-Cioldi (1993) pointed out that SRT has three basic assumptions. First, a community has a minimal consensus about ideas and objects of social importance. Second, despite commonness, individual members may have differing positions with regard to the consensual content. And third, different positioning is regulated by certain attitudinal dimensions. This chapter explores the first two assumptions.

3.1 Citizenship Traditions and Social Psychological Insights: Objective and Subjective Citizenship

The discussion of social representations of citizenship draws on different traditions of citizenship research, including political science, sociology and social psychology. In spite of varied disciplinary foci, citizenship research generally concerns three dimensions of citizenship: content, extent and depth. Political scientists discuss them in consideration of effective governance (Isin & Turner, 2002); while sociologists approach it from the angle of socioeconomic structure (Marshall, 1950; Turner, 1993). Social psychologists on the other hand focus on social psychological mechanisms behind citizenship phenomena and recently researchers have begun to explore the role of the public in citizenship dynamics (Masso, 2012).

One of the most important findings of the recent social psychological research is the discrepancy between 'subjective citizenship' and 'objective citizenship'. The former is defined in terms of bureaucratic classification, and the latter in terms of personal awareness and investment (Condor, 2011). Although the subjective and objective distinction may invite questioning given that 'subjective citizenship' is no less objective/real for people as 'objective citizenship', this observation provokes thinking about the implications of the discrepancy between the perceived and

the normative, which is yet to be explored. In effect, incompatibility between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship appears to me to be the most crucial for understanding contemporary citizenship movements. It is a strong incentive for people to engage in citizenship movements because it may result in cognitive dissonance, which in turn drives actions for change (Festinger, 1957).

In this age of surging rights claims, psychologists' observation of subjective citizenship is timely and significant. However, a better understanding of its implications requires a reference to objective citizenship, which warrants the integration of a psychological perspective with other disciplinary approaches. In spite of a long tradition and the strong trend of interdisciplinary research, psychological research on citizenship remains rather independent of other disciplinary traditions till now. It has to do with psychologists' steady disciplinary commitment as well as a lack of theoretical tools for an interdisciplinary incorporation. Social representation theory provides a useful tool to incorporate insights from other traditions into a social psychological perspective and to construct a more comprehensive model to understand citizenship phenomena.

The current research on social representations of citizenship though focuses on subjective citizenship is ultimately discussed with reference to objective citizenship. It covers all three facets of citizenship — content, extent and depth. Due to the wide coverage, two chapters are dedicated to this investigation. Citizenship content is examined in this chapter and its extent and depth are discussed in the next chapter. Specifically, this chapter examines citizenship rights and obligations and the following chapter investigates distribution (extent) and the exercising of citizenship rights.

3.2 Representing Citizenship in Rural China: Citizenship Awareness and A Yet-To-Be-Finished Association Task

The fact that 'citizenship' is a concept produced in Western democratic countries and is underplayed in public discourses in China may raise the question as to whether social representations of citizenship exist in rural China at all. The unsuccessful association tasks in the pilot study seem to suggest its nonexistence. The association tasks using 'citizen' (*gongmin* 公民) as the stimulus word did not produce no association. Although, it was anticipated that information produced by free associations could be very limited given that 'citizen' is a barely useful concept in rural life, the fact that nobody associated anything to the concept of 'citizen' is still surprising. It seems to imply that there are indeed no social representations of citizenship in rural Chinese communities and 'citizenship' may remain to be nothing more than an abstract concept over a century following its introduction. Because this term is not used in daily communication, it seems that the concept is irrelevant to daily life. Consequently, Chinese rural residents seemingly do not think of themselves in terms of citizens.

However, some empirical evidence proves otherwise. There are vibrant citizenship movements in rural China. Compared with their urban counterparts, rural citizens are more brave and ready to engage in collective actions to protect self-interests. Confrontations initiated by rural communities with the local governments to defend communal rights are not rare in China. The past two decades in particular has witnessed a rapid increase in Chinese peasants' rights awareness due to the implementation of the village self-governance policy. Statistics show that lawsuits brought by rural residents and judged by courts at all levels have risen from 14 in the first decade of self-governance to 712 in the second. Since the release of the *2010 Organic Law*, 994 more cases have already been judged around it. Lawsuits against the higher levels of government appeared in the second decade of self-governance and the number has steadily increased over the years[12] (Zhao & Fang, 2013). These figures show a rapid growth of citizenship awareness in rural China and citizenship awareness is indeed a collective phenomenon.

The figures additionally reveal Chinese rural residents' awareness of certain civic rights despite the fact that they do not associate rights with the term 'citizen'. In effect, the failure of the association task is not only a result of lacking formal knowledge, but also has to do with the means of inquiry. Many participants were intimidated by the association task and suspected that it is an intelligence test. The response rate increased when the association task was changed into interviews. Although about half of the respondents said they have never heard of '*gongmin*' (citizen), their answers to questions of their political experiences simply show their critical engagement with politics. Being unfamiliar with the term '*gongmin*' or even not knowing the technical term does not prevent people from being aware of civic rights entailed in membership. Nor does it stop people from participating in the political and social lives as conscious citizens. The questions left are: are there some consensual views of citizenship in China's rural communities despite the huge social and economical variations across the country? What is/are the common view(s), if any? And what differentiates people's citizenship understandings and practices?

3.3 Citizenship Content: A Qualitative Enquiry

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of subjective citizenship in rural China, a qualitative investigation was conducted. Participants were asked about their understanding of the concept citizenship and their political practice. Qualitative content analysis is applied to interview data to determine terms, concepts and evaluations related to civic rights and duties. The analytical framework is developed in light of the sociological theorisation of citizenship and is presented in Figure 3.1.

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[12] All statistics quoted in this paper are from the Chinalawinfo database, based in Peking University, China. Accessed: 9 November 2014. http://vip.chinalawinfo.com/index.asp.

This chapter focuses on investigating citizenship content, i.e. the lower part of the figure. The upper part of the figure, i.e. citizenship extent and depth, shall be discussed in the next chapter. Although specific content varies in each country, citizenship rights are widely considered to include civil rights, political rights and social rights (Marshall, 1950). More recently, the concept of participation rights is proposed as an important new dimension to evaluate citizenship (Janoski & Gran, 2002). On the other hand, there is little theorisation about civic duties, which is possibly because citizenship obligations are more specific from country to country. Three categories emerged reading China's *Constitution*: duties to the state, to society and to family. Coding was firstly conducted in December 2012 and then redone in April 2013 to improve internal validity.

Figure 3.1 *Analytical framework of social representations of citizenship*
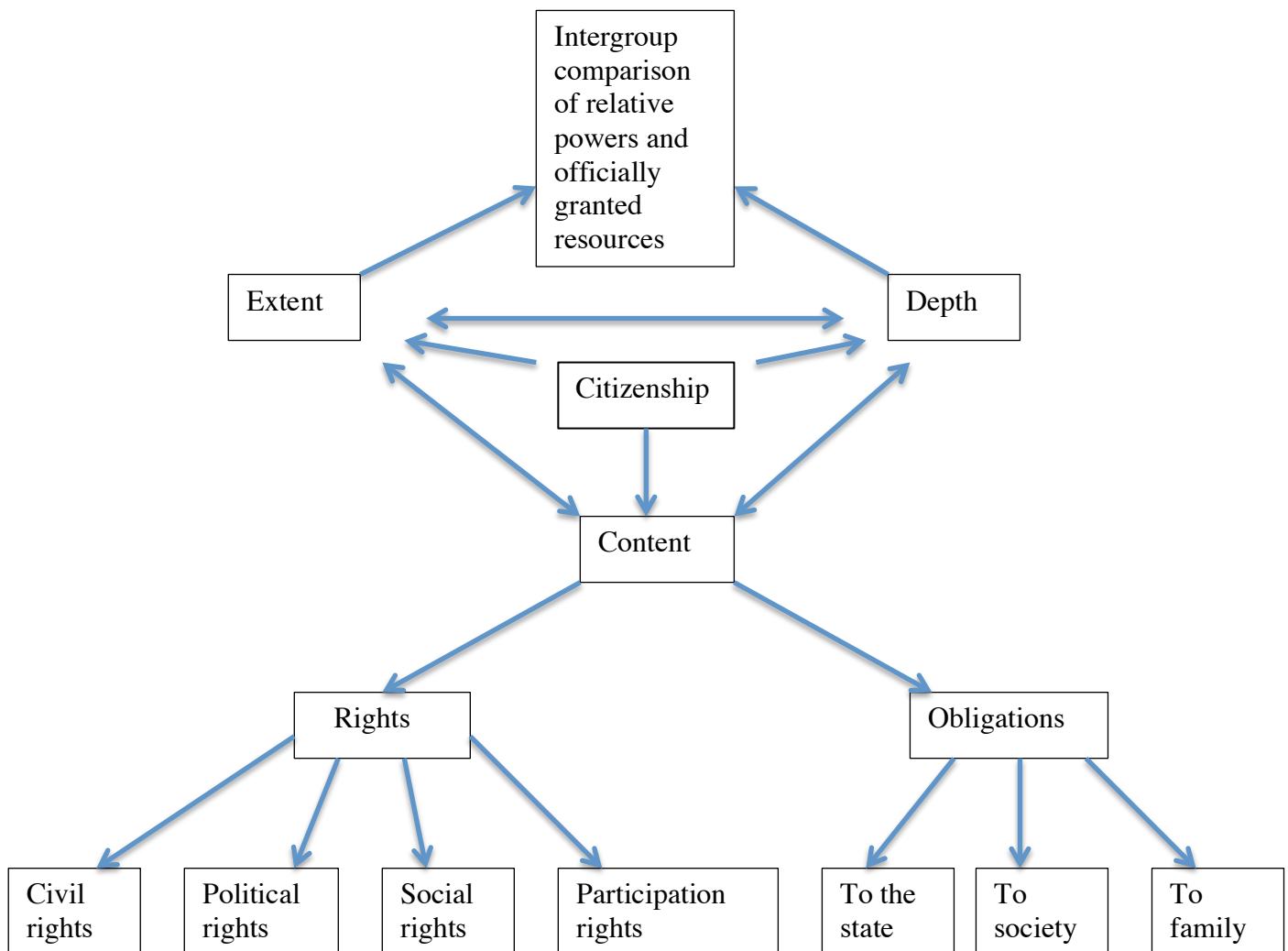
3.3.1 Participants and Measures

A total of 25 interview transcripts were analysed. Among these 25 interviewees, 14 were men and 11 were women; 6 were incumbent village leaders, including one female member of the village committee (VC). A total of 19 were ordinary villagers, including 2 former VC chairmen. Ten people were under 50, of whom two did not disclose their educational levels, and all the rest had middle school or high school diplomas. Ten people were between 50 and 60, three of which have finished middle school, two finished primary school, two were illiterate and three did not provide precise information about their educational attainments but indicated low attainment levels. Five people were above 70 and all of them were illiterate (See Participant Table A-Y in appendix 4). This sample well reflects the current composition of rural residents. Most people living in villages are senior because younger generations tend to seek opportunities outside the village. The latest statistics released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China show that the number of migrant workers reached 268.9 million in 2013 and the number is estimated to be on a steady increase each year.

Following Moscovici's definition of social representation — "system of *values*, *ideas* and *practice*" (1973, p. xi, emphasis added) —, this research examines these three dimensions. The following analysis is based on participants' answers to three sets of questions about citizenship and their participation in village self-governance which is the major arena for exercising civic rights in rural China. The first two sets of questions are interchangeable and designed to investigate the ideational facet of social representations of citizenship. The first set of questions consists of four sequential items: a). do you know about '*gongmin*'; b). according to your knowledge, what is '*gongmin*' (in the following questions the term citizen is applied instead to make it easy to read); c). what rights do citizens have; and, d). what obligations do citizens have? The second set of questions comprises two items: a). what rights do villagers have; and, b). what duties do villagers have? 11 participants did not answer every question. Participants who claimed no knowledge of the term of '*gongmin*' were asked the second set of questions only.

These two sets of questions are regarded as interchangeable for two reasons. Theoretically, villagers' rights are derived from civic rights. Also, some participants' answers show that they perceive citizenry to be equivalent to, or include, the peasant group. In answering the question of what is '*gongmin*', five respondents directly equated citizenry with peasants; one respondent associated it with peasants; and another seven stated "we are" or "Chinese people" are citizens, which immediately includes the peasants group. The fact that participants intuitively related 'citizen' to 'peasant' and frequently referred to themselves as peasants when answering other questions shows that the peasant identity is salient in rural communities. Even when people were uncertain or

had no idea at all about the concept of '*gongmin*', they associated it with 'peasant'. Therefore, 'villager' is chosen as an alternative to 'citizen'.

The third set of questions about participation in self-governance has two parallel sub-sets designed respectively for ordinary villagers and village leaders to complement and crosscheck each perspective. They are designed to explore respondents' citizenship awareness in their actual behaviours. As rural residents are generally inarticulate, examining their political behaviour becomes the most efficient way to catch a glimpse of their mind, especially the unconscious mind. In addition, complementing behaviour with verbal expressions can avoid the error of assuming consistency between attitude and behaviour. Although the analysis drew on the interview data, the data however consist of reports from not only self but also observers, and was additionally crosschecked by my field observation. Three questions about individual behaviours were raised to ordinary villagers: a). do you vote in village elections; b). do you read information posted on the village bulletin board; and, c). do you criticise or make suggestions to village leaders? Five questions about the execution of the village self-governance policy were raised to village leaders: a). what was the voter turnout at the last election; b). do you ask for villagers' approval before conducting village projects; c. do many people read posters on the village bulletin board; d). do villagers often go to you or other village leaders when they have complaints or difficulties; and, e). are there cases of 'letters and visits' in your village? (*xinfang*) (the official channel for petitioning in China. People can make suggestions, lodge complaints or express grievance to the government through means such as correspondence and visits).

These are widely regarded as the representative activities of village self-governance. 'Letters and visits', in particular, is the main way rural residents gain governmental supports. Again, not all participants answered all questions. Some provided relevant information when answering other questions and some simply indulged in their own narratives and effectively ignored the questions. The following section aims to answer two questions: how do rural people understand the concept of citizenship; and what rights and duties do they think they are entitled to?

3.3.2 Knowledge of 'Citizen'

Rural residents' unfamiliarity with the technical term of 'citizen' is striking; no participants could immediately respond to this term. Only seven participants confidently confirmed their awareness of this term after it was reiterated in Mandarin, showing the powerful influence of the state in spreading this notion. Wenzhou dialect has little in common with official Mandarin in speaking, so local people speak Mandarin only when they speak about concepts rarely used in daily life. The act of speaking Mandarin in itself shows the rare use of the term and its irrelevance to daily life. Nine participants readily declined the set of citizen-related questions and declared that they "have never

heard of it" or "have no idea about it at all". The rest either answered these questions with much uncertainty and constantly sought for my confirmation, or simply stopped at giving some remote guesses to the definition of citizen.

3.3.3 Rights and Obligations

Compared with the term citizen, civic rights and obligations are better known to participants. Respondents were more conscious of citizenship content, especially civic rights.

3.3.3.1 Citizenship Rights

Participants have poor knowledge of civic rights in general. Nevertheless, their political participation shows that they are in effect aware of more rights than they can verbally identify.

3.3.3.1.1 Named Rights

In general, rural residents lack knowledge of citizenship; only seven people named a limited number of citizenship rights. Five people mentioned "the right to vote", of whom two additionally mentioned "the right to stand for election". "The right to report to the government", "the right to supervise everything", "the right to suggest local officials", "the right to protect one's self-interests", "the children's right to receive education" and "a senior's right to receive material support and care from their children" were all mentioned once.

Three categories emerged from the eight named rights: political rights, civil rights and social rights. The most frequently mentioned rights were political rights, and this category is more diverse than others. Political rights are active and seek to influence the public arena, including the right to vote and to stand for office, among others (Janoski & Gran, 2002). Five out of the eight rights listed fall into the category of political rights. Besides "the right to vote" and "the right to stand for election", "the right to report to the government" and "the right to suggest local officials" belong to this category too. These two particular rights can be subsumed within the upper-class right of protesting. They are procedural rights and convey that people are legitimate in asking the government to right wrongs. The major difference between "the right to suggest local officials" and "the right to report to the government" is that the former was voiced from a standpoint of ordinary villagers and the latter from that of the government. "The right to supervise everything" is a typical political right that aims for political influence and requires freedom of information.

One civil right was named: "A senior's right to receive material support and care from their children" although phrased as the adult children's duty in China's *1984 Constitution*, it indeed is a civil right of all parents. It is in accordance with the two basic principles of civil rights: a). ensuring

individuals' mental and physical integrity; and, b). in the private arena, which indicates at independency of state redistribution.

The only social right mentioned was the right to education. Social rights provide support and resources for citizens to achieve and maintain economic subsistence as well as social status (Janoski & Gran, 2002). They rely on state redistribution to achieve a certain degree of equality in society. All levels of education fall into this category, so does "the children's right to receive education".

Lastly, one participant raised the right "to protect one's self-interests". As it can potentially mean any kind of rights, given that all rights are essentially means to protect individual interests, it is labelled as a compound right. In sum, eight specific rights were identified and four groups were produced: five political rights, a civil right, a social right and a compound right. The listed political rights are the right to vote which was mentioned by five participants, the right to stand for election by two, the right to report to the government by one, the right to supervise everything by one, and the right to suggest local officials by one. The listed civil right social right and compound right are seniors' right to receive material support and care from their children and children's right to receive education and "the right to protect one's self-interests" respectively.

It is clear that political rights are the most accessible. Political rights mentioned above outnumber all other rights. Five out of eight specific rights named are political rights in comparison with one civil right, and one social right. Political rights are also recalled the most frequently, especially the right to vote; as mentioned by five people. Considering that only seven participants responded to the question of citizenship rights, five is a very convincing figure to show salience. Together with the other four particular rights named, political rights were recalled ten times, in comparison with one instance of civil right, and one social right.

It should be emphasised again that only seven out of twenty-five participants responded to the question of citizenship rights; and a single respondent at most named three items. It should be also noted that among these seven people, five were incumbent village leaders and only two were ordinary villagers. The contrast between these two groups is striking if proportions are calculated. Over 83.3% of village leaders instantiated citizenship rights, but the figure is less than 11.8% with ordinary villagers. In addition, village leaders showed their knowledge of more varieties of rights than ordinary villagers. Only two rights were raised by ordinary villagers: voting and making suggestions to leaders. These two rights were also mentioned by village leaders, who additionally named five more items. Clearly, village leaders had more knowledge of citizenship rights than ordinary villagers, but overall, civic rights known to rural residents remained limited.

Answers to the question of villagers' rights do not expand the list. The seven participants who gave examples of civic rights either did not answer the question directly or repeated the answers to the question of citizenship rights. Villagers' rights are perceived undifferentiated from civic rights.

Participant E for example said, "Villagers don't have special rights (other than the regular ones)". His statement provides another piece of evidence to justify the interchangeable use of 'citizen' and 'villager' in interview questions. As for other respondents, only two gave examples of villagers' rights, but each raised only one item. Both items fall into the category of political rights. Participant G stated that "make suggestions (to leaders)" is villagers' right and Participant K stated "attending Party meetings" as a right, which can be crudely categorised as a political right. All the rest spiritedly asserted that villagers have no right at all.

3.3.3.1.2 Exercised Rights

The list of rights compiled by rural residents is indeed short, suggesting that either rural residents have vague ideas about citizenship rights or they fall short of articulation. After all, language is often proved to be incapable of fully capturing thought. However, even if the concept of citizenship is a mystery to them, does it mean people have no idea at all about what they are entitled to by law? Are the people that failed to recall rights completely ignorant of their lawful rights? And, is it true that people who mentioned certain rights are unaware of other rights? One thing for sure is that rights listed by respondents are not the only rights to which they are entitled.

Given that information about citizenship seldom appears in mass media and the concept seems to have little to do with daily life, it is likely that this concept is never deliberatively processed in the mind. Subsequently it eludes descriptions, which leaves the examination of related behaviour the most feasible way to tap into the mindset. Note that only seven people recalled certain items of citizenship rights. What needs to be examined is thus: whether these seven only exercise the named rights and those who failed to exemplify rights do not exercise rights at all. Behavioural themes that emerged in interviews show that participants exercised more rights than what were exemplified and their political behaviours are indeed based on their awareness of particular rights.

Several rights that are exercised actively by many villagers are generally ignored. Among them is the right to vote: the essential right for village self-governance. While only five people identified this right in interviews, all participants confirmed that they vote in village elections. Although village leaders were not asked about their voting behaviour, it is reasonable to assume that they vote in general because they are likely to be more politically active than ordinary villagers. Despite the fact that two women said that they sometimes have their husband cast the vote in their places —a phenomenon common to female residents in rural communities—, it still signals towards people's awareness of the voting right and their insistence on their right. Even if they did not vote in person, they did not give up their right to votes.

This self-reported behaviour is highly reliable. It is corroborated by village leaders' unanimous stance that only a handful of ballots were wasted in their village. It is also consistent with the

extremely high voters turnouts in village elections in general. On the one hand, by law, valid elections require at least half of the whole voting community. (see Article 15, *Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees of the People's Republic of China (2010)*/the *OL*). On the other hand, the transference of administrative rights, including the management of village finances and the planning and conduction of village projects, to the village committees, have incited ambitious candidates as well as speculators to embroil ordinary villagers in elections. Apart from these two reasons, the immediate relevance of village planning to each and every villager on its own is a strong incentive for people to become involved in village elections. Nevertheless, this widely exercised right was identified by only five out of the total of 25 participants.

Neither village leaders nor ordinary villagers identified participation in deciding village projects as a right. Obtaining the consent of every household in the village for all major village projects, however, is a standard procedure stipulated in the *OL* and is strictly followed by most, if not all, village committees. All village leaders confirmed that this was exercised in their villages. Obtaining villagers' consent for village projects, in practice, is largely considered by village leaders to be a big challenge and even a hindrance to their work. Participant A bitterly commented that villagers' consent "*has to* be asked for" in order to launch a village project and Participant H overtly commented that obtaining content "delays the Communist Party's work".

Their complaints, however, hint at villagers' active participation in village decision-making. It is clearly shown in an example that Participant H gave to spell out the harm of collective decision-making. A governmental plan to requisite the village land was abolished at the last stage due to the resistance of some villagers. It is also implied in Participant E's elaboration of how they managed to have their village projects approved: "After it is approved by the villagers' representatives' assembly, if there is still a small section of, or several villagers, who don't agree on it, we talk to them. Everybody has different opinions. There're always people who don't agree. Nothing can be done about that". Apparently, the right to decide collective matters applies to every household in his village. It is exercised in every village under study and the *OL* guarantees its wide practice in rural communities. The right to collective decision-making is a participation right, which though widely exercised, is not identified by either ordinary villagers or village leaders.

Supervision of village affairs is another widely practised right although it is largely ignored and by no means used to its fullest extent. By law, villages can set up supervisory organs to oversee the village committees, and most villages in effect have special supervisory teams for economic activities. Also village committees should immediately disclose information involving villagers' interest by law. Subsequently every village has at least one bulletin board posting information concerning villagers, including the use of funds and other matters that involve villagers' interests. Expect for those who are not able to read, all male respondents reported regular checks on village

bulletin boards. Female respondents though reported less frequent reading of the posted information confirm their knowledge of village affairs. So are most illiterate participants.

In rural society, information is often gained through social interactions rather than official channels. As an essential part of the rather unexciting rural life, gossiping plays a major role in spreading information as Participant B commented, "people talk about everything here. There're no secrets in the village. Everybody knows everything". Rural women and people who cannot read seem to be less involved in village affairs, but are in fact no less informative than literate men. Unnoticeably, they exercise their supervision right. Emphasising procedural justice, this right falls into the category of political rights. Guaranteed by law, the right to supervise village affairs is widely practiced by villagers. Yet neither village leaders nor ordinary villagers regard it as a right.

As a measure to ensure villagers' supervision over village affairs, releasing information that involves villagers' interests may not fulfill the intended purpose well; it nonetheless guarantees villagers' freedom to information, a political right ignored by all participants. In addition, disclosing village information in a timely manner also allows rural residents the chance to question and exercise their right to inquire. Indeed in rural communities, the most dissatisfaction was expressed merely in the form of complaints and critiques. Outrageous infringements of people's rights, however, often led to 'letters and visits' to the above governments or even large-scale protests, regardless the perpetrator, be it individuals, village committes or governmental organisations.

Petitioning is another important civic right that is exercised, yet overlooked. All village leaders interviewed confirmed cases of 'letters and visits' in their villages. Apart from village leaders' rather regular petitions to the above government in supporting village projects, individual petitions were not rare in rural China. In Village 4 and Village 5, there were a number of cases where villagers bypassed the immediate above government and appealed directly to the higher-level governments. This reported behaviour of villagers is reliable because handling 'letters and visits' is a criterion that the above government uses to evaluate village leaders' performance, and in many cases letters and visits are made against the village committees.

Ordinary villagers' answers to the question of villagers' rights also corroborate village leaders' accounts. Among the 25 respondents, five people reported personal experiences of 'letters and visits'. Participant L visited the relevant administrative organ several times to ask for a refund of her late husband's endowment insurance payments. Participant R reported her preparation in filing a lawsuit against the above government for long delayed land acquisition compensation. Participant Y reported their lasting litigation with the previous village committee. The latter was alleged to have embezzled the village fund raised by 38 households for a village project. In effect, currently rural residents are becoming more comfortable in resorting to legal means to protect their own interests, reflecting people's increasing awareness of the legal system.

On the other hand, most village leaders had experience of intercepting petitions that bypassed the immediate leadership. Participant A had several experiences of bringing back villagers from the provincial capital, and Participant X reported two incidents in Beijing. Although 'letters and visits' occur in almost every village, it is not a common practice in rural society in general. It is generally regarded as a privilege of knowledgeable people because most people lack the knowledge of petitioning though official channels.

If village 'letters and visits' are more of an administrative characteristic, ordinary villagers' actions of petitions clearly reveal their citizenship awareness. Their political actions demonstrate their consciousness of the right to property and the right to access legal systems; two civil rights not brought up by any participant. It is also fair to say that most, if not all villagers, are aware of these two rights. The right to property in particular is defended by everybody and most political activities in rural communities are derived from economic disputes.

Lacking formal knowledge does confine people's political participation. It however does not stop people from being aware of the fact that they have some fundamental rights which are protected by the state. While some people resort to more mild ways of defending self-interests such as complaints and critiques, radical actions other than 'letters and visits' take place in rural society too, although they are even less common than 'letters and visits'. A mass demonstration in front of the City Hall was reported in Village 4. What lies behind all these political activities is in effect the political right to protest, which apparently is highly salient in rural society. However, it is not recognised as a right by most people. Two participants identified "suggesting local officials" as a right, but it is more in the petitioning sense than a protesting one.

For unknown reasons, the mass demonstration in Village 4 ended up with three villagers being arrested, among whom was Participant P. His awareness of the right to the justice process is revealed: "I was so bummed out! I went there just to look on. They took me for three days but didn't even tell me why I was arrested and detained". This awareness is apparently shared; all people around expressed sympathy when he ridiculed his own experience. This infringement however seems to be tolerable. By blaming himself for the arrest and sarcastically repenting of being "stupid to go", he made his experience a lesson to be leant by others.

Lastly, while ordinary villagers unanimously said that they have no rights and spiritedly criticised the condition of villagers' rights and even that of civic rights in China, they were exercising their right to free speech. They clearly have no concerns for consequences when making radical statements such as "there're no citizenship rights. They are just official stories for foreigners to hear." (Participant D) and "(officials in) the sub-district office collude with them (village leaders)!" (Participant V). Their harsh criticism against the powers and rural politics when anonymity is promised demonstrates a certain degree of confidence in free speech.

Three categories of rights emerged in responses to questions of political participation: political rights, civil rights and participation rights (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 *Categories assigned to rights practiced in village self-governance*

Category	Specific Rights	Reported Political Behaviour	Extent of Exercise	Whether was named by participants
Political right	Vote	Vote	Almost every voter	Named five times
	Stand for office	Run for office	A few (only politically ambitious people	Named once
	Freedom of information	Keep informed of village affairs	Widely exercised	No
		Post information of village affairs	In every village (stipulated by law)	No
Political rights; civil rights (implicit)	Right to protest; Right to property (implicit)	Letters and visits	A few ("capable" people)	No
		Question and/or criticise village leaders	Widely exercised	Named twice
		Demonstration	A few	No
Civil right	Right to justice-access	Question the unjustified arrest	One participant	No
		Resort to legal means	A few	No
	Free speech	Criticise rural politics	Widely exercised	No
Participation right	Co-determination	Informed consent for all major village projects	Every household	No

Note. Practiced rights and the extent of practice as opposed to named rights as reported by interview participants. Source: interview. N=25.

Only three rights were verbally identified, including the right to vote, the right to stand for office and arguably, the right to protest. While these rights were barely recalled, they are widely exercised in rural communities. Meanwhile, four specific rights not referred to by any participant in effect underlie villagers' daily political practices, including the right to freedom of information, access to justice-access, free speech, and co-determination. Certainly aside from rights prescribed by the village self-governance policy, there are still some other rights that rural residents exercise regularly such as the right to education, freedom to religious belief and the right to obtain material assistance from the state under certain circumstances. None were recalled by any participant.

3.3.3.2 Citizenship Obligations

Most participants have no knowledge of citizenship obligations at all. An examination of exercise of duties, however, shows that rural residents in practice faithfully fulfil their legal obligations. Moreover, people generally view fulfilling civic duties as important civic virtues.

3.3.3.2.1 Named Obligations

Compared with rights, obligations are even less known to rural people. Only two participants exemplified civic duties. Participant E mentioned young people's duties to rear their children and to support their parents. Participant H referred to "supervising everything" as a citizenship duty. While the former are legal family duties, the latter is not an obligation by law. Considering that H is the Party secretary and no elaborations were given, it is difficult to tell whether the duty he named was meant towards the state or society or both. For this reason it is categorised as a compounded responsibility of social orientation.

None of the remaining participants recalled any item when asked about their duties as citizens (villagers). While more respondents simply ignored the duty-related questions and some said they did not have the knowledge, some explicitly said they did not have duties.

Altogether, only two of 25 participants exemplified civic obligations; both of whom were village leaders. No ordinary villagers recalled any civic or villager obligations and some explicitly said that there were no duties. Among the three listed duties, two are family responsibilities including "young people's duty to rear their kids" and their obligation to "support their senior parents"; and a compound responsibility of social orientation: "supervise everything". Compared with civic rights, civic obligations are known to even fewer people, with a ratio of seven to two. The diversity of listed duties is also lower than that of rights, with a ratio of three to eight.

3.3.3.2.2 Practiced Citizenship Obligations and Attitudes towards Legal Duties

The extreme unfamiliarity with civic obligations has not prevented rural residents from fulfilling their lawful obligations. Nor does the explicit denial of obligations mean that rural residents are unaware of what is expected of them, nor do they lack a sense of responsibility to the state or to the community. The following discussion about practice incorporates survey data that measure normative evaluations of civic virtues to make a clearer contrast with named obligations.

Despite a failure in verbalising obligations, Chinese peasants in effect had been the major contributor to the state revenue for over 2000 years, up until 2006 when agricultural taxes were abolished. Although paying taxes is no longer a duty required of the large rural population employed in agriculture, it is still widely believed in rural society to be an important attribute of a good citizen. In answering the question of how important paying taxes is for being Chinese, 57.5% of the survey participants (N=200) stated that it is 'very important' to pay taxes, and another 34% stated it as 'important.' Altogether, 91.5% of participants regarded paying tax to be important in defining a Chinese person. No matter whether responses are biased by social desirability, the figure shows that people are aware of what is expected of a 'good' citizen, at least.

Rearing children and supporting parents are also widely practised in rural China. They are, however, more in terms of conventions than legal duties. The rural population in particular is expected to take on more responsibility for their families due to China's unbalanced welfare system which favours urban residents. Taking responsibility for family is indeed an ethical imperative in China. A total of 85.5% of the participants considered it 'very important' in defining a Chinese person, and an additional 12% viewed it as 'important'. The high proportion of 97.5% provides a strong statistic for rural residents' awareness of family obligations.

Besides these three important obligations, compulsory education is welcomed and well executed throughout the country. It is not so much because parents fear legal consequences of keeping children from schooling, but because education is highly valued in China and is generally considered to be the only feasible way to achieve upward social mobility by disadvantaged groups. Sponsoring children to achieve higher education is in effect Chinese parents' life-long commitment in spite of the general low income of rural residents. Most younger people in rural areas have completed high school, more than what is required by law. Also, 68% of participants expressed disapproval of the hypothetical scenario whereby parents ask children to quit school to work in support of the family. A total of 31.5% of the participants stated that it is central to human rights and 36.5% stated that it violates human rights. Although, attitudes towards this obligation are not directly measured but responses to the indirect question to a certain extent reflect people's supportive attitudes towards children's education. For Chinese parents, this institutionalised family

responsibility is rather self-inflicted, and for this reason, it is considered to be an obligation to family but not to the state.

Family planning is perhaps the best known legal duty in China. Its effective execution manifests in the country's rapid decline in the labour population, which has led the government to loosen the policy earlier. This policy has been well exercised in China, including rural China, not only because it is a major task assigned to officials at all levels (the execution of the family-planning policy is the first criterion for official performance evaluation), but also because of parents' financial concerns. Slogans about family planning are conspicuous everywhere in rural China and relevant information is always present on the village notice board. Although violation of this state policy is more common with the rural population, family planning is met by the vast majority of rural residents and this duty is undoubtedly known to all Chinese adults.

Other civic obligations stipulated in the *Constitution* include: working; adhering to the *Constitution* and the law; safeguarding the unification of the country; protecting the security, honour and interests of the country; defending the country and resisting aggression; and, performing military service and joining the militia when required. Expect for working and observing the law, the rest are more responsive duties, which are only required under particular circumstances. As a means of subsistence, working is more of a need than a legal duty. The large-scale labour migration from rural areas to cities each year demonstrates that this duty is actively exercised. A huge 95% of participants stated dedication to work as an 'important' attribute of Chinese people, among which 81.5% regarded it 'very important'. The high level of safety in rural China shows that the law is well observed in rural areas. When asked of the importance of abiding by the law, 96% of the participants stated it 'important', and among them 80.5% considered it 'very important'.

Responsive duties are only expected in specific conditions, they are not daily practice and are especially difficult to be observed in peace times. Nevertheless participants express strong endorsements for relevant characteristics, indeed, 97% stated that defending the country (presumably including security, honour and interests of the country and join the army when needed) an important attribute of a good Chinese person, and among them 85.5% rated it 'very important'. The figures show that duties to the state are embraced and people are aware of services that the state expects them to provide.

In addition to legal duties, rural residents share a strong sense of responsibility to their community. In rural China, one basic moral obligation is to help fellow villagers in need and also the disadvantaged people; this is expected of all communal members. In practice, it is not exceptional that people keep an eye on migrant workers' left-behind children and the elderly as well as the widowed and the disabled. Certainly, it is even more common that people benefit from the traditional mutuality principle during the harvest, in house-building and other labour-intensive

matters. Indeed, by law, villagers are responsible for managing village affairs and raising funds for village projects on their own. Self-funding and helping out in village projects, however, are communal traditions in rural China from ancient times. A total of 57% of the survey participants reported at least one of the above activities. Even those who migrate and therefore less involved in village affairs acknowledge the importance of community participation. As much as 91.5% of the participants stated that it is important to participate in community activities, and 42.5% of them said it is a 'very important' attribute of a good citizen.

Overall, despite the fact that legal obligations are unknown to rural residents in general, they are widely practised and/or recognised. Rural residents are apparently very aware of civic virtues that the state and society endorse. While family obligations are faithfully fulfilled, the state-oriented duties are also well acknowledged. Besides the legal duties, Chinese peasants additionally demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility to the community, which is manifested both in their support for community members and their communities and their insistence on the importance of community participation. A summary table is provided as the following.

Table 3.2 *Categories assigned to the actual practice of obligations and awareness of obligations*

Category	Specific Obligations	Named or not (frequency)	Institutionalised or not	Extent of Exercise	Attitude towards the obligations
Duty to family	Rear minor children	Yes (1)	Yes	Widely exercised	Highly valued (very important: 85.5%; important: 12%)
	Support parents	Yes (1)	Yes	Widely exercised	
	Compulsory education	No	Yes	Widely exercised	Highly valued (central to human rights: 31.5%; human-rights relevant: 36.5%)
	Work	No	Yes	Widely exercised	Highly valued (very important: 81.5%; important: 13.5%)
Duty to the state	Pay taxes	No	Yes	Widely exercised before	Highly valued (very important: 57.5%; important:

				agricultural taxes were abolished	34%)
	Defend the country	No	Yes	Difficult to be observed	Highly valued (very important: 85.5%; important: 12%)
	Abide by the law	No	Yes	Widely exercised	Highly valued (very important: 80.5%; important: 15.5%)
	Family planning	No	Yes	Widely exercised	Not measured
Duty to the community	Helping community members	No	No	Widely exercised	Highly valued (very important: 42.5%; important: 49%)
	Provide public goods	No	No	Widely exercised	

Note. Practiced obligations and normative evaluations as opposed to named obligations reported by interview participants. Source: survey. N=200.

As can be seen from the Table 3.2, rural Chinese residents in effect faithfully exercise their legal duties and think highly of corresponding behavioural traits. They also acknowledge that they have certain duties to the state, although these duties are less relevant to daily life. Rural residents in addition show a strong sense of responsibility towards the community. They support each other and their community in daily life and highly value community participation.

3.3.3.3 Summary

Rural residents generally have very limited formal knowledge of citizenship. The discrepancy between accounts and practice, however, is highly significant. Lacking in formal knowledge does not prevent people from practising legal rights and duties. Despite a poor performance in naming rights and duties, rural residents actively practise certain rights and faithfully fulfil legal duties, which indeed reflect their consciousness of citizenship rights and obligations. Divergence can be observed between the ordinary villagers and village leaders; the latter demonstrating more

knowledge. Nonetheless, this difference appears to be existent only at the ideational level. Ordinary villagers exercise the same rights and obligations as the village leaders in daily life. Also survey data show an overwhelming endorsement of the traits that correspond to particular civic duties, which to hints towards the strong construction of the state. Enshrined in political institutions, these traits are essentially normative civic virtues.

The findings are consistent with SRT assumptions: while community members share certain views about objects or concepts of social importance, differences can also exist across social groups (Doise et al., 1993). With regard to citizenship, ordinary villagers and village leaders, though diverge in knowledge, are shown to converge in practice and in norms. Evidence supports a minimal consensus that civic virtues have formed in rural China. The questions are: a.) is the commonness statistically significant; and, b.) to what extent does the commonness hold? These questions are to be addressed in the following survey study.

3.4 Commonness and Specificities in Social Representations: A Quantitative Investigation

The survey study focuses on the normative dimension of social representations of citizenship, not only simply due to the above discussion, more importantly, it is a fundamental dimension of social representations of citizenship for ideas and practices are ultimately regulated by norms. The qualitative discussion has briefly demonstrated people's support for normative civic virtues; this section discusses the normative aspect of citizenship in detail.

The preliminary examination of evaluations of normative civic virtues shows a high level of consensus, suggesting a homogeneous rural society. Meanwhile, given the huge socioeconomic diversity in rural China, even if there is a certain degree of homogeneity, it is unlikely that different types of villages will have identical judgements about various issues. Also, if the knowledge-encounter model Jovechelovitch (2007) proposed is valid, there should be some differences between places of varying degrees of exposure to external influences. In other words, a normative evaluation of a 'good' citizen should vary across villages because these villages experience external influences to different extents and citizenship is an entirely extraneous concept. Lastly, cross-regional differences do not violate assumptions of SRT, as SRT also posits individual differences despite minimal consensus (Doise et al., 1993). Therefore this section also tests the commonness and specificity hypotheses inherited in SRT.

3.4.1 Measurement

The following analysis is conducted with the 'good' citizen index adopted from Willliem Doise's research on social representations of citizenship in ten countries (unpublished manuscript, for the scale see Appendix 2). It answers to the iconic aspect of citizenship, which is immediately

evaluative. Questions centre on behavioural characteristics that define a 'good' citizen. Participants were asked to indicate on a four-point scale the degree of importance of certain behavioural characteristics for defining a 'good' citizen. Reliability of the scale is high ($\alpha = 0.88$). Cross-regional differences are examined.

3.4.2 Findings

The previous analysis demonstrated that civic virtues that correspond to particular civic duties are generally highly valued. A further examination of the survey data shows that people value active political participation too, although to a lesser extent. In addition to community participation, voting in deputy elections at the town level and above, concerning oneself with public and international affairs, helping the poor, protecting the environment and making suggestions to the government are all regarded important. A total of 89% of the participants stated that concerning oneself with international affairs is important; and over 90% participants agreed on the importance of the rest behavioural traits. Over 40% of the participants agreed that all these traits 'very important' when defining Chinese people.

Unsurprisingly, participants shared a strong relational orientation. China is well known to be a *Guanxi* society, and having good social relationships is valued the highest, not only because good social connections are the most valuable personal assets, but also because of the strong Confucian ethics of benevolence. A total of 82.5% of the participants rated honesty and politeness as 'very important', while 78% stated that it is 'very important' to be a good neighbour, while, 63% strongly opposed violence in resolving interpersonal disputes. Although the percentage is relatively low (44.5%) with people who regarded tolerance to others' different thoughts and behaviours 'very important', an additional 41.5% rated it as 'important'. Evidence seems to support a general commonness in spite of regional socioeconomic differences.

3.4.2.1 Commonness Tests

A one-way between regions ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the magnitude of exposure on SRs of a 'good' citizen in villages 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. It is worth mentioning again that these five villages are situated in the continuum of exposure to external influences, with Village 6 at the end of low exposure and Village 10 at the end of high exposure. The main effect is significant at the .05 level ($F(4, 193)=5.53, p<0.001$). There is at least one population that differs from the others in terms of social presentations of a 'good' citizen. Results corroborate the specificity assumption of SRT and prove that rural residents do not completely agree with one another on behavioural traits of a good citizen.

Post hoc tests were then conducted to make further examinations. Results showed a significantly higher average score in Village 6 (*M*=1.60, *SD*=0.03) than that in Village 9 (*M*=1.35, *SD*=0.05) at the 0.05 level. The score is also significantly higher than that in Village 10 (*M*=1.27, *SD*=0.06) at the 0.001 level, but not than that in villages 7 (*M*=1.41, *SD*=0.05) and 8 (*M*=1.40, *SD*=0.07). No significant differences were found between other villages (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 *Using multiple comparisons for mean differences in civic virtues between villages*

		V 6	V 7	V 8	V 9
Scheffe	V 7	-.19			
	V 8	-.20	-.01		
	V 9	-.25*	-.06	-.05	
	V 10	-.33***	-.14	-.14	-.78

Note. V stands for village; *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

Given that these five villages are ranked in ascending order of levels of exposure to external influence, these results showed that people in places of significantly different degrees of openness/closure tend to evaluate civic virtues differently. Meanwhile, people in places with similar degrees of openness/closeness were likely to share certain beliefs about the qualities of a 'good' citizen, which to a certain degree, proves the commonness hypothesis of SRT. Moreover, the ordinal correlation between the average scores of the civic-virtue evaluation, and villages of varied degrees of exposure to external influence, validates the knowledge-encounter model and supports the validity of the comparison design of this research. Village 6 stood out because it was a rather isolated society unlike other communities; the village was building a road in order to link it to the outside world at the time of survey.

3.4.2.2 Dimensionality of Civic Virtues

Statistic tests showed cross-regional differences in the civic-virtue evaluation, with close communities scoring higher than open communities. The higher the scores are, the less important participants think of the listed behavioural traits for defining a good citizen. Meanwhile, respective examinations of each item showed that respondents generally think highly of certain traits, such as those that correspond to civic duties. In order to make a further distinction, a cluster analysis was operated on the 'good' citizen index to check the dimensionality of the 'good' citizen scale and to investigate specific controversial traits. A hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method produced three clusters (see Figure 3.2). Paired-sample t-tests confirmed the significant distinction of these three clusters.

Figure 3.2 *Clusters of civic virtues*

Dendrogram using Ward Linkage
Rescaled Distance Cluster Combine

Label	
Be a responsible worker	1
Defend the country when it is in danger	2
Obey the law	13
Be responsible to one's family	3
Be courteous	6
Be a good neighbour	5
Be honest	4
Involve oneself in community activities	14
Keep informed of international affairs	15
Make suggestions to the government	19
Pay taxes	9
Participate in elections for people's representatives	10
Keep oneself informed of current affairs in China	11
Obey the government	12
Help the poor	17
Protect the environment	18
Respect national symbols	8
Solve conflicts with people peacefully	16
Tolerate people's thoughts and practices	7

Results slightly deviate from Doise's original theorisation. They do however make the perfect sense if examined against Chinese culture and placed under the state-society-market framework. The largest cluster concerns normative virtues and consists of eight items, including: respecting national symbols, paying taxes, voting in elections, keeping informed of domestic affairs, obeying the government, solving conflicts peacefully, helping the poor and protecting the environment. These virtues either correspond to specific civic duties or are highly advertised within political discourse. They are normative virtues, reflecting the will of the state.

The second largest cluster is comprised of seven items: being a responsible worker, being responsible to one's family, being honest, being a good neighbour, being courteous, defending the country when it is in danger and obeying the law. The first five items are oriented towards social relations and the last two correspond to specific civic duties and are essentially normative. Seemingly to be two distinctive sets, these two groups of variables are nevertheless highly compatible if examined from a historical and cultural perspective.

On the one hand, unlike Western democratic societies, a "differentiated mode of association" organised traditional Chinese society (Fei, 2007/1948); and it still characterises contemporary China. This ripple-like pattern centres on self, and gradually spreads out to wider society. Also, the more distant the ripple, the less significant it is for individuals. This mode has a strong selfish quality and prioritises one's immediate social environment (ibid). Keeping harmonious social relations is

therefore of vital importance for Chinese people, and especially in rural China. It is often perceived as the premise of survival rather than just having a pleasant living environment.

On the other hand, James Scott (1985) pointed out that "the subsistence ethic" is the key to interpreting peasant politics. In this regard, not only social-relation-oriented virtues, but also defending the motherland and obeying the law, are the primary conditions of subsistence for rural residents. They distinguish from normative virtues, in that the latter is not of immediate concern to survival. Because of its strong cultural characteristics, this cluster is identified as cultural virtues and it reflects the needs of society.

The third cluster concerns democratic orientation and is comprised of four items: involvement in community activities, raising critiques against, and making suggestions to, the government, keeping informed of international affairs and tolerating people's different opinions and practices. The former three variables involve active political participation and the last variable reflects one's own democratic mind. This cluster encompasses the equality spirit of market economies.

Analyses of variance were conducted to examine the effect of village type on each of the three clusters. No significant effect was found in cultural virtues, $F(4, 193)=1.20$, $p>0.1$. Rural residents generally highly value behavioural characteristics that are inscribed in the traditional culture and are of subsistent importance. Results showed significant main effects of normative virtues, $F(4, 192)=15.6$, $p<0.001$; and democratic virtues, $F(4, 191)=2.85$, $p<0.05$.

Multiple comparisons further found that Village 6 distinguished from all other villages in normative virtues and it was significantly different from Village 10 in democratic virtues too. With regard to normative virtues, the average score was significantly higher in Village 6 ($M=1.86$, $SD=0.04$) than that in villages 7 ($M=1.42$, $SD=0.06$), 8 ($M=1.39$, $SD=0.07$), 9 ($M=1.38$, $SD=0.07$) and 10 ($M=1.25$, $SD=0.06$) at the 0.001 level. As for democratic virtues, the average score was significantly higher in Village 6 ($M=1.87$, $SD=0.05$) than in Village 10 ($M=1.50$, $SD=0.09$) at the 0.05 level, but Village 6 did not vary from villages 7 ($M=1.68$, $SD=0.07$), 8 ($M=1.65$, $SD=0.10$), and 9 ($M=1.65$, $SD=0.08$) in this regard. No significant differences were found in the average scores of both normative and democratic virtues between other villages. Results showed that people in Village 6 generally regarded normative virtues as less important, albeit still important (the cutting point is 2) than people in other villages, and in comparison with people in Village 10, they also regarded democratic virtues less important (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 *Using multiple comparisons for mean differences in normative virtues and democratic virtues between villages*

		Normative virtues				Democratic virtues			
Scheffe	V 7	-.45***				-.19			
	V 8	-.47***	-.03			-.28	-.09		
	V 9	-.48***	-.04	-.01		-.21	-.03	-.07	
	V 10	-.61***	-.17	-.14	-.13	-.38*	-.20	-.10	-.17

Note. V stands for village; *p<0.05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001

While Village 6 diverged from all other villages in evaluations of normative virtues and varied from Village 10 in democratic virtues, all villages converged in cultural virtues evaluations. Considering that these three clusters represent state, society and market respectively, the distinction between these three clusters somehow captures the interplay of state, society and market in social representational processes of citizenship. The formidable force of society is manifested in the rural population's firm uphold of traditional cultural principles. Moreover, given the varied socioeconomic situation of each villages, and that Village 6 is the most closed community of all, the results reflect the trajectory of the transmission of the Western concept of citizenship to rural China, to a certain extent.

As this concept was transmitted to rural China through rural society's contacts with the outside world, more closed regions are likely to be less receptive to external influence. Consequently, unlike endogenous cultural values which were championed across rural society, foreign ideas were accepted to vary degrees by different communities depending on the community's degree of openness and the compatibility of the incoming ideas with the existing value system. People in closed communities are more likely to think less highly of exogenous values. This explains the reason why differences exist in normative virtues and democratic virtues, but not in terms of cultural virtues.

Considering the fact that the concept of citizenship was made familiar to people mainly through political institutions and only through political institutions in places isolated from the larger society, there should be a time lag between people's reception of political discourse and exogenous ideas in these places. It was demonstrated by the fact that cultural virtues (*M*=1.19, *SD*=0.02) were valued higher than normative values (*M*=1.46, *SD*=0.03) and democratic values (*M*=1.67, *SD*=0.36).

What was not expected is that only Village 6 and Village 10 varied in the average score of democratic virtues. One may wonder that since Village 6 distinguished from all other villages in normative virtues, why this village was not significantly different from all others in democratic virtues too given that democratic values are essentially exogenous and the community was cut off

from the outside world (there was not even a road directly links it to the town) at the time of research. A possible explanation is that certain traditional norms and practice in effect echo the idea of democracy. While the traditional practice of collecting taxes for the imperial government by households in turn (Zhao, 1998) made participation in community life a living norm in rural China, the Confucius value of benevolence and the 'face-keeping' culture in China produced people's general high tolerance towards others' different opinions and practice. The consensus in these two variables in the democratic virtues might have prevented a huge divergence in democratic virtues among villages. F tests indeed did not find any difference in the variable of "tolerating people's different opinions and practice" ($F(4, 188)=1.75$, $p>0.05$) among villages although differences existed in "involvement in community life" ($F(4, 188)=1.75$, $p<0.05$).

3.4.3 Summary

As the survey study showed, cultural values that help individual survival have a dominant position in the value system in rural China. Meanwhile, rural residents highly valued normative virtues too and generally considered democratic orientation as important. The ANOVA analysis manifested the main effect of village type on SRs of a 'good' citizen. Further tests suggested that a distinction existed in the democratic and normative domains, but not in the cultural domain. Results confirmed both the commonality and specificity hypotheses of SRT. With regard to civic virtues, rural Chinese society shared cultural values on the one hand. On the other hand, communities having huge differences in levels of openness diverged in the normative and democratic dimensions.

3.5 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter is to explore social representations of citizenship in rural China, focusing on the content of citizenship. The qualitative study found that Chinese peasants have very limited formal knowledge of citizenship. Participants were unfamiliar with, not only the concept of 'citizen', but also civic rights and obligations. Civic obligations in particularly were alien to people. Compared with civic obligations, rights were known by more people and rights known to people were more diverse. Among the rights known to people, political rights were the most accessible. Evidence suggests that political rights are at the core of SRs of citizenship, not only in that civic duties were barely known by people, but also that political rights were recalled most frequently and outnumbered the other rights recalled and ordinary villagers specifically complained about having little influence on village politics. Appealing for political empowerment is a common theme to qualitative interviewing, which reflects people's desire for political rights. Meanwhile, lacking formal knowledge does not prevent people from being aware of rights and duties. Certain rights, in particular political rights that underpin village self-governance, were widely exercised, and all legal

duties were faithfully fulfilled in rural communities. Rural residents in practice were quite proactive in the practice of their rights and voiced a strong desire for more political influence through their scathing criticism.

Rural residents' lacking in formal knowledge of citizenship, their regular exercise of civic rights and duties and the salience of political rights in rural society support the commonality assumption of SRT. While the qualitative study demonstrates some commonness in SRs of citizenship, differences are also found. There are notable differences between the ordinary villagers and the village leaders in citizenship knowledge. The latter is generally more knowledgeable. Statistic analysis also found that villages with varied degrees of exposure to external influence vary in normative evaluation of civic virtues. Villages of similar degrees of openness/closure tend to share opinions, but not with communities of very different degrees of openness/closure. Also differences exist in the normative and democratic dimensions, but not in the cultural dimension.

It should also be noted that the results indicate the important role of the state in cultivating citizenship awareness and in social re-presentation of citizenship. Although rural Chinese residents did not gain knowledge of citizenship through official channels, they became aware of their civic identity and the entitlements encompassed in this identity through institutional setups, such as the mechanism of appealing through 'letters and visits' and very importantly, the self-governance policy and the *Organic Law*. The big impact of state is reflected in people's strong endorsement for the official criteria of a good citizen too. They considered meeting legal duties as 'very important' for defining a good citizen and thought less of duties that are deinstitutionalised (paying taxes) or un-institutionalised (participation in community activities) even when they have no apparent formal knowledge of civic duties. Nevertheless, one can never ignore the formidable force of society. The endogenous values are shown to have the widest and deepest social base. They were shown to constitute the most powerful part of the value system in rural China.

In sum, this chapter shows that with regard to citizenship there are certain themes and attitudes that are shared across the rural communities, despite socioeconomic differences. Moreover, rural residents display similar civic behaviour despite knowledge differences and they act in the spirit of modern citizenship, although lacking in relevant knowledge. Their citizenship awareness and their civic practice convincingly prove the ignorance of the popular political discourse that Chinese peasants lack the intelligence to practise democracy. On the contrary, empirical evidence shows that villagers are wise enough for democratic practice, even if they are not well educated. It shows that high education is by no means a premise for democratic practice. What is crucial for democracy is in effect a sound institutional mechanism. Through the platform of village self-governance, rural Chinese residents came to realise their political identity as citizens and developed their democratic habits.

This chapter also demonstrates the plurality of SRs of citizenship in rural China. Analysis shows cross-regional differences. Results verified both the commonality and the specificity assumptions of SRT. It justified the comparative design of this research and demonstrated the relevance of the concept of "knowledge encountering" (Jovchelovitch, 2007) to SR research.

In this chapter, differences were also found between the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group. The discussion is however limited only to citizenship content. Intergroup differences shall be discussed in more detail in the next chapter and the investigation shall highlight the other two aspects of citizenship: extent and depth.

Chapter 4 Differentiation in Social Representations of Citizenship: Social Identity at Work

This chapter continues to discuss social representations of citizenship and tries to explore the relationship between social identity and social representation by further examining disparities in SRs of citizenship following the previous discussion. An important assumption of social representation theory is that individual members of a community may have a variety of opinions about the same idea or object, despite a minimal consensus (Moscovici, 2001; Doise, et al., 1993). Chapter 3 has demonstrated differences in SRs of citizenship and has discussed the cross-regional differentiation. Except for the degree of exposure to external influence, it showed the impact of village leadership on SRs of citizenship, which suggests an important role of social identity in the process and outcome of social re-presentation.

Focusing primarily on the ideational dimension, previous analysis displayed differences between village leaders and ordinary villagers in citizenship knowledge. This chapter shall further explore the intergroup differences along the dimension of village leadership and address the behavioural and normative dimensions of SRs. The other two aspects of citizenship — extent and depth — are to be examined in detail. Based on the empirical evidence and the vast literature on the kinship between social identity (SI) and social representation (SR), also explored are other group identities that may influence SRs of citizenship, including, very importantly, Party membership.

Analysis accordingly proceeds in two stages. The first stage deals with intergroup differentiation between the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group. A qualitative investigation is firstly conducted to research ordinary villagers' perception of rights practice, which automatically brings citizenship extent and depth to the fore. Statistical analysis is then operated on the indices of 'good' citizen to see whether village leadership has an impact on SRs of a 'good' citizen. The second stage relies solely on the survey data to explore whether Party membership and other group memberships may influence individual opinions about behavioural traits of a 'good' citizen.

4.1 Social Identity in Social Representation Research

An important finding of the previous chapter is the villager-leader distinction in citizenship knowledge. It corroborated the correlation between SR and SI implied in social representation theory that has been confirmed in numerous empirical studies. Premised on the presumption of a minimal consensus within a community (Moscovic, 2001), SRT does not deny variations in individual positioning (Doise, et al., 1993), which immediately brings together social identity theory. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), social categorisation orients social actors. Varied group ethos entails intergroup, and hence individual, differentiation.

By presuming a minimal communal consensus, SRT in effect also assumes interrelationship between SR and SI and suggests a multiplicity of SR given that a community is essentially a social group and social groups are bound, especially in the contemporary world. Social groups, no matter how similar they are, seldom have identical opinions about an object or idea due to their specific group goals and the ethos of their group. Infinite divisions of the social world necessitate a social identity perspective in researching SR, for one can never fully understand SR without placing it in a group context. It is especially true of SRs of political concepts such as citizenship because they often involve much social inequality and power contest. As for the concept of citizenship, social identity is particularly essential. Citizenship is above all a group membership by definition and it manifests in the real world with both inclusion and exclusion, which warrant an intergroup perspective.

The affinity between SR and SI is recognised by both SR and SI researchers (Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011; Moscovici, 2001). The correlation is illustrated as early as Moscovici's (2008/1961) seminal research on social representations of psychoanalysis, in which he separately studied the then three dominant political groups in French society. His findings that not only these three groups have varied social representations of psychoanalysis, but also that the variation is associated with different communication styles, provide strong evidence for the association between SR and SI. The same important phenomenon revealed in his research is the fact that political stances govern the content of SR.

The impact of political orientation is again evident in social representations of citizenship in rural China: village leaders differ from ordinary villagers in their conceptualisation of citizenship. Built on previous findings, the first part of this chapter further examines the differentiation between village leaders and ordinary villagers, focusing on the other two dimensions of citizenship: extent and depth. In the second part, other possible intergroup differentiations are explored using survey data. Party membership[13] is singled out because of the Party's strong political ethos.

4.2 Social Stratification in Rural China: Villager Leadership and Party Membership

Village leadership emerges from the qualitative interviewing to distinguish between rural residents in their citizenship knowledge. The village-leaders' group is, not only more familiar with the term of citizen, but also possesses more formal knowledge about citizenship content. They perform notably better than ordinary villagers in naming civic rights and know more about civic duties. This distinction in verbal expression suggests an impact of village leadership on people's political knowledge, which often transforms into a capacity for political action. Village leadership is in effect the most important group membership in rural life. It not only affects people's political thinking and

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[13] "Party" is conventionally used in literature to refer to Chinese Communist Party in China.

behaviour but also their general decision-making and practice as this membership is often laden with considerable economic interests aside from political power. Leaving aside vested interests, what makes this group membership important for the rural population is the fact that village leaders control the village economy and construction, which concerns the interest of every villager. Because social stratification is usually weak in rural China, it is often the only significant group membership in village life and its significance is highlighted once every three years by village elections.

Political leadership is in general highly valued almost everywhere. It is especially salient in rural China because rural Chinese society is rather homogeneous. In rural China, educational differences between generations are moderate and there is little differentiation within generations. Overall, the educational levels of peasants are low. The *China Agriculture Yearbook 2009* shows that 6.1% of the rural population barely read; 25.3% have only primary education or an equivalent; 52.8% have been to middle schools; 14.1% have been to high schools or technical schools, and only 1.7% have received higher education. Most people over 60 are illiterate or can barely read; the majority of the 50 to 60 age group have been to primary school and some of them have been to middle school, which does not necessarily imply school completion; the vast majority of the 40 to 50 age group have been to middle schools; most younger people have finished high school or equivalent. The proportion of people having higher education is insignificant, accounting for only 1.7% of the whole rural population according to *China Agriculture Yearbook 2009*.

The division of labour in rural areas is very low. In agricultural villages, most residents farm if they work at all. In semi-industrialised villages, people either work in small-scale family factories or farm. In industrialised villages where farmlands are mostly acquired for industrial use, most people are employed in family factories or collective-owned village factories. Differentiation among residents in villages adjacent to cities, although a little higher, is still limited. These villages are usually completely industrialised and urbanised. Except for a few younger people who are lucky enough to find jobs in cities, many people are unemployed; making a living by renting out properties or on village collective welfare. Indeed, polarisation between the rich and the poor is dramatic in contemporary China, and can be true in a village. Yet economic status is barely a stratification indicator in rural communities because in most places, people of the same village, rich or poor, live very similar lives due to infrastructural constraints and resource shortages.

The inter-individual differentiation is usually the most manifest in the political arena in rural China. Two political memberships are important: village leadership and Party membership. Although Article 4 of the *Organic Law* stipulates that the village committee (VC) is an administrative organ and the Party branch is its supervisory organisation, village leadership is generally considered to be more important. Real power is often in the hands of the elected village

leaders and Party members generally have no tangible power expect for the core members of the Party branch who are endowed with authority over the VC by law. The two group memberships have a cumulative effect on one's political career if one possesses both, but they can also be occasionally contradictory in situations where state interest conflicts villagers' interest as the VC answers to the electorate — villagers as a whole — whereas the Party branch represents the state.

The different resources of legitimacy these two groups draw upon, and the contests between the village committee and the Party branch for control over village affairs, produce tension between these two groups. It is therefore theoretically possible that members of these two groups have varied political opinions, with elected village leaders prioritising people's interests and Party members prioritising state interests. Also, people with dual identities may experience severe intra-individual struggles. Party members are likely to distinguish from other people in their political positioning and hence in the normative dimension of SRs of citizenship. They are likely to be more committed to state ideology and prioritise state interests over individual interests.

Meanwhile choices between the state and the villager may not be so difficult for village leaders due to China's specific political environment. They may have similar political mentalities to Party members because village leaders are under constant political pressure to work in accordance with the official instructions. To stay in office and to be re-elected they cannot disregard the bureaucratic orders even if villagers' interests are violated. In reality the elected village chair usually puts the state before villagers and works cooperatively with the Party secretary (Zhao & Fang, 2013).

It is especially true of the village chair who at the same time is a Party member. For instance, Participant H (village chair), though not a Party member, explicitly denounced ordinary villagers' selfishness in the face of a conflict with the state interests: "(The ordinary villager) does not think about the state. He only thinks about self." His opinion is representative of the village-leaders group.

Interestingly, however, a chi-square test of independence to examine the relation between Party membership and policy priority showed no significance between these two variables, X^2(1, N=3)=4.73, p=0.19. Not only village leaders but also ordinary villagers share political orientation with Party members. Serving state interests was no longer considered a policy priority, and over half of the rural residents stated that policies should attend to bother state interests and people's interests (56.3% of Party members and 52.7% of non-Party members). Given the consensus about political orientation, Party-non-Party differentiation within the village-leaders' group is not made in this investigation.

On the other hand, despite the consensus about the priority of social policies, Party members may still distinguish from others in their normative evaluations of civic virtues because they may insist less on cultural values or be less receptive to democratic virtues as a result of a strong allegiance to

state ideology. Also because Party membership does not entail village leadership, it is singled out for further examination.

Nevertheless the focus of this chapter is on village leadership. A main finding of Chapter 3 is that commonalities and differences coexist in social representations of citizenship in rural Chinese society. Chapter 3 suspends differences and focuses on exploring commonness. The next section shall discuss differences demonstrated in Chapter 3 in detail.

4.3 Divergence between the Village-Leaders' Group and Ordinary-Villagers' Group: Manifestation and Reasons

It has been found in this research that the village-leaders' group differs greatly from the ordinary-villagers' group in formal knowledge of citizenship. Village leaders know more about citizenship than the ordinary villagers. Most of them are aware of the term of 'citizen' and can name certain civic rights and duties, whereas most ordinary villagers did not respond to the concept and failed to exemplify rights and duties.

Two conceivable reasons can account for the difference: a). village leaders have more access to relevant knowledge. Politically sensitive as citizenship can be, it is usually only discussed within the bureaucratic system, if it is discussed at all; b). village leaders generally have more formal education. The completion of high school has been made a basic eligibility requirement for candidates running for village chairs in recent years. Given that citizenship-related information is almost absent in textbooks until high school and is rarely seen in public media, it is reasonable to assume that most ordinary villagers can say little about it.

However, access to relevant information and formal education cannot sufficiently explain the intergroup difference in verbal expression. Even if village leaders have relatively higher educational attainment and have more chances to gather relevant information, knowledge they can acquire through these channels is still very limited because 'citizenship' is almost a political taboo and is eliminated from the grand discourse in China. Meanwhile, a person who is interested in this topic can always find relevant information in public media, such as in newspapers and TV programmes featuring crimes and rights protection. Take Participants X and Y as examples; the former though a Party secretary who completed high school education had no knowledge about citizenship at all, and the latter, although never assuming any political position and is illiterate, understood the term of 'citizen' and recalled a right. Undeniably, education and access are two important reasons for the knowledge difference, they are however not the sole reasons. Political orientation undoubtedly also contributes to one's mastery of knowledge.

The problem remains is that in effect knowledge cannot explain away the differences in verbal expression between these two groups. Two important phenomena are not presented in Chapter 3.

Firstly, some participants gave self-contradictory accounts to the rights questions and some people's reactions indeed show that, it is not that they have no knowledge, but rather they refuse to exemplify rights. For instance, Participant D (58, primary school dropout, ordinary villager) explicitly said, "There are plenty of rights, but it (the government) deprives you of them".

Secondly, ordinary-village participants were generally emotional during the interviews and cynical about the idea of rights. In contrast with village leaders' calmness, most ordinary villagers' responses to rights questions were characterised by frustration and anger. The abrupt negation of rights appears to be more of a catharsis than of a factual statement, especially when participants' self-contradictory accounts are considered. Apparently, insufficient knowledge is not the reason for ordinary villagers self-contradiction and strong emotions.

Lacking formal knowledge is unquestionably an important reason for ordinary villagers' poor performance in naming rights. Knowledge however is unlikely to be the reason for varied reactions of the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group when responding to the rights questions. Why did some ordinary-villager participants refuse to name rights when they in effect demonstrate knowledge? And, why does the topic of rights evoke so much cynicism and even anger among ordinary villagers? If they were cynical or angry because the rights questions made them feel ignorant, they could have chosen not to respond. On the contrary, all of them enthusiastically engaged in this topic. Most of them complained about their lack of rights for the most part and some of them simply ignored my question and indulged in their own narratives. An alternative explanation, rather than knowledge deficiency for ordinary villager's vehement reactions towards my questions about rights, therefore, needs to be investigated.

4.4 Differentiated Citizenship Rights Practice: A Qualitative Enquiry into Citizenship Extent and Depth

Accordingly, ordinary villagers' interviews were singled out (N=18). Contents that relate to rights are extracted for further analysis. An initial analysis of data shows that participants' strong emotions occur only when they implicitly or explicitly refer to certain social group(s) to evaluate their own rights status; and emotional reactions are essentially expressions of strong dissatisfaction with the unfair reality and the feelings of powerlessness to change the situation. Empirical evidence entails a group perspective, which immediately brings citizenship extent and depth to the fore. Participants' perception of these two dimensions is examined in the following section.

Various techniques used in discourse analysis are employed to uncover social facts underpinning expression in the conviction of a correspondence between expression and social reality, subjective or objective (Wittgenstein, 2001/1922). Analysis incorporates elements of different discourse traditions, including sociolinguistics (van Dijk, 1985; Eckert & Rickford, 2001), social psychology

(Billig, 1996/1987; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) and sociology (Donati, 1992; Fairclough, 1995; Watson, 1992). Theme, style and structure are examined in combination with each participant's social background.

4.4.1 Perceived Differentiation in Citizenship Practice: Antagonism towards the Village-Leaders' Group

Overall, ordinary villagers' opposition to the leaders group is striking. They perceived notable differences between powerful groups and themselves in rights practice, rights that make significant difference to their daily lives. Here I present two examples. [14]

Extract 1

1 I: Are you aware of the rights of villagers?

2 B: (silence)

3 I: What if you have complaints about the village committee?

4   Do you speak to them (village leaders)?

5 B: **I** don't!

6   Make complaints?

7   **Where on earth…** complaints are allowed? [laughter]

8 I: Is it so?

9 B: It is!

10   We, incompetent people.

11 I: What about those competent people?

12 B: I don't know.

13 I: So you don't speak to them even if you have complaints?

14 B: I also don't have complaints.

15   Complaints, I have none.

16   Let it [the VC] be.

17 I: Let it be?

18 B: **Sure**!

Participant B is a resident in a semi-industrialised village where most young people are employed in factories and older people either farm for self-sustaining or live on family support. As villages of this kind largely remain to be acquaintance societies, it is common for people to go to village

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[14] Transcription notations are as following: square brackets indicate the author's explanation; single parentheses enclose participants' unspoken words; and words in bold means stress.

leaders for village affairs especially when their personal interests are involved. Although division between the rich and the poor in these places is moderate and stratification in rural communities in general mild, B's experience shows that differentiation between certain social groups is still substantial in political life.

Being a gatekeeper in the village recreation centre, B lives in hardship. In her 70s, she is widowed and lives alone in the centre by herself. Like most women over 60 in rural areas, she is illiterate. Belonging to a group that is regarded by men as well as themselves to be ignorant, she is deprived of a voice in public life. Her immigrant identity exacerbates her poor living condition. Despite the fact that she has spent most of her life in the village, she is still considered to be an outsider. My interview with her was forced to a halt by a village leader who came to volunteer at the interview. She insisted that my questions were irrelevant to B. According to her, B is an immigrant regardless that she is officially a registered villager. B also positioned herself as an outsider of the community and claimed that she knew nothing about the village.

Her keen attention to the village leader's explanation of the village administration and villagers' political participation to me, however, betrayed her interest in village affairs. Her claim that she knew nothing about the village is especially intriguing given that she is the sole runner of the village recreation centre where information of all kinds is discussed, exchanged and spread. She probably knows more about the things going on in the village than anybody else, which makes her silence to the question of rights very unusual too. The superior term "rights" is often heard of in daily life, more so in recent years, although it may be no more than a vague idea for many people. She could have declared no knowledge or made remote guesses like other participants, but she responded to the question with long silence. Her silence was more of a sign of rejection than a lack of knowledge, especially when taking her latter statements into consideration.

She was in effect very conscious of the political dynamics in the village. She said she never attempted to make complaints to the VC (ll.3-5). Her stress on "I" introduces a perspective of social comparison, implying otherness (l.5), which was made clearer in her self-derogation later. After she indicated that making complaints to the VC was impossible (l.7), she described herself as an "incompetent" person (l.10). It is in effect to supplement her statement and explain why making complaints is impossible. Although she was conservative in commenting on other people's rights practice (ll.11-12), her self-derogation however implies that "competent" people exercise this particular right, if not others, and they are more likely to use their rights to achieve their goals.

Participant B's reply overflows with strong emotions, a mix of frustration, anger and cynicism. Her frustration is obvious in her description of her non-interactive relationship with the VC. Her response to my question on whether she would speak to the VC if she had complaints (ll.3-5) was in flat opposition. To complete her statement, she offered the rhetorical question, cynically asking me

where to complain (l.7), showing her strong dissatisfaction for, and criticism against, the VC's irresponsiveness. She stressed "I" with notable anger, which while distinguishing herself from other people in exercising this particular right, also suggested that she actually had complaints and was angry for the lack of response (l.5). Although she claimed no complaints at the end (ll.14-15), both her angry tone and her follow-up statements indicate otherwise. She had no complaints, not because she was satisfied with her life or the village affairs, but because she decided to "let it be" (l.16; l.18) as she felt incompetent to make any difference. Her anger was visible when she spoke this short sentence, disclosing her deeply-felt powerlessness.

She was frustrated and angry to have to "let it be". Her frustration came both from the VC's irresponsiveness and her low political self-efficacy resulting also from her social comparison with "competent" people, the source of which however, is the VC. It denied her access to legitimate rights and created differentiation between people, between competent people and incompetent people, in her words. Her rage was shown to be solely at the VC but not the so-called competent people. Her abrupt declination of my question on other people's rights practice (l.12) indicates that she believed it irrelevant to herself. Her talk in effect is centred on the VC, although she did not mention either the VC or the village leaders at all. My questions were on her rights practice, but she highlighted the practice of the VC in her reply. Her rhetorical question of where complaints are allowed (l.7) and her decision to let it be (l.16; l.18) present an image of an unaccountable and cold VC. By doing this, she subtly attributed her political inaction to the VC. In spite of efforts to appear indifferent, her anger was conspicuous at times, which culminated with the stressed "sure" in the end (l.18). Eventually, my interview on her practice ended in her insinuation of the village leaders' arbitrariness.

As we can see, she perceived some differences among ordinary villagers in rights practice and a chasm between the ordinary villagers and the village leaders in political power. According to her, the VC has the power to distribute certain rights if not all rights. Hence village leaders have the privilege to entitlements, but the ordinary people do not. It is cynical that the lawful right to make complaints and raise suggestions to the VC, which is supposed to protect ordinary people's interests and to check the misconducts of the VC, is in effect under the control of the village leaders. Moreover, their decisions to listen or to ignore were made solely based on their evaluation of people's "competence".

Ironically, "competence" in local usage refers to the personal capacity to build and maintain relationships with powerful people, in other words, people's political capital. Knowledge though widely regarded to be an indicator of competence is recognised by most village leaders only for its convertibility into political capital. Therefore, whether people can exercise the right to appeal, fundamentally depends on their personal connections with the political leaders. The message B tried

to convey is that rights are virtually formal for her because of her "incompetence". Behind her ostensible self-blame, however, is her scathing accusation against the political authorities. Accompanied by anger, her frustration was obviously, not so much at her own "incapacity" than at the VC. Her frustration and anger together with her advantaged access to information provided by her job problematised her long silence to the question on rights, making it rather a gesture of rejection than knowledge deficiency.

Despite her unique personal background, her political experience is by no means exceptional. Living in a different environment and being a member of the mainstream society, Participant V shared her negative feelings for her political status.

Extract 2

1 I: Do you know what rights and duties citizens have?

2 V: Our rights? We are **supposed to** have some.

3 I: What rights do you have?

4 V: Nowadays village leaders talk about rights, and so do subdistrict officials.

5 I: What rights do you know then?

6 V: **What rights do we have?**

7 I: So you mean you don't have any rights?

8 V: Yes. [long pause]

9   The communist Party [pause]

10   (We) should have some rights.

11 I: Should have some rights?

12 V: We had meetings.

13   We (were told we) have rights.

14   (But) the subdistrict officials and the underworld forces [he meant village leaders, especially the core numbers of the village committee such as village Chair and Party secretary because they are believed to be part of an underworld force] **took them**.

15   What rights do we have?

Born and raised in the village, Participant V is in his 50s. Like many men of this age living in industrialised villages, he though likely have completed primary school or even middle school (he did not disclose his educational attainment but indicated that he has had some education), stays at home and is unemployed. Farming for a living has become impossible due to the conversion of farmlands to industrial or residential areas. In such villages, village leaders are often suspected of illegal activities in farmland trades and are questioned of their integrity in managing the collective

economy. In V's village, there have been collective actions against village leaders suspected of criminal activities in farmland trade. A demonstration was staged in front of the City Hall and appeals to the above governments were attempted, all of which, however failed because of collusion between village leaders and the local officials (according to participants in this village). Refusing to disclose personal information, V criticised the local leaders scathingly.

V automatically screened out obligations when both civic rights and duties were asked, which occurred to some other participants too (l.2). His sole attention to rights suggests the central importance of rights to citizenship and increasing rights awareness in rural China. It explains why more participants were able to name rights than duties. His response to the rights question indicates that his failure in naming rights is more complex than simply a knowledge deficiency. Initially he evaded the request for exemplifying rights and talked about the publicity campaign launched by the government instead, which seems to indicate that he has knowledge (ll.1-4); although, avoiding questions can also be a strategy to hide ignorance.

The stressed rhetorical question he made when asked for details, however, suggests that his referral to the official activities to publicise the idea of rights is more likely to be an expression of cynicism (ll.6). He did not hesitate to voice strong negation of people's rights through rhetorical questioning. This makes the official promotion especially ironic and his evasion of the rights question less of an issue of knowledge. His knowledge is shown in his intuitive self-categorisation as a citizen (l.2) if not his later claim that he was informed of relevant information through official channels, which may be questioned as a self-enhancement strategy (ll. 12-13).

Unlike B who tried hard to cover up her anger, V did not hide his rage and overtly condemned the village leaders and the local officials for seizing villagers' rights (l.14). His anger was fully revealed in the repeated contrasts he drew between the formal and the substantive in response to my persistent inquiry about people's rights. At the beginning, he stressed the legal dimension of rights (l.2) before he emphatically denied its execution in real life (l.6). The contrast was enhanced later when further clarification was asked. After adding a normative perspective to the legal aspect (l.10; l.13), he elaborated on the reality and on the root of the reality: the local authorities' "conspiracy" against them (l.14). His increasingly sharp and loud voice revealed his heightened anger with the talk unfolded. Conceivably, his acknowledgement of, and believe in, entitlements make the deprived status quo particularly unacceptable and unbearable.

It was exacerbated by the fact that the official channel for appeals is compromised. Stressing the bullying nature of the authorities' taking their rights (l.14), he constructed an overall oppressive image of the local authorities. Not only rights are taken away for no reason, but also appeals are made impossible due to the collusion between the authorities. Repeating the rhetorical question to close his opinion about rights, he announced his anger and cynicism (l.15). The main theme of his

words are clear: villagers are deprived of rights by the local authorities, which is unjust and illegal. Apparently for V, huge differences exist between the political leaders and the ordinary villagers in rights practice, and rights are only in the grasp of political leaders. Meanwhile ordinary people barely distinguish from one another because none of them enjoy these rights.

It is reasonable to infer that the reason why he failed to name rights is not because of, or at least not only because of, a lack of knowledge, but because of his cynicism about the idea of rights. Even if the knowledge he claimed to have is rather abstract and not detailed to specific rights or he indeed had no knowledge and tried to appear knowledgeable because of the need for high self-esteem, his abrupt negation of rights still reflects his resistance to the idea of people's rights.

Although belonging to different villages and having different experiences with village committees, both B and V despaired of their own political status. They not only shared feelings of frustration and anger, but also the target of their grievance: the village leaders. Indeed B seemed to acknowledge her own "incapability" and accept her marginalised political status in the village. Her covert criticism against village leaders was as sharp as V's fervent condemnation. More radical in expression, V however, was more pessimistic about the ordinary villagers' political status. In contrast with B who implied that "competent" people have the chance to negotiate rights, V denied chances for negotiation and insisted that the ordinary-villagers' group as a whole is deprived of rights. Rights are not only merely formal for him but also for the ordinary villagers in general. In other words, while B perceived differentiation in exercising rights among village residents with some exercising more extensively than others, V saw the difference only between village leaders and ordinary villagers.

4.4.2 Rethinking Ordinary Villagers' Poor Performance in Naming Rights

Their reactions placed the explanation for ordinary villagers' poor performance in naming rights into question. Even if the issue of the authenticity of talks keeps a knowledge deficiency as a possibility, it is still reasonable to conclude that it is not the only reason for V's reluctance to name rights. Distrust in rights is another important reason. It is in effect likely to be a major reason for B's non-response to the question on rights too, inferred from her silence and self-sarcasm. Undoubtedly, both of them were sceptical about the idea of rights, which fundamentally affected their performance in naming rights.

Evidence suggests that the same reason may have also resulted in other participants' refusal to talk about rights. Excluding the two participants quoted above, among the remaining 16 ordinary villagers interviewed, another 7 flatly declared that villagers have no rights and most of them ranted about their right-less status, although some of them admitted their practice of certain rights when was specifically asked. This certainly cannot eliminate the effect of a deficiency of formal

knowledge. Nonetheless, their violent emotional reactions manifest their strong dissatisfaction. Participants often used rhetorical questions when responding to questions about rights, and village leaders were always referred to and often blamed for ordinary villagers' unsatisfactory political status.

Take Participant W as another example. He firstly denied villagers' rights but admitted the civic right to vote later when asked whether they can vote in village elections. He explicitly said, "We have this right (the right to vote)". Immediately after that however, he maintained that their rights are in the control of the VC and the local officials and proclaimed that questioning powerful people would only bring trouble for the challenger. He did not respond to my question on rights but indulged in elaborating on how the local authorities colluded to seize villagers' rights. His denial of rights is apparently not a knowledge issue, otherwise he would not have admitted the exercise of the voting right and would not have condemned the local leaders for preventing people from exercising rights.

Like many other participants, he considered rights formal too, which likewise led him to intuitively reject the idea of villagers' rights and hence resist to thinking about such rights. According to him, ordinary villagers strongly distrust village leaders and antagonism between these two groups is sharp. He not only perceived a huge gap between these two groups in rights practice like others but also shared the resentment for the local leaders. Participant W's example supports the earlier argument that it was scepticism about the idea of rights rather than a knowledge deficiency that has given rise to some people's non-response to the rights question.

What is importantly revealed in ordinary villagers' rejection of the idea of rights is the felt inaccessibility of rights, in which the village-leaders' group plays a central role. Village leaders may be unable to influence rights practice outside their villages and beyond village self-governance. They often control, however, the rights that are most influential to ordinary villagers' daily lives, such as making complaints. Undoubtedly there are some highly responsive village leaders. Yet this group is often seen to be hostile to ordinary villagers rights' practice, which gave rise to strong feelings of powerlessness and deprivation among ordinary villagers.

These feelings fundamentally influenced both participants' performance in naming rights and their evaluations of the leaders' group. Some participants' failure in naming rights is not simply because they lack formal knowledge, but also because they consider rights merely nominal, which perhaps is an even more important reason for some people. Apparently their conviction contradicts the fact that they exercise certain rights regularly in reality. It is in effect not the inaccessibility of rights but rather their extremely low political efficiency that has blinded them to the reality and led to their bias.

4.4.3 Unbalanced Power Structure: the Root of the Group Differentiation

One may have noticed that none of the aforementioned participants named any right, but some of them demonstrated certain knowledge of rights and also none of the participants above explicitly admitted lacking in knowledge. A question hence arises: do participants who clearly declare no knowledge of rights and participants who can name rights have the same perceptions and feelings? While people having no knowledge may take the status quo for granted, and accept the reality more easily, more knowledgeable people may have vision of a sound relationship between ordinary villagers and village leaders in political life. They are likely to feel more deprived if reality falls short of their expectation. If the feeling of frustration with politics is commonly shared and is what gave rise to people's cynicism, what is the fundamental cause of this feeling? To answer these two questions, Participant J's response follows.

Excerpt 3

1　I: Do you know what 'citizen' means?

2　J: What?

3　　What 'citizen' means?

4　　Well, citizen is…is a kind of people.

5　　Generally, a citizen is this kind of people.

6　　A citizen is just like this.

7　I: Who is not a citizen then?

8　J: Generally speaking [pause], a citizen [pause], is not a cadre.

9　　He/she is not a…

10　　He/she is not a **cadre**!

J was unfamiliar with the concept of citizen, expect that she vaguely knew that it refers to a social category (ll.4-6). Trying hard to elaborate (ll.4-6), she eventually reached the conclusion that a citizen is not a cadre (l.10). In spite of the inaccurate understanding, she perceived a formidable division between the political leaders and ordinary people. Her dichotomisation shows her deep conviction that cadres are different from ordinary people. Although she did not explain the precise criterion she used to make such a division, it is reasonable to assume that she referred to political power which fundamentally distinguishes cadres from the rest, and which is visible and relevant to everybody in rural society.

The political power cadres possess privileges them in virtually every social sphere. It is well known in contemporary China that political capital is an "omnipotent capital" which can be easily transformed into all other capitals and concomitantly brings interests of all kinds (Sun, 2003). In the local context, political power is not only associated with authority over ordinary villagers but also

tangible interests incorporated in this group identity, which manifested in the control over people's political practice and access to rights. Although J did not comment on either village politics or village leaders, her taxonomy unveiled her disapproval of 'the cadre', a label of which has many negative connotations.

Some other participants also avoided the question about the concept of 'citizen'. Nor did they directly respond to my request for naming rights. When asked about rights, they unanimously opposed themselves to village leaders and singularly talked about how their requests or suggestions had been ignored by the village leaders as well as how that had influenced their life. Apparently, they felt deprived. Although, their complaints show that they in effect exercise the right to appeal, this right was undoubtedly not taken seriously by village leaders and they were unable to defend their rights. Having political power at hand, village leaders are of vital importance to villagers' rights practice.

The same opposition was made by G and Y, the only two ordinary-villager-participants who exemplified rights. Both named the right to make complaints and suggestions to the VC. This is in effect the only right G named and the one of the two Y recalled. It is worth quoting what both of them said, "It is better than the past. Now we **can** make complaints and suggestions (to the cadre)". Clearly, they also perceived a stark division between the ordinary villager and the cadre and the latter's absolute superior position.

Seemingly to be merely positive about the progress, by emphasising the only thing they can do in their power now, they insinuated their dissatisfaction at villagers' current political status despite the improvement: it is **only better in comparison** with the past when even questioning a situation was not allowed. A known fact in rural China is that when people talk about "the past", they refer to the time of People's Commune to contrast the current practice of village self-governance, which was implemented in 1988, and centres on village elections. At that time, villages were organised for collective production and every village was a unit of bureaucratic administration. It is "only better" because although challenging the authority became possible, it is barely responded; leaders' remaining silence to criticism hardly makes any difference to people's life.

Like other participants, their discussions of rights revolve around the local cadres and put the village-leaders' group at the centre of villagers' rights practice. The right to make complaints and suggestions is ultimately a right premised on a rather unequal political relationship between ordinary villagers and village leaders, which ultimately privileges leaders. G did not disclose her attitude towards village leaders in her brief reply; Y however bluntly criticised village leaders' misconduct and elaborated on their longstanding legal wrangle with the former village leaders over a farmland issue.

The leap from fear to criticism is indeed significant and decisive for rural democracy. Clearly, village self-governance and village elections in particular have greatly empowered people. There is however still a long way to go before a more balanced power structure is achieved and before ordinary villagers' requests are taken seriously. The extremely unbalanced power relationship between village leaders and ordinary villagers is essentially what gave rise to the differentiated rights practice between these two groups. The unparalleled privileged position of the village-leaders' group in this intergroup relationship entails a fundamental impact on people's rights practice. Consequently, this group not only exercises more rights, but also exercises the rights more extensively.

As we can see from above analysis, the dichotomy between the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group was a common perception among ordinary villagers and their unequal relationship led to a divergence of rights practice between these two groups. Also important is the fact that the unbalanced intergroup relationship appears to be the source of people's grave political frustration. Whether people are able to exercise rights and have rights extensively exercised depends solely on village leaders' integrity. Sadly however, their integrity cannot necessarily be counted on, and there is a widely shared grievance against the village-leaders' group. They are often perceived as hostile or at least indifferent to people's rights practice, and discussing their political performance generates negative emotions among ordinary villagers.

Meanwhile, besides the unbalanced power relationship, there is another possible cause of people's political frustration. It is also possible that their frustration is also with objective citizenship. Given that they are generally sceptical of the idea of rights, perhaps they feel they are not empowered enough at the first place, which was exacerbated by the adverse immediate political environment. Participant G's reaction to the rights question is a good starting point to discuss whether other possibilities exist.

4.4.4 Evaluation and Reference: the Root of Political Frustration

What distinguishes G from Y and all other participants is not only her relatively positive evaluation of the villagers' political status, but also her references to the past, as opposed to the current when discussing rights. As we can see, all the participants quoted above expressed strong dissatisfaction at their political status, except for G. On the contrary, G was pleased with the improvement of her political status in comparison with the past. Evidence suggests a correlation between reference and evaluation.

It seems that referring to village leaders leads to ordinary villagers' negative evaluations of their rights status, whereas references to past meanwhile results in rather positive evaluations. G's satisfaction can also be explained by personal connections with political authorities and village

leaders' high responsiveness. Being a housewife of an average rural family, G had neither any impressive personal achievement nor did her family have any special political ties, which eliminates the first possibility. However village leaders in her village were indeed popular and praised for being accountable; thus, her political satisfaction is possible and reasonable.

Participant Y's response however shows that the correlation between reference and evaluation exists in spite of village leaders' personal traits. Y was in a legal battle with the VC and distrusted village leaders, yet he still appreciated the overall improvement of political status. According to him, even the head of the county government remains silent to criticism to his face, which was impossible in the past when everybody feared cadres. "Without citizen, will he allow us to criticise him?" he followed. Having no formal education, he was not eloquent and often made grammatical mistakes. Nevertheless despite illiteracy and old age (78 yrs), he sent a clear message: the execution of citizenship empowered him. He was happy about the progress and believed in a better future in spite of everything else. He only became critical when asked to comment on village politics and the performance of village leaders.

The covariance of attitude with reference is the most evident in Participant S's language. A notable emotional turn occurred when she switched from talking about village leaders to about her current life in general. She began with harsh accusation of village leaders' monopolising interests at the expense of villagers' rights and calmed down to become contented when asked to make a comparison of her life quality between the past and the present. She applauded the substantial improvement of people's life quality in every aspect and credited it to the Communist government. In effect, in spite of fervent criticism, rural residents commonly agree that ordinary villagers' political status has been tremendously improved and praised the Communist government for the substantial achievement. In general they have no problems with objective citizenship, at least objective citizenship intended. And they attributed their unsatisfying civic status to the arbitrary local authorities, which was well illustrated in V's accusation against the local leaders for taking villagers' rights.

The fact that a switch of reference resulted in opposing evaluations shows that what frustrated ordinary villagers was not normative citizenship, but the constrained citizenship rights practice which was rooted in the unequal power relationship. People were convinced that their legal entitlements were more than what they were experiencing, and it was the local political authorities that crippled their rights practice. Consequently, while they denounced local politics, they praised the country's general progress and pinned their hopes on the central government to right the local wrongs. Such a mentality gave rise to the rapid growth of 'letters and visits' as well as collective actions in rural China. In Village 5 for example, some participants expressed their earnest hope for the then premier *Wen Jiaobao* to look into the criminal activities of the village leaders who were

accused of embezzling village assets and bribing the local officials to cover it up. Instead of asking for more rights or fewer obligations from the legal perspective, what ordinary villagers asked for is governmental support for rights practice and individual interest protection. It is essentially the unequal intergroup relationship that produced ordinary villagers' grave political frustration.

4.4.5 A Summary of the Qualitative Inquiry

Overall, despite the agreement on civic virtues, ordinary villagers perceived huge differences between the village-leaders' group and themselves in rights practice both in terms of extent and depth. The village-leaders' group is seen to be crucial and often hostile to ordinary villagers' rights practice. The consensus is that ordinary villagers barely have any substantive rights in spite of normative citizenship rights. Also, even if the exercise of certain rights is possible, they can hardly be used extensively although legally, every citizen is entitled to the same rights and is protected equally by the law. It appears that it is not what people have, but what people want, that determined their responses. Some participants' negation of villagers' rights are in effect a cry for rights.

Although none of the participants directly commented on village leaders' rights practice, there are reasons to believe that they exercise more rights and exercise rights more extensively. For one thing, they are considered to be determinant for people's rights practice; and for another they are often criticised for taking advantage of their political position to serve their own interests at the expense of people's interests. The intergroup difference in rights practice is indeed significant (see Table 4.1) and also detrimental to rural politics.

Table 4.1 *Ordinary villagers' perception of their rights practice in comparison with that of the village leaders'*

	Extent of rights	Depth of rights
Ordinary villagers	Barely have any substantive right	Unwarranted, depending on one's political capital
Village leaders	Monopolise rights	Extensive, in control of rights practice

Reasons behind these intergroup differences are complex, importantly including knowledge difference. Conceivably, people will not use the right if they do not know it exists and they are unable to use the right to a full extent if they do not know what exactly the right enables and what help is available to them if their rights practice is sabotaged. With regard to citizenship, the village-leaders' group is comparatively more knowledgeable, which contributes to their better exercise of rights. Yet their knowledge is overall very limited. The more important reason is indeed the unequal

intergroup relationship. As the centre of local power structure, the village-leaders' group virtually controls people's exercise of certain critical rights, however minor.

Both knowledge differentiation and unbalanced power structures are harmful, not only in that they produce conspicuous differences in rights practice between the ordinary-villagers' group and the village-leaders' group; but also, that they damage the political ecology in rural China. While lacking formal knowledge constrains rights practice, lax enforcement of the law is more detrimental to people's political participation. Considering that rural residents generally know few or only a very limited number of rights, it is not difficult to imagine how deep their frustration will be when they find themselves unable to exercise the only rights known to them, which are often of great importance to their daily life.

The frustration however is fundamentally rooted in the unbalanced power structure that prevents sound intergroup interaction. This results in ordinary villagers' shared grievance against the leaders, scepticism of the idea of rights and low political efficacy. On the one hand, intergroup antagonism disables village self-governance and creates various negative emotions harmful for both community construction and people's subjective wellbeing. On the other hand, low political efficacy leads to passive participation or even political apathy, which is destructive for rural China's political progress in the long run.

Certainly, knowledge difference and unequal intergroup relationships can mutually enhance one another, reproducing the intergroup differences. It is however unlikely to have a significant impact on rural politics as the intergroup difference in knowledge is likely to disappear in the near future with the natural replacement of the population. The younger generation in rural society has little difference in their collective education attainment.

While ordinary villagers perceived a stark division between the leaders' group and themselves and evaluated their political status very negatively, village leaders usually think that the ordinary villagers are greatly empowered and sometimes even over-empowered as to hinder their work. For example, the rule that village projects have to be unanimously approved by ordinary villagers has not only made their work more difficult, but also can harm the state's interests if projects involve conflicting interests between the state and people, according to Participant H.

4.5 Civic Virtues: the Point of Convergence

In spite of the huge intergroup difference in rights practice, these two groups seemed to converge in the sphere of civic duties. Chapter 3 showed that most village leaders failed to name citizenship obligations like ordinary villagers. Moreover, there was a high degree of consensus on cultural civic virtues across rural society. Although differences existed in normative and democratic civic virtues, overall the majority of the rural population share opinions about civic virtues. Participants generally

thought highly of normative virtues and valued democratic values. An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare scores of civic-virtue evaluations. No significant difference was found between the village-leaders' group (*M*=1.40, *SD*=0.67) and the ordinary-villagers' group (*M*=1.41, *SD*=0.03); *t*(196)=0.12, *p*=0.55. These two groups do not differentiate in civic virtues evaluations. The results show that the intergroup distinction exists at the ideational and behavioural levels but not at the normative level. Also, the intergroup differences exist mainly in the sphere of citizenship rights but not in citizenship duties. Members of both groups knew little about civic duties, but all of them faithfully exercised legal obligations and evaluated normative civic virtues similarly.

4.6 The Impact of Village Leadership on Social Representations of Citizenship: A Summary

In sum, the group identity of village leadership greatly influenced people's representations of citizenship. Its impact is mainly in the ideational and behavioural domains and primarily involves citizenship rights. These two dimensions however contain all three aspects of citizenship, with the ideational dimension corresponding to citizenship content and the behavioural dimension reflecting citizenship extent and depth. The village-leaders' group demonstrated more knowledge than the ordinary-villagers' group about citizenship definition and citizenship rights as well as obligations. Meanwhile in political life, village leaders were generally perceived by ordinary villagers to be privileged in rights practice and were blamed for the latters' poor rights conditions. In contrast with ordinary villagers' complaints of having no rights, village leaders believed that this group was highly empowered and had an important influence on village politics through their regular rights practice.

The intergroup difference closed up in the normative domain of citizenship. Although village leaders knew civic duties better, most of them were ignorant of the content, just like ordinary villagers. Despite poor knowledge, both groups however faithfully fulfilled their legal duties in reality. Also, these two groups converged in the normative evaluation of civic virtues. A summary table is presented below (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 *Ordinary villagers' and village leaders' social representations of citizenship*

	Ideas			Practice			Values
	Definition Of Citizen	Content		Rights		Obligations	Civic Virtues
		Rights	Obligations	Extent	Depth	Extent and Depth	
Ordinary villagers	Most people hardly knew about the concept. Some intuitively associate it with social categories.	Only two rights were named (one political right and one civil right) and many participants saw rights merely nominal.	No duties were recalled	Basic rights were regularly practiced in daily life, including political rights, civil rights and participation rights.	Rights were usually denied.	Faithfully fulfilled citizenship obligations, including obligations towards the state, the community and family.	Highly evaluated normative civic virtues and cultural virtues. Active political participation was also considered important
Village leaders	Most people understood it vaguely from the legal angle and categorise. themselves as citizens.	Eight rights were named (five political rights, one civil right, one social right and a compound right).	Only three duties were recalled and the majority had no knowledge (two family obligations and a compound obligation).	Rights were actively exercised, including political rights, civil rights and participation rights.	Rights were extensively exercised.	Faithfully fulfilled citizenship obligations, including obligations towards the state, the community and family.	Highly evaluated normative civic virtues and cultural virtues. Active political participation was also considered important

Apparently, the group identity of village leadership has a huge impact on people's representations of citizenship. The result however seems to be self-contradictory. On the one hand, the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group differentiate in their knowledge about and practice

around citizenship; on the other hand, they converge in normative evaluation of civic virtues. By theory, individuals aspire to internal consistency (Festinger, 1957). There should be no disparity between one's values or ideas and his or her behaviour. Accordingly, if two groups converge in normative evaluation, they should not differ much in behaviour. Empirical evidence however shows convergence in values but divergence in behaviour, which implies a value-behaviour disjunction. As this disjunction is ultimately resulted from the unbalanced power structure and is not subject to individual power, rural residents, especially ordinary villagers, have to live with enormous dissonance, although their lacking in formal knowledge alleviates dissonance-induced discomfort to a certain degree. To avoid dissonance-induced information is their only strategy to cope with the dissonance, which led ordinary villagers to reject the idea of rights and village leaders to dismiss intergroup differentiation.

Meanwhile, the dissonance is hugely present in rural society despite people's intentional avoidance and manifested in perplexing social phenomena. While ordinary villagers taunt about the idea of civic rights and harbour substantial grievance against local authorities, they still generally believe in their entitlement to legal rights and strongly support the central government. Their ambivalent political attitude has puzzled scholars for many years. Seemingly contradictory, it is however sensible if approached from a social identity perspective.

A central cognitive mechanism in social identity processes is self-categorisation. It produces social identification or identity reconstruction or destruction (Turner et al., 1987). Although self-categorisation is an intra-individual process, it may drive people to launch or engage in social activities to reverse the disadvantaged in-group social position if they believe group boundaries impermeable, the intergroup division illegitimate and cognitive alternatives available (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987).

With regard to social representations of citizenship in rural China, the mechanism of self-categorisation is key in understanding the puzzling value-behaviour disjunction. Despite lacking formal knowledge of citizenship, rural Chinese residents' identification with the country is strong, which is reflected in their unanimous high endorsement for normative and cultural civic virtues. In spite of the structural constraints, they still identify themselves as citizens entitled to equal rights above all. Identification with the country and hence with civic membership resulted in a convergence in evaluations of civic virtues between the village-leaders' group and the ordinary-villagers' group.

On the other hand, it is also this identification that led ordinary villagers to question and challenge the local authorities while remaining supportive for the country. For ordinary villagers, division between the village-leaders' group and themselves in rights practice is unjust and illegitimate. While they categorise themselves as citizens of equal rights, they are acutely aware of

their distinction from the cadre. Nevertheless they generally attributed the intergroup differentiation to the leaders' group oppression, but not to institutional inequality. For them, such a division is an issue of whether their citizenship is fully recognised by the local authorities, especially by village leaders, rather than an issue of insufficient empowerment.

Although most people chose to turn a blind eye to village leaders' abuse of power, most are becoming increasingly intolerant of the violation of individual interests, even in the name of collective wellbeing, and have started to fight for themselves. Deep inside they believe in their entitlements and insist on basic citizenship rights although they may not even be able to enunciate those rights. Also, they are becoming more aware of institutional support available to them through political participation. The village self-governance policy in particular familiarised them with the idea of equality, or "fairness" in their terms, through which they also learn to negotiate with the authorities and to employ different means to defend their lawful interests.

Their fight for recognition however is not constrained to participating in village politics. They also resort to other legal means such as protesting to defend self-interests beyond the village context. Not only appealing to the above governments has become part of routine politics, but also open confrontations with local governments have gained a momentum in recent years. Moreover, going to count is now recognised as the ultimate solution for resolving disputes in rural China, which was unimaginable not long ago when non-litigation was the social norm (Fei & Wu, 1988/1948). Mild forms of protesting such as speaking to village leaders and visiting relevant governmental divisions are within the institutional framework and are often used in individual efforts to appeal for official support. Collective actions triggered by violations of collective interests or collectively shared interests nevertheless can be violent and can target, not only village leaders, but also the above governments. Although the village-leaders' group is often the origin of collective rage, it is not rare that the above governments are sued for infringing villagers' interests, which was an impossibility in the past.

From the more conventional means of 'letters and visits' to going to court and collective actions, from protesting against village leaders to against the above governments, Chinese peasants display an increasingly firm resolution to defend self-interests and a growing confidence in having their lawful status fully recognised. It is ultimately their identification with their group identity as a citizen and the vision of citizenship of equality they uphold that drives their struggles for recognition, producing a vibrant citizenship movement in rural China.

Meanwhile, village leader peers also experience dissonance although the discomfort is less felt than for the ordinary villagers given that they are the beneficiaries of the unbalanced power structure. Unlike ordinary villagers, their way of handling this dissonance is not to avoid all rights-related information but to emphasise the bright side of the story. Being conscious of the egalitarian

principle of citizenship and hence the illegitimacy of any inequality, they stressed villagers' increasing empowerment and dismissed intergroup differences.

The above analysis demonstrates that political status indeed influences social representations of citizenship and predicts people's rights practice. Village leadership divided rural society. It was associated with relatively more knowledge of citizenship (see Chapter 3) and an absolute privileged position in rights practice. Ordinary villagers on the other hand, were often powerless in defending their legal rights due to their deprived position in relation to village leaders. As a result, they not only practised fewer rights but more importantly exercised rights less extensively in reality. Consequently, they were cynical about the idea of rights and held a strong grudge against the leaders group. In spite of intergroup division in the ideational and behavioural dimensions, these two groups however converge in normative evaluations of civic virtues. Such a conflict can be sufficiently explained by their identification with their civic identity and the country, both as a cultural and political entity.

4.7 Other Social Categories and Social Representations of Citizenship: A Quantitative Exploration

The previous section demonstrated the impact of social identity on social representations of citizenship. Although social stratification is very mild in rural China, political status is certainly not the only dimension that divides the rural population. Apart from village leadership, Party membership is another salient group identity in rural China. This section firstly examines the effect of Party membership on SRs of a 'good' citizen. It then further explores social categories that may potentially influence people's normative evaluation of civic virtues. The following analysis is based solely on the good citizen index given that no qualitative evidence indicated at any other dimension rather than political status that differentiates rural residents in SRs of citizenship.

4.6.1 Party Membership

Although there was a high degree of consensus in civic virtues in rural society in general and Party members did not differentiate from others in political orientation, they might still be distinctive in the normative dimension of SRs of citizenship. Because of the communist Party's strong political stand, Party members might dwell more on normative virtues and less on cultural and democratic virtues.

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to examine the effect of Party membership on civic virtues evaluations. No significant difference was found between Party members (M=1.38, SD=0.51) and non-Party members (M=1.42, SD=0.28); t(192)=0.71, p=0.76. Both groups agree on the importance of all listed behavioural traits for being a good citizen.

4.7.2 Other Social Categories

SRT posits specificity of SR albeit its social nature (Doise et al., 1993). An important mechanism involved is social identification. It is nevertheless not the only factor that determines individual differentiation. Many social factors can influence individual psyche as well and social factors are in effect important determinants. This section uses the clustering technique to look for social categories that influence individual positioning. It aims to discover social categories that were not identified in the qualitative study and it helps crosscheck the previous findings.

A quick cluster analysis was run on the 'good' citizen index to derive groupings of cases. Five clusters were produced using Ward's method. The main effect on variables were significant ($F(4, 175)=289.32$, $p<0.001$) and further tests verified that each cluster was significantly different from one another at the 0.001 level.

Crosstab analysis based on the cluster analysis found that village type, age group and education had significant effects on clustering, with X^2 (16, N=180) =107.40, $p<0.001$ for village type; X^2 (28, N=175) =55.59, p=0.001 for age group and X^2 (20, N=178) =31.72, $p<0.05$ for education. There were no significant effects of village leadership, X^2 (4, N=180) =1.62, $p>0.1$; Party membership, X^2 (4, N=176) =5.60, $p>0.1$; gender, X^2 (4, N=179) =3.04, $p>0.1$; and working experience outside the village X^2 (4, N=180) =7.32, $p>0.$ 1. Chi-square tests corroborated the previous findings that there were no differences between village leaders and ordinary villagers as well as between Party members and non-Party members in civic virtue evaluations.

Among the five clusters produced, the first cluster featured a mild agreement to the importance of the listed civic virtues (M=1.88). Twenty participants fell into this cluster. They were mainly from Village 7 (six participants) and Village 8 (seven participants), with several from each of the remaining villages. Participants were evenly distributed from 20s to 70s in the age range. Except for one participant who had higher education, all of them had at most nine years of schooling. The second cluster was the dominant cluster (N=66) and was characterised by a fairly high degree of endorsement for the listed civic virtues (M=1.28). Only three people in this cluster were from Village 6. Participants from Village 7, Village 8 and Village 9 were most likely to fall into this cluster and participants from Village 10 also had a good chance to be in this class. This group was comprised of people from their 20s to 80s and of all educational levels. Nevertheless, people in their 50s to 70s were more likely to fall into this group although there was also a good chance that people in 30s and 40s could be in this class too. Also, people with higher education were unlikely to fall into this class.

The third cluster was featured with an extremely high endorsement for all civic virtues (M=1.03). Forty-four participants were in this cluster and only one of them was from Village 6. Around half of

them were from Village 10 and several were from each of Village 7, 8 and 9. This group was characterised by relatively young ages. Over half of them were below fifty. Most of them had been to middle school or had been to college or university, and people with a higher education were most likely to fall into this class.

Like the first cluster, the fourth cluster was characterised by modest agreement to the importance of civic virtues (M=1.62) and was comprised of 44 participants. The vast majority of this cluster (31 participants) was from Village 6 and each of the rest villages contributed several. Over half of this group were between 30 and 50 years old and there were several between 50 and 70. Over half of them had been to primary school or middle school and some were illiterate. The last cluster was the smallest cluster and was characterised by a disagreement with the listed behavioural traits as civic virtues (M=2.24). Only six people were in this class and none of them were from Village 7 and 8. Half of them were in their 60s and the remaining three were between 20 to 50.

Overall, the vast majority considered the listed civic virtues important and only six people regarded them unimportant. Village 6 stood out in the analysis. Most participants from this village (N=31) tended to only mildly agree to the importance of civic virtues (M=1.62), to a lesser extent in comparison with the rest of the villages, the majority of which fell into cluster 2 (M=1.28) and 3 (M=1.03). Among all age groups, participants in their 20s were the most supportive for all civic virtues; 65% fell into the third cluster. The same support was found in the 80s group. Among the three participants, one was in cluster 2 and two was in cluster 3. People in their 50s and 70s also highly valued the listed civic virtues; 63.64% of the 50s group and 57.14% of the 70s group fell into the second cluster. Participants in their 30s, 40s and 60s had fewer consensual opinions about civic virtues. They mostly ranged from cluster 2 to cluster 4. The teenage participants were the most disengaged group; both participants were in cluster 4 and modestly agreed to the importance of the listed civic virtues (M=1.62).

With regard to educational attainment, people with more education tended to agree more on the listed civic virtues. The most supportive group was people with a higher educations; 66.67% were in cluster 3. The next supportive group was people having been to high school (not necessarily completed). Half of them fell into the second cluster. While more illiterate participants and participants with only primary school experiences tended to swing between highly supportive (M=1.28) and modestly supportive (M=1.62), participants having middle school or secondary vocational school experiences were more likely to fall into cluster 2, 3 and 4.

It is not surprising that there was overlap between educational attainment and age groups as younger generations were often better educated. The most supportive group was the 20s group which was also the more educated group. Also, half of the participants who disagreed with the civic virtues were illiterate and in their 60s. The more educated groups tended to value civic virtues more

and formal education is conceivably influential because schools are a major site for learning institutional norms. Age can be influential too, as younger generations are more receptive to external influences and older generations are more likely to dwell more deeply on traditional values. These experiences can affect people's opinions about normative values and democratic values as well as cultural values.

4.7.3 Summary

Results showed that Party membership did not have an impact on SRs of citizenship but village type, age and educational attainment did. Village 6 stood out the tests again; the vast majority in this village agreed modestly to the importance of the listed civic virtues. There were more people in Village 10 that extremely valued all civic virtues and more participants in the rest of the villages that valued the virtues less than people in Village 10, but more than people in Village 6. This result, to a certain extent, corroborates the findings in the previous chapter. It should be noted that these five villages are consecutively situated on the continuum of exposure to external influences and Village 6 is the most closed. Among the five villages, participants in Village 6 valued the democratic as well as normative virtues the least, whereas participants in Village 10 valued the democratic as well as normative virtues the most.

Results also showed that there was an overlapping effect of age and education. The younger generations are often better educated and valued civic virtues more. Whereas the older generations are often less educated and thought less of civic virtues. It is sensible as normative values are often instilled through formal education and democratic values are usually acquired through contacts with the outside world, which is more likely to happen with younger people.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the specificity of SRs of citizenship. Based on findings of the previous chapter, the first section of this chapter found that political status influenced SRs of citizenship. The influence nevertheless was mainly in the behavioural domain. The difference in knowledge between ordinary villagers and village leaders was conspicuous, and could be partially explained by educational attainment. Evidence also indicated another notable possibility: ordinary villagers' extremely poor performance of naming rights resulted from the perceived differences in rights practice between village leaders and themselves and their inability to change the situation.

Meanwhile, statistical tests found that political status had no impact in the normative domain and ordinary villagers did not differentiate from village leaders in their civic virtue evaluations despite the fact they practised citizenship differently which generated much grievance among ordinary villagers. The discrepancy between behavioural and normative spheres can be explained by a social

identity mechanism. In spite of the behavioural division, rural residents identified with the state and their civic identity. Subsequently, they identified with objective citizenship and valued civic virtues just as village leaders. Social identity indeed mediates social representational processes.

Statistical tests in the second section did not support the impact of Party membership on SRs of citizenship. Nevertheless, results showed that village type, age and educational attainment had significant impacts. People in different villages and of different ages and educational backgrounds vary in their opinions about what makes a 'good' citizen. The results corroborated findings in the previous chapters that an exposure to external influence affected SRs of citizenship. Meanwhile, tests also revealed that except for the social identity mechanism, institutions also affected SRs. Social categories such as age and groups based on educational attainments, though, involve little identification processes tremendously influence knowledge transmission and acquisition. In sum, the discussion of specificity of SRs in this chapter showed that not only a psychological factor, i.e. social identity, but also social factors, such as institutional experiences, affected SR. With regard to citizenship, political status, village type, age and educational attainment all influenced people's representations.

Chapter 5 Discourse and Culture as Anchors for 'Citizenship': Social Representations in a Polyphasic Representational World

This chapter examines the anchoring of 'citizenship'. Specifically, relationships between SRs of a 'good' citizen and discourses of Communist ideology, community autonomy, universal equality and democracy are investigated. The first three strands of thinking are respectively the major principles of state, society and market. An investigation into their relationships with SRs of a 'good' citizen helps illuminate the respective impact of state, society and market on people's normative evaluations of citizenship. Here, I do not argue that market economies are operated on an equality principle, but rather that this underlying principle of market economies links market to citizenship and gave rise to modern citizenship.

Social re-presentation of citizenship in China is essentially a combat between Chinese knowledge and Western knowledge. 'Democracy' is a basic component of Western liberal ideology in the political field. Therefore, comparing its impact on SRs of citizenship with the other three, more or less domestic strands of ideas, sheds light on the interplay between the local knowledge and the Western influence in social representational processes of citizenship.

Findings in the previous chapters suggest that the foreign concept of citizenship has been taken up by rural Chinese society. Rural residents exercised citizenship rights and duties regularly and sometimes actively pursued rights despite the fact that they generally had only vague ideas about the concept. In the meantime, SRs of citizenship in rural China have strong cultural characteristics. Except for discrepancies between ideational and behavioural dimensions, rural residents generally positioned themselves inferior to political authorities and there was a strong tendency to obey political authorities in rural China. Ordinary villagers perceived huge differences in rights practice between village leaders and themselves and were hugely disappointed at their political status. Nevertheless, they tended to be conservative in political actions for changes and only reacted to extreme violations of their personal interests.

Political conservatism is, on the one hand, a cultural issue and on the other hand, is shown to be related to structural constraints (see Chapter 4). There is solid evidence showing that villagers, in spite of their political status, generally identify with the country and their civic identity. Although ordinary villagers express huge dissatisfaction with their political status, they credit their improved life quality to the central government and highly value normative civic virtues like village leaders.

The questions that remain are: How was a the West-originated concept accepted by a society of significant cultural and political differences and what gave rise to the unique SRs of citizenship in rural China? These questions ultimately concern anchoring 'citizenship' in rural China. To answer these questions, this chapter examines citizenship in the specific context of rural Chinese society

and in relation to the prevailing cultural and rural traditions and conventions. Analysis of this chapter draws mainly upon the survey data and is preceded by an introduction of the predominant ideology, traditions and conventions and their political manifestations in rural China. This chapter begins with an explanation of the reasons for proposing this question.

5.1 Anchoring as a Psychological and Social Process: State, Society and Market in Social Representational Process of Citizenship

Anchoring as a basic process of social re-presentation (Moscovici, 2001) has always been of great interest to SR research. It concerns the third assumption of SRT: SRs are governed by certain attitudinal dimensions which are shared in a society (Doise, et al., 1993). It is essentially these attitudinal systems that determine and construct the manifestations and the norms of SRs. Chapter 3 and 4 have discussed social representations of citizenship. An important question that remains is where in the representational field this concept anchors. Specifically, what prior knowledge affects people's understandings and evaluations of citizenship as well as their civic behaviour?

From a social cognitive angle, anchoring is to find a match or some matches for the incoming object/idea in the existing schemata and objectification is a process of adjustments, modification and a projection of ideas. They follow the relevance principle (Higgins, 1996) and are subjected to the regulation of relevant social norms (Doise, 2001). In terms of cognitive processing, anchoring is a rather reflective intra-individual process. However, the prior schemata with what incoming information is further processed are essentially internalised social knowledge and it is society that functions as the reference and the check for its members to adjust, modify and project their individual opinions. In this sense, investigating anchoring of 'citizenship' requires a reflection on what specific prior knowledge influenced SRs of citizenship and more importantly, what social norms governed the representational process. Tracing back the ideational and normative origins of SR helps us better understand the current construct of SRs and their social manifestations. It also sheds light on predicting the future development of SRs.

The social nature of SR and the peculiarity of Chinese citizenship provide substantial social implications beyond psychology to the investigation of the anchoring process. For one thing, as citizenship originated from the West and modern citizenship was devised in liberal democratic countries, to discuss anchoring of 'citizenship' is in effect to examine dialogicality/non-dialogicality between Western knowledge and Chinese knowledge and between liberalism and communism. It helps to show whether societies of different cultures and ideologies may interact; and whether and how mutual influence is possible.

For another, researching anchoring of 'citizenship' is also to investigate the interplay between state, society and market in the sphere of citizenship. Reading extensive citizenship literature, one

often has the feeling that modern citizenship is a matter of interaction between state and society, which to a certain extent is true. Empirical studies usually attend to either state or society or the interplays to try to capture the dynamics of these two spheres in order to illuminate the possible change of the dynamics. The relational nature of citizenship is often highly emphasised, and studies in this line provide insights in constructing sound state-society relationships. What is usually overlooked in these studies is the role of market.

It was in effect the market economy that normalised the equality principle — the foundation of modern citizenship. Adam Smith (2005/1776) attributed the spread of the equity principle to commercialisation. His argument states that profit-making motivates merchants to develop every member into a customer, and the result is the break of segregation of any kind. Montesquieu further argued that competitions propelled by market economies shatter and prevent the monopoly of any social group in any area (Montesquieu, 2005/1748). Subsequently, the notion of class became irrelevant and the equality principle was championed throughout commercialised societies. Modern citizenship was precisely conceived and facilitated by this social mentality.

Although the impact of market economies on modern citizenship is widely acknowledged, market is absent in most, if not all, contemporary citizenship models (Howell, Ishkanian, Obadare, Sechinelgin & Glasius, 2008). Contemporary researchers routinely search the spheres of state and society for explanations of citizenship phenomena. On the one hand state and society are indeed powerful explanatory factors and citizenship indeed reflects the power relationship between these two spheres. On the other hand, however, the role of commercialisation on modern citizenship is undeniable.

Its absence in current studies can be explained by two significant reasons. Firstly, most models are developed by researchers in the West where the market economy is a living reality. The free market is routinely taken as a presupposition, rather than a variable. As a result, its impact on citizenship is not considered in most models. A high commercialisation level, however is by no means universal. In places where marketisation is underway, such as China, its influence on citizenship should neither be taken for granted nor be regarded constant. The common practice to uncritically apply Western models to researching citizenship phenomena in China is inevitably deficient if not problematic.

Secondly, it is difficult to operationalise market. Most models are built on empirical evidence of the action/inaction of state and/or society and routinely concretise state and society. The former is usually equated with the government at different levels and the latter is often conceived as social groups and organisations. In contrast with state and society, known as the 'invisible hand', the market is rather intangible. Any attempt to pin it on a particular agent or agents can only raise controversies.

In effect, one cannot concretise market in studying citizenship phenomena. The way market acts on society and state is subtle through price mechanisms (Hayek, 2006/1944; Smith, 2000/1776). It operates on its own logic once a free market system is established. Unlike state and society, it does not directly become involved in citizenship combat. Its influence is not candid and intended through interactions between surrogate actors, but indirect and unintentional through changing social mentality. Popularising the idea of universal equality is not the end, but an unintentional by-product of the market economy. For this reason, it is both futile and problematic to concretise market in citizenship studies.

Departing from the conventional attempt to seek to pin state, society and market on particular actors, I treat them as sources and resources of thinking to construct an integrative model for understanding citizenship phenomena. Indeed, each of the three spheres produces institutional establishments, which regulate people's practice. However, all the institutions involved and the agendas they set are essentially produced under the guidance of, and in accordance with, particular ideologies, traditions and conventions. It is ultimately these grand discourses that govern people's thinking and doing at both the intra-individual level and the social level. They are indeed the governing principles of social re-presentation of citizenship.

In light of social representation theory, instead of concretising state, society and market, I alternatively look for determinants of people's conceptualisation of citizenship in the discourses that emanate from these three spheres. Specifically, I shall research relationships between social representations of a 'good' citizen and discourses of democratic centralism (communist ideology), community autonomy (the self-governance policy), universal equality (a Chinese cultural legacy which relates also to market) and democracy (which relates both to market and communist ideology). A description of discourses emanated from theses three spheres and the interplay between these three spheres is presented below.

Figure 5.1 *Discourses emanated from state, society and market and their interplays in contemporary rural China*
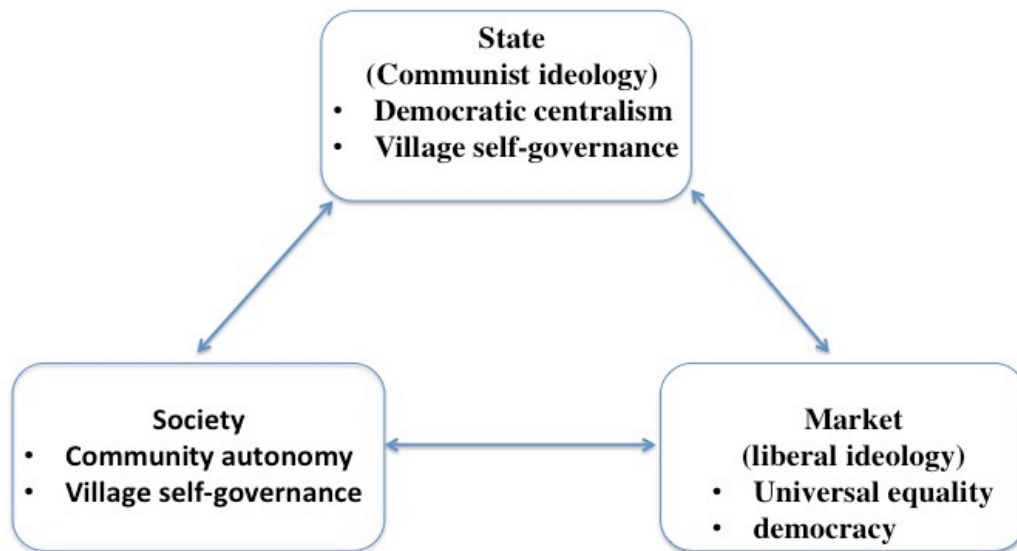
5.2 Communism, Community Autonomy, Universal Equality and Democracy as Metasystem

On the whole, discussing the anchoring of citizenship is essentially to examine its relationship with the pre-existent metasystem and to examine the influence of discourses of communist ideology, community autonomy, universal equality and democracy on SRs of the 'good' citizen, to be precise. Such an investigation identifies the normative origins of SRs of citizenship and helps illuminate the respective influence of state, society and market on people's conviction about citizenship. It also provides insights into knowledge encounters and demonstrates how exactly knowledge exchanges occur.

As a cognitive process, social representing follows the relevance principle, which means incoming ideas are always anchored in relevant systems of meanings (Higgins, 1996) and systems of social representations in Moscovici's (2001) terms. Systems that are relevant to citizenship include the system of democracy globally and systems of state, society and market domestically. Originating from the West, modern citizenship was developed with the development of democratic countries and it is a crucial constituent of democracy (Tilly, 2007). As a conception that defines the relationship between the government and its people, 'citizenship' is initially conceived in light of

people's vision of state and society and is defined accordingly. Hence, the representational process of citizenship is above all regulated by SRs of state ideology and social conventions that define the relationship between state and society. As mentioned, this process also involves market because it mediates state-society dynamics.

Treating state, society and market as sources and resources of thinking and highlighting their discursive/rhetorical nature are in line with SR theory and consistent with discourse theories. According to Doise (1990), a metasystem as a control of cognitive processing regulates the social representational process. In the two cognitive systems he argues for, i.e. an operating system and a metasystem, the former performs mere cognitive tasks such as inclusion and exclusion, and the latter controls the former on a normative base. The operating system is idea-based, and the metasystem consists primordially of normative relations, which fundamentally determine the nature of ideas/objects represented. Norms originating from spheres of state, society and market that are relevant to citizenship are respectively communism, community autonomy and universal equality. They constitute the metasystem in which citizenship is embedded.

Meanwhile, normative relations are essentially themata. Themata, according to Moscovici (2001), function as cardinal organising principles of the mental world, based on which people selectively process incoming information. It is fundamentally discursive in the sense that it is not only persuasive but also prescriptive and even mandatory.

Being discursive in its own right, themata are discursively plagued. They form, change and die out in public communication — the battlefield of discourses of all origins. Seemingly concerns only the public, public communication is however subjected to the influence of state and market too. No matter how liberal and democratic a country appears to be, it is always the elites, importantly the political elites who set the keynote for public discussion (von Dijk, 1992). Besides covert manipulation of the mass media, the government also makes use of all possible media from the national flag to passports to transmit its favoured values to the public (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Fairclough, 1995). Meanwhile, commercialisation popularises the idea of egalitarianism (Smith, 2005/1759), and the law of supply and demand applies also to public communication. As a result, epochal themes in commercialised societies unavoidably bear the marks of state, society and market.

Currently in China, the predominant themes in the sphere of state and rural society are communism and self-governance. Together with the universal equality principle popularised by marketisation, they consist of the local discursive system that guides the anchoring of 'citizenship'. Another representational system involved and primarily represents Western influence, is that of democracy. As an exogenous concept, citizenship was initially introduced into China as part of the political reform that aimed at establishing a democratic government. Although a communist regime instead of a liberal democracy was established later, the idea of democracy had taken root in China.

It was driven by the inspiration for democracy that the Chinese Communist Party adopted democratic centralism as the organisation principle for both the Party and the government. Also, it was this inspiration that led the government to launch the village self-governance project.

It should be noted that 'democracy' in communist China has very different connotations to liberal democratic countries. The debates centre on the governmental organisation. To mark this divergence, democracy is treated separately from communism. Discourse regarding democracy in China has been undergoing tremendous changes and becoming more influenced by the liberal ideology with China's opening-up and the influence of globalisation. It orients the anchoring of citizenship.

The time lag between the spread of the notion of democracy and the anchoring of citizenship is not merely because of historical reasons but also because of political reasons. In spite of harsh international critiques against the distortion of the concept, democracy has always occupied the central position in political discourses in communist China. On the contrary, citizenship is largely downplayed. For the sake of precision, democracy discourse is regarded primarily as the representative of international influence, rather than that of market in this thesis despite its close connection with marketisation. It was in effect against the backdrop of economic reforms in rural China that community autonomy was reinstated in villages and developed into the village self-governance policy. Certainly, the impact of the discourse of democracy on SRs of citizenship also reflects the influence of market.

China's ongoing transformation provides this thesis with a good opportunity for such an investigation. To observe the impact of commercialisation on citizenship dynamics is almost impossible in the West due to the strong presence of market and its integration with state and society. In China however, the market is discernible. This is not only because marketisation was launched only recently, but also because the logic of the market economy is to a certain extent in conflict with both China's state ideology and the traditional Chinese thinking. This is explored in the next section.

5.3 Encountering Western Knowledge

Intuitively, one may question the possibility of anchoring 'citizenship' in China given the country's distinctive political and cultural traditions, which are very different from the liberal tradition. Empirical evidence however shows that the concept has been assimilated in rural Chinese society. Participants in this research showed little formal knowledge about the concept, yet demonstrated strong citizenship awareness. The empirical contradiction implies a complex social representational process of citizenship. The inconsistency between linguistic and behavioural dimensions reflects

contradictory social facts. The precise word may be avoided intentionally in mainstream language and discourses; but relevant ideas are available through other channels.

Indeed, the social representational process of citizenship in China is an extremely complex social process. It is a wrestle between Western knowledge and Chinese knowledge, subjected to the forces of state, society and market and under the pressure of political opposition. On the one hand, the liberal ideology behind modern citizenship conflicts with China's communist ideology and the individualist aspect of liberalism contradicts traditional Chinese culture. On the other hand, some aspects of citizenship have political and cultural foundations in China. The key concept of universal equality in particular is not alien to Chinese people and it is becoming more and more popular with the country's marketization, although it has never been the mainstream thinking. Anchoring 'citizenship' in China, hence, is a process characterised by tremendous ideological and cultural clashes.

5.3.1 Confucianism: Background of Chinese Psyche

To understand the Chinese mindset, one can never bypass Confucianism. Together with Daoism and Buddhism, they constitute the three pillars of traditional Chinese culture and continue to influence Chinese people's thinking and practice. Chosen as the state official ideology since the Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD) and incorporated the other two philosophical traditions in Song Dynasty (960AD-1279AD), Confucianism has the most profound impact on Chinese society and politics. With a strong ethical stance, Confucianism is the basic element of the metasystem of China's social mentality since ancient times. Its legacy can be found not only in conventions and traditions, but also in the more recent communist ideology. It is both collectivist and hierarchical in essence.

Confucianism's lasting vitality in China lies not only in its philosophical significance, but more importantly in its strong moral stance which has served feudal governance. Its precepts of respecting a hierarchical world order and taking responsibilities accordingly made its unshakable supreme political position in ancient China. "Rule by Confucianism" had been the governance philosophy for much of Chinese history before the founding of the Communist China. The concept of *Li* (etiquette) in particular was fully exploited by the ancient scholar official class to cater for the need of feudalistic governance. As a system of ritual norms and propriety, it centres on 'five basic relationships'. *Li* concerns social relations in both private and public life and aims at creating a world of order. These relationships include a.) ruler and subject; b.) father and son; c.) elder brother and younger brother; d.) husband and wife; and, e.) friend and friend.

Deviating from Confucius' original principle of mutuality for social relations, neo-Confucianism places emphasis on subservience of the inferior to the superior. Subservience became the cardinal

principle for social relations, and importantly for four of the 'five basic relationships'. Excepting the relationship between friends where equality is applied, an overarching principle governing the remaining four is subordination of the latter to the former, i.e. subject to ruler, son to father, younger brother to elder brother and wife to husband.

Moreover, these relationships are ranked in descending order of importance and the higher-ranking is prioritised over the lower-ranking should conflicts occur. The 'five basic relationships' and their order of importance established and legitimised the ruler's supreme power. Subsequently, 'self' fell into oblivion and was considered to be expendable for the interest of superior others and hence the welfare of the collective given that it immediately includes one's superior others. These five relationships constitute the foundation of collectivism. Although Chinese culture has been changing dramatically, collectivism is still widely regarded as its defining characteristic (Triandis, 1994).

With regard to citizenship in rural China, people's collective orientation was notable. While over half of the participants thought that public policies should taken into consideration both state interests and individual interests; there was another 28.6% that stated that public policies should prioritise state interests. Even if this proportion was influenced by social desirability and exaggerated the reality, it still demonstrates the predominance of a collective discourse in the country. Only 11.96% overtly declared their preference for individual interests.

Similarly, hierarchical thinking, the other legacy of the 'five basic relationships' and the foundation of collectivism, is influential too. Its variations are more famously known as holism thinking (Na et al., 2010) and the interdependent self-construal (Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa & Uskul, 2009). Besides establishing orders to the social world, the *Li* system created a patriarchal society of strict hierarchies that revolves around clans and centres on imperial power (Chang, 2000). Because of its political function, it was enshrined in institutions and hierarchical ideas were instilled into people's minds through all forms of education from formal imperial examinations to periodical lecturing by the gentry class in rural communities in feudal times (Fei, 1953; He, 2000). Hierarchical thinking became deeply entrenched after thousands of years of practice and it survived the eradication of the feudalistic system and Confucian institutions in the wake of Communist China.

This reasoning logic remains to be predominant in contemporary China, especially in rural China where traditional thinking prevails. It can be easily noticed in the current communist regime despite the fact that the notion of hierarchy and the social reality constructed around this concept were precisely what the Chinese communist revolution was determined to eradicate. In spite of revolutionary changes in social relations with the change of the political system, obedience remains to be a notable cultural trait in China. Though the magnitude has been greatly decreased especially

in domestic life, the cultural tendency to obey the authority remained strong. Questioning the government openly, let alone standing up to the government overtly, remains an alarming idea for most people despite the popular political discourse that 'people are masters of new China'.

Even in rural China where collective actions against the government are more common, although still rare, questioning and antagonism are always directed at the local governments, but not the central government. The purpose of collective actions is in effect often to draw the central government's attention to right a wrong. The supreme power is usually taken as the ultimate arbitrator and is generally supported in rural society. It is seldom questioned, let alone formally challenged. The central government was always given the credit for improving peasants' overall life quality and people are generally optimistic about the future despite dissatisfaction with their current political status. Evidence strongly suggests that praising the central government is not so much about political correctness, but rather out of a strong identification with the country, especially considering the fact that rural Chinese residents are reputed to be politically 'unsophisticated'.

The most significant implication of the inveterate hierarchical thinking in political life is perhaps people's uncritical acceptance of a hierarchical power structure and their intuitive support for the supreme power, among others. Obeying the government was overall considered to be important (92.9% of participants). To a certain extent it explained the reason why ordinary villagers pinned hopes on the central government and identified with the state and their civic identity, while they harboured grievance against the local leaders and were clearly dissatisfied with their political status. To discern the interrelationship between hierarchical thinking and identification with the supreme power is not a task of the current research. Nevertheless it is reasonable to believe that these two factors mutually enhance one another.

In a sense, Chinese people still largely position themselves as subjects instead of liberal citizens in relation to the state. If examined by Olson's recent definition that citizenship is the "status of individuals in relation to a political unit" (Olson, 2008, p.4) (unit here refers to both the government and the public), the departure of Chinese citizenship from prototypical citizenship becomes the most evident. Chinese citizenship does not fall into any category of the Western taxonomy. It is neither liberal, nor republican, or communitarian, although it does prioritise community interests like communitarian citizenship. It is distinguished from all types of liberal citizenship in the sense that modern citizenship is conceived as a social contract made between state and society of relatively equal power. In China however, people normally consider state power as superior.

The link between Chinese citizenship and the Western versions is notable and recent years have witnessed a rapid growth of citizenship awareness in China. Firstly, China's regulations on citizenship largely follow Western countries and these regulations form the legal basis for people to understand their civic status and to solve disputes. They became known to people, not only through

school education but also through all kinds of institutions. Previous chapters demonstrate that rural Chinese residents may have little knowledge about this concept, were however conscious of their legal obligations and certain civic rights. They faithfully fulfilled their duties, and also actively exercised their rights while showing rather proactive attitudes towards rights practice. Their political attitude and behaviour indicate at their conscious understanding of fairness. They intuitively followed the contractual nature of citizenship and of the mutuality principle that underpins modern citizenship. They have expectations for the state as a benefit provider in return for their duty exercise.

Secondly, Chinese people exhibit behavioural patterns more and more similar to Westerners in citizenship practice. Currently, rural residents seriously consider legal means as an option to defend their self-interests and they became more vocal and proactive in rights claims too, which were unimaginable three decades ago. Law cases have been increasing exponentially since the implementation of the village self-governance policy and collective actions for various rights claims have since erupted.

In addition, evidence suggests a huge narrative shift in rural China and villagers have awakened to individual rights and interests. When immediate self-interests were included, participants were ready to question and confront governmental policies. Responding to the item on the governmental control of house site applications in the questionnaire,[15] 42.21% of the participants believed that there should not be any control at all, versus 57.79% of those who supported governmental control. Given that this item evokes great pressure for social desirability, 42.21% likely under-represents people's preference for individual interests.

However, it corroborates the earlier finding that individual interests are becoming increasingly pronounced in rural China. Responding to the item on the priority of public policy, only 28.26% of the participants declared that policies should be geared towards state interests. The majority of the 53.8% insisted that policies should take into account both state interests and people's interests. Also, another 11.96% overtly stated that public policies should prioritise individual interests. Considering the huge pressure of social desirability, the fact that most people announced publically that individual interests were at least as important as collective interests disclosed villagers' changing political minds.

Third, rural Chinese residents manifested a strong democratic orientation. They highly respected the law and regarded abiding by the law (M=1.2, SD=0.46) even more important than obeying the government (M=1.55, SD=0.71), t(193)=6.71, p<0.001. Their tolerance for breaking the law is

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[15] The governmental planning for rural developments strictly controls the transformation of farmlands into residential houses. However, the need always exceeds the official quota. It is a highly controversial issue in rural China.

lower than for disobeying the government. Over 99% of participants supported the government to encourage and educate people to observe the law, and over 94% of participants agreed that the government should punish those who break the law.

Disagreeing with the government on the other hand was better taken where 66.5% supported the public expression of opinions that were different from the government. Also, 51.9% supported public gatherings and protests. However, they largely disapproved of secretive dissidents. Only 28.6% supported secretive gatherings and 77.9% believed that secretive gatherings could disrupt either the social order or the normal governmental functioning or both. This is less a sign of blind support for the government, than a reflection of consideration for self-interests and general social progress. The fact that rural residents accorded more importance to observing the law than obeying the government disclosed their democratic orientation. Whether a society takes constitutions rather than governmental orders as the ultimate rules for social life is an important indicator of democracy (Andrew & Chapman, 1995).

Although support for the government was high, people did not blindly entrust the government with all political decisions. In addition to the high tolerance with dissent with official opinions, there was a strong demand for involvement in policy-making and an extensive disagreement with the governmental use of policy enforcement in policy implementation; indeed, 81% insisted consulting the public as necessary for law and policy making. Also, 52% disapproved the governmental deployment of policy enforcement in the implementation of official projects.

Chinese peasants' civic behaviour and their democratic orientation demonstrated their rising citizenship awareness. Both the introduction of citizenship into China and the growing citizenship awareness indicate a liberal element in China's social mentality. Although the kinship of Chinese objective citizenships with liberal Western versions cannot be taken as a sign of an official acceptance of liberalism in China and citizenship remains to be a highly sensitive topic in the country, the similarity in subjective citizenship shows that liberal thinking has a social foundation in Chinese society despite ideological contradictions.

Liberal thinking is in effect by no means unique to liberalism; protecting self-interests is more of a human nature than ideological construal. Also, egalitarianism is the ultimate goal of communism and had been gaining more and more power in recent years in China with the country's Great Transformation. The economic reform in particular facilitated its popularisation. The result led to revolutionary changes in the Chinese psyche, manifesting in SRs of citizenship as people's awakening to individual rights. Rural residents not only demanded more empowerment to defend their rights but also placed high value on individual rights, which was heavily depreciated in the past and is understated in communist ideology.

5.3.2 Polyphasic Discursive Registers in Rural China

The most significant characteristic of the anchoring process of citizenship in China is resistance to and reconciliation between contradictory ideas. On one hand, the liberal ideology is resisted by the state ideology, its universal equality principle conflicts the traditional hierarchical thinking, and its individualistic principle contradicts the society's collective values. On the other hand, communism has a liberal element, and the idea of universal equality is echoed by a rural tradition of community autonomy, and its recent variation — the village self-governance policy. Moreover, the idea of universal equality is becoming increasingly popular in China and individual rights are given more and more weight with the country's increasing pace of marketisation.

Anchoring 'citizenship' in rural China is particularly complex in comparison with urban China. While it can be more conflicted, it can be more interactive too. For one thing, hierarchical thinking is well preserved in rural communities and it still governs rural residents' daily life in general. For another, equality despite being conditioned was practised in rural society for over two thousand years throughout feudalism (Li, 2005; Zhao, 1998; Zhong, 2000), and this legacy of community autonomy was resumed by the recent state policy of village self-governance.

Indeed, the anchoring process of 'citizenship' in China is permeated by ideological and cultural conflicts. Nevertheless, the coexistence of polyphasic discourses in contemporary China allows for the possibility of a "dialogical interaction" (Jovchelovich, 2007) between Chinese knowledge and Western knowledge when they encounter one another.

5.3.2.1 Liberalism and Communism: Politics and Beyond

Undoubtedly, the first and greatest challenge for anchoring 'citizenship' in Chinese society is political hostility. At its very root, modern citizenship is founded on liberalism, which is widely considered to be in opposition to communism. The confrontation between liberal democratic countries and communist countries in the second half of the twentieth century deepened the division between these two ideologies, leading to lasting hostility and enduring mutual distrust between the two camps.

As a result of ideological opposition, the current Chinese government is obsessively secretive about citizenship. To talk about citizenship in public is believed to be politically problematic for officials [16] and it is almost a taboo in mass media. Citizenship education is accordingly downplayed.[17] The concept of citizenship is rather unfamiliar to Chinese people, especially to

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[16] A local official participated in the interview process as a personal favour, but refused to be recorded. The survey study was only approved until the questionnaire was read and considered appropriate by local officials.

[17] Citizenship education was part of the primary school curriculum during the period of the Republic of China (1912-

people with lower levels of education to date, although it was introduced to China over a century ago.[18]

Beyond politics, as scientific theories, these two strands of thinking have distinctive proposals for a socioeconomic system. Liberalism puts emphasis on the right to property and supports a free market system; whereas, communism advocates common ownership of means of production and a planning economy (Gary, 2000; Kornai, 1992; Marx & Engels, 2008/1848). This divergence results in completely different conceptions of socioeconomic orders and governmental organisations. Liberalists promote market economies and a limited governmental intervention into the market as well as other aspects of social life. On the contrary, communists champion a planning economy hence a highly organised society and a ubiquitous government (Hayek, 2006/1944).

Traditionally, economic form is taken as the first and the most important criterion to distinguish between liberal democratic countries and communist countries. Economists like Smith and Hayek argued that economic structures eventually determine the political structure in modern societies. Market economies entail democracy, and a planning economy paved "the road to serfdom" (Hayek, 2006/1944). Communist China's survival of the collapse of communism worldwide and its recent rather successful marketization, however, has proved that there is not a necessary correlation between the form of economy and that of governmental organisation.

The once-believed defining criterion to differentiate liberal democratic regimes and communist regimes was shown to be fictitious in reality. The opposition between communism and liberalism therefore became nothing but politics in real life, and the disparity in governmental organisation became the only distinctive dimension, which is not any less influential than economic form. And its impact on the social psyche is instant. What form of government a country chooses always has a historical origin, which also greatly influences a country's evolution.

1949). The principle of that curriculum was to cultivate civic virtues in the spirit of liberty and equality according to a report in the *Magazine of Education*. In Fei Xiaotong's *Democracy, Constitution and Human Rights* (2013/1949), it is not difficult to see that citizenship education was highly emphasised at the time. The content in the primary school curriculum was advanced, consisting of 12 parts including the origin and evolution of state, the relationship between the state and the people, and the *Constitution*, among others. After the founding of communist China, the course was replaced by Marx's theory of communism.

[18] A pilot study in urban areas for the comparative purpose showed that urban residents could say little about citizenship, although the term 'citizen' is more accessible to them. Chapter 3 has shown participants' lacking formal knowledge of citizenship.

The establishment and sustainability of China's current governmental organisation and the country's success in switching to a market economy without changing its political structure is deeply indebted to Confucian legacies: hierarchical thinking and collectivism. Born out of feudalism, communist China cannot completely throw off its feudalistic past. The conventional hierarchical organisation of government was immediately adopted by the new regime to organise the new government, which is not simply because of cultural inertia. Certain traditional practices and values serve communist aspirations well. Similar to Confucianism, communism emphasises collectivism and it similarly produces a centralised organisation of society. Changes were made, but centralisation as the primary principle for governmental organisation remained. Confucian tenets of prioritising the political authority and collective interests laid a solid social foundation for living out communism in China. Accordingly, democratic centralism as the principle of Leninist parties' internal organisation was accepted by Chinese society and was also applied to organising the government naturally.

Certainly inertia cannot explain why a centralised government succeeded in China despite the international pressure and the domestic economic reform. Undoubtedly, its success has much to do with the government's great achievements in improving people's quality of life. Nevertheless, the government's unchallenged legitimacy is undeniably indebted to the country's strong cultural values. With the conventional practice of political centralisation preserved and the traditional hierarchical thinking persisting, Chinese people's self-positioning in relation to the state remains largely unchanged and people are generally in awe of the authorities.

A social positioning task conducted in the pilot study to investigate rural residents' mental representations of the power structure reflected Confucian values of social relations well, and also showed a notable centralisation tendency, indicating at the strong historical inertia (Feng, 2000).[19] All participants placed the political authorities with the highest esteem, and parents the second highest in relation to themselves. Children were placed lower and contemporaries were placed around the self. This demonstrated the persisting Confucian influence on contemporary political minds and suggests that a relative equal self-state as well as self-superior-others relationships are yet to be formed in rural China. Such a hierarchical mental structure explains, to a certain extent, the strong governmental impact on social representations of citizenship. Because Chinese rural

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[19] Ten participants participated in the task and were asked to draw their relative positions to political leaders including the president, the mayor and the village head, to their kin including their parents, their siblings and their kids if they have, and to other villagers on a coordinate. Expect for the general ranking, it should be noted that political leaders are ranked in order of their official ranks. The experimental material is presented in Appendix 4.

citizens regard the political power as supreme, they were highly receptive to the governmental influence. Concomitantly, they highly valued normative civic virtues.

In contrast, people in liberal democratic countries, even in countries where community interests are prioritised over individual interests, generally regard themselves more equal to the state and to political leaders.[20] Protecting individual rights is conceived as the ultimate goal of politics for democratic regimes, and there is usually a strong civil society in these countries. The differentiation in citizen-state relationships is a reflection of the perpetual individualism-collectivism debates between liberalism and communism. This discrepancy, together with the varied proposals for socioeconomic and political structures of liberalism and communism obstruct an anchoring of the concept of citizenship in China.

Nevertheless, these two theories are not entirely contradictory. Communism after all was born out of a liberal background. While opposing an individualistic worldview of liberalism, it shares a liberalist aim for an egalitarian social world (Gary, 2010; Marx & Engels, 2008/1848). Also, despite disagreements on the specific means, these two theories share the goal of freedom for the entire human race. Although the definition of communism for crucial concepts like freedom and democracy and the means it employs to achieve emancipation it aims for are severely criticised by liberalists (Hayek, 1988; 2006; Kornai, 1992), it is also problematic to claim that there are no democratic elements in communist China and to view it only in opposition to liberal democratic countries.

Indeed China's governmental organisation follows the basic principle of centralisation, yet the government also employs certain democratic measures that promote liberty. For instance, gender equality was greatly improved in *Mao* era, and an open class system replaced the rigid status hierarchy with the country's recent marketisation (Bian, 2002). In rural China, changes are even more radical. The state policy of village self-governance in particular encourages liberal thinking and cultivates people's citizenship awareness. The egalitarian principle of village self-governance is also the key principle of modern citizenship, which facilitates the anchoring of citizenship in rural China.

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[20] The same task to examine mental representations of the power structure was run on ten international students from democratic countries including the UK, the US, Canada, Germany, India and Zimbabwe. Results found that their representations are generally flat. While some put political figures slightly above themselves, others only put parents slightly above themselves. Although the results are not consistent across countries and the sample size is small, it does provide some are insight into the weight political authorities are given in these countries.

5.3.2.2 Community Autonomy and Self-Governance: Practising Equality in Rural China

Although the village self-governance policy is a democratic measure in communist China, it is not a governmental invention but a variation of the rural tradition of community autonomy, which was practised for thousands of years during feudal times. The first official record of community autonomy can be traced back to the Zhou Dynasty (1046 -256 BC) (Zhao, 1998) and since then it was the unofficial means of rural governance until 1958 when the new government replaced it with the People's Commune system. Having people govern themselves was a practical measure to maintain social orders as a result of sequential empires' deficient administrative resources, however this allowed for the idea of equality to take root in rural Chinese society. And this tradition in effect influenced the vast majority of the Chinese population. As an agricultural civilisation, the rural population has always been the majority of the Chinese population, until 2013.[21] This was especially evident in the ancient times before the country's industrialisation. The idea of equality is in effect ingrained in Chinese society.

However, equality practised in community autonomy was conditioned, applied only to households, but not to individuals. Within each and every household and the larger society, hierarchies still ruled. The rulers' practical consideration for affordable administration and their utilisation of the Confucian ideology complicated social reality, and in turn social minds. People had to accommodate and live by contradictory ideas. One the one hand, equal responsibilities and mutual supports for all households in the community autonomy tradition[22] bear an egalitarian characteristic and are in the spirit of democracy. The democratic habit of political participation and a strong sense of community responsibility cultivated in this tradition laid a social foundation for the anchoring of citizenship in rural China. These historical legacies are reflected in SRs of citizenship as people's active participation in village self-governance and their exercise of and endorsement for community responsibilities. Over half of the participants reported helping behaviours towards other villagers or in village projects, and also most of them considered participating in community activities as important.

On the other hand, authoritarianism governed domestic life and the wider social life. An important function of community autonomy is to establish and maintain social orders in rural society, apart from tax collecting in ancient times. To achieve the social function of this practice,

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[21] The vast majority of the Chinese population was rural in ancient China. Until 1954, the rural population still accounted for around 86.74% of the whole population according to the first national census.

[22] An important practice in community autonomy is to rotate the responsibility to collect taxes for the imperial government among households. Communities raised funds for families that were unable to pay the taxes for the year and the debtor would pay it back over the following years once they were able (Li, 2005; Zhao, 1998).

the central imperial government resorted to Confucianism as a means of ideological construction to elicit people's wholehearted cooperation. Regular lectures were delivered by the gentry class to instil hierarchical norms. Rewards and punishments with regard to officially endorsed virtues were institutionalised to further facilitate their internalisation. Of all virtues, obedience to authority was stressed the most and was the most influential on social minds. It was promoted in social life as subordination to the father and to the husband in domestic life, and submission to the ruler in social life. The strict status of hierarchy produced an authoritative culture, which contradicts the egalitarian principle of modern citizenship.

Its residue is traceable in village self-governance. With the *Organic Law* guiding village politics and stipulating equality among community members and regular village elections, the village self-governance policy adopted purely liberal democratic rules. By law, villagers of age have equal rights to participate in village politics including elections, decision-making, management and supervision. These rights are well acknowledged in rural communities and certain institutional measurements are enacted to guarantee people's rights in reality. Nevertheless, a hierarchical power structure remains in village self-governance despite the legislated principle of universal equality. There is a solid cultural foundation behind this complexity. Ordinary villagers' subordinate self-positioning in relation to the political authority elevates political leaders and sustains the traditional power structure.

Meanwhile, although equality practised in rural China in ancient times was conditioned, the idea of universal equality is in effect not exogenous to Chinese society. Ancient revolts were in effect always inspired by this idea. Indeed, the slogan — "How can our birth prevent us from becoming princes and barons, generals and ministers?" — was always used to mobilise people to overthrow old dynasties. The idea of universal equality is highlighted in the village self-governance policy and is popularised in China in the processes of marketisation and globalisation.

Historical and political foundations enable the anchoring of 'citizenship' and allow a dialogical relationship between Western and Chinese knowledge. Nevertheless, equality in reality has always been conditional in Chinese culture. Even now, with strong legal support, rural residents remain self-positioned lower in relation to village leaders, and the latter are more privileged in rights practice in terms of both extent and depth.

Political hostility, and ideational incompatibility and affinity complicate the social representational process of citizenship. On the one hand, anchoring 'citizenship' in China is a global dialogue between the West and East. One the other hand, the process is subjected to the domestic interplay between market, state and society. The anchoring process of citizenship in rural China is especially complex not only because of the polyphasic pre-existing representational system, but also because it involves a reconfiguration of "the four elementary forms of social relations" in Allen

Fiske's terms (1992). In the process of China's great transformation, equality matching and market pricing were brought to the fore with the country's fast pace of modernisation and marketisation. While communal sharing is made salient in the context of village self-governance, authority ranking, as emphasised by Confucianism, is being further dismantled. Consequently, as soon as the concept of citizenship was introduced into Chinese society, it was immediately questioned, debated and resisted, yet also welcomed and adjusted.

5.4 Anchoring 'citizenship' in the Polyphasic Representational Field

This section examines the anchoring of citizenship in rural society. I shall focus on the normative dimension of SR and investigate interrelations between relevant metasystems in the conviction that social representational processes and hence SRs are fundamentally regulated by the metasystem. To be specific, interrelationships between norms governing citizenship and norms encompassed in discourses of communism, community autonomy, universal equality and democracy are tested.

The previous section presented theoretical connections between citizenship and communism, community autonomy, universal equality and democracy, which are manifested in citizenship phenomena in rural China. SRs of citizenship in rural China are characterised by a strong cultural tendency of obeying the authority. Nevertheless, while they might refrain from active action, Chinese peasants involved in the study were in effect critically engaged with politics and highly critical of village politics. Meanwhile, within the village self-governance context, they abided by the equality principle and believed in the equal rights of each and every villager. Their championing of the equality principle is also a sign of their democratic orientation, which was notable in their endorsement of civic virtues, which also correspond to democratic features. It seems that in the field of SRs of citizenship, traditional and local forces have similar, if not the same impact as modern and international forces.

However, evidence suggests a greater impact of the Western influence on Chinese peasants' political minds. Specific items involving either-or situations were designed in the questionnaire to investigate participants' political orientation. There was a notable preference for current participatory governance to traditional bureaucratic governance in rural society. In spite of harsh critiques, 47.15% of the participants still considered village elections a better form of governance than the old people's commune system led by the government, in contrast with 10.88% who favoured the latter better (see Table 5.1). Although participants may have considered their opinion merely individual (only 33.51% of the participants were certain that their opinions were shared by their fellow villagers and 64.92% said that they were not sure about others' views); the preference for village elections was indeed commonly shared across rural communities. And 67.11% of the participants believed that village elections could produce leaders of proven ability and integrity.

Table 5.1 *Opinions about the village election in comparison with the people's commune system*

	Frequency	Valid percentage
Better	91	47.15
Not different	30	15.54
Worse	21	10.88
Don't know	51	26.42
Missing	7	
Total	193	100

In addition, among the 45 participants who declared the reason behind their preference, 55.56% explicitly stated that village elections are "democratic". Another 17.78% used the word "just" to describe its merit and there were also people that said it represents the general will and helps improve life quality. With those who preferred the old system on the other hand, only one person explained his reason. He thought that elections induce conflict through competition; not a surprising view, given that he was a village leader in the commune system from many years ago.

Except for the items about forms of governance, another item about the right of final decision-making in village self-governance revealed a changing political view of rural Chinese residents too. Participants were asked who they think should make the final decision on village affairs when the Party secretary and the village Chair disagree. The majority of 35.71% state that a validity of arguments instead of group identity as the only determinant, and another 25% believed that decisions should be made collectively by members of the Party branch and the village committee. Only 7.65% of participants thought that the Party secretary should have the final say (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 *Opinions about the final decision-maker in the village*

	Frequency	Valid percentage
Party secretary	15	7.65
Village chair	20	10.20
Whoever has a point	70	35.71
Party branch together with the village committee	49	25.00
Don't know	42	21.45
Missing	4	
Total	196	100

To decipher these figures, it is crucial to understand the institutional establishment in rural China. As has been introduced in the previous chapter, the Party branch and the village committee are two official organs co-existing in villages, with the former answering to the government, and the latter to villagers. Although the village committee is the legislated administrative organ, the Party branch is endowed with a supervisory role by law and is purported to be the superior power. The fact that most participants dismissed the normative principle and prioritised the validity of arguments or the majority principle in decision-making despite the uncertainty of others' opinions (only 24.08% were certain that their opinions were commonly shared and 65.97% said that they were not sure about others' views) demonstrates their strong democratic orientation.

Based on the above evidence, the hypothesis is that the modern and international discourse of democracy have more influence on villagers' political minds than traditional values and the predominant ideology. This hypothesis shall be tested in the following analysis. Analyses of this section draw on the survey data. Except for the hypothesis-testing, they are more importantly aimed at statistically examining the interconnections between SRs of citizenship and discourses of communism, community autonomy, universal equality and democracy and comparing their respective influences.

5.4.1 Measurement

In correspondence with communist ideology, community autonomy, universal equality and democracy, four sets of questions are designed in the questionnaire (see Appendix 4). The communism scale was constructed around the egalitarian principle of the ideology and the governance principle of democratic centralism. Participants were asked to indicate on a four-point scale the extent to which they agree with a list of statements about the functioning of the government. An option of "don't know" was provided. Reliability of the scale is high ($\alpha = 0.78$), and four indices were subjected to analysis: the index of procedure justice, the index of egalitarianism, the index of individual agency; and, the index of ethnicity.

Universal equality was measured by the human rights violation scale. Participants were asked to indicate on a four-point scale the extent to which they thought certain conditions were in violation of human rights. An option of "don't know" was provided. Reliability of the scale is high ($\alpha = 0.87$), and four indices were subjected to analysis: the index of developmental rights, the index of civil rights, the index of parenting rights; and, the index of community welfare.

Community autonomy was measured by the scale of village self-governance, which is the political embodiment of community autonomy. Participants were asked to indicate on a four-point scale the extent to which they agree with a list of statements about village governance. An option of "don't know" was provided. Reliability of the scale is high ($\alpha = 0.83$), and four indices were

subjected to analysis: the index of procedural justice, the index of democratic orientation, the index of social influence; and, the index of equal participation.

Finally, the measurement of democracy focused primarily on the political and legal aspects. Participants were asked to indicate on a four-point scale to what extent they thought the listed characteristics were related to democracy. An option of "don't know" was provided. Reliability of this scale is high too ($\alpha = 0.75$), and the three indices subjected to analysis include the index of public involvement, the index of equality; and, the index of freedom of belief.

As with the scale of the 'good' citizen, there are three indices as have been explained in previous chapters. They are the normative virtues index, the cultural virtues index and the democratic virtues index. Dimensionalities of all the five scales were yielded in hierarchical cluster analyses and validated by pairwise t-tests.

5.4.2 Results

Canonical correlation analyses were conducted to examine the reciprocal links between 'good' citizen representations and discourses of communism, village self-governance, human rights and democracy. Canonical correlation analysis (CCA) is widely used in social sciences to detect the correlation between two sets of variables. According to Hardoon, Szedmak and Shawe-Taylor, "CCA can be seen as the problem of finding basis vectors for two sets of variables such that the correlations between the projections of the variables onto these basis vectors are mutually maximized" (Hardoon, Szedmak and Shawe-Taylor, 2004, p. 2640). As a tool for detecting correlations, CCA does not assume a causal relationship and hence does not differentiate between the dependent variable and the independent variable. In this study, CCA is used as an exploratory tool to firstly investigate whether 'good' citizen representations are related to discourses of communism, village self-governance, human rights and democracy and then how they relate to each other if they do at all. Although the hypothesis is that these four discourses function as anchors for 'good' citizen representations, it is also assumed that 'good' citizen representations once formed, shall act back upon them, bringing changes to these discursive systems. Their interactions are mutual but not unidirectional. Looking for mutual relationship is what CCA aims at.

Analysis shows no significant connection between 'good' citizen representations and the communist discourse, using the Wilks $\lambda=.927$ criterion, $F(12, 452.72)=1.09$, $p>0.10$. The connection between 'good' citizen representations and the discourse of village self-governance is also statistically insignificant, using the Wilks $\lambda=.944$ criterion, $F(12, 423.61)=0.77$, $p>0.10$. No significant connection was found between 'good' citizen representations and the discourse of human rights using the Wilks $\lambda=.935$ criterion, $F(12, 460.65)=0.47$, $p>0.10$.

There is however a significant connection between the discourse of democracy and the 'good' citizen representations, using Wilks λ=.882 criterion, $F(9, 413.89)$=2.42, p<0.05. Three functions are yielded. Results showed that only the first function is statistically significant at the .05 level. It explains 27.9% of shared variance between these two sets of variables.

Further inspections on the significance of raw coefficients for the first canonical variate indicates that no variability was shared among the democracy variables or among the 'good' citizen variables. However, the equality index in the democracy representations was negatively associated with the cultural virtues index in the 'good' citizen representations.

Examing the standardised canonical coefficients for Function 1 across both sets of variables, we can see that for the democracy variables, the first canonical function is most strongly influenced by the equality index (0.87). Holding all other variables constant, a one standard deviation increase in the equality index leads to a 0.87 standard deviation increase in the scores for the set of good citizen variables. For the good citizen variables, the first function is similarly influenced by all the three indices, with the cultural virtues index (-0.7351) contributing slightly more than the normative virtues index (0.6242) and the democratic virtues index (0.6225).

Table 5.3 *Tests of raw coefficient and standardized canonical coefficients for Function 1*

	Coef.	std. Coef.	T	P>|t|
Democracy variables				
public involvement	-.099876	-0.0605	-0.19	0.846
Equality	1.318983	0.8704	2.83	0.005
freedom of belief	.4562366	0.3822	1.39	0.166
The 'good' citizen variables				
cultural virtues	-2.137202	-0.7351	-2.44	0.016
normative virtues	1.46664	0.6242	1.78	0.077
democratic virtues	1.304306	0.6225	1.85	0.066

Note. P values for raw coefficients smaller than 0.05 are underlined.

5.4.3 Summary

Canonical correlation analyses did not find statistical connections of the 'good' citizen representations with discourses of democratic centralism, village self-governance and human rights. The statistical results however cannot repute the interconnections between the 'good' citizen representations and the other discourses found earlier. Leaving aside the magnitude of interconnections, there are still discrepancies between attitude and behaviour, between explicit and implicit attitudes and between the capacities of methods in capturing different aspects and nuances

of phenomena at stake. The associations are not only theoretical but also supported by solid qualitative evidence and evidence produced by social positioning tasks.

Meanwhile, the analysis showed a significant relationship between the 'good' citizen representations and the discourse of democracy. This result supports the expected greater impact of the discourse of democracy on the 'good' citizen representations. Results additionally showed that among all the three democracy variables, the equality variable exerts the greatest influence on the 'good' citizen representations. Although the analysis finds no significant correlation between the 'good' citizen representation and the universal equality discourse, the equality index in democracy representations which is comprised of equal rights for all citizens and equality of all citizens including state leaders in front of the law in practice, has proved an important role of the universal equality principle on SRs of citizenship. The insignificant result may be explained by cultural difference. Specific connotations of the equality principle might be different in China and in the West, and people might agree on certain items but disagree on others due to nuanced cultural traditions.

Interestingly is the negative correlation between the equality index in the democracy variables and the cultural index in the 'good' citizen variables. It reveals the tension between modern liberal values and traditional cultural values and between the modern "organisational mode of association" and the traditional "differentiated mode of association". The results indicate that in social representational processes of citizenship, traditional cultural values are the most challenged, and embracing the universal equality principle would discard traditional cultural values which centre on interpersonal relationships. This implied a negative association of equality matching and communal sharing. Such results reflected an unavoidable clash between the modern and the traditional in the process of modernisation, which has been historically proved worldwide. However, whether the society would completely discard traditional values or reinforce them is uncertain.

Overall, SRs of citizenship in rural China manifest much stronger liberal characteristics than traditional and communist traits, from expressed attitudes to observable behaviours, as demonstrated. Results show that in the social representational process of citizenship, the Western influence outweighs local influence. Given the close relationship between the spread of the liberal conceptualisation of democracy and the country's marketisation, the result also supports a greater influence of market on SRs of citizenship than both state and society.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that state and society remain an important influence on SRs of citizenship. Not only both normative virtues and cultural virtues were strongly endorsed by rural residents, but also participants effectively valued the cultural virtues the most, as the survey data illustrates. Also, it was indeed the state project of village self-governance that enlightened rural residents on the concept of citizenship, and this practice is ultimately a resurrection of the historical

tradition of community autonomy initiated by Chinese peasants. Social re-presentation of citizenship would indeed be impossible without either state or society.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the anchoring of 'citizenship' in rural China. Theoretically, there are reciprocal links between SRs of citizenship and discourses of communism, universal equality, village self-governance and democracy, which are supported by qualitative evidence and evidence produced by social positioning tasks. Canonical correlation analyses however find only the statistically significant correlation between SRs of citizenship and the discourse of democracy, which nonetheless did not repudiate the interconnections between SRs of citizenship and other discourses. After all, qualitative research can usually capture nuance, which is often overlooked in quantitative research.

What is also interesting is the negative association between the cultural virtue variables in the good citizen representations and the equality index in the democracy discourse. It indicates the subtle interplay between society and market, between the modern and the traditional as well as between the West and the local in the field of citizenship. Although evidence supports a more significant impact of market, of the modern and of the West on SRs of citizenship in rural China, it could not refute the influence of state and society, of the traditional and of the local. It only proves the closer relationship between citizenship and democracy. What was valued the most among the three 'good' citizen indices was the cultural virtues, and normative virtues were also viewed as more important than democratic virtues (see Chapter 3).

Even if cultural values lose their influence in the face of increasing democratic awareness as their negative association suggests, it is still reasonable to assume the state's continuous crucial role in social representational processes of citizenship given the powerful nature of the Chinese government. Although market is shown to have exerted the greatest influence on current representations of citizenship, the state has the power to influence the process by moderating the dynamics between market and society even if the rising rights awareness is an irreversible trend.

Chapter 6 Three Layers of Social Representations of Citizenship: Political Minds in Action

This chapter explores the political implications of SRs of citizenship in rural China. Specifically, the political consequences of discrepancies between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship and/or ideal citizenship are discussed. After presenting empirical evidence on gaps between the perceived political reality and the deemed, as well as the desired political vision, the possible political consequences of the gaps in light of self-discrepancy theory, cognitive dissonance theory and social identity theory are also examined.

Analyses shall proceed in two stages. A narrative analysis is firstly conducted with four participants' stories on their political experiences to examine the links between SRs of citizenship and people's active political actions. The second stage analysis draws on the survey data and explores the interrelationships between SRs of citizenship with villagers' daily political participation in village self-governance.

6.1 Discrepancies between Subjective Citizenship and Objective Citizenship: Awakening Citizenship Awareness

The previous chapters have shown that the West-originated concept of citizenship has been assimilated into rural Chinese society despite political resistance. Also importantly, there was a huge discrepancy between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship,[23] and such a gap largely resulted from ideological rejection. Because citizenship is intentionally understated in political discourse, rural Chinese residents generally knew little about citizenship and often exercised only a very limited number of rights. Moreover, ordinary villagers' lawful rights were not always guaranteed due to their lack of knowledge and also importantly the unbalanced power structure in villages, for which ordinary villagers largely blamed local leaders. Consequently, ordinary villagers' political-efficacy was generally low and there was enormous tension between the ordinary-villagers' group and the village-leaders' group.

Lacking formal knowledge did not prevent rural residents from an awareness of citizenship rights and duties. In effect, they were not only conscious of civic duties and more legal rights than they could enunciate and actually practised, but also were aware of the egalitarian principle of citizenship. The villager-leader division was generally perceived unjust and illegitimate in rural China. Ordinary villagers often criticised local leaders for depriving them of legal rights and hoped

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[23] It should be emphasised again that 'subjective' in 'subjective citizenship' only means that it is a personal experience. Subjective citizenship reflects civic experiences. Its influence is in effect as objective as objective citizenship, which is essentially normative citizenship.

central government intervention. Their demand for more political empowerment demonstrated their citizenship awareness, whereas their reliance on the central government to eliminate intergroup inequality signalled their trust in the regime and their faith in their lawful entitlements.

The universal equality principle of citizenship was welcomed by Chinese peasants. In contrast with the past when social inequality was based on social status and taken for granted, and self was considered expendable for collective interests, rural residents demonstrated decreasing tolerance towards intergroup inequality as well as governmental violations of individual interests. 'Justice' was a widely used term to comment on political incidents and evaluate one's own political status in rural communities. It was also based on this criterion that people made major political decisions as to action or inaction. Although justice judgements alone do not determine the initiation of political actions, it is a necessary condition for action.

Modern citizenship fundamentally changed this connotation of justice by injecting a universal equality into the notion. Derived from people's citizenship awareness, this sense of justice gave rise to deep political powerlessness among ordinary villagers. Being unable to exercise or at least fully exercise their legal rights contradicts people's belief in equal rights and their inability to protect their lawful interests falls short of their citizenship vision.

6.2 Three-Layered Citizenship in Rural China: Insights of Self-Discrepancy Theory

The discrepancy between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship was apparent in rural China. Beyond objective citizenship however, evidence suggests another level of citizenship — ideal citizenship. Indeed, consciousness of the gap between reality and normality, between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship, can incentivise demands for more empowerment. Chinese peasants' desire for more political power however was unlikely to be derived only from their awareness of objective citizenship, especially considering the fact that they knew little about citizenship. Their wish was not motivated by some lofty political agendas, but by a simple need of safeguarding self-interests.

Laws in themselves are far from protecting only individual and specific interests. Legislation always takes into consideration the balance between the individual and the collective and between state and society. General principles are stipulated, but seldom detail specificities. In this sense, ideal citizenship deviates from objective citizenship because it is essentially personal and it can never be covered by legislations alone. Nonetheless, ideal citizenship may collide with objective citizenship when normative citizenship is more a political vision than a delivered promise and information about citizenship is not entirely transparent. Also, a certain degree of consensus about the ideal is possible.

Evidence shows that these two states of citizenship overlap to a certain degree in rural China. What rural residents asked for is usually legally promised, and they undoubtedly shared some opinions about ideal citizenship despite additional and specific personal interests. There was an earnest appeal for more political empowerment across rural communities. SRs of citizenship in rural China in effect are not only three-dimensional (ideas, practice and values) but also three-layered: an actual layer, an ought layer and an ideal layer. Among these three layers, the actual layer corresponds to subjective citizenship, and the ought layer corresponds to objective citizenship.

6.2.1 Self-Discrepancy and Dissonance

This differentiation is inspired by Higgins' self-discrepancy theory (1987). Higgins discriminates between three states of self: actual, ideal and ought. Actual self is one's own perception of self; ought self is a belief about one's obligations and responsibilities understood by oneself and expected by one's significant others. Whereas the ideal self reflects one's own as well as the significant other's wishes or aspirations. He further argues that discrepancies between these three states of self can produce discomfort of various kinds. Actual-ideal discrepancies can produce dejection-related emotions including dissatisfaction, disappointment and sadness; and actual-ought discrepancies can induce agitation-related emotions including restlessness, tension and fear. Discomfort resulting from inconsistencies between self-concepts can lead to actions for change once the threshold is reached, and changes can be in attitude, in behaviour or in beliefs (Festinger, 1957; Higgins, 1987).

Higgins' self-discrepancy model provides insights for studying SRs of citizenship. It illuminates the existence of another layer: ideal citizenship. And it is pertinent for this study, not only because discrepancies between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship have already observed by some researchers, but also because participants' emotional reactions towards the rights questions disclosed discrepancies between subjective citizenship and ideal citizenship. Citizenship as a membership that politically defines a person, immediately produces representations of self as a political agent. In correspondence with three states of citizenship are three states of citizen images at the social level, and also three states of political self at the intra-individual level. Subjective/actual citizenship produces an actual citizen image and an actual political self; objective/ought citizenship produces an ought citizen image and an ought political self; whereas ideal citizenship produces an ideal citizen image and an ideal political self.

'Self' in the current research is used in a broader sense than Higgins' definition. Higgins' theory builds on two standpoints on self: self; and, a significant other. Originally, actual self was merely a self-perception, whereas ought self and ideal self took also into account a significant other's perspective. All self-concepts, however, are ultimately dialogical products between self and society.

Even actual self is a looking-glass self, encompassing numerous perspectives (Cooley, 1902). Higgins brackets the impact of the larger society by identifying self and a significant other as the only sources of self-concepts, which confines the application of his theory.

The modern approach to self-discrepancy phenomena needs to incorporate a broader social perspective. In modern societies, intimate relationships have largely retrogressed to private life and society has replaced the family to become the major education provider. The larger society in effect has as prominent influence on self-concepts as significant others. Representations of ought self and ideal self in particular are likely to become more subject to the influence of the larger society than that of the significant other given the rapid development of mass communication and the exponential growth of netizens.

Apart from the social perspective, self-concepts here are also modified to accommodate the unique feature of citizenship in rural China. Firstly, unlike Higgins' original conceptualisation of ought self, which emphasises obligations and responsibilities only, all states of self in the current research have the dimensions of rights and obligations, as both dimensions are essential to citizenship and hence citizen images. Secondly, self-concepts can be ambiguous to oneself, unlike Higgins' postulation that they are clearly known and often unique to oneself. In the case of citizenship in rural China, it is unlikely that people had clear ideas about ought and ideal citizenship given that they generally lacked formal knowledge of citizenship. A certain consensus about what citizens are or should be entitled to however was shared among rural residents. Their specific political requests were often similar and they generally wished for more political empowerment.

This is because citizenship is above all a codified membership. It is a political institution lived by people and it becomes known to people through various channels, if not at school. Objective citizenship orients SRs of citizenship. Laws and regulations regarding citizenship provide a normality basis. Subjective citizenship reflects the actual implementation of objective citizenship and ideal citizenship is developed on the grounds of normative citizenship. Essentially, citizen images and concomitantly political self-concepts are premised on objective citizenship. Because normality with regard to citizenship is universal and strong, given constant governmental implementation, there should be some widely shared opinions about citizen images as well as political self-concepts. Certainly, SRs can vary drastically if objective citizenship is opaque. In whatever case however, objective citizenship orients people in the political field and citizenship awareness is the basis for developing political self-concepts.

6.2.2 Complementing Self-Discrepancy Theory with a Social Identity Perspective in Citizenship Studies

In addition to an adjustment to the concept, applying the self-discrepancy model to studying citizenship additionally requires a social identity perspective. What is crucial to the formation of both self-concepts and social identity is social comparison. Although actual self-concept is more of self-perception, it is reached by adjusting one's own perspective with that of other people's. Whereas ought self and ideal self are products of social comparison no matter whether they are reached alone or imposed by significant others whose opinions, expectations and wishes are also socially constructed. They are produced out of comparisons with others as well as the actual self.

Essential to self-concept formation but suspended in self-discrepancy theory, social comparison is placed at the centre of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It results in identity processes, producing intergroup differentiation and in-group identification or identity destruction (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, et al. 1987). Although social comparison does not necessarily entail social identity processes, the formation of representations of the three states of political self, however, involves much identity work. It is not only because citizenship is ultimately a group identity that centres on inclusion and exclusion, but also because this membership directly concerns every social member's self-interests.

Political self-concept formation in particular involves more group processes than intra-individual activities. In the field of citizenship, inequality is based on group identity but not individual traits. This is because legislation stipulates principles but not specificities, and principles are meant to be applicable to social groups above all. Although inequality is often perceived through interpersonal comparison, inequality is always attributed to social status rather than personal characteristics in the political arena. People routinely refer to social groups to evaluate ingroup political statuses, based on which they develop three states of political self and act upon their group identity.

The role of intergroup comparison in political self-concept formation is clear in rural China. When asked of political life, ordinary villagers automatically included village leaders, implicitly or explicitly. They were generally highly dissatisfied with their current political status and their negative evaluation was closely associated with reference to the leaders' group. However, they applauded the improvement of their life quality when specifically asked to make comparisons with the past. The interrelationship between reference and attitude suggests that in evaluating one's own political status, Chinese peasants intuitively resorted to intergroup comparison. Their rejection and agitation signalled the occurrence of dissonance and hence the existence of discrepancies between three states of political self.

6.2.3 Discrepancies between States of Political Self and Social Implications of Dissonance

Discrepancies between states of political self are common. Despite the fact that citizenship is legally bound by the egalitarian principle and all citizens are supposed to have identical rights and duties (Janoski & Gran, 2002), absolute equality is impossible to implement because of limited resources and an unequal distribution of social capital. Some people are always disadvantaged in comparison with others in citizenship practice in reality. Also, globalisation can intensify divergence between self-concepts by making visible cross-country differences in citizenship regulations and practice. International comparisons thereby became an important source for political self-images. People not only refer to the international community to evaluate their own political status, but also seek inspiration and support from other societies to construct their political vision.

Multilevel social comparison can produce huge divergence between representations of political self, which in turn give rise to intense dissonance. Resulting discomfort can motivate action for change. In rural China, discrepancies clearly exist both between the actual and the ought levels and between the actual and the ideal levels. And people were apparently aware of normality and/or had political vision despite lacking in formal knowledge of citizenship. Ordinary villagers generally rejected the idea of rights and were extremely dissatisfied with their political status. They were also angry at the leader-villager differentiation in rights practice.

Theoretically, people will either change attitude or change behaviour to reduce dissonance. There was little evidence suggesting a change in attitudes. In contrast, there was an increasingly loud and urgent appeal for more empowerment in rural China, and villagers' behavioural changes were notable, although citizenship awareness in rural China was yet to be systematically transformed into political action. Aside from increasingly active political participation, lawsuits increased rapidly and people were becoming more and more willing and ready to engage.

Behavioural changes with regard to citizenship are essentially signs of identity reconstruction, reflecting people's efforts to realise the ought or/and ideal self. Identity reconstruction meanwhile can result from, and be intensified by, intergroup comparison. In describing their own political status, ordinary villagers intuitively referred to the leaders' group and demarcated themselves from the latter. Their eruption of negative emotions showed that their understanding and vision of citizenship were severely challenged by perceived intergroup differences in citizenship practice. While their citizenship awareness made them conscious of discrepancies between actual and ought citizenship, the perceived intergroup differentiation in citizenship practice exacerbated dissonance resulting from discrepancies.

Theoretically, exacerbated dissonance should be easily observed and likely to yield action for change. It was clearly manifested in ordinary villagers' negative emotions, which culminated in referring to the leaders' group. It was also reflected in people's strong desire for more

empowerment and their heightened grievance towards and concentrated anger at village leaders. Almost all collective actions in rural communities were targeted at the leaders' group. No action was directed at the central government, although individual accusations might directly involve the state. China's specific political system might be suspected to be the reason for this. However, the tremendous life quality improvement in rural China and rural residents' praise of the central government's achievement are genuine. Asking for more political power perhaps was as much for the sake of eliminating intergroup inequality to realise what they conceived as 'justice' as forcing political accountability.

In sum, discrepancies between representations of the political self have incentivised political-mindedness in rural China. The need to reduce dissonance at the individual level and identity work involved at the group level has fuelled citizenship activities in rural China. Subsequently, Chinese peasants have not only demonstrated more and more resolution and confidence in defending self-interests, but are also enthusiastic about eliminating visible intergroup inequality. Meanwhile, it should be noted that political participation is largely passive in rural China. Chinese peasants were seldom proactive in rights claims and mostly only acted upon serious self-interest violations. Nevertheless, by producing three states of political self at the intra-individual level, SRs of citizenship indeed sharpened political minds.

6.3 Discrepancies and Political Struggles: A Qualitative Enquiry

Analysis of this section is based on four participants' political experiences. Narrative analysis is applied in combination with techniques used in discourse analysis. The following analysis combines two approaches within narrative traditions: thematic and structural analysis (Riessman, 2008).[24] It begins with an examination of individual experiences and closes with an exploration of the shared theme and structure of individual stories (Freeman 2006; Georgakopoulou 2006; Jovchelovitch, 2012; Laszlo, 1997). Specifically, three aspects of the stories are examined: a.) respective themes of the stories; b.) subnarratives nested within the broad narratives; and, c.) the common theme and structure of the four stories.

Two of the stories analysed were extracted from the semi-structural interviews. In effect, most participants deployed narratives responding to the interview questions. These two excerpts were selected because they represent two types of political actions most often seen in rural China: petition through official channels for individual matters and collective protests. L filed in the local Ministry of Civil Affairs for pension violation and W participated in a collective action against village leaders. These participants represent numerous ordinary villagers in rural China. The other

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[24] Riessman suggests four approaches. Expect for thematic analysis and structural analysis, there are still dialogic or performance analysis and visual analysis.

two participants were interviewed for their special political experiences. Participant Z was interviewed about his deposition by villagers, and Participant ZA was interviewed about village election politics. Their political experiences though personal form part of routine politics in rural China and they spoke for the political mind of rural political elites.

6.3.1. Ordinary Villagers' Political Fights

Apart from village elections, ordinary villagers were seldom actively involved in village affairs. Although some people trusted village leaders' leadership capacity, more people believed it futile to intervene. "Let it be" (quoted from Participant B) captures the pervasive powerlessness. Low political responsiveness and the visible differentiation from the leaders' group in political life contradicted the democratic belief ordinary villagers held. The huge discrepancies between representations of subjective and objective citizenship as well as subjective and ideal citizenship frustrated and agitated them. Indeed, cultural and structural constraints kept them from proactive participation. Their citizenship awareness however drove them to act upon serious violations of individual interests. With a firm faith in justice, they resorted to all possible means known to them to safeguard their self-interests.

6.3.1.1 Individual Petitioning

Participant L is a newly windowed middle-aged woman. She had little education and had been living on her husband's wages. She went to various places to plead for a return of the full amount of premiums her late husband paid for endowment insurance for the year. She believed it unreasonable that only one third was returned. Unsurprisingly, she did not refer to any legislation to make her claim given that she had little formal education. Instead, she phrased her request on a normative basis and from a moral perspective. She was persistent in appealing to the government in the conviction that her request was just.

Extract 1

L: My old man died. We bought insurance. He had served in the army for nine years. We went there and they gave only one third back. That is why I can't accept it. I can't accept it.

I: Did you talk to people?

L: Yes, yeah. My son went there.

I: Where did he go?

L: Went to the authorities. Hmmm, went to…to the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Went to the authorities.

I: What made you think of going to the authorities?

L: This…this…I haven't got that. The pay date is November. My old man has died. You should give me back my money. How is it reasonable that you don't give it back to me? You government is unjustifiable. Now that I didn't go to ask for your money, how is it justifiable that you don't give back my mine? Isn't it? Now I am windowed. I am windowed. I don't have money. It's like that. I used to live on my old man. Isn't it? I [she refers to her husband] was ill. I was ill in the army. I came back with illness. I came back after surgery and had been ill since.

……

I: From where did you get to know that you should go to the Ministry of Civil Affairs?

L: (We) asked the Social Security Bureau. My son went to ask them. How can you possibly justify it? So much money of mine. You government lends (our) money with interests.

……

I feel very dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. I. You recruited him into the army when you need people, right? You asked me to leave (the army). My illness, right? Nine years in the army and retired without (giving him) a job. Right? Without (giving) a job!

……

How can you take my money? You government has much money…

Despite incoherent narrating, the main theme of the story is clear: L believed that the government was unjustifiable to return only one third of endowment insurance they paid during the year and she wanted the full amount back. To support her claim she employed four subnarratives: a.) they paid the endowment insurance for eleven months and it was only a month short before maturity; b.) she was widowed and had no means of subsistence; c.) the government gained the profit out of their money by lending with interests; and, d.) her husband retired from the army with an illness and was not compensated. These four subnarratives reflect her awareness of the right to material assistance from the state and the right of the disabled members of the armed forces for government suppors. Both are social rights, which were not recalled when she answered to the rights question.

 Her narration reflects her strong sense of fairness. She believed that the state-citizen relationship should follow the mutuality/equality principle. Her request was firstly phrased from the angle of state compensation. When her husband fell ill serving the country, the state did not provide a corresponding compensation settlement. She was only asking for the long due justice. Secondly, she perceived herself equal to the state as an economic partnership. She was an investor and the state was a profit-making enterprise reinvesting public money. To justify herself, she was not afraid to criticise the state.

Meanwhile, she also took soft measures to try to win moral support. She tried to arouse sympathy by emphasising how close they were to the maturity of the insurance and by creating an image of a

weak woman in the face of a powerful state. She was an unemployed widow in need of help and on the contrary, the overwhelming state was rich. Although to help the disadvantaged is its moral obligation, she did not ask for material assistance, but only her own money back. She constructed herself as a fighter for justice. The justifications she made for her claim disclosed the severe dissonance she suffered. As she could not come to terms with the governmental solution, she launched a persistent fight for her lawful interests.

Despite low educational attainment, she was apparently conscious of the fact that she could protect her lawful rights through petitioning. Although she was unclear about official petitioning channels, she was determined to actively seek relevant information. She may have lacked formal knowledge of citizenship, but she had strong citizenship awareness and was no less strategic in achieving her goals than educated people. She may not have been able to quote laws, but she was skilful at using normative and moral accounts to generate sympathy, which can be as effective as laws in protecting self-interests.

Narrative characters (Propp, 1968/1928) are not obvious in her story, but it is present. Her fragmented narration diluted the mission characteristic of the story and her inferior self-positioning belittled her heroic image. The 'villain', however, is easily identifiable: the government. She criticised its unjustifiable deeds and clearly expressed her dissatisfaction. She was strategic in petitioning and minimised her criticism but maximised her pleading. Instead of being tough and arguing strongly for her claim, she presented herself as the weak and disadvantaged, which is in effect often more effective in the Chinese context.

Her active political action revealed her strong citizenship awareness and her faith in justice. She was not afraid to stand up to the government if her interests were violated. Her petitioning strategies meanwhile showed that education is not a condition of democracy. Less educated people have enough reason for political participation; they are sensible in political calculations and actions. Participant L was one of the numerous rural Chinese residents. Even with poor knowledge and seemingly powerless in the face of political authorities, they did not make concessions to violations of their individual interests and they were apt at using various means to negotiate with power.

6.3.1.2 Collective Protesting

Participant L's petitioning is a prototypical individual political reaction towards rights violation in rural China. Participant W's experience on the other hand represents another type of political action: collective. W was over 50, but he had "been to schools for a few years". Like most people in his village, he participated in collective actions against the village leaders. The following is his reflection on the events.

Extract 2

W: There was a protest in our village. A huge one. The TV journalists were called in.

I: For what reason?

W: For what reason? Money, properties, so many farmlands. All were taken by the leaders, by the criminal underworld. All taken by them. Peasants then campaigned (against them). (Peasants) went to the municipal office of letters and visits. What they did was, for instance, interviewing only five to six people out of thousands villagers who went there. These five or six are actually their accomplices. It's like that. Too vicious!

I: So it's basically useless to go there?

W: We went there and four or five were then arrested.

……

I: Did you protest?

W: I did. Told you (we) went to the municipal hall.

I: I mean whether you have ever gone to the village chair's office by yourself? Have you?

W: The village chair's office. We went to protest. Protest. But you can do nothing with it. What could you do? The power is in his hands, isn't it? Even if you protest, hmmm, (threaten to) vote him out of office, the second day, the second day he is still at the desk.

Do you think the Party allows such disturbance? Last time four were arrested during protests. Arrested! The police station even bought him in!

I: Whom?

W: Those two. So vicious. (We) petitioned for dozens of times.

I: You didn't protest again after the arrests?

W: It's in vain to protest. Useless. They have power and money. If you go to the village leaders' office, they got the criminal underworld to tell you to shut up, you then shut up.

The storyline of W's narrative is much clearer than L's, although his narration was also not fully coherent. He told a story of a series of collective actions against village leaders for their encroachment on collective assets, none of which however were successful. His opinion that ordinary villagers were powerless to defend their lawful interests was clearly conveyed in his story. His narration provides an insider's perspective of the origin of ordinary villagers' low political efficacy. Five subnarratives in the story support his argument and demonstrate the gradual development of his powerlessness. First, only village leaders' accomplices were interviewed when thousands of people went to the demonstration and four people were arrested. Second, threats to depose leaders through voting could not force political accountability. Third, dozens of petitions

had been attempted but all failed. Fourth, village leaders had the Party's backing. Fifth, village leaders deployed the underworld forces to silence ordinary villagers.

W's story discloses his consciousness of the right to protest and the right to vote. His political actions demonstrate his faith in objective citizenship. He believed that they could make change by active actions, which contradicted his earlier claim that ordinary villagers' rights were simply formal and in control of the cadre. Reading through his story however, we can see that his behaviour and accounts were not actually contradictory. His attitude change was gradual with the repetitive failure of their political actions to defend their interests.

There was an overflow of frustration and powerlessness in his story. He was convinced that they "could do nothing" to the "vicious" leaders. His grudge against the village leaders and the local government, especially the former, is notable. Indeed both were presented as villains, but the worse were the village leaders, which was emphasised more in his narration. The narrative began with accusing village leaders of encroaching upon collective properties and closed with denouncing their criminal activities as using gangsters to silence people. His anger was also clear, which was showed both in his harsh critiques and his reddened face as well as raised voice and fast speaking when describing the leaders' evil deeds. His verbal and facial expressions unambiguously signalled the intense dissonance he experienced internally. His lived experience severely challenged his faith and vision of citizenship.

A clear cue of how ordinary villagers' powerlessness is acquired and gradually developed was disclosed in the story. Initially, they were optimistic about their fight, and filed complaints through official channels with conviction. After dozens of unanswered complaints and a futile warning to vote the village Chair out of office, they went for radical protesting and organised a demonstration in front of the City Hall. To maximise the effect, they even invited local media to try and attract public attention and support. Much to their disappointment, confusion and anger, four people were arrested. Their hope to have their voice heard was shattered by the fact that the local government brought the compliance of the village leaders only in for interviews and dissuaded the journalists from getting involved.

The series of failures gradually brought him to the conclusion that their rights could not protect their interests. The collusion of village leaders with the local government and the criminal underworld blocked their way to rights practice and claims. And the key to their failure is clearly pointed out by W as power: "The power is in his hands", he stated. Such an unbalanced power structure produces low political responsiveness, which prevents active political participation and results in low political efficacy. W's story collaborated what was found in Chapter 4: the huge differences between ordinary villagers and village leaders in rights practice ultimately originated from the unbalanced power structure. It was also the origin of ordinary villagers' strong sense of

powerlessness because they were often unable to fully exercise their lawful rights to protect their self-interests.

Moreover, his story further reveals the development of ordinary villagers' powerlessness and illuminates the reason for ordinary villagers' strong grievance towards the leaders' group. The pervasive powerlessness in rural China is acquired through intergroup interactions in daily life rather than general political participation. Ordinary villagers had no doubt about the institutional design, but were disappointed at the actual implementation, for which they blamed mostly the executor — village leaders and sometimes local officials. They persisted in their political fight and actively sought ways to attract the central government's attention, even after a number of failed political actions, demonstrating their faith in objective citizenship. On the one hand, low political responsiveness produced their strong sense of powerlessness, which eventually developed into grievance towards the village-leaders group. On the other hand, huge discrepancies between the reality and the normative as well as the ideal gave rise to their political actions.

W's story again proves that high education is by no means a premise for democratic practice. Despite a low level of education, villagers were tactical in petitioning and made use of both official and unofficial channels to attain their goal. In spite of the alleged vicious political environment and low political self-efficacy, they were resolute in protecting self-interests and were not afraid to confront the village leaders, and even the local government, to defend themselves. What is more important is their insistence in pursuing justice, which promises a better political future of ordinary villagers. Although W presented a bleak view of their political struggle, he still held a glimmer of hope, which was indicated by his brief deviation from the narration at the end, signalled by "unless…". After he denied the usefulness of protesting, his mind was taken away by contemplating an alternative to protesting shortly before he went back to his story.

W's political experience widely applies to rural Chinese society. It was not only a collective memory but is also resonated in individual actions. A widely shared opinion in rural communities was that to talk to the village leaders was "useless". Nevertheless, from L and W's experiences, we can see Chinese peasants' political mindedness. They put up fights against violations of their self-interests and refused to reconcile with the reality despite the alleged adverse political environment and their low political self-efficacy. The rising citizenship awareness in rural China has given rise to vibrant citizenship movements.

Indeed more people put up with leaders' misconducts and live with dissonance. Some people may not be aware of the petitioning channel, some may fear the authorities, and some may simply not know their entitlements. Nonetheless, their vocal dissatisfaction with their political status demonstrates their desire for more political power and the fact that people overtly criticise politics reflects their vision of a better political environment. The rapid growth of active political actions in

rural China reflects people's lowering tolerance with acts of violation. All these promise a better political future in rural Chinese society.

6.3.2 Rural Elites' Political Games

In contrast with ordinary villagers, rural political elites often had high political efficacy. It undoubtedly has much to do with their success in their personal life. Village leaders are always "capable" people in villagers' eyes and a consensus in rural communities is that only those who succeed in personal life are able to manage village affairs and make the community prosperous. Hence, politics largely became a game of elites in rural society. Villagers choose elites because they hope for community prosperity, and elites pursue village leadership because it boosts self-esteem and is associated with various interests.

While the village self-governance policy provides rural elites with the opportunity to enter the political arena, the institutional design directs their attention to ordinary villagers rather than the above government, even if it was only for the purpose of being elected. Also, in the context of village self-governance, although the leaders' group still had the absolute advantage over ordinary villagers, it became more and more difficult for them to ignore the majority villagers. Meanwhile, although ordinary villagers generally felt powerlessness, they actually have much more power now than in the past, and they are able to exert substantive influence on village politics. Even under a poor situation where politics was believed to be hopeless, they actively sought ways to make use of all possible opportunities to their advantages.

6.3.2.1 A Village Chair's Deposition

Z is the first village chair voted out of office by his fellow villagers in China. Being a successful businessman, he was elected as the village Chair but was deposed later under the suspicion of stealing collective funds. His story manifests the power of the ordinary-villagers' group and elites' reservations about ordinary villagers' political capacity.

Extract 3

Z: To be fair, those are really rogues. He doesn't work, lying around his life. It was that kind of people who petition the government.

…

I: Can he do it by himself? Did he mobilise others?

Z: Yes. It's easy to mobilise people lie around the house.

I: How did he do it?

Z: Cooked up a story. If the leaders were arrested… At that time people followed one another to spread the untruth. He must have said that the leaders pocketed lots of collective money. Each took millions. So if they were arrested, everybody, everybody could get at least a thousand. That's it.

……

Z: It was quite a successful mobilisation. Honestly he's quite capable.

I: How did he mobilise it?

Z: Tell you the truth why (he could mobilise people). Our village, the clan in our village, all families in the same clan united. (They) counted for 70% of the whole village population.

I: So, many of them are your relatives?

Z: It is so. If united, everybody would get one or two thousand *yuan*. Who doesn't want money?

I: So they turned against you?

Z: Yes. They turned against me.

……

I: How did they depose you? Through collective actions?

Z: (They) Petitioned the government. Petitions. Go together to the central government.

I: Against village leaders?

ZA: Yes, they went to Beijing.

I: How many people went to Beijing?

ZA: About six.

I: Then people from Beijing came to investigate the case?

ZA: Journalists from Beijing. Journalists of tabloids. They are very vicious people. I didn't know at the beginning. They came to us (village leaders) but we ignored them. I feel we didn't do anything wrong, there's no reason that they come to us.

I: Did those who went to Beijing gave money to the journalists?

ZA: Yes. They gave quite a lot of money. Tens of thousands *yuan*. They spent all the money, over 200,000 *yuan,* on going to Bejing.

I: Where did they get the money?

ZA: Villagers raised the fund.

……

Ye (the person who started the rumour) was arrested. The municipal committee and the Party committee settled on the arrest.

….

The investigation found nothing. The case has closed. Why do you still make trouble? It's like that. He (the municipal government) came down to arrest several people.

Nothing (illegal) happened here. Nothing was found. The case has closed, why do you still make trouble intentionally? It's like that. He (the municipal authorities) came down to arrest several people.

Several were arrested. Arrested and several were detained.

……

I: Was anybody in the village arrested?

Z: (They) took several and detained them for about ten days.

I: On what charges? Did they arrest only those who made trouble?

Z: Yes. They smashed their cars.

……

I: Did it happen on the day of your deposition?

Z: No. It was before that. The township government sent officials here to talk to them and asked them not to misunderstand something. They surrounded the cars and started beating them on their arrival.

I: So the villagers beat the officials from the township government?

Z: Yes.

I: They were then arrested by the township government?

Z: Yes.

I: Then how were you deposed afterwards?

Z: Deposition. Over sixty per cent, hmmm, seventy per cent of the votes can remove leaders from office.

……

Z: My brothers and relatives welcomed my deposition. My brothers and relatives took part in the deposition. Well, not of me but my nephew. But isn't it the same as to depose me?

……

It was reported in newspapers. Then the police started to investigate the case. To investigate whether there was corruption. The investigation lasted for five or six years. He (the person who initiated the deposition) really doesn't believe. The police found nothing. Then the Commission for Discipline Inspection started to look into it. He (the commission) said there was nothing. Nothing. They checked the books. There was nothing. Later, the People's Procuratorate. Then the Anti-corruption Bureau. Four or five governmental organs.

……

Nothing was found. How can there be anything?

I: Was there a village chair between those five and six years.

Z: Yes. That rebel. For half a year.

……

At that time no candidates ran for the election. Everybody said that whoever appointed by the government was fine. For us, who would like to be that (village leaders)?

I: Has there been any progress in the village since then?

Z: No progress! It's been five years now and it has been regressing.

The theme of this story is clear: the ordinary villagers were incited by vicious lies into collective action to depose the village leaders and the repercussions were serious. The village has been regressing since then and no good people want to run for village office. What he tried to convey in his story is not the exact processes of his deposition, but the harm of ordinary villagers' irrationality. His point is illustrated step by step in his subnarratives. First, he described those who initiated the collective action as "rogues". By a seemingly unbiased presentation of their life style and speculation of how they mobilised villagers with a lie, he successfully constructed their despicable images in a negative light. Second, the local government supported him and arrested several people for starting the turmoil.

Third, villagers smashed the governmental car and beat the local officials who came to mediate. Fourth, although village leaders were voted out of office eventually as the villagers wished, none of the accusations were proven and the village has been regressing since then. Clearly in the story, the vicious "rebel" is the villain. Although Z did not present villagers as villainous, he constructed them as pitiful, irrational, and easily manipulated. This was a common view of rural elites who believed that having ordinary villagers in decision-making processes was more destructive than constructive, as described in Chapter 3.

Certainly stories, especially political stories like this, are inevitably subjective. Leaving aside the issue of authenticity, the soaring citizenship awareness in Z's village is striking. People were extremely sensitive to their economic rights and appreciated certain political rights to defend their self-interests. Not only did they shrewdly use their votes, but they also knew the petitioning channels well. As a group, they had low education, but they showed sophisticated political skills. They were persistent in petitioning and went as far as the central government. When regular petitioning did not work the way they wished, they resorted to mass media. Instead of local media, they sought help from journalists in Beijing to maximise the public influence, which successfully forced full attention from the local government. To protect self-interests, they were not even afraid to question and even fight against the local government.

Their activities demonstrated their political competences, which again refutes the popular political discourse that peasants are not intellectual enough for democratic practice. Even if they are misled by false information more easily, they were insistent in defending self-interests. And as a

group, they are powerful enough to depose village leaders they distrusted and were solidary enough to stand up to the government. Even if the result was a failure of their expectations, they obviously had political beliefs and vision and were capable of pursuing political causes.

They had the capacity to learn through participation although were presented as irrational. According to Z, villagers became extremely politically aware and the voter turnout in village elections since then was almost 100%. In spite of low individual political efficacy, as a group, ordinary villagers possess considerable political power if they are united. Their current political practice drew a stark contrast with ordinary villagers' political behaviour to the past. Before the village self-governance policy, neither litigation nor political participation were encouraged or approved in rural communities. Accordingly, village leaders' political practice changed tremendously. The institutional design put their power under constraints and made them become more people-oriented.

Political behavioural changes in rural China are fundamentally driven by people's awakening citizenship awareness. What determine people's political practice is ultimately their understanding and vision of citizenship. Based on their understanding of objective citizenship through years of self-governance as well as other political practice, village leaders started to turn their attention to ordinary villagers. Ordinary villagers on the other hand were inspired to stand up for their self-interests. Indeed, their limited citizenship knowledge constrained their actions, their political vision however harnessed their political minds. In fighting for their rights and interests, they resorted to unofficial means to supplement the main official channels, especially if official means failed to produce desired effects, which is shown in all the three stories quoted above.

Z's story also importantly illustrated the tremendous changes in social relations in rural China. It challenges the conventional opinion that the link of kinship is unbreakable in rural society. Utilitarian calculations apparently replaced consanguinity to become the most important principle that governs social relations in Z's village. It has fundamentally changed how people relate to one another, both in the domestic and the public spheres, as we can see from the above extracts. Not only was consanguinity no longer the unconditional source of social support, but also rural residents' self-positioning in relation to the political authorities became more equal. Political decisions were based on people's utilitarian calculations, rather than their consideration for personal relations and the power structure.

This is a revolutionary break from the traditional Confucian conception of social relations. It shows that the equality principle of modern citizenship has been well received by Chinese peasants and they treated every community member equally in political life. Villagers' challenges to the power of local authority also demonstrates change in the state-society relationship. Although submission to authorities is still a social normality, rural residents have gained certain civic dignity

through political participation and they are no longer afraid to confront authorities when official decisions contradict their conceptualisation of justice. Such a transformation in social mentality has fundamentally changed political behaviour in rural China, which in turn has led to changes in the political dynamics in rural society.

6.3.2.2 Elites' Gaming Elections

Although rural elites' have often looked down upon ordinary villagers' political capacities, they were forced to admit their political power as a group. It is particularly evident in village elections in the rural community. This chapter now turns to Participant ZA's story. Owning a company in the city, ZA was confident of his competence despite having no positions in the village committee. In effect, he proudly put himself above the village setting by bragging about how village elections were managed by him. Unlike most elites who live in the city, he was very involved in village elections. The following extract fully reveals his views on village politics.

Extract 4

ZA: It was quite a busy period of time. Let alone the candidates, the whole campaign team was busy. Drank all the time with people from different neighbourhood. (We) Tried to build connections (*Guanxi*). A classmate of my nephew's said, "uncle, uncle, you are in charge of this area. Just let me know how much money you need. I have made arrangements in restaurants. You take care of people in this neighbourhood". (we) Gave out presents by neighbourhood.

I: He himself didn't join you?

ZA: He needed to take care of the above government.

I: You mean the county government? Why was the county government involved? Isn't it supposed to stay away from (village) elections?

ZA: Although they (officials) are supposed not to interfere, they have actual influence. For instance, if I were seen to be hanging round with the mayor or the (incumbent) village chair, some people would swing to this side. After all some people are uncommitted, some are leftists and some are rightists. The uncommitted voters are like weeds on the top of a wall, swaying with the wind.

I: Do you gather together to discuss about the candidates during election seasons?

ZA: We have to, have to make plans to response.

I: Respond to what?

ZA: I shouldn't have said it. Just, for instance make a plan. Analyse your current situation. How much room you still have to work on. Make things clear and then make the response plan. The rest is up to you.

I: So you mean candidates for village chair?

ZA: Candidates for village chair. The same is with people run for posts in People's Congress.

I: I mean what about ordinary villagers?

ZA: Ordinary villagers are very simple. We know exactly the number of votes when running for village chair. (We know) How many votes we can secure and how many more we need. We try to buy them. At the final stage, we have people to buy votes for us.

……

I: Are there cases people take the money but vote for others?

ZA: They don't dare.

I: Isn't voting unanimous?

ZA: People who play the game follow the rule.

……

In fact, these things (elections) are like business. It's no different from us buying a product.

ZA provided a firsthand experience of how village elites 'played' politics. His whole story revolves around the election "management". Despite highly standardised procedures, bribing voters was known to be very common in rural China. It is an important strategy that elites employ to win elections and ZA's story discloses the political mentality behind this activity.

Two subnarratives can be easily identified in the story. He firstly recounted his involvement in an election campaign of a family friend and then talked about the general strategies they used to handle elections. Seemingly bleak, his story demonstrates the changed political dynamics and minds in rural China. Village politics became more of a local event rather than merely a government activity. And village elections in particular primarily concern interplays between rural elites and ordinary villagers. Even if the local government got involved, its role was supplementary; as a means used by the elite to win social trust and support.

The worth of voting rights was obviously well acknowledged both by political elites and ordinary villagers. Nevertheless, because of their bifurcate goals, they had varied attitudes and strategies towards this right. For elites, winning the election is the first and the most crucial step to a political career and they can use people's voting rights to their advantage. Buying votes is the most convenient strategy. For ordinary villagers on the other hand, the right to vote is above all a weapon of self-defence. If it fails to check political leaders' power and force accountability, it can at least be transformed into monetary interests. Selling votes is a responsive strategy in extreme conditions.

Aside moral debates, buying votes shows the elite's recognition of villagers' political status and power; selling votes is more than political self-awareness. It is often an expression of "resistance of the weak" in Scott's terms (1985). Large-scale vote-selling in practice occurred only in places where people abandoned the hope of exerting political influence. Cashing votes is their only chance

to actualise their power. This behaviour *per se* is psychologically functional at the intra-individual level too. It decreases the dissonance people experience from perceiving discrepancies between subjective and objective and/or ideal citizenship if examined from a cognitive angle.

ZA did not introduce any villain to his story, but he undoubtedly established himself as a superior "hero" who masters elections. He was trusted by the candidate to canvass the voters. He had a sophisticated political mind and was skilful in handling elections. In contrast, ordinary villagers were just "simple". Again if suspending considerations for political correctness, we can find the tremendous social implications of the village self-governance policy: what it enables people to do and how it changed political thinking and behaviour in rural China. Rural politics became open to every member of rural society, and through involving everybody in politics, village self-governance cultivated political thinking and skills. Even if it deviated from initial good intentions, it is still important for the development of rural democracy because, even deviant practices such as bribing, have brought people's rights to the fore and made people think about using their rights.

ZA's narrative additionally revealed revolutionary changes in social relations, which is crucial for understanding the current representations of citizenship in rural China and in which commercialisation has played an important role. The occurrence of large-scale trade in votes shows that the principle of exchange based on economic calculation has replaced the traditional *guanxi*-based reciprocity to become a major principle of social life in some villages, if not all. As illustrated in the analogy ZA provided between running elections and doing business, such a mentality is not exclusive to the elite. It is also true of ordinary villagers. It was essentially the widely shared economic mind that gave rise to transactions in vote that has possibly led people in Z's village to turn against their close kin for personal economic interests.

The rise of the economic mind might have overshadowed *guanxi* (connections) in some places, however, it was not excluded from public life. It still plays a significant role in every aspect of life across China. It remains to be the principal origin of social trust in villages, and ZA would not have been invited to help in the election campaign if he was a stranger to the candidate. Also, it is a major social resource that people draw on, which was made full use of by ZA to influence village elections. Take kinship — the most valued *guanxi* — for example, 63.31% of survey participants said lineage still had a substantive impact on rural elections, despite the government's crackdown on clan dominance in village elections.

In comparison with political life, *guanxi* is certainly more important for social life. The survey study showed that villagers primarily turn to families or neighbours for help if they encounter difficulties. They not only count on them to help in personal matters such as a wedding or funeral preparation, financial difficulties and medical emergencies, but also to mediate in disputes with neighbours, for example, which was in effect always readily denied. Although 34.74% of

participants would like village leaders' intervention, the majority 51.58% preferred families or neighbours to mediate.

While these results demonstrate the utility side of *guanxi*, they more importantly show that official channels are generally considered as the last, and possibly a less efficient, resort whereas *guanxi* is the first option to try. This explains the reason why candidates made great efforts to establish *guanxi* with voters, although they presumed an economic nature. It was less for the purpose of winning support than having the assurance of the votes. Nevertheless, *guanxi* including kinship (Z's example), indeed has given way to economic interests in many places. Candidates regarded voters as stakeholders above all and saw *guanxi* simply as a means to establish transactional relationships.

The occurrence of voter bribery marks the fall of traditional values and the rise of an economic mind. Indeed, *guanxi* still dominates many aspects of public life, especially in some more closed acquaintance societies. Its domination, however, is being seriously challenged by economic reasoning. ZA's story clearly shows that people's political decision-making is affected both by traditional *guanxi* logic and modern economic reasoning, and the latter in practice was the dominant influence.

The functioning of both principles in social life was corroborated by participants' high endorsement for both traditional cultural values and modern democratic values. If the pre-existing polyphasic representational system enabled the anchoring of 'citizenship', the radical reconfiguration of social relations ultimately gave rise to distinctive SRs of citizenship in rural China. Take the manifest elections for example: Chinese rural elites heavily drew on *guanxi* even in activities such as bribing votes, which distinguishes it from Western democratic elections, despite having the same institutional design.

On the other hand, the rise of the economic mind is more consequential for modern political life. Guided by the principle of exchange, people tend to see social members as equal to the self and to each other, rather than placing them in rigid status hierarchies. Electoral fraud is driven by this mentality, which signals that both political elites and ordinary villagers treat one another as equal to the self in this particular activity, if we put aside moral judgements. In this sense, orientation at market pricing helps dismantle the traditional hierarchical power structure and bring more equality to life.

Indeed, both ordinary villagers' political fights for self-interests and political elites' turned attention to ordinary villagers reflect the changing social relations in rural China and the increasing importance of market pricing in people's decision-making. Nevertheless, it is also true of the lasting influence of authority ranking on rural politics. People still place political leaders higher above themselves and avoid confronting authority in their daily life. It explains the reason why political

action in rural China is seldom proactive, but mostly responsive. The rapid growth of political appeals and legal action in the name of justice, however, suggests a trend of more active political participation and proactive rights pursuits in rural China. Chinese peasants' political behavioural changes have crystallised the radical configuration of forms of social relations in rural society, which was indicated in ZA's story as the major drive for the evolution of SRs of citizenship in rural China.

6.3.3 Summary

Common to all four stories is the villagers' insistence on individual rights and self-interests. All participants employed subnarratives to build their stories. In spite of different themes and some incoherent narratives, their stories and substories similarly revealed rural residents' increasing citizenship awareness. It is reflected in individual petitioning, in collective actions, and even in buying and selling votes. It should be noted in their stories that all ordinary villagers' political actions were in effect responsive, driven by the discrepancies between subjective citizenship and objective citizenship and/or ideal citizenship.

As much as the four stories have shown that in reality most political action in rural China is no more than a reaction, active actions are indeed rare. Political inactionism is perhaps the most manifest Confucian heritage in the political field in rural society. The discursive encouragement and institutional support for active participation and the defence of rights did not elicit peasants' initiative in political life. The traditional cultural values of avoiding interpersonal conflicts and keeping good *guanxi* as well as obeying the authorities are still the default norms that people live by. They would only break this cultural inertia and take active actions when immediate self-interests were severely violated.

Nevertheless, a notable phenomenon in rural China is that the threshold of tolerance for encroaching on individual rights is becoming increasingly lower. There has been a rapid growth of political action and lawsuits in defence of rights over the years. And people demonstrate unprecedented persistence in their rights struggles, going through all levels of government and resorting to all possible means to defend their self-interests. Evidence supports a shift in the public discourse from prioritising collective interests and denouncing individual interests, to legitimising individual interests and sympathising with individual rights claims.

All these changes in political thinking and practice are accompanied and facilitated by transformational changes in social relations in rural society. Implicit in L and W's narratives, Z and ZA's stories clearly show that the traditional form of *guanxi*-based association as well as the traditional belief in a hierarchical social structure has been seriously challenged by the emerging economic mind. Political decisions are made based more on economic calculations than on personal

sentiments. Mutuality had become an important criterion in evaluating social relations, not only for relations with other social members including political leaders, but also with tangible institutions such as the state, especially when self-interests are involved, which signals that equality has become an important principle of social relations.

Consequently, although cultural traditions such as respecting authority and conflict-avoidance still govern daily life, questioning and even challenging political authorities when self-interests are violated are more and more common in rural China. ZA's story clearly disclosed the association between changes in political behaviour in rural society and the reconfiguration of the "four elementary forms of social relations" (Fiske, 1992). Because people have become more oriented at marketing pricing and equality matching and consider authority ranking increasingly irrelevant, they are more vocal and active in rights defence. All four stories, although somewhat bleak, reflect the changing political dynamics in rural China as a result of peasants' awakening citizenship awareness.

All changes in political life would be impossible without institutional support. While village self-governance has familiarised Chinese peasants with the connotations of citizenship and cultivated their civic thinking and habits, objective citizenship has liberated their imagination for better political prospects and has provided them with a weapon as well as a framework for political struggles. Moreover, two decades of village self-governance has obviously sharpened rural residents' political minds and honed their political skills. Despite lacking in formal knowledge, they were very involved in village politics and subsequently became strategic in political struggles. They learnt to use varied means to attain their goals and did not confine themselves within official channels. In addition to formal institutional support such as official 'letters and visits' offices, they also resorted to informal cultural norms like *guanxi* as well as the media.

If village self-governance planted the seed of citizenship in rural China, it was essentially SRs of citizenship, of the actual, of the ought, and of the ideal, that generated the vibrant citizenship phenomena. While citizen identity was the legal basis of rural residents' political fights, this identity as well as objective citizenship functioned as a strategic tool for people to negotiate their political reality.

6.4 Objective Citizenship and Village Political Participation: A Quantitative Investigation

This section explores the impact of SRs of the good citizen on political participation in village self-governance. The above section explored the relationship between SRs of citizenship and political actions in rural China and showed that radical political actions were ultimately driven by discrepancies between three states of citizenship. It should be noted that although discrepancies between states of citizenship are conspicuous, radical political actions are uncommon. Political

fights are largely responsive and rural residents generally have a high tolerance towards leaders' misconduct. They generally only reacted to grave violations of vital personal interests. The normality of political life in rural China is routine participation in village self-governance, which seldom goes beyond elections or involves intense confrontations. The purpose of this section is to find whether social norms of civic virtues have some significant influence on people's daily political participation.

Chapter 3 has explained Chinese peasants' participation in village self-governance. In addition to village elections, they were also extensively involved in major decision-making. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that their participation was mostly passive. They were only involved by the elites because of institutional pressure. Although most people would keep track of village affairs and regularly check information posted on the village post board, they seldom actively sought information beyond what was posted. Villagers' rather passive political participation seems to confirm the predominant traditional cultural impact on political behaviour.

Nevertheless, like the political struggles the villagers undertook, their political participation in itself is an indication of their changing political mindset and of their take-up of democratic values. The question is whether the new norms of citizenship had already displayed some influence on people's daily political practice. So far, evidence suggests that the modern conceptualisation of a 'good' citizen, — one that values active participation — has little influence on people's real-life practice. This observation is tested with survey data in this section.

6.4.1 Measurement

The current investigation draws on the survey data. Except for the 'good' citizen scale, questions about village self-governance participation were devised, including knowledge about village self-governance and people's actual practice. One would assume that a morality-oriented citizen would aim to live up to the 'good' citizen standards and actively participate in village politics, which is premised on a good understanding of the policy. With regard to knowledge, participants were asked both about the most recent election year and the basic rules of the policy. Responses were regrouped to form two categories: accurate knowledge and inaccurate knowledge.

Items on actual practice are comprised of two major parts: village elections and other activities. Village elections were stressed and singled out, not only because they are the core of the policy, but more importantly because village self-governance is rarely exercised beyond elections in reality. With regard to electoral activities, in addition to whether they voted in the last election, participants were also asked of their involvement in the last election campaign including attendance in campaign meetings and gatherings and the roles they played in the campaign. Participants were asked to

indicate on a four-point scale the frequencies of their involvement, if any. Responses were regrouped into two categories: active participation at least once and passive participation.

Other activities asked of, include actions relating to democratic supervision, critical engagement and the provision of public goods (see Appendix 2 for the questionnaire). Democratic supervision is measured by items on information-seeking behaviours. Critical engagement is measured by items on criticising and/or suggesting village leaders. Lastly, provision of public goods is measured by helping behaviours in village projects and towards other villagers. Again, the final categorisations were binary: yes and no.

6.4.2 Results
Logistic analyses were conducted using the 'good' citizen indices (including cultural virtues, normative virtues and democratic virtues) as the predictors. Results showed that SRs of the 'good' citizen could not predict villagers' voting behaviour in the last election. Nor could they predict people's supervisory activities or critical engagement with rural politics.

Analyses showed a significant relationship between the 'good' citizen representations and people's knowledge about the self-governance policy, χ^2 (3)=17.39, $p < 0.001$. The small pseudo R^2 of 0.10 however indicates that the association is very weak. Analyses also found a significant association between the 'good' citizen representations and involvement in election campaigning, χ^2 (3)=13.16, $p < 0.05$. Their relationship however was proved to be extremely weak, with the pseudo R^2 of 0.06. The same is with the 'good' citizen representations and provision of public goods. Although the relationship was found significant χ^2 (3)=15.36, $p < 0.05$, the small pseudo R^2 of 0.02 nevertheless suggested that the association is negligible.

6.4.3 Summary
Statistic analyses showed that overall SRs of the 'good' citizen have no significant influence on villagers' daily self-governance practice. The results are unsurprising given the general low predictive effect of attitude on behaviour. Nonetheless, evidence cannot rule out its impact on particular aspects of daily political life, including people's knowledge about the policy, their involvement in election campaigns and their provision of public goods. One possible explanation given by the consistency theory to the attitude-behaviour discrepancies could be: attitudes with regard to civic virtues were not strong enough to accurately predict civic behaviour because 'good' citizen representations are still in the process of formation (Tesser, Martin & Mendolia, 1995).

Although SRs of citizenship are indeed a recent phenomenon, weak attitudes however cannot be the only reason for the attitude-behaviour discrepancies. Evidence repeatedly shows villagers' high tolerance to various discrepancies. Even when villagers had strong normative beliefs in citizenship,

they seldom took radical action to change the disappointing status quo. It seems that the strength of attitude is not the critical reason for the discrepancies.

Qualitative evidence suggests that a more pertinent explanation is political motivation. What is common among the four stories is villagers' orientation towards self-interests. Rural residents, elites or ordinary villagers, were generally interests-oriented rather than morality-oriented in political life. It is not surprising that civic virtues cannot predict political behaviour given that political decisions are largely made out of economic calculation and not moral consideration.

Making political decisions based on individual economic calculations was only seemingly possible when pursuing self-interests was regarded as a legitimate and just course of action. In this sense, it was fundamentally the polyphasic discursive registers that produced the attitude-behaviour discrepancies. People switched between varying discursive registers in decision-making. While morality was primed when responding to normative questions, economic calculations were opted for when deciding upon actual actions.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, three dimensions of SR are linked —ideas, practice and attitude—to discuss social implications of SRs of citizenship. Inspired by the observation of the inconsistency between objective citizenship and subjective citizenship, the first section explored the relationship between idea and practice in light of the self-discrepancies theories and social identity theory. Narrative analysis found that there possibly exists another layer of citizenship: ideal citizenship. It was ultimately the inconsistency between subjective citizenship and the other two states of citizenship that drove political fights in rural China. Nevertheless, because of the deep-rooted Confucian authoritarian values and the cultural heritage of *guanxi*, tolerance for violations of individual rights was high in rural society in general.

Analysis found that Chinese peasants' political actions were grounded on their awareness of their citizen identity and this identity together with objective/ought citizenship was used both as a legal basis and a strategic tool in their political struggles. Because their political fights were conducted within the country's general political framework, there were rarely direct confrontations between society and state. In this sense, ideal citizenship should not deviate too greatly from objective citizenship in rural China.

What was also importantly revealed in the qualitative analysis is the radical reconfiguration of social relations in rural China. Evidence pointed towards that the emergence of the economic mind and concomitantly the gaining weight of market pricing and equality matching in social life, which gave rise to political behavioural changes in rural communities. Also, the changing social relations drove the evolution of SRs of citizenship, which were in turn influenced by the latter.

The second section of this chapter investigated the relationship between normative and behavioural facets of SRs of citizenship and focused on villagers' daily political lives. Logistic analyses were conducted to test the predictive effect of attitudes towards civic virtues on village self-governance practices. Results found no significant relationships between these two fields. Qualitative evidence suggests that the attitude-behaviour discrepancies were less likely because of the weak attitudes, as indicated in literature, than of people's self-serving political motivation. Given that attitudes are heavily influenced by moral norms which may be in conflict with individual interests, especially in a country with a strong collective culture such as China, behaviours that are oriented towards self-interests are likely to deviate from attitudes. The attitude-behaviour discrepancies reflect the changing political climate in rural China, demonstrating both a rising awareness of individual rights and a popularisation of the discourse championing individual rights and interests.

Overall, this chapter reveals that SRs of citizenship have indeed brought tremendous change to rural political life and have fundamentally changed political dynamics in rural society. The citizenship representations importantly inspired political fights for individual rights and interests. And currently self-interest is the predominant political motivation in rural China. With China's further marketisation, this orientation is likely to be strengthened, which might produce a number of social and political problems. On the other hand however, marketisation and the emergence of the economic mind also diluted the traditional authoritarian culture, bringing more equality to society. It may inspire more political fights for more empowerment and a further reconfiguration of the power structure in rural China. In the long run, SRs of citizenship empower Chinese rural residents and facilitate rural democratisation.

Chapter 7 Citizenship Awareness in Rural China: Inconsistencies, Anchoring and Objectification

This chapter reflects upon the entire research. After summarising the results of each empirical chapter, I present a theoretical model for studying social representations of citizenship. I then discuss the findings from theoretical and political angles, while focusing on three issues: inconsistencies and inconsistency tolerance, anchoring and objectification and the transformation of hegemonic representations into polemic and emancipatory representations.

7.1 Summaries of Empirical Investigations

The general aims of this research are to examine citizenship awareness in rural China and to explore the political implications. To achieve these goals, this research brings together political, sociological and economical insights and investigates citizenship as social representations. Because of the dual nature of SR, i.e. both as an artefact and as a process, the current research takes into account factors at various levels and articulates different levels of explanation. As an artefact, SR is a mental construct and can vary across populations. Two chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4) are dedicated in examining the construct of SRs of citizenship, as both citizenship and social representation encompass multiple dimensions and variations across China are huge.

As a process, SR involves multiple competing forces. They can be from the same level such as social groups, or from different levels such as social groups and the government. Social re-presentation of important political concepts like citizenship necessarily involves cross-level as well as within-level competitions and the contests are between state and society and also between social groups. Social re-presentation of citizenship in China is especially complex because it is currently taking place during the country's great transformational process and it is also a clash between Chinese and Western knowledge. The representational process involves, not only social groups, but also macro-level forces including state, society and market as well as external liberal influences. Intergroup interplay is captured in exploring the construct of citizenship representations in Chapter 4. And Chapter 5 investigates the representational process in relation to cross-level contests, i.e. contests between state, society and market in detail. Due to citizenship representations' huge presence in the political field and its on-going evolution, the question of their social consequences naturally rises, which is addressed in Chapter 6.

7.1.1 Citizenship Content

Chapter 3 explores the question of the construct of citizenship representations in rural China. The discussion focuses on citizenship content, including the definition of the concept and, more importantly, citizenship rights and obligations.

Qualitative content analysis is conducted using semi-structured interviews to investigate citizenship representations from ideational, behavioural and normative dimensions. Results found huge knowledge-behaviour discrepancies across rural society. On the one hand, rural residents demonstrate little formal knowledge about citizenship. Neither the concept nor civic rights and duties are familiar to them. On the other hand, lacking formal knowledge does not prevent them from practising citizenship. Villagers regularly exercise certain rights and faithfully fulfil their legal obligations.

Analysis also found divergence between ordinary villagers and village leaders at the ideational level. The village-leaders' group showed relatively more formal knowledge and more familiarity with this concept and civic rights, if not duties, than the ordinary-villagers' group; they did not differ much in civic practice. Descriptive analysis with the survey data also found high convergence between these two groups in civic virtue evaluations. Results showed both cross-regional commonality and intergroup disparity, which corroborated the two basic assumptions of commonness and specificities of SR.

To test these assumptions and also to examine the normative dimension of SRs of citizenship, survey data on civic virtue evaluations were analysed. One-way ANOVA tests found the impact of exposure to external influence on SRs of citizenship. Villages of similar degrees of openness/closeness shared representations, and village of different degrees had varied citizenship representations. Cluster and crosstab analyses further found that what distinguished villages were evaluations of normative and democratic virtues and all villages did not differ in evaluations of cultural virtues. The results again validated the main effect of exposure to external influence, considering that culture virtues are grounded in rural traditions and conventions, whereas normative and democratic virtues are more recent social constructions, transmitted from the outside world.

7.1.2 Citizenship Extent and Depth

Chapter 4 aims to investigate the impact of important group identities on SRs of citizenship and explores other factors that may influence citizenship representations. It is a continuation of Chapter 3 and further examines SRs of citizenship from the aspects of citizenship extent and depth. Because citizenship extent and depth necessarily involves social groups, examining extent and depth is also to illuminate the role of social identity in social representational processes.

Discourse analysis with interviews revealed an unbalanced distribution of rights in rural society, which is closely related to one's political status and also associated with one's political capital and knowledge. Ordinary villagers were disadvantaged in rights practice in comparison with village leaders, and the leaders' group was often perceived to monopoly rights and control people's rights practice in the rather hierarchical power structure. Due to structural disadvantage and insufficient

information about rights protection, ordinary villagers were often unable to exercise their legal rights or exercise their rights extensively. In contrast with ordinary villagers who reported much inequality, village leaders simply ignored the intergroup differences in their accounts. Ordinary villagers showed strong dissatisfaction with their political status and intense intergroup antagonism. Blaming the leaders' group for blocking their rights practice, ordinary villagers shared a grudge against the leaders' group and pinned their hopes on the central government through intervention.

Their seemingly contradictory political emotions demonstrated their identification with the country and with their civic identity, which is supported by their high endorsement for cultural and normative civic virtues. It was because of their identification with the country that they remained supportive for the government, although they were extremely disappointed at their political status. Also, their grudge against the leaders' group was not so much because of the feeling of relative deprivation, than the feeling of deprivation. Intergroup differentiation in effect was hardly visible in villages due to the infrastructural constraints, but being ignored by the leaders' group is a common experience in rural society, which contradicts villagers' belief in their entitlements. The subtle social identity work is what behind the changing political dynamics in rural China.

ANOVA analysis found no significant differences between ordinary villagers and village leaders in civic virtue evaluations. It however does not contradict the villager-leader disparity found in qualitative analyses as these two methods address different aspects of representations and citizenship. The important political identity of Party membership however was not found to be significantly associated with citizenship representations in both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Quick cluster analyses with the civic virtues items found five clusters and crosstab analyses found that village type, education and age influence people's normative evaluations about civic virtues. The findings once again confirm the "knowledge-encounter" hypothesis proved in Chapter 3. What influence people's access to information about the Western concept of citizenship is not only the openness degree of the community they reside, but also their education, which is immediately related to age.

In sum, Chapter 4 found two influential group identities in the social representational process of citizenship in rural China: civic identity and village leadership. They moderated citizenship representations, which resulted in subtle political dynamics in rural society. Apart from the social psychological factor of social identity, age education and village type also affected citizenship representations. SRs of citizenship were not only subjected to the influence of social identity but also to the sociological factor of exposure to external influence.

7.1.3 Anchoring of 'citizenship' and the Polyphasic Grand Discourses

Chapter 5 addressed the question of anchoring 'citizenship' in rural China. It is also aimed to discriminate between the respective influences of state, society and market in the social representational process of citizenship and illuminate how anchoring of the West-originated concept of citizenship is possible in rural China and which knowledge, western or domestic, is more influential in the anchoring process. The chapter begins with a review of the grand discourses prevailing in contemporary rural Chinese society and then proceeds to statistical analyses of the interrelationships between citizenship and these discourses.

Four grand discourses were identified, including the communist ideology, the rural tradition of community autonomy, and the idea of universal equality and democracy.[25] All these discourses were manifested in rural residents' civic practice in one way or another. Canonical correlation analyses however found that SRs of the 'good' citizen were only significantly related to SRs of democracy, but not to other representations. Moreover, the equality index in the democracy representations was negatively associated with the cultural virtues index in the 'good' citizen representations. The results confirmed the expected close relationship between democracy and citizenship, but showed that anchoring 'citizenship' in rural China contradicts the traditional cultural values the most. It is unsurprising given that citizenship has universal equality as its primary principle whereas Chinese traditional cultural values emphasise hierarchy and personal relationships. The result revealed major changes in social relations in the representational process of citizenship.

Meanwhile, the statistical findings cannot invalidate interrelationships between the 'good' citizen representations and the other discourses because they evaluated only the normative aspect of SR. There was strong qualitative evidence and evidence produced by social positioning tasks supporting their interrelationships in the behavioural and ideational dimensions. Statistical results suggested the strongest impact was the market on 'citizenship' anchoring. Nevertheless, historical facts show that state and society also have a significant influence. Anchoring would be impossible without rural democratisation initiated by the state and many of the democratic practices such as collective decision-making can be traced back to the rural tradition of community autonomy.

In effect, evidence suggests that these three forces played different roles in different stages of social re-presentation. State and society played major roles at the initial stage, with the former setting the representational process and the latter providing a social foundation for aligning the incoming ideas with the existing knowledge. Once the representational process took off, the market started to exert its impact and take control from the other two forces. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that the state can regulate the representational process by interfering in the economic

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[25] Ideology and tradition are essentially discursive and hence are taken as discourse in this research.

system and moderating between the market and society. In sum, this chapter found the closest relationship between the discourse of democracy and the 'good' citizen representations, indicating the strong impact of market in the representational process. Evidence also supports the role of state and society in the social representational process but the respective influence of state, society and market is different at different times during the anchoring process.

7.1.4 Social Representations of Citizenship and Political Actions

Chapter 6 is aimed to demonstrate the political implications of SRs of citizenship. Active political actions and daily self-governance practice were discussed separately because these two forms of political actions are driven by different mechanisms. Active actions are more self-oriented, and thus self-motivated. They are uncommon in rural society. Participation in village self-governance on the other hand is villagers' daily practice in villages, which also involves institutional incentives.

A narrative analysis was conducted with four interview scripts. Results pointed towards three states of citizenship: actual citizenship, ought citizenship and ideal citizenship. Accordingly there are three layers of social representations. Active political actions in rural China were ultimately driven by discrepancies between actual citizenship representations with ought and ideal citizenship representations. The underlying psych ological mechanism includes the need for self-consistency at the intra-individual level and social identity at the group level. The civic identity functions both as a frame and a discursive tool, thus guiding people's political actions. Villagers' political actions were always within the framework of normative citizenship or objective citizenship in Condor's terms (2011), and they justified their action with their civic identity and the rights and interests incorporated within the group membership.

Analysis also showed that villagers' political struggles were largely passive reactions to severe self-interest violations. In these circumstances, people may react violently and persist in having their goals attained regardless of the perpetrator. The fact that people would confront the government if self-interests were violated suggests a narrative shift from prioritising collective interests to highlighting individual interests, which reflects the transformation of social relations in China. While there is a notable growth of citizenship awareness in rural China, it is also true that villagers generally have a high tolerance towards political inequality, which is highly associated with the Confucian hierarchical value and the *guanxi* principle of social relations as well as villagers' lacking formal knowledge of citizenship and the malfunctioning institutions.

In contrast with political action, participation in village self-governance was found to be extensive and regular in rural China. Logistic analyses with survey data did not find a significant relationship between 'good' citizen representations and villagers' self-governance practice. Narrative findings suggested that political motivation is an important factor behind the attitude-

behaviour discrepancies. Due to villagers' political behaviours as interest-oriented as opposed to morality-oriented, it was not surprising that civic virtues variables failed to predict civic behaviours. And the attitude-behaviour discrepancies in effect reflected the polyphasic discursive world in China. The two contradictory values, i.e. individual interests and collective interests can co-exist, and in fact are widely accepted. In sum, SRs of citizenship have empowered Chinese peasants. Political struggles as well as daily political participation, inspired by citizenship representations, have fundamentally changed political dynamics in rural China. Although villagers seldom resort to active actions, they are becoming less and less tolerant to rights violations because of the increasingly accentuated individual rights and interests with the country's further marketisation.

7.1.5 Summary: A Social Representation, Social Identity and Discourse Model for Studying Citizenship

Overall, this research shows soaring citizenship awareness in rural China. Villagers not only exercise rights and duties regularly but also highly value normative civic virtues in spite of their poor citizenship knowledge. Citizenship as a foreign concept has anchored in rural Chinese society and SRs of citizenship have incentivised vibrant citizenship phenomena. The representational process is premised on a pre-existing polyphasic representational world and it is mediated by social identity work.

Embodied practices have played a critical role in objectifying 'citizenship'. The concept of citizenship was firstly made concrete and useful to rural residents through their political participation. The objectification process is indeed a developmental process of villagers' citizenship awareness and their political skills. Only after the concept was concretised through physical experiences, was it aligned with pre-existent schemata and adjusted in the existing representational world. The subsequent anchoring process was dominated by discursive battles among state, society and market with each stretching the concept of 'citizenship' to its own discursive register.

Social re-presentation of citizenship meanwhile is also a process of identity formation. 'Citizen' was a rather alien identity to rural residents. Traditional values that contradict the universal equality principle of citizenship are often highly valued in rural communities. People still largely self-position as a subject rather than a citizen in relation to the state. With the social representational process of citizenship, entitlements became concretised experiences that now benefit people. Consequently, rural residents' identification with their civic membership has been strengthened, which has resulted in a firmer determination for, and more confident persistence in, rights defence and claims in return. Representing citizenship eventually led to villagers' political identity transformation, from a subject to a citizen.

Figure 7.1 *Theoretical Model of Representing Citizenship in Rural China*
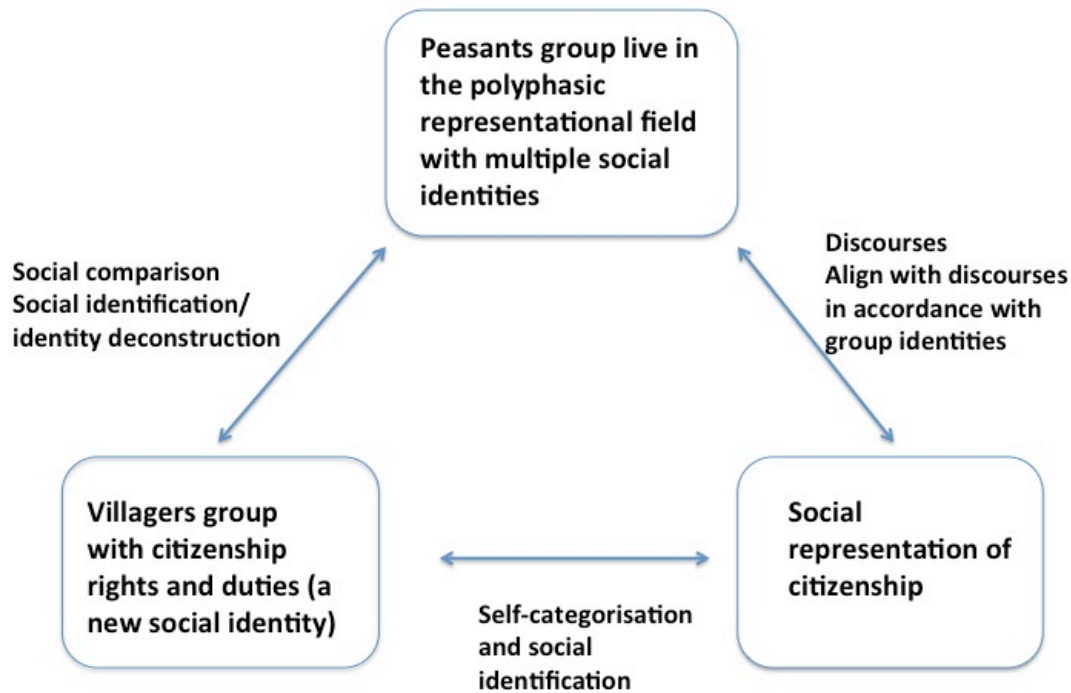
The current research demonstrates close interrelationships between social representation, social identity and discourse. Based on the research findings, a theoretical model of representing citizenship in rural China is presented in Figure 7.1. When the West-originated concept of citizenship was transmitted to rural China, there was an existing representational world which was comprised of polyphasic representational systems and rural residents were susceptible to different systems to varying degrees, according to their group identities.

In the meantime, powerful forces competed with one another for a brand on citizenship through their highly constructive discourses. And group members aligned 'citizenship' with discourses akin to their group identities. SRs, once formed, immediately generated self-categorisation and social identification processes. A civic identify thus emerged, which in turn generated social identification or identity deconstruction through social comparison and SRs of citizenship became a living fact in the rural world.

Although this research shows the flow of the process, it is however reversible. Social comparison can lead to identification and subsequently the formation of a new identity as a citizen in rural China. Through people's self-categorisation and social identification with their civic identity, citizenship representations have emerged. And through discourses and alignment, SRs have matured and stabilised as a social fact people live with. This model, although describes the social

representational process of citizenship in rural China, the triad model of social representation, social identity and discourse also is applicable to the study of socially representing new concepts, especially political concepts in other social settings. The transformation of an alien notion into social knowledge inevitably involves adapting the notion in accordance with local knowledge and the adaption is unavoidably influenced by group norms.

7.2 Discussion

Findings of the current research inspire thoughts on a number of issues in social psychology. Expect for issues of anchoring and objectification in the social representation tradition, research findings also provoke thoughts on discrepancy theories. And these two seemingly distinctive issues are effectively intertwined.

7.2.1 Discrepancies and Discrepancy Tolerance

A recurrent finding in this research is discrepancies; discrepancies at various levels and in different domains. With regard to the three aspects of SRs, there were significant knowledge-behaviour/idea-practice and attitude-behaviour/value-practice discrepancies. With regards to SRs of citizenship in rural China specifically, huge discrepancies are found to exist between the actual and the ought layers, as well as the actual and the ideal layers. These discrepancies gave rise to intense cognitive dissonance and self-concepts discrepancies within individuals.

7.2.1.1 Knowledge-Behaviour Discrepancies

This research shows that three dimensions of citizenship can diverge from one another. Behaviour not only diverges from attitude, but also deviates from knowledge. The divergence between knowledge and practice found in Chapter 3 on the one hand shows the importance of separating the ideational and behavioural dimensions in SR research, and on the other hand, raises an important question to the sequence of anchoring and objectification.

7.2.1.1.1 Knowledge-Behaviour Discrepancies: Rethinking Anchoring and Objectification

Moscovici (2001) implies the successive order of anchoring and objectification in social re-presentation. By arguing that anchoring is finding a match or matches in the existing knowledge system, and objectifying is to modify, adjust and project ideas, he implicitly assumes that anchoring precedes objectifying, which was, however, proves to be debatable in the case of rural China.

Evidence suggests that objectifying occurs before anchoring in the social representational process of citizenship in rural China. While Chinese peasants had little knowledge about citizenship, they exercised certain rights and duties regularly in reality but they barely consciously associated their

civic practice with the concept of citizenship and did not perceive most of their daily practice as rights or duties. The fact that the rights and duties accessible to rural residents are limited to those that they regularly exercise shows that SRs of citizenship were essentially developed out of their political practices, rather than through public discussions. Unlike previous SR research, the concept of citizenship is in effect blocked in the mainstream discourse and is not circulated in public communications in rural China.

In spite of the absence of public discussions, there were certain consensuses about citizenship in rural society, which are ultimately grounded in embodied practice. The current research suggests an alternative process of social re-presentation that is different from that identified in the literature: SR or common knowledge can derive from individuals' common practice in society even if the practice is not communicated within that society. Objectification can occur ahead of anchoring.

The sequence of anchoring and objectification is important for developing SR theory; currently most SR researchers conceive that social representational process happens in communication and their research designs are largely confined within the verbal examinations of ideas and/or values. Such a presumption risks an incomplete description of SRs and can also limits the SRT research scope. Take SRs of citizenship in rural China for example; looking only at the verbal reports certainly cannot fully capture citizenship awareness in rural China given that most civic practices that people regularly exercise are not reflected in enunciations. Also, a project only looking at the ideational dimension of SR may have to quickly cease when association tasks elicit almost no information and interviews did not do any better. An incorrect conclusion that there are no SRs of citizenship in rural China may be drawn.

7.2.1.1.2 Knowledge-Behaviour Discrepancies: Reconsidering the Relationship between Thinking and Doing

The reversed order of anchoring and objectification revealed in this research importantly reflects a reversed process of the cognition-behaviour link that most cognitive psychologists assume. Their mutual generation and inhabitation/facilitation on the other hand, challenges the behavioural theories. Both traditions however are derived from the old philosophical consideration for the relationship between thinking and doing.

Debates around this topic centre on two intertwined themes: the interrelationship between knowing and doing and the relative importance. There are two distinctive views: separation and interdependence. First, knowing is separated from doing and they belong to distinctive biological domains. This view culminates in the Cartesian distinction between body and mind (Descartes, 1988). It is the foundation of both behaviourism and standard cognitive science, although the latter is in revolt against the former. While behaviourists take only observable behaviours as the material

of analysis and as the only predictor of behaviours (Dinsmoor, 1999), standard cognitive scientists rely exclusively on cognition for explanations. The views prioritise either thinking or doing, with behaviourists valuing only doing and standard cognitive scientists only knowing.

Another view holds the interdependent relationship between doing and knowing. Having a long history in the East, this view however rose more recently as a reaction towards the rational tradition of the West (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1992). With considerable evidence supporting embodied cognition (see, for example, Bargh, Chen & Burrows, 1996; Bargh, Williams, Huang, Song & Ackerman, 2010; Barsalou, 1999; Williams & Bargh, 2008), the separation between body and mind and hence doing and knowing began to thaw in cognitive studies.

The contribution of the current research to the thinking-doing debates is not so much in its demonstration of the role of doing in thinking, as in the illustration of the mechanism of how doing affects knowing. The generative effect of practice on knowledge shows that doing is essential to knowing and that knowledge effectively originates from practice, be it textbook or lay knowledge. Chinese peasants' knowledge of citizenship was limited only to those they practised. They showed limited understanding of the abstract concept which bares on no physical experiences, but knew very well certain rights that they regularly practised. Their regular political practice revealed their awareness of certain civic rights and duties and their political actions reflected their awareness of particular rights. Nonetheless, awareness is not equivalent to systemised knowledge and rural residents were unable to identify their routine practices as rights or duties.

Evidence suggests that two factors are crucial to the transformation of practice into knowledge: naming and a consistent effect of practice. Naming belongs to the anchoring process examined through a SR lens. Due to the fact that concepts as rights and duties are alien to traditional Chinese culture, people seldom thought of their daily practices in terms of rights and duties. These practices are unlikely to become systematic knowledge in the absence of public communications and with largely remain routines that require no deep cognitive processing and hence unidentifiable awareness. Naming foregrounds practice and makes social discussions about previously unidentifiable practices possible.

A consistent effect of practice is another condition for practice-knowledge transformation. Especially in places where foreign ideas are not associated with any pre-existing named notions, these ideas can only become manifest when practices derived from the ideas bring about *lasting* changes that are evident to people. And only when the practices become foregrounded will they become a part of public consciousness. It should be noted that awareness is not the same as knowledge. It is a steppingstone to knowledge because deep cognitive processing can only occur when objects enter the conscious level.

Here it is important to stress the role of official institutions in connecting doing to knowing. Apart from giving names to specific practices, which sometimes are not conveyed to people, as is the case of citizenship in rural China, they importantly guarantee the consistency of practice, which can also produce the same effect of naming as making these practices salient in social life. For instance, standardised village elections made many people understand that voting is a right, whereas monitoring village affairs, although is a stipulated right, was not regarded as a right because it seldom served its function. Naming and the persistent salience of practices are crucial for social representing abstract concepts in the absence of public communications.

In sum, *doing* is the premise of *knowing*; whereas naming and a consistent effect of physical experiences are indispensible for transforming doing into knowledge. In addition, formal institutions function as a catalyst and an affordance to the transformation. This doing-knowing transformation is in effect another form of social re-presentation that previous SR research has dismissed. This research shows that social representational processes can start from objectification and be activated by embodied practice, but not from anchoring and in public communications. Also the interdependent relationship between doing and knowing calls for an integration of body and mind in psychological studies.

7.2.1.1.3 Doing and Knowing: Rethinking Cognitive Embodiment Studies

Embodied cognition is a most recent trail of integrating body and mind. Within this broad approach there are however various stances and some contradict the tenet of embodied cognition. The current discussion about doing and knowing helps refocus the rather dispersed embodiment research. The field design of this research provides observation evidence in addition to natural language to make the following argument.

Although all embodiment researchers argue for the interdependence of body and mind, in other words doing and thinking, they disagree on the role of doing in knowing (Shapiro, 2011); most aspired to cognitive processing and some to cognitive content. Researchers holding a constitutive view propose that doing is part of knowing and focus on the content of cognition (Tversky & Hard, 2009). Most researchers however argue for a causal role of doing in knowing and hence highlight the process of cognition. They either emphasise constraints that physical experience places on cognitive processing (Citron & Goldberg, 2014; Pezzulo, Barsalou, Cangelosi, Fischer, McRae & Spivery, 2011) or stress the possibility of cognitive processing through only physical experiences and without representational mediations (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1992).

As Dinsmoor (1999) rightly pointed out, many cognitive researchers at the time did not fundamentally differ from behaviourists given that the empirical facts they study are essentially behavioural by nature, be it attention, perception or problem solving. Aiming at reconciling body

and mind, embodiment researchers maintain the causal effect of sensory and motor experiences on cognition, however they move even closer to behaviourists in practice. Cognition became an intermediate factor between behaviours, but not the decisive factor of behaviour following this logic.

Relying solely on cognitive processing to predict human behaviour is a regression rather than a progress, in the sense that it further excludes mind/thinking from body/doing and widens the gap between body and mind. Some researchers even advocate "the use of cognitive robotics to implement embodiment" to build computational models of cognition (Pezzulo, Barsalou, Cangelosi, Fischer, McRae & Spivery, 2011, p.1). The problem of this approach lies in its confusion of 'what to know' with 'how to know', in other words, content with process. By stressing practice as a function of cognitive processing which is generated by physical experiences, it collides with behaviourism. Also, by identifying physical experiences as the determinant of cognitive processing, it renders human behaviour reactive.

Nevertheless, human behaviour is less a passive reaction to physical experiences or the physical world, than a result of the intentional mind in most circumstances. For this reason, it is more meaningful to study cognitive content than processing. And the current research provides a strong piece of evidence to support this view. Citizenship guides Chinese peasants' political actions, not as an abstract concept, but as concrete representations. Their political practices are in line with specific rights and duties and so are their political struggles. The fact that villagers' civic practice is in line with representational content manifests the framing effect of knowledge on practice. Therefore, to predict behaviour, cognitive content deserves as much, if not more, attention as cognitive processing.

7.2.1.1.4 Doing and Knowing: Political Implications

The interdependence of doing and knowing and of body and mind showed in this research proves the mistake of separating body from mind in social psychological research. The findings *per se* are by no means original, but the political implications are alarming. Despite the knowledge, a separation view still dominates the modern world and guides modern society. The pervasive economic logic of cost and benefit across the world is essentially premised on rationality: 'cold' logical thinking. The danger of this trend is, not so much in logical thinking itself but in the pure rational governance it results. In this system, lay people can be systematically discriminated against and deprived of voice and of the right to substantive political participation.

The rule of a pure old rationality can result in incorrect decisions. More dangerous is the fact that major decisions in this system may bear upon no personal physical experiences, but rather solely made out of logical inferences, which can produce humanitarian disasters. The devastating social repercussions of logical decisions have been repeatedly proved throughout human history, and

especially in World War II (Arendt, 1968; Bauman, 2000). An entirely rational government in effect produces institutional discrimination of all kinds. Due to its scientific authority, they are often accepted by people without being questioned and challenged. And politicians can easily shift responsibilities when things go wrong, excusing their fault as simply following scientific practice.

It is precisely the 'cold' logical reasoning that gave rise to the popular political discourse that Chinese peasants are incapable of democratic practice as they are not intellectually prepared. The current research debunked this political myth by showing rural residents' systematic civic practice in spite of poor formal knowledge about citizenship. It leaves no logical excuse for politicians who oppose rural democratisation.

Also, SRs of citizenship in rural China showed that social life and society is a major origin of knowledge. The village self-governance policy originated from the rural tradition of community autonomy, which was invented by people. Ruling solely by logical reasoning not only risks the danger of grave mistakes, but also strangles social creativity. An integration of thinking and doing/mind and body is indeed pressing for both scientific research and modern political governance that is largely informed by science.

7.2.1.2 Attitude-Behaviour Discrepancies and Tolerance for Inconsistency

Chapter 6 demonstrates huge attitude-behaviour discrepancies with regard to citizenship in rural Chinese society. Political self-concept discrepancies have given rise to strong political dissatisfaction and generated much tension within individuals, which in turn has produced large-scale active political struggles. Also civic virtues variables could not predict people's daily political practice. For many years researchers have been puzzled by the fact that extensive political dissatisfaction in rural China did not lead to antagonism towards the regime, and that rural residents were instead strongly supportive of the central government. Outside observers speculated that the tension was relieved by the central government making scapegoats of local leaders.

There is some truth in that, but it certainly is not the main reason. First, villagers' gratitude towards the government for improving their life quality was earnest and the government's performance is widely acknowledged across the country. Secondly, there are strong institutional support for rural residents' rights practice, but most people stopped at complaining and seldom put up a fight, even when they perceived a gap between the reality and the normative. Living with severe cognitive dissonance is a common practice in rural China.

7.2.1.2.1 Culture and Inconsistency Tolerance: Hierarchical Thinking and the *Guanxi* Principle

Regarding tolerance of dissonance, Festinger (1957) attributes this to individual traits and proposes that people with higher tolerance for cognitive dissonance can deal better with inconsistency. It is however wrong to assume this individual trait to be a collective trait shared among Chinese peasants. For one thing, to infer from the individual level to the group level arrives at an ecological error. For another, tolerance is certainly not a static trait of personality and rural residents' tolerance to political transgression was decreasing rapidly. The reason for change is in effect more politically implicated.

Later, researchers found that cognitive dissonance can only motivate attempts for change when inconsistency threatens the self (Steele, 1988). In other words, inconsistency would not suffice active actions if not of personal importance. Nevertheless, rights practice certainly concerns each and every rural resident and it is immediately related to self-efficacy and subjective wellbeing as was shown in their accounts. Explaining the high tolerance for political inconsistency with individual relevance is apparently incorrect.

There is also evidence for the correlation between attitude and belief in inconsistency tolerance, which can be regarded as the earliest cultural explanation (Silverman, 1971). The most popular cultural explanation for dissonance tolerance however is Peng and Nisbett's (1999) propose of dialectical thinking. According to them, people in Eastern countries or Confucian-influenced societies have a higher tolerance for contradictions because of the dialectical aspect of their culture. This view of cultural distinctiveness however was rendered obsolete by more recent research on multicultural minds. The assumption is that modern people often have more than one cultural schema in their cultural toolkit in the contemporary world of extensive cultural exchanges. Numerous studies have shown that people are able to flexibly switch between cognitive styles in different situations and these cognitive styles were believed to be cultural specific in the past (Hong, Morris & Chiu, 2000). A cultural explanation for contradiction tolerance hence is not the most appropriate.

Here, I do not challenge the validity of Peng and Nisbett's research, and do not argue against the relationship between dialectical thinking and contradictions tolerance. It is true that dialectical thinking is deep-rooted in Chinese culture. Nevertheless, an important discovery in rural communities is that there were no dialectic views about villagers' low political status and people perceived rights violations evil and unjust, which made the cultural explanation irrelevant. Also important is the fact that Chinese peasants have become less and less tolerant towards political irresponsiveness. They might not take radical actions but their critiques were open and harsh. Dialectical thinking cannot explain the collective decrease of inconsistency tolerance.

The cultural factors contributed to the decreased political tolerance, but the specific element was not dialectical thinking, but hierarchical thinking and the cultural imperative of keeping good *Guanxi* with people. These two cultural values are fundamentally discursive and contradict the equality principle of citizenship but were often more influential in rural China in comparison with the latter. Refraining from action indeed gave rise to dissonance. Putting up a fight against the power or any acquaintance, however, could produce more discomfort and thus was more unbearable for many people because it fundamentally violates these deep-rooted values. Consequently, political actions were often only taken in extreme circumstances.

7.2.1.2.2 Institution and Inconsistency Tolerance: Encouraging and Inhibiting

Another determinant of inconsistency tolerance was also found in this research with official institutions. The fact that political actions have grown rapidly since the implementation of the village self-governance policy, suggests that institutional design plays a critical role in people's contradiction tolerance. Holding the attitude constant, tolerance for contradictions increases when institutional setups inhibit expressions, and decreases when institutions support expressions.

When referring to the past, rural residents expressed their satisfaction with the present. A clear line was drawn between the People's Commune time and the current village self-governance period. Villagers unanimously referred to the former as the past, and the latter as the present. Tremendous changes in political life were reported after the implementation of the policy, among which, an increased accessibility of local leaders and growing numbers of petitions. Apart from villagers' self-reporting, national statistics show an explosion of lawsuits in rural communities following rural democratisation and collective action also increased rapidly. Although villagers did not explicitly attribute these changes to the policy, they often mentioned that it was impossible in the past.

The major difference between the past and the present in political life is the political system. And the key difference between the people's commune system in the past and village self-governance now is that the latter introduced village elections which conferred real power to check village leaders' conduct by ordinary villagers. In commune time when there were no effective channels for protesting and petitioning, people had to live with inconsistencies because attempts to make a difference were unheeded. In contrast, since the adoption of the village self-governance policy and with institutional support for protests and petitions, villagers' tolerance for political contradictions has decreased rapidly and they are now overtly critical about politics even if their political actions remain conservative. And criticism is essentially an attempt to elicit change although it is not as obvious as more radical actions.

The institutional impact on people's political tolerance is vividly captured in participants' descriptions of their changes in feelings when speaking to political leaders. Most people said that

nobody dared to speak to political leaders in the past, however, now, not only talking to leaders is less stressful but also overt critiques against them is acceptable. Nevertheless, it is clear that the efficacy of institutional support for people's rights practice is still far from satisfaction. Many people stopped at criticism because they believed that active action is futile. Changes in political dynamics resulted from institutional changes has proved that governmental establishments or top-down influences are critical for people's tolerance to political contradictions by constraining or enabling their tolerance expression.

7.2.1.2.3 Individual Traits and Inconsistency Tolerance: Relevance and Political Motivation

Within the institutional constraints, with regard to what forms of action people would take if they tried to make changes, evidence suggests the relevance of Steele's theory (Steele, 1988). Most people would take radical actions only if their self-interests were severely violated. Meanwhile, political motivation fundamentally determines what is relevant to people.

Chapter 6 shows the predominance of the economic logic in villagers' political life. Political decisions were often made on a cost and benefit basis rather than their beliefs in civic virtues. This explains why attitudes failed to predict civic participation. This finding provokes thinking about the attitude-behaviour research. To account for the attitude-behaviour gap, some researchers attribute it to low correspondence between attitudinal and behavioural entities (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) and some others blamed the limitation of traditional measures (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

Measurement techniques were thus developed and an implicit attitudes measurement was subsequently devised (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998), the validity of which however has been controversial (Cunningham, Preacher & Banaji, 2001; Nosek, Hawkins & Frazier, 2000) and its predictive validity on behaviour remains low (Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann & Banaji, 2009). A recommendation was made to use explicit attitude and implicit attitude in combination for a behavioural prediction (ibid), the validity of which is yet to be known and I suspect would be volatile based on the current research findings. What predicts behaviour more accurately is, not the attitudes towards the specific subject concerned, implicit or explicit, but the actors' motivation.

In rural China, what overwhelmingly determined people's political behavioural patterns within the specific institutional setting was economic calculation, rather than their attitudes towards civic virtues. Although implicit attitudes were not measured, an implicit attitude measurement could barely change the conclusion; looking at attitude for explanations for behaviour is misleading at the first place. Indeed, there can be close relationships between attitude and behaviour if the attitude measured corresponds to motivation.

7.2.1.2.4 Pholyphasic Discourses and Inconsistency Tolerance: Choosing between Competing Discourses

Besides the relatively stable cultural and individual traits within the given institutional environment, inconsistency tolerance has much to do with the existence of polyphasic discourses and the dynamic psychosocial factor of social identity. The fact that villagers' political actions were often interests-oriented rather than morality-oriented shows that apart from normative discourses, economic discourses became popular in rural communities and people were comfortable to express it behaviourally and verbally.

Also, the growing number of political actions defending self-interests proves the legitimisation of the individuality discourse in communist China. The increasing individual and collective actions to protect collective interests from governmental transgressions demonstrate the change in political discourse. Political authorities stopped being unchallengeable in contemporary China. Defending individual rights and interests has gained a momentum in the country's marketisation and globalisation. It was under the background of polyphasic discourses that attitude-behaviour discrepancies occurred.

Meanwhile, because of the polyphasic characteristics of the discursive system, discrepancy tolerance increased. While the discourse of individual rights and interests were becoming popularised, collective interests and submission to authorities remained strong in China. Subsequently, discrepancies between political self-concepts seldom drove active actions to bridge the gaps because there co-existed contradictory discourses. It is important to note that contradictory discourses are fundamentally different from Peng and Nisbett's (1999) dialectical thinking. The former emphasises conflicts and the latter stresses interdependence and interchangeability.

7.2.1.2.5 Multiple Social Identities and Inconsistency Tolerance: Shifting between Group Identities

Polyphasic discourses are directly associated with multiple group identities, which also function as an antidote to inconsistency. Social identity is both enabling and disabling. In rural China, civic identity is the legal base for villagers' pursuit for individual rights and interests. In the meantime, modern people possess more than one group membership and norms of different groups can be contradictory. Villagers while are citizens are also families, friends and acquaintances. The rules governing public life is not the same as the rules governing private life. And rules of these two spheres can contradict one another and public life can often collide with private life.

When private life is valued more than public life, one may prioritise group memberships important for private life and stick to the corresponding group norms/discourses. In such circumstances, political self-concept inconsistency would not produce sufficient anxiety to motivate

political action. For instance, one may forsake civic pursuits for the sake of keeping good private relations. Anxiety resulting from political self-concept inconsistency can be alleviated by the comfort of taking other more subjectively significant roles.

In addition to the function as an anxiety buffer, social identity is in effect also a self-protection mechanism. Under institutional constraints, assuming social identities that are less threatening, is more practical for individuals and can protect people from devastating consequences of living with inconsistency. Anxieties resulting from inconsistency in one arena can be counteracted or reduced by comforts attained from fulfilling obligations encompassed in other group identities. All in all, multiple society identities increase inconsistency tolerance.

7.2.1.2.6 Knowledge Deficiency and Inconsistency Tolerance: Passive Endurance

Another factor influencing inconsistency tolerance in this research is insufficient knowledge. Knowledge deficiency limits people's civic practice and disempowers people. It is highly related to low self-efficacy, and also lacking information of rights protection has discouraged villagers' active pursuits for individual rights and interests. Lacking citizenship knowledge, Chinese peasants have effectively forsaken many of their legal rights. They have been forced to endure rights' violations, because they were not well informed of the official protesting and petitioning channels. Passive endurance in return has disheartened people in their pursuit for lawful rights and interests, and also disengaged people from political participation. Moreover, it may produce more political dissatisfaction and political self-concepts discrepancies, which could give rise to more dissonance within individuals, further endangering people's subjective wellbeing.

Knowledge is indeed not a premise for democratic practice as has been discussed previously. Nevertheless, it moderates civic participation. Well-informed citizens are more likely to actively participate in politics and be more able to protect their rights and interests, not only because they know their entitlements, but also because they know how to effectively protect them. On the contrary, ill-informed citizens are less likely to actively engage in politics and to defend individual rights and self-interests. Lacking citizenship knowledge ultimately prevents people from active political participation and hampers people's pursuit for legal rights and interests. Conceivably, it is positively associated with inconsistency tolerance. Meanwhile, it should be noted that informing citizens of their rights and duties is the government's responsibility. In this sense, the knowledge issue is in effect an issue of institution.

7.2.1.3 Summary: Psychosocial Factors and Institutional Scaffolding for Political Actions

The above discussion has reviewed discrepancies at various levels found in this research and considered theoretical and political implications. Rural Chinese residents' high inconsistency

tolerance was found to be related to both psychosocial and institutional factors. Overall, the institutional scaffolding shaped people's political behaviour. It was the institutional design of citizenship and its social representations that motivated villagers' political activities. Meanwhile, it was also the flawed institutions, including the insufficient enforcement of the village self-governance policy and the inadequate civic education that constrained their political practice.

Within institutional settings, social psychological factors heavily influence people's civic practice. The cultural factors of hierarchical thinking and the *guanxi* logic at the social level, social identity at the group level and motivation at the intra-individual level all account for villagers' high inconsistency tolerance in political life. All these factors are closely related to the polyphasic discursive system in rural China.

Reflections on discrepancies in SRs of citizenship help demystify the political discourse of democracy *equals* high education. They also shed light on relationships between doing and thinking as well as between body and mind in social scientific research and political governance.

7.2.2 Anchoring A New Concept in Knowledge Encounter

An investigation of social re-presentation of 'citizenship' in rural China inevitably invites the question of how anchoring a concept in a drastically different social and cultural environment is possible. The answer that the current research provided is firstly a discursive foundation and secondly embodied practice.

Theoretically, anchoring requires corresponding schemata in the existing cognitive world (Higgins, 1996). Moreover, anchoring is only possible when the new concept is not entirely contradictory to the existing knowledge system. Indeed, citizenship is an alien concept to Chinese society and there is political resistance to this concept in China. Nevertheless, in spite of the specific name of the concept, certain elements of the concept of citizenship can be found in historical traditions in China. First, the principle of universal equality has existed in China for thousands of years, although it has never been the predominant discourse. Second, there is a huge presence of the democracy discourse in communist China, although the connotation of democracy is not entirely the same as that in the liberal sense. Third, more specific content of citizenship is reflected in the rural tradition of community autonomy and it is the evolved version of village self-governance now. Empirical evidence show that they function as the anchors for citizenship. Anchoring a concept in a foreign environment is premised on the existence of discourses that are akin to the concept.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that anchoring an alien concept is not solely about conceptual compatibility and adaptability. Even if the concept is relevant to people's daily life, it shall only remain abstract and thus meaningless if it is not used by people. Another critical step that has made social re-presentation possible is concretising the concept. In Moscovici's (2001) theorisation of

social re-presenting, the concretising process is objectification, which happens mainly through communication. Objectification is depicted as a process of knowledge transformation and of imbuing the abstract with accessible concretes (Staerklé, 2011), which then is associated with institutionalisation. This process as theorised happens through public communications.

The current research however found that public communication is not the premise of objectification, and objectification is in effect based on embodied practice. With regard to social re-presentation of citizenship in rural China, public communications were absent. The concept of citizenship nonetheless was adopted by rural society. Empirical evidence shows that what made social re-presentation possible without public communications is the shared embodied practice. All understandings about citizenship, the name of which though might not be known to people were proved to be grounded in people's daily political practice. Participants could only recall rights or duties they exercised.

The fact that many people did not know the concept of citizen, but were aware of, and regularly exercised, citizenship rights and obligations proves the close connection between embodied practice and social re-presentation. The lag between practice and ideas demonstrates that objectification occurred before anchoring in the social representational process of citizenship. Conceivably, anchoring an alien concept would be impossible if introduced in name only. It is more so when even the name of the concept is not properly introduced to people. Under such conditions, a concept can only penetrate people's mind when it is instantiated with embodied practice and only when it is aligned with physical experiences; then a concept can become relevant and accessible to people. Only after the embodied concretisation can the process of anchoring succeeded, i.e. find the concept a match in the pre-existing knowledge system.

Institutions are found to play an important role in concretising a concept in this research. They standardise and routinise people's physical experiences, allowing the possibility of consensus without public discussion. In rural China, villagers exercise the same rights and duties by law. They were able to form some common views about citizenship even when the concept was barely talked about because most physical experiences regarding citizenship were shown to be widely shared. And these widely shared experiences were the premise of the social representational process of citizenship. This research finds that in transmitting a foreign concept, embodied practice is the key to the social representational process and institutions facilitate the processes through regulating practices.

7.2.3 Knowledge Encounter and the Transformation of Hegemonic Representations

Besides the two major issues, the current research provides evidence for thinking about the change of hegemonic representations into polemic and emancipatory representations. The transmission of new ideas from one society to another is found to be an important driver for transformation.

In rural China, the supreme nature of political power had been a hegemonic representation governing political life. Constrained by this representation, people's political actions to stand up the government barely exist. With the introduction of the concept of citizenship, the equality principle was popularised, leading the absolute authority of the government into question. The hegemonic representation became controversial and changed into polemic representations. Subsequently, people's political actions surged. This change was brought about by the transmission of the new concept of citizenship in the encounter between Chinese and Western knowledge.

Conceivably, a society governed by homogeneous norms could seldom initiate changes from inside. Changes are usually only possible when new ideas that encompass distinctive values are introduced into a community. The transmission of new ideas and values may break the balance of the existing discursive system, making alternatives thinkable and communicable. Subsequently, hegemonic representations are challenged by new ideas and become polemic and even emancipatory. In sum, the transformation of hegemonic representations is grounded on the diversity of discourse in the social world and is driven by knowledge transmission.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter reviews the empirical investigations and discusses findings of this research in light of the literature. From the empirical findings, a triad model of social representation, social identity and discourse is derived, which is applicable for studying citizenship representations in any social and political setting, because it takes into account the impact of not only state and society but also market. The discussion involves both specific issues in SRT and some other issues in social psychology and consideration is also given to the general relationship between structure and human agency. It highlights discourse, institution and social identity in the social representational process of citizenship while considering political implications.

Towards A Comprehensive Understanding of Citizenship Dynamics: A Triad Model of Social Representation, Social Identity and Discourse

Over the years, researchers have accumulated a large evidence base of citizenship phenomena in China, and there have been reports on the increasing citizenship awareness in rural China. The surging collective actions and social movements in the country have attracted much governmental and scholarly attention. Also, a large number of political actions have occurred in rural China. Researchers routinely looked for reasons at the macro-level while overlooking the micro-level dynamics; contextual specificities are often lost in the macro approach. Focusing on human agency and taking also social contexts into consideration, this research demonstrates the social psychological mechanism behind citizenship phenomena, while illuminating the political future of rural China.

As an attempt to articulate different levels of explanation in investigating citizenship awareness in rural China, within the social representational framework, this project combines social psychological theories at various levels and brings together sociological, political and economic insights to achieve explanatory breath and depth. In accordance with the integrative trail and to ensure validity and reliability, this project employs multiple research methods to try to attain qualitative richness and quantitative conciseness. A comparative field design was planned in consideration of the significant diversity in China and for the purpose of greater generalisability. The selection of sites based on communities' openness/closure to the outside world, which largely overlaps the modernisation level, is intended to achieve some degree of prediction, because modernisation is an unavoidable trend that inevitably results in increased opening up. Findings of the present research contribute to a wider reflection at the empirical, theoretical and methodological levels.

1. Social Representations of Citizenship in Rural China

Overall, this research finds that citizenship as social representations have forged Chinese peasants' political mindedness and driven vibrant citizenship phenomena. The impact of external influences on social representations of citizenship suggests that in time modernisation will minimise regional differences.

1.1 Increasing Citizenship Awareness: Empowered Peasants and Structural Affordance/Constraints

Results show a growing citizenship awareness in rural China in general. Despite lacking formal knowledge of citizenship, rural residents regularly exercised certain civic rights and duties. They

valued all civic virtues in general, although they originate in the different spheres of state, society and market. However, they valued endogenous virtues and thought more highly of cultural virtues than normative virtues than democratic virtues.

In spite of the high degree of convergence, differences existed in SRs of citizenship between the closed community and other communities and the distinction between ordinary villagers and village leaders is considerable. People in the most closed community demonstrated less susceptibility to external influence and regarded normative values less highly. In comparison with the most open community, they also thought less highly of democratic values. Nevertheless, their adherence to traditional cultural values did not differ from others. The commonness and specificity of SRs of citizenship across communities supported the hypothesis that exposure to external influence indeed have an impact on social re-presentation and illustrated a knowledge-encountering process and a time lag of knowledge transmission. Given the strong top-down ideological construction and the widely-shared strong economical drive which leads rural communities eagerly to connect to the outside world, it is tempting to think that cross-regional differences shall be minimised in time due to the modernisation process.

Meanwhile, although village leadership did not distinguish people in their normative evaluations of civic virtues, this group membership was found to have heavily influenced people's perception of, and practice around, citizenship. Firstly, village leaders generally had more citizenship knowledge than ordinary villagers. Secondly, they were largely perceived to be privileged in rights practice both in terms of extent and depth. In addition, the village-leaders' group was often blamed for ordinary villagers' poor political status by hampering their rights practice. In contrast with ordinary villagers who perceived huge differences in rights practice between village leaders and themselves, village leaders largely dismissed this gap. Consequently, antagonism for the leaders group was often intense in rural communities not only because of the perceived intergroup differentiation, but perhaps more importantly because that this gap was intentionally ignored by the privileged and was being reproduced if not enlarged. On the other hand, evidence shows that structural constraints, i.e. the unbalanced power structure and the insufficient implementation of citizenship policies also accounted for the differentiated rights practice and intergroup antagonism. Except for group identity, age and education were found to be influential on the 'good' citizen representations too.

Evidence suggests that state, society and market have significantly influenced the social representational process of citizenship through discursive construction. Nevertheless, they played different roles at different stages of social re-presentation. The state initiated the process by introducing this concept into rural society and implemented a village self-governance policy to concretise the concept. In the absence of information, people anchored this foreign notion in their knowledge system by aligning the concept with their embodied practice. The country's

marketisation has accelerated and channelled this process by popularising the economic logic, and concomitantly the universal equality principle. A shift of the grand narrative from prioritising collective interests to also valuing individual interests was found in the study and which is likely to be set off in the process of marketisation. Along with the discursive shift is reconfiguration of social relations. Embodied practice and embodied representations were found to be critical for anchoring new ideas in a drastically different social and cultural setting.

Finally, citizenship as social representations is consequential. In practising village self-governance, people were introduced to certain substantive rights and in struggling and negotiating with the power class they learnt that certain principles are worthy fight for and formed beliefs about their civic entitlements. Also in this process, people learnt to use resources available to fight for their self-interests. The formation of SRs of citizenship changed people's political beliefs, which in turn drove large-scale civic practice. Normative citizenship is no longer a mere frame of civic practice. It has become the legal basis that people use to defend their rights and interests too. Evidence suggests that perceived discrepancies between subjective citizenship and normative, as well as ideal citizenship, had produced political self-concept discrepancies, which motivated people to take action to make changes.

Another finding worth mention is that it appeared that structural constraints determined people's political expression. Evidence shows that decisions for action or inaction usually depended on the institutional support available for civic pursuits. Meanwhile, while official institutions largely determined political expressions at the social level, intra-individual psychological factors governed individual expressions more specifically. With the structural constraints, people were more likely to react only to violations of immediate self-interests. Between institution and individual psychology, there were also cultural and social identity mechanisms involved in civic practice. The cultural tradition of hierarchical thinking and the *guanxi* principle in social relations were shown to confine people's active political fights. In the meantime, all political struggles were in effect based on people's assumption of a civic identity, which was considered as enormously empowering as Participant Y explicitly stated and consequently this identity is used as a discursive tool in people's rights claims.

1.2 Citizenship as Social Representations: Transforming the Political Mindset in Rural China
In sum, evidence suggested that the West-originated concept of citizenship has taken root in rural Chinese communities despite political and cultural incompatibility and despite the absence of public communication. It was also found that citizenship as social representations is empowering and emancipatory and it has brought about tremendous changes in Chinese peasants' political life. For those who are familiar with Chinese history, the extent to which the concept of citizenship is a

Western import might be arguable. Indeed, the first introduction of citizenship into China was indebted to the Japanese mediation. Nevertheless, the connotation of citizenship nowadays has become quite distinct from then and bears significant Western characteristics due to historical and political reasons.

Historically, before the exact concept of citizenship was transmitted from Japan to China, there were massive discussions about democracy among the then Chinese intellectuals. The intellectuals' enthusiasm for democracy compelled high demands for bringing in related thoughts, leading to the concept of citizenship being introduced to the country. The concept of democracy however was brought from the UK, and the translated works on democracy were widely read and inspired generations of political elites at the time (Zhang, 2001). Among them is Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of People's Republic of China who proposed the Three Principles of People — nationalism, democracy (his exact expression is "*minquan*"/civic rights), and the people's livelihood. Citizenship as a basic component of his political philosophy was lived out to some extent during the republic era but its impact was largely confined within urban areas and hardly reached rural China. Admittedly, his political philosophy was developed during his stay in Japan, yet it would be wrong to assume that it lacks a Western perspective (Qian, 1988). Moreover, his political thinking ceased to be influential in contemporary China although it has fundamentally changed the country. After the establishment of the communist China, political institutions embodying his political visions including the ones aiming at raising people's citizenship consciousness were abandoned. Since then, the communist ideology dominated the Chinese society. Political legacies from that time gradually disappear with the demise of the Republic and the old generations of political elites. Topics about democracy became a taboo for a long period of time in the country out of political concerns.

It was not until China's opening-up in 1979 that this concept and the related idea of citizenship re-entered the Chinese society. Although they are still intentionally understated in the mainstream discourse and are not overtly discussed even by political elites like in the past, democratic ideas that advocate a liberal sense of citizen have reached beyond the intellectual to the public this time, giving rise to the current surges of rights claims. Citizenship phenomena in contemporary China in effect are characterised by distinct Western liberal thinking. On the one hand, people gradually awoke to individual rights, which distinguishes the current citizenship from Sun Yat-sen's conception. Incorporated the Confucius value of benevolence, he believed that serving others instead of scheming for personal interests is the basic principle of practising democracy/civic rights (Sun, 2001).

On the other hand, a new type of political relationship between people and the political power begins to take shape with the public's increasingly louder call for justice. People started to

challenge the authorities on legal grounds, seeking for more power in the face of the political authority. This has brought about power reconfiguration in China. Although the state undoubtedly still dominates the country's politics, a more equal relationship between the government and its people is forming. All these changes are essentially facilitated by the country's marketisation, and individual interests are augmented in this process. Consequently, individual rights that protect self-interests became unprecedentedly pronounced in the Chinese society. These changes links citizenship in contemporary Chinese to the West. For one thing, a relative equal relationship between state and society is the foundation of modern citizenship conceived in Western liberal cultures; and for another, an emphasis on individuality is the basic characteristics of liberal Western citizenship.

What should be also noted is the fact that village self-governance is often taken as the Chinese government's democratic move to pacify the West and it strictly takes after the Western political design (He & He, 2002; Li, 2003). It was this practice that liberated Chinese peasants' political imagination and raised their citizenship awareness. In sum, from historical and political perspectives, citizenship in contemporary China barely resumed its historical tradition. It is in effect mostly affected by the country's recent opening-up and by the Western liberal ideology that comes along with the country's marketisation. In this sense, it is more of a Western import than others.

The transmission of the West-originated concept of citizenship into China has three significant social impacts. Firstly, it transformed people's political mindset and thawed the previously hegemonic political representation of the supreme of the political authority. Universal equality became another important principle guiding people's political practice. The popularisation of this principle has encouraged political engagement and active actions. Secondly, citizenship as a concrete official institution has enabled people. It protects people's rights and interests and the law-protected civic practice has forced official responsiveness. Thirdly, the implementation of citizenship policies has facilitated the growth of civil society by empowering people. As a result, the dynamics between society and state have changed and the social structure is being flattened. A more balanced power structure in return shall bring about more active political participation.

Overall, citizenship as social representations has transformed Chinese peasants' political mindset and inspired large-scale civic practice, bringing about a power reconfiguration in rural society. Although active political fights are still uncommon, the country's further marketisation and the fast pace of globalisation shall inevitably lead to more stress placed upon individual rights and interests, which may potentially result in more active political participation and more assertive rights claims. Due to the fact that SRs of citizenship in rural China are grounded within people's political experiences, they are indeed embodied representations.

Currently, SRs of citizenship have political rights at the core and were more often recalled and more earnestly requested. Asking for more empowerment however was essentially driven by the need for self-interest protection. Therefore, social representations of citizenship in effect centre on a dyad of political rights and individual rights and interests. In principle, Chinese citizenship can be categorised as the communitarian. In reality however, the participants in this research showed that collective interests were no longer valued more than individual interests although they were not valued less verbally. In this sense, subjective citizenship in rural China was neither communitarian nor liberal, but more republican.

2. Contributions and Limitations

Findings of this project mainly contribute to literature of China studies, citizenship studies and social representation studies. The research design of this project provokes methodological thinking about SR and multidisciplinary research. As a bold attempt to integrate levels of explanation and multidisciplinary insight, this project suffers from inevitable limitations.

2.1 Empirical Implications and Limitations

Empirically, this project provides important evidence for understanding citizenship awareness and citizenship phenomena in rural China. The research findings also shed light on the political future of Chinese rural society and also illuminate policy-making.

Firstly, this project provides a comprehensive description of citizenship awareness in vast rural China, attending to a significant missing piece within Chinese citizenship studies. Departing from previous studies, this research prioritises a bottom-up approach and a societal perspective. Citizenship awareness was not examined from the perspective of effective governance or the angle of policy evaluation, but was researched through the social representations inside people's minds and embodied in their actions.

A description of subjective citizenship with reference to normative citizenship and with consideration of contextual factors better captures the citizenship reality on the one hand, and an emphasis on subjective citizenship is more politically significant on the other because it highlights people. And political developments can only be achieved through deep understandings of people's political status and demands.

Secondly, in addition to a deep description of the political status quo, this project presents a dynamic picture of citizenship phenomena in rural China. By demonstrating the underlying social psychological mechanisms, this research sheds light on the political future in rural China. Citizenship as social representations has harnessed Chinese peasants' political mindedness,

liberated people's imagination for a better political life and driven large-scale political engagements in rural society.

With the concept of citizenship being further socially represented, people will conceivably become more persistent, assertive and skilful in rights defence and legal pursuits. They are likely to become more ready to act as a citizen but not a subject in political participation and actions, and their enhanced political participation will inevitably result in further power reconfiguration in rural areas. This shall lead to a growth of civil society and Chinese peasants will become more empowered in the face of the state power as a result. Nevertheless, the important role of institutions in people's political expression and hence in their subsequent political behaviour shall not be forgotten. However, it is the same important to know that imaginations once set free can never be retained. Even if there is some institutional regression, it unlikely will change the trajectory of rural democratisation with the growth of civil society and the country's irreversible marketisation. Rural democratisation shall only proceed, but not retrogress, even if there might be some stagnancy.

Thirdly, this project produces important findings that illuminate policy-making. The fact that Chinese peasants are capable of democratic practice and political reasoning in spite of a poor education has debunked the political myth that democracy is a privilege of the intellectual. The research shows that what is crucial for democracy is not intellectual capacity but institutional establishments. By institutionalising people's political practices, official institutions foster people's citizenship awareness and develop their democratic habits and political skills. Currently however, policy implementation is rather insufficient, which has resulted in political tension in rural China. To reduce intergroup antagonism between ordinary villagers and village leaders, it is important to reinforce policy implementation.

This research also finds that lacking formal knowledge of citizenship is a common social phenomenon, and the pilot study in urban cities finds that a deficiency of formal knowledge is not unique to rural China. The consequence was shown to be devastating. It limited people's political practice and disengaged people from politics. More importantly, it disabled people from defending and pursuing their lawful rights, producing enormous frustrations and anxieties within people.

Citizenship as a politically sensitive concept in China has been largely understated out of wider political concern. The current research however shows that the transmission of citizenship did not create tensions between society and state. Instead, the social representational process of citizenship in rural China strengthened people's identification with the central government because of the increasing feeling of empowerment. Conceivably, equipping people with proper citizenship information shall only generate more positive feelings, which in return shall lead to people's further identification with their civic identity and the country. On the contrary, keeping citizenship information from people can only produce political dissatisfaction, and concomitantly lower

citizens' identification with their civic identity and the country. Civic education is a pressing political issue for both Chinese people and the Chinese government.

Focusing on citizenship awareness in rural China, this project however leaves a large proportion of Chinese peasants outside of the research scope: migrant workers who work and usually live in cities. Their political thinking and practice are conceivably different from those who live in villages due to their extensive exposure to urban influences and their inferior political status to urban residents in cities. Due to the difficulty in tracing this group and also because of the fact that they do not participate in rural politics, this group was not researched in the current project. As the boundary that is set for this project, the current research investigates only citizenship awareness in rural China but not Chinese peasants' citizenship awareness.

2.2 Theoretical Implications and Limitations

This project takes a social representation approach to researching citizenship awareness in rural China. Within the social representation framework, this research also draws on sociological, political and economic insights and articulates social identity theory and theories on discourse. Cognitive theories on dissonance and self-concept discrepancies were referred to in order to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the data. The current research informs SRT, citizenship studies and multidisciplinary research.

Firstly, aiming at constructing a social psychological model for citizenship studies, this research proposed a theoretical model of social representation which brings also together social identity and discourse based on empirical evidence. This model though grounded on social psychological theories, incorporates multidisciplinary insights. And the dynamics that this model captures is not limited to social psychological processes. The model reflects interactions between different forces, i.e. state, society and market at a macro-level. By treating these grand spheres as sources and resources of social thinking and operationalising them as specific discourses, this model achieves a certain degree of multidisciplinary breath and captures both bottom-up and top-down processes in citizenship phenomena.

As a trial to integrate SRT, SIT and theories of discourse in researching complex social phenomena, this model though rather underdeveloped, demonstrated some power and is shown to be feasible for researching. The model *per se* stresses social psychological dynamics at the societal level because citizenship phenomena are large-scale social processes, which cannot be explained by the individual psyche and the latter ultimately originates in the social psyche. Nevertheless, it is also true that individuals differ from one another in specific aspects, but the principles governing individual minds are the same. Incorporating cognitive theories at the individual level helps achieve a certain degree of depth and particularity that is often missing in theories such as SRT and SIT.

The integration attempt of this project shows the feasibility and power of articulating different levels of explanation in social psychological research on complex social processes. Multidisciplinary research appears to be possible provided a meticulous design and careful operationalisation.

Secondly, this project contributes to the development of SRT. It has discovered the reversed order of anchoring and objectification processes in social representational processes. This discovery opens up a new area for SR research. SRT can be applied to the research of social phenomena that involve few public communications. The finding that the ideational, behavioural and normative dimensions of SR can deviate from one another calls for independent investigations into different aspects of representations for a more full understanding.

This project also illuminates the social representational process in knowledge encounters. Research findings show that when a new idea is transmitted into a vastly different social setting, what is crucial for anchoring this new idea is not so much ideational, but rather an embodied practice. Anchoring 'citizenship' in rural China would be impossible without the village self-governance policy which has institutionalised villagers' civic practice.

Thirdly, this project compels further investigation about the general issue of the relationship between structure and agency in social psychological studies. This research finds a significant role of official institutions in social representational processes and in framing people's political thinking and action. Meanwhile, human agency does not simply react upon structural constraints but also actively acts against them. Therefore, comprehensive social psychological research on complex social phenomena requires a serious consideration of structural factors.

Despite the theoretical breath and depth this project has aimed to achieve, an integration project as this inevitably invites critiques for epistemological inconsistency and crude theoretical integration. The only defence of mine is that empirical richness is what I value more than others.

2.3 Methodological Implications and Limitations

Multiple methods of both qualitative and quantitative schools are adopted in this project to achieve methodological rigour and to generate richer data. The employment of multiple research methods as complementary elements and in order to triangulate data contributes to the methodological development of SR research and social psychological research more generally.

Firstly, contemporary SR researchers usually attend to only one aspect, or at the most two aspects, of SR. Qualitative approaches normally focus on the ideational dimension of SR aiming to provide deep descriptions of the construct of SR. Quantitative approaches on the other hand attend more to the normative side of representations. Behind it is the assumption that meta-system regulates system on a normative base. Discrepancies found among the three dimensions of SR however calls for the

employment of multiple research methods in SR studies because particular methods seldom elicit information about all aspects of SR.

Moreover, the fact that social representational processes occur even in the absence of public communications suggests an investigation into the behavioural dimension of SR, which has been largely overlooked in recent studies because SR research relies heavily, if not solely, on verbal accounts. Verbal accounts can hardly fully capture practice, let alone the issue of accuracy. To examine the behavioural dimension of SR, methods that deal with behaviours, such as observation, should be considered.

Secondly, the retroductive design of this project shows the importance of methodological triangulation in researching complex social processes. The whole project was developed gradually through the implementation of various research methods. Qualitative interviewing produced terms for use in the survey questionnaire and qualitative analyses produced hypotheses. The validity of data analysis is achieved through crosschecking data streams yielded by different methods and through model verification at each step of the research.

While the mixed-methods design of this project yielded some rich data and increased the validity and reliability of the research, the current study suffers from certain methodological limitations. Firstly, although efforts were made to control the effect inflicted by the interchange of terms, using "villager" and "Chinese person" as proxies for "citizen" unavoidably decreased the research validity. However, in the absence of linguistic familiarity, this is a trade-off worth risking given that there indeed are vibrant citizenship phenomena in rural China although the specific term of citizen/citizenship is not circulated in public communications.

Secondly, the discriminative power of the survey data is rather low. People expressed very similar views about most items. Two conceivable reasons can account for this. On the one hand, Chinese people are known to be insensitive to Likert scales. It might be related to the country's prevailing collective culture and most of the time people are obliged to conform to the mainstream opinions. Subsequently, their expressed attitudes are often the mainstream attitudes although they might be internalised as well. Especially in rural China, submission to the authority is still a predominant social norm. In this case, it should not be surprising that participants' opinions did not deviate much from one another. On the other hand, the possibility that their high consensus was resulted from their unfamiliarity with the topics discussed also exist, but the chance is likely to be small because people might express drastically different views as well. Nevertheless, this possibility cannot be ruled out. The remedy made for this uncertainty was a compensation of qualitative methods, considering there is no way to find out the extent to which the expressed opinions are genuine personal.

Another problem of the survey involves measurement. Although the reliability of the scales was tested in the pilot study, the external validity of certain scales in the questionnaire can be improved in the future. Certain items can be removed and some more contextual items can be added accordingly. Firstly, the knowledge issue exited here too. There are items that many people feel unable to answer due to their lack of knowledge and the low relevance of the questions with their daily life, such as questions involving procedural justice like whether there should be periodical elections in the central government. Secondly, certain items that touch upon the core of the problem under research were excluded from the scales due to political concerns. For example, research on people's understandings of democracy had to be presented as a matter of the state-society relationship. This shall unavoidably decrease the robustness of the research. Great efforts however had been made to construct non-alerting questions addressing the core principles of the topics under research. Unquestionably, more needs to be done and more can be done in the future.

3. Future Research Directions

This research has produced an integrative social psychological model of social representation, social identity and discourse to study citizenship. The model is important for citizenship studies in general, not only because of its capacity to produce deep descriptions about the status quo of citizenship, but also because of its predictive function. The dynamics captures by this model challenges the conventional psychological approach to citizenship. It shows that citizenship behaviour is not determined by stable cultural or individual characteristics, but is driven by social psychological processes at the societal level.

This model can be applied to research citizenship in other settings, including social settings and cooperative settings. Indeed, testing the validity of this model in different contexts is one of my personal future research goals. Another research ambition is to produce a full picture of Chinese citizenship. To achieve this goal, I shall include urban residents as well as migrant workers as my research samples.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Topic Guide   241

A. Questions about citizenship knowledge

Set 1.

a. Do you know about the term 'citizen'?

b. According to your knowledge, what is a 'citizen'?

c. What rights do citizens have?

d. What obligations do citizens have?

Or alternatively

Set 2.

a. What rights do villagers have?

b. What duties do villagers have?

B. Questions about participation in self-governance

Set 1. For ordinary villagers

a. Do you vote in village elections?

b. Do you read information posted on the village bulletin board?

c. Do you criticise or make suggestions to village leaders?

Set 2.

a. What was the voter turnout in the last election?

b. Do you ask for villagers' approval before conducting village projects?

c. Do many people read posters on the village bulletin board?

d. Do villagers often go to you or other village leaders with complaints or difficulties?

e. Are there cases of 'letters and visits' in your village?

Appendix 2

PEASANTS' SOCIAL PARTICIPATION SURVEY

1. CASE ID ___
2. PLACE
   County /Community _____
   Village Committee _____
3. Start from __/__(DD/MM)___:___ to __:__

INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING UNIT RESIDENT

  Hello, I'm Zhao Mi. I'm conducting my PhD research on peasants' civic participation. This survey is to learn about peasants' participation in and feelings about the village management, and also to learn about how peasants feel about some social issues. Your help is of special importance to my research.

  These questions have no right or wrong answers. You can decline to answer any question if topics are sensitive for you. Most participants find the survey to be interesting with a chance to talk about things that matter to them. The questionnaire takes from 20 to 60 minutes for most people. I can interview you if that will make it easier for you.

  Your participation is voluntary. However, all information that you provide will be kept in strict confidence in accordance with *Statistics Law of People's Republic of China*. All participants' answers are combined, and presented in the form of summary statistics, such as tables and graphs. You will receive a small gift for your participation. Thank you very much for your help!

SECTION ONE: VILLAGE SELF-GOVERNANCE

Q1. When was the most recent election in your village?   V1 [ ]
    1. 2010
    2. 2009
    3. 2008
    4. 2007
    5. 2006
    6. 2005
    7. Before 2004
    8. Don't remember

Q2. How were the candidates for the village committee in the most recent election nominated?   V2 [ ]
    1. Directly by villagers

2. By the election committee

3. By the villagers' group assembly

4. By the villagers' representative assembly

5. By the Party branch

6. By leaders of the above government

7. Don't know

Q3. In the most recent election, the election for the chairperson of the village committee was

_____   V3 [ ]

1. A contested election

2. A single-candidate election

3. Other（Please specify_____）

4. Don't know

Q4. In the most recent election, the election for members of the village committee was

_____   V4 [ ]

1. A contested election

2. A single-candidate election

3. Other（Please specify_____）

4. Don't know

Q5. Did you vote in the most recent election?   V5 [ ]

1. Yes

2. No

8. Don't remember

Q6. Were you engaged in one of the following activities in the most recent election?

		Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	V6
A	Attend pre-election meetings or meetings in which candidates are introduced	1	2	3	4	A [ ]
B	Nominate candidates	1	2	3	4	B [ ]
C	Lobby other villagers to attend pre- election meetings	1	2	3	4	C [ ]
D	Lobby other villagers to nominate someone as a candidate	1	2	3	4	D [ ]

E	Lobby other villagers to vote for (a) particular candidate(s)	1	2	3	4	E [ ]
F	Lobby other villagers not to vote for (a) particular candidate(s)	1	2	3	4	F [ ]
G	Criticise the election	1	2	3	4	G [ ]
H	Other (please specify------------ ----)	1	2	3	4	H [ ]

Q7. In your village, who makes the final decisions on important village affairs?　　　　V7 [ ]

    1. Party secretary

    2. Village Chair

    3. Party branch together with the village committee

    4. Villager representatives

    5. Villagers' assembly

    6. Don't know

Q8. If the Party secretary and the village chair committee disagree with each other in deciding particular village issues, who do you think shall make the final decision?　　　　V8 [ ]

    1. Party secretary

    2. Village Chair

    3. Whoever has a point

    4. Party branch together with the village committee

    5. Don't know

Q9. Will most other villagers agree with you on this?　　　　V9 [ ]

    1. Yes

    2. No

    3. Don't know

Q10. Compared with the old people's commune system, do you think the election is a better or a worse form of governance?　　　　V10 [ ]

    1. Better

    2. Not much different

    3. Worse

    4. Don't know

Q11. Please give the reason_____　　　　V11 [ ]

Q12. Do most other villagers think the same?   V12 [ ]

    1. Yes

    2. No

    3. Don't know

Q13. During the past three years, have you been engaged in one of the following activities? (Please choose as many as applicable)   V13 [a_|b_|c_|d_|e_|f_]

    1. View the messages posted on the village bulletin board (if you have, please specify the contents that you are interested in _____)

    2. Speak up to members of the Party branch or the village committee

    3. Speak up to the Party secretary or the chair of the village committee

    4. Enquire about village affairs with the villager representatives

    5. Enquire about village affairs with the village cadres

    6. Make suggestions to the villager representatives or members of the Party branch or the village committee about village affairs

    7. Make suggestions to the Party secretary or the chair of the village committee about village affairs

    8. Discuss village affairs with other villagers

    9. Make donations to or help in village projects, e.g. building roads, schools, recreation centres for the seniors, etc.

    10. Help other villagers with weddings, funerals, harvest among other things.

    11. Help look after the widowed, the left-behind elderly and the left-behind children in the village

Q14. With regard to the self-governance policy, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree the following statements.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	V14
A	It is NOT important to vote	1	2	3	4	5	A [ ]
B	Periodical elections of members of the Party branch and the village committee are Unnecessary	1	2	3	4	5	B [ ]
C	It is OK that the above governments nominate candidates	1	2	3	4	5	C [ ]

	for village elections						
D	ONLY prestigious people are eligible for self-nomination in village elections	1	2	3	4	5	D [ ]
E	It is OK that village cadres are appointed by the above governments	1	2	3	4	5	E [ ]
F	Periodical elections of villager representatives are unnecessary	1	2	3	4	5	F [ ]
G	Regular meetings of villager representatives are unnecessary	1	2	3	4	5	G [ ]
H	Party members should be given priority consideration for the position of the village chair	1	2	3	4	5	H [ ]
I	ONLY financially successful people can take the position of the village chair	1	2	3	4	5	I [ ]
J	Party members should be given priority consideration for the positions of members the village committee	1	2	3	4	5	J [ ]
K	Financially successful people should be given priority consideration for the positions of villager	1	2	3	4	5	K [ ]

	representatives						
L	Anyone with long-term inhabitancy, including immigrants and outcomers, is eligible to vote in the village election	1	2	3	4	5	L [ ]
M	Anyone with long-term inhabitancy, including immigrants and outcomers, is eligible to run for positions in the village committee	1	2	3	4	5	M [ ]
N	It is OK that only men vote in village elections	1	2	3	4	5	N [ ]
O	The state should control approvals for house sites for the purpose of the integrated rural development	1	2	3	4	5	O [ ]
R	Lineage influences village elections	1	2	3	4	5	R [ ]
S	Elections can produce leaders of proven ability and integrity	1	2	3	4	5	S [ ]
T	There is NO need to have female members in the village committee	1	2	3	4	5	T [ ]
U	There is No need to have student village officials in the village	1	2	3	4	5	U [ ]
V	There is NO need to	1	2	3	4	5	V [ ]

	establish a supervisory committee to oversee the village financial management						
W	There is NO need to establish sub-committees for people's mediation and public security	1	2	3	4	5	W [ ]

SECTION TWO: STATE AND SOCIETY

Q15. To ensure people respect the law, do you think the government have or have not the right to

		Yes	No	V15
A	Encourage people to obey the law	1	2	A [ ]
B	Educate people to obey the law	1	2	B [ ]
C	Use the police to maintain the social order	1	2	C [ ]
D	Punish people who break laws	1	2	D [ ]

Q16. In your opinion, what should be the priority of state policies?   V16[ ]
   1. Protecting individual interests
   2. Developing the country
   3. Both protecting individual interests and developing the country
   4. Don't know

Q17. Should people who disagree with the government on certain issues such as jobs, schooling, health care, housing, among other things

		Yes	No	V17
A	Be allowed to express their opinions in the media?	1	2	A [ ]

B	Be allowed to get together and protest?	1	2	B [ ]
C	Not be permitted to gather secretly?	1	2	C [ ]

Q18. If they should NOT be allowed to do one of the above things, please state your reason.　　　V18 [ ]

　　1．To prevent social disorder

　　2．To ensure good functioning of the government

　　3．Both 1 and 2

　　4．Other (please specify_____)

　　5．Don't know

Q19. Can competent office holders

		Yes	No	V19
A	Make policies and laws and regulations without obtaining the views of people?			A [ ]
B	Resort to the policy to ensure projects implementation?			B [ ]

Q20. Please indicate on the four-point scale the extent to which you agree or disagree the following statements.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	V20
A	It is NOT important to vote in elections for people's representatives	1	2	3	4	5	A [ ]
B	Periodical elections of people's representatives are NOT necessary	1	2	3	4	5	B [ ]
C	Periodical elections of state leaders are NOT necessary	1	2	3	4	5	C [ ]
D	Every citizen regardless of ethnicity and religion should vote	1	2	3	4	5	D [ ]

E	ONLY party members can take important offices in the central government	1	2	3	4	5	E [ ]
F	Non-Han ethnic members should NOT take important offices in the central government	1	2	3	4	5	F [ ]
G	Party members should NOT have religious beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	G [ ]
H	If a family does not have money to send its children to school, it is NOT the government's problem but is its own	1	2	3	4	5	H [ ]
I	If a person dies because he/she did not have enough money to pay appropriate health care, it is NOT the government's responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	I [ ]
J	Employment should NOT be based on ethnicity or Hukou but people's competence	1	2	3	4	5	J [ ]
K	University graduates themselves should be held responsible for their having difficulties in finding	1	2	3	4	5	K [ ]

	jobs						
L	A number of people are unable to find jobs because they are not competent	1	2	3	4	5	L [ ]
M	Schools in autonomous regions should NOT mix students of different ethnicities	1	2	3	4	5	M [ ]
N	Contact between ethnic groups should be avoided	1	2	3	4	5	N [ ]
O	Contact with people of different ethnicities and origins are inspiring	1	2	3	4	5	O [ ]
R	A diversity of ethnicities poses a threat to state stability	1	2	3	4	5	R [ ]
S	The state should have preferential policies on schooling, jobs, etc., for certain groups such as minority ethnic groups	1	2	3	4	5	S [ ]

Q21. Please indicate to what extent do you think the following features (civic virtues) are important for defining a person as a good Chinese?

		Very important	Fairly important	Not important enough	Not important at all	V21
A	Be a responsible worker	1	2	3	4	A [ ]
B	Defend the country when it is in danger	1	2	3	4	B [ ]

C	Be responsible to one's family	1	2	3	4	C [ ]
D	Be honest	1	2	3	4	D [ ]
E	Be a good neighbour	1	2	3	4	E [ ]
F	Be courteous	1	2	3	4	F [ ]
G	Tolerate people's thoughts and practices	1	2	3	4	G [ ]
H	Respect national symbols, such as the national flag and the national emblem	1	2	3	4	H [ ]
I	Pay taxes	1	2	3	4	I [ ]
J	Participate in elections for people's representatives	1	2	3	4	J [ ]
K	Keep oneself informed of current affairs in China	1	2	3	4	K [ ]
L	Obey the government	1	2	3	4	L [ ]
M	Obey the law	1	2	3	4	M [ ]
N	Involve oneself in community activities	1	2	3	4	N [ ]
O	Keep informed of international affairs	1	2	3	4	O [ ]
P	Solve conflicts with people peacefully	1	2	3	4	P [ ]
Q	Help the poor	1	2	3	4	Q [ ]
R	Protect the environment	1	2	3	4	R [ ]
S	Raise critical opinions and make suggestions to the government	1	2	3	4	S [ ]
T	Other (please specify_____)	1	2	3	4	T [ ]

SECTION THREE: KNOWLEDGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Q22. Please indicate how important/unimportant do you think the following features are for democracy

		Very important	Fairly important	Not important enough	Not important at all	Don't know	V22
A	The obligation for the	1	2	3	4	5	A [ ]

	government to obtain views of all citizens when making laws						
B	The obligation for the government to keep informed of the citizens' demands and requirements, including those of minority ethnicities	1	2	3	4	5	B [ ]
C	Equal rights for all citizens regardless of the ethnic or religious background	1	2	3	4	5	C [ ]
D	Equality before the law	1	2	3	4	5	D [ ]
E	Freedom of political beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	E [ ]
F	Freedom of religion	1	2	3	4	5	F [ ]
G	The government resolves political differences with opposing groups through open media discussions	1	2	3	4	5	G [ ]

Q23. Please indicate to what extent do you think the following situations are relevant to human rights.

		Extremely	Fairly	Not	Not	Don't	V23

		relevant	relevant	relevant enough	relevant at all	know	
A	Someone jailed without the possibility of defence	1	2	3	4	5	A [ ]
B	Parents physically punishing their children	1	2	3	4	5	B [ ]
C	Death by starvation	1	2	3	4	5	C [ ]
D	Police arresting adults and children	1	2	3	4	5	D [ ]
E	Child labour	1	2	3	4	5	E [ ]
F	People forbidden to practice certain religions	1	2	3	4	5	F [ ]
G	Parents obliging children to drop out of school to work	1	2	3	4	5	G [ ]
H	Jail because of protesting against the government	1	2	3	4	5	H [ ]
I	Parents demand their children follow their religious practices	1	2	3	4	5	I [ ]
J	People with contagious diseases are compelled to the hospital for treatment	1	2	3	4	5	J [ ]
K	Some people receive lower wages than others because of Hukou	1	2	3	4	5	K [ ]
K	Some people do not find suitable jobs to satisfy their basic needs	1	2	3	4	5	L [ ]
L	Children are not accepted in schools in urban areas because of Hukou	1	2	3	4	5	M [ ]
M	Peasants are not allowed to register urban Hukou	1	2	3	4	5	N [ ]
N	Women are disadvantaged in the job market	1	2	3	4	5	O [ ]

SECTION FOUR: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Q24. Sex   V24 [ ]

   1. Male   2. Female

Q25. Age   V25[_|_]

Q26. Educational attainment   V26 [ ]

   1. Barely read and write   2. Primary school

   3. Junior school   4. High school

   5. Secondary vocational school   6. College and above

Q27. Political affiliation   V27 [ ]

   1. Party member   2. League member

   3. No party affiliation   4. Member of non-Communist parties

Q28. Occupation _____   V28 [ ]

Q29. Have you worked outside the village?   V29 [ ]

   1. Yes   2. No

  If you have, for how long? _____

Q30. Are you current/Have you held any of the following offices? (choose as many as applicable)
    V30[a_|b_|c_|d_|e_]

 1. Party Secretary   2. Vice Party Secretary   3. Member of the Party branch

 4. Village Chair   5. Vice Village Chair   6. Member of the village committee

 7. Representative of the villagers teams or villagers representative

 8. Leader of the farmers' cooperative   9. Accountant   10. No position

Q31. Do you have a computer at home?   V31[ ]

   1. Yes   2. No

Q32. Do you have a car?   V32[ ]

   1. Yes   2. No

Q33. Do you watch TV?   V33[ ]

   1. Yes   2. No

  If you do, how often do you watch TV?_____

What programme(s) do you like to watch?_____

What do you like to do in your spare time?_____

Do you travel?_____ If you do, do you have specific place(s) that you want to go?_____

Q34. In the following situations, to whom will you turn for help?

		Family members or relatives	Neighbours	Senior people of the linage	Village cadres	Others	Don't know	V34
A	Family conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	A [ ]
B	Neighbours conflicts	1	2	3	4	5	6	B [ ]
C	Borrow money or things	1	2	3	4	5	6	C [ ]
D	Preparing weddings or funerals	1	2	3	4	5	6	D [ ]
E	Going to the hospital	1	2	3	4	5	6	E [ ]
F	Other (please specify____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	F [ ]

Q35

		Relation to you	His/her occupation	Frequency of contact	V35
A	Do you have acquaintances who you keep in contact with living/working in cities				A [__|__|__]
B	Do you have acquaintances who you keep in contact living/working abroad				B [__|__|__]

Appendix 3

Village Survey

_____(county)

_____(village)

Section 1 General Information of the Village

Q1. Land

Total land area_____

Farmland area _____

Forest area _____

Tidal flat area _____

Q2. Population Composition

Total population _____

Number of permanent residents _____

Number of household _____

Sex ratio _____

Number of voters _____

Number of college graduates _____

Numbers of college graduates back to the village _____

Occupations

Male _____

Female _____

Education attainment

	Male	Female
Over 60	_____	_____
40-50	_____	_____
30-40	_____	_____
Under 30	_____	_____

Q3. Village Ecology

What is the approximate distance from the village to the city? _____

Is there a railway in the village? _____

Is there a highway that connects the village to the city? _____

How many markets are there in the village? _____

Is there any recreation facility (such as KTV) in the village? _____

Are there any public recreation areas (such as park, the senior's centre) in the village? _____

Is there a bulletin board? _____

If so, what information is posted? _____

Do many people come to view the posted information? _____

Who (democratic feature)? _____

Are there village regulations? _____

If there are, how were they drafted? _____

Is there any loudspeaker? _____

If there is, how often is it used? _____

What is broadcasted usually? _____

Q4. Village Finance

Village revenue _____

Sources _____

Approximate expense per year _____

On what _____

Is the village in debt? _____

Why? _____

Q5. Village Affair

Is there any supervisory organ in the village? _____

If there is, how are members of the supervisory organ produced? _____

Is there any mediation or security organ in the village? _____

If there is, do they perform well? _____

Is there any seniors' association in the village? _____

If there is, how much influence does it have on village affairs? _____

On what specific matters? _____

Q6. Villagers' Life

Is there any collective activity in the village? _____

If so, what are they? _____

What do villages usually do in spare time?

The seniors _____

Young people _____

Men _____

Women _____

Q7. Household Information

Village GDP per capita _____

Approximately how many households have a TV? _____

Approximately how many households have a computer? _____

Approximately how many households have a tractor? _____

Approximately how many households have a mobile? _____

Section B Composition of the Village Committee and Basic Information of Village leaders

Q8. How many people are in the village committee? _____

How many female members are there in the village committee? _____

What is the age range of the members? _____

Q9. How many people are in the Party branch? _____

How many female members? _____

What is the age range of the members? _____

Q10. Is the Village Chair also the Party secretary? _____

Appendix 4 The Experimental Material Used in the Pilot Study

Suppose that the centre of the coordinate represents yourself, please draw on the coordinate the relative positions of your parents, your child(rem), your fellow villagers, the Village Chair, the Mayor and the President. The vertical axis stands for hierarchical ranks and the horizontal axis represents your closeness to them.
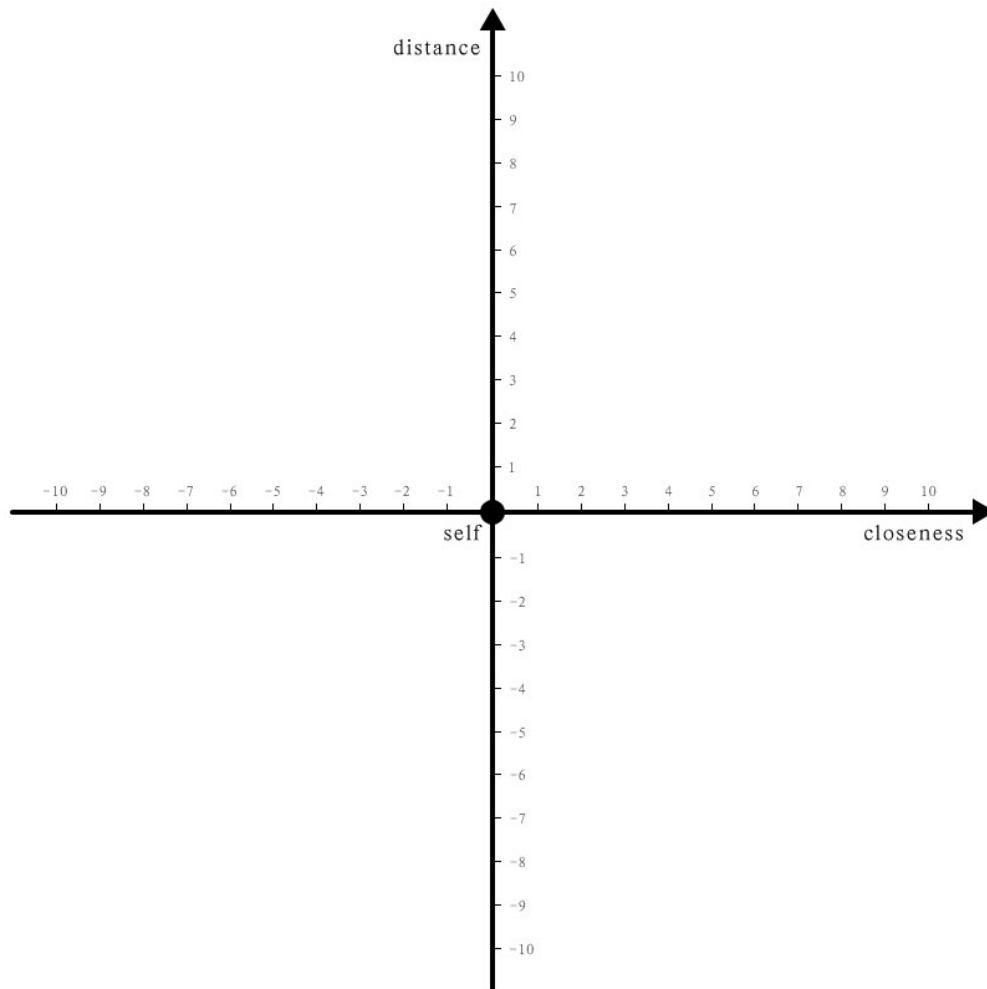
Appendix 5. Descriptions of interview participants

Participant ID	Village	Age	Sex	Education Attainment	Party Affiliation	Position in Village
A	1	56	Male	Middle school	Party member	Party Secretary
B	1	>=70	Female	Illiterate	None	None
C	1	42	Female	High school	None	VC member
D	1	58	Male	Primary school	None	None
E	2	39	Male	High school	Party member	Vice Party Secretary
F	2	36	Male	Middle school	Party member	Party Secretary
G	2	>=40	Female	Middle school	None	None
H	3	52	Male	Middle school	Party member	Party Secretary
I	3	>=50	Female	Unknown	None	None
G	3	84	Male	Illiterate	Party member	Former Brigade leader
K	3	>=30	Female	Unknown	None	None
L	3	>=50	Female	Unknown	None	None
M	3	>=50	Male	Illiterate	None	None
N	4	50	Male	Middle school	Party member	Former Village Chair
O	4	>=40	Male	Middle school	None	VC member
P	4	>=40	Male	Middle school	None	None
Q	4	>=40	Female	Unknown	None	None
R	4	>=40	Female	Primary school	None	None
S	4	51	Female	Illiterate	None	None
T	4	>=70	Female	Illiterate	None	None

U	4	>=40	Female	Unknown	None	None
V	4	>=50	Male	Primary school	None	None
W	4	>=50	Male	Unknown	None	None
X	5	43	Male	High school	Party member	Party Secretary
Y	5	78	Male	Illiterate	None	None
Z	None	61	Male	Primary school	Party member	Former party secretary (thrown out of office by villagers)
ZA	None	47	Male	Middle school	None	None

Note. some participants are unwilling to disclose their exact age and educational level, especially female. Most female participants only gave an age range.