A CHINESE CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE MAKING?

CIVIC PERCEPTIONS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN AN ERA OF MASSIFICATION

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Chinese higher education has achieved a remarkable expansion in recent years but few studies have examined the civic perceptions and civic participation of contemporary university students. This study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by accomplishing four main goals: first, to investigate how students view citizenship, civic issues, and civil society; second, to examine how they participate in civic activities, both on and off campus; third, to understand how their civic attitudes and behaviours are being influenced by society, university and family, also by such factors as formal citizenship education curricula, informal educational experiences and the mass media; and fourth, to analyze the impact of higher education expansion on civil society in China.

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, and combined findings from a large-scale national student survey across 12 universities and 34 face to face interviews conducted in 3 selected institutions among the 12 that were surveyed. The conceptual
framework drew upon social capital theory and both ecological and cognitive psychological theories to generate two analytic frameworks for analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data.

The major findings were: (1) university students demonstrated strong patriotism, and a serious commitment to social justice and civic participation, which was partly the result of the distinctive form of citizenship education they received in the Chinese context; (2) half of the survey participants were found to be inactive participants in civic activities, which showed a disconnect between their civic attitudes and civic behaviours; (3) higher socio-economic status (SES) was associated with more active civic participation; (4) the mass media, especially the Internet was found to have a profound impact on students’ civic perceptions; (5) interview participants in the three qualitative case institutions revealed distinctive patterns of civic engagement, which confirmed the importance of university environment, policy, history and culture on student civic participation and citizenship development.

This study has made a significant contribution to the existing literature on citizenship issues in contemporary Chinese universities. It has also added to current knowledge on trends of civil society development and the democratization process in China, from the perspective of university students.
Acknowledgements

It has been a long intellectual and life journey. There are so many people I would like to give my sincere thanks to. I am very grateful for the support, guidance, belief, and help from all of them.

I would like give profound thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Ruth Hayhoe, for her continuous support and concern for my progress along my doctoral journey. Ruth, Your wealth of knowledge, expertise, industriousness and dedication are qualities I would like to emulate. Thank you for being a role model. More specifically, thank you for including me as a research assistant in your project on “China’s Move to Mass Higher Education (CMMHE)” ever since the beginning, the working opportunity of which led me to become interested in citizenship education and student civic development. I feel grateful for the tremendous resources I have enjoyed through working for the project. Your numerous invigorating conversations and communication have been essential to the completion of this dissertation.

I have also been privileged to have two excellent scholars, Dr. Creso M. Sá and Dr. Glen Jones, as my doctoral dissertation committee members. Thank you, Creso, for the great amount of time, and helpful advice you have devoted in both of my dissertation and my research assistant work with you, and for stimulating my thoughts when I was struggling in academic research. Thank you, Glen, for introducing new perspectives that enriched my study and dissertation process and for always providing me prompt and valuable suggestions on my preliminary versions. I would also like to thank Dr. Li Jun
and Dr. Becky Chen, who served on my dissertation committee at an initial stage, for
guiding me in the process of designing the study.

During the process of data collection, I owe thanks to Dr. Yan Fengqiao in Peking
University, Dr. Li Ling in Southwest University and Dr. Hu Haifeng in Blue Sky College,
for their support and liaison efforts to make my investigation process in each site so
smooth. Many thanks are also due to all participants in my interview study, who were
willing to share their own experience and thoughts. Without their contributions, I would
not have been able to make this dissertation come to fruition.

I am very blessed with the generous financial funding and research assistant
appointments OISE /UT has provided during my doctoral program. My dissertation
project has also benefited from Travel Funds provided by the School of Graduate Studies,
University of Toronto. I also want to thank the members of the thesis group at OISE that I
have been participating in for the last three years. Thank you to Meggan and Kirk, for
your efforts and time in coordinating the regular meetings, and thank you to everyone in
the group, for making our group into a kind of stimulating and resourceful companion
along the dissertation journey. My sincere thanks are due to my wonderful friends at
OISE who have always been cheerful and supportive: to Lijuan, thank you simply for
being my best friend; and to Sharon and Ji’an, thank you for being great colleagues.

Special thanks to Alex, for reading my draft and offering me advice on statistical
analysis, and for making the final stage of the dissertation writing the most enjoyable
moments for me.
Next, I would like to give my deepest gratitude to my grandfather and my parents, for their endless support, for their unconditional love, and for their sponsorship which allowed me to chase my own dream. Thanks also go to Jin, my younger sister, for being a constant source of emotional support. I am always indebted to them.

Last but not least, I would like to thank a significant person in my life, Rui, who I unfortunately lost in this journey. Thank you for your belief in me, thank you for loving me, thank you for lighting up my life, thank you for everything you have done for me and thank you for making me to be a better person. I know I could not have achieved so much if I have not had you in my life.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart!
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to

my grandfather, parents, sister, friends, and teachers

for their love and support.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Research Motivation

This study is motivated by the striking developments in Chinese higher education that have taken place alongside China’s increasing national economic prosperity. Between 1998 and 2008, the number of students enrolled in higher education quintupled from 6.23 million to 29.07 million. The gross enrolment rate also increased in this period, from 9.8 percent to 23.3 percent (Hayhoe & Zha, 2006; Ministry of Education [MOE], 2009). China thus ranks as the largest provider of higher education in the world (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). Given that the university is a critical institution of civil society, how university students interact with the general public is a crucial factor influencing the development of that civil society. Despite the ever-increasing enrolment, only a few in-depth studies have been done - in either the Chinese or English language - to determine how contemporary Chinese students perceive civic issues and how they participate in civic activities. This lack of research indicates the serious gap between China’s citizenship education policies on the one hand and actual practice in Chinese higher education institutions on the other.

The primary objective of this study is to provide the policy and academic communities with empirical evidence of university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation and to enhance the theoretical understanding of the interplay between higher education development and civil society maturation in the Chinese context. This thesis examines the patterns of Chinese university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation, using findings from a large-scale national student survey and 34 follow-up, in-depth, face to face interviews in three
higher education institutions selected, to represent different types of institutions. The study has four main goals: first, to investigate how students view citizenship, civic issues, and civil society; second, to examine how they participate in civic activities, both on and off campus; third, to understand how their civic attitudes and behaviours are being influenced by society, university and family, also by such factors as formal citizenship education curricula, informal educational experiences and the mass media; and fourth, to analyze the impact of higher education expansion on civil society in China.

_Civil society_ has become a commonly used term in the social sciences, yet it is difficult to define because it represents an ideal and a reality at the same time. On the one hand, civil society is a model embodying a desirable state of affairs. It is often viewed as a kind of remedy for the crises that modern democracies are experiencing (Leshchenko, 2006). On the other hand, civil society is a phenomenon which can and should be studied empirically. Deeply rooted in Western social thought, the idea of civil society has been adapted to different cultural, political, and economic conditions in the process of its historical evolution. Following the radical ideological changes that have occurred in the political arena in China since the late 1970s, there have also been revolutionary social, economic, and political transformations in recent decades. It is widely accepted that the economic openness and prosperity of China’s reform era have weakened the state’s dominance over society and have created favourable conditions for nurturing Chinese civil society (Tai, 2004, 2006; Yu, 2009). Influenced by the resurgence of the idea of civil society in the West in the late 1980s, Chinese scholars have been making great efforts to develop a Chinese notion of civil society in order to help them understand the interactions between the state and society in the Chinese context.
Civil society epitomizes values such as openness, social networks and institutional bonds, while civic activity implies responsibility, solidarity and commitment to the well-being of the larger community. The explosive growth in the number of university students in China since the late 1990s has opened up new opportunities for the advance of democratization and civil society. Currently, more than one quarter of Chinese youth aged 18-24 benefit from some form of higher education (MOE, 2009). The classical theory of higher education massification established by Martin Trow (1973) defines three stages of higher education in modern societies by the gross enrolment rate: an elite stage (5 percent), a mass stage (15 percent), and a universal stage (50 percent). Since the government made the decision in 1999 to rapidly expand higher education, China has shifted from the elite to the mass stage in a relatively short period of time. Given that such a large cohort of Chinese young people are now receiving higher education, and that higher education has an influence on civic participation, it is of great significance to analyze their opinions, attitudes and behaviour in this regard. This analysis can then serve as a critical reference for understanding the trends in thinking and action among Chinese university students who are, in turn, regarded as a part of the general public engaged in building a civil society in China.

1.2. Background of the Study

Currently the second economic power in terms of gross GDP output after the USA, China has been playing an increasingly active and important role in the world both
economically and politically\textsuperscript{1}. The historical turning point was the year 1978 when “pragmatist” leader Deng Xiaoping came to power. He led a series of market-oriented economic reforms for developing “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, with the goal of generating surplus value to finance the modernization of the Chinese economy (Brown, 2008). The reforms initiated since 1978 are considered to be of great importance for China’s higher education system (Hayhoe, 1996), as well as for the development of civil society (Tai, 2004, 2006; Yu, 2009).

Although it has experienced dramatic economic growth, Chinese society faces many problems. To resolve escalating social issues, leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have carried out a series of political reforms since 1978. Three recent CCP official guiding ideologies are Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents” (sange daibiao 三个代表), which means the CCP claims to represent China’s advanced productive forces, the orientation of China’s advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the majority of the Chinese people (Yang, 2010); and Hu Jintao’s “Harmonious Society” (hexie shehu 和谐社会) and “Scientific Concept of Development” (kexue fazhan guan 科学发展观) (Li, 2007; Xinhua, 2006). Hu’s perspective recognizes that the mode of China’s development is changing from reliance on cheap labour and natural resources to advanced science and technology and high-quality human resources, with a new focus on goals of sustainable development, energy-saving, social welfare, increased democracy, and ultimately, a harmonious society. These campaigns were

\textsuperscript{1}In the second quarter of 2010, China’s gross GDP reached $1.337 trillion, surpassed Japan (whose was $1.288 trillion) for the first time. China became the second biggest economy in the world (Bloomberg News, Aug 16, 2010).
initiated to mitigate the most pressing social problems and to ensure stability while keeping to the belief that rapid economic development should continue. Although there has been great progress in China’s democratization process, the current one-party system casts some doubt on the possibility of a full-fledged civil society.

The market reforms of more than three decades have raised interesting questions about China’s future political direction. According to Seymour Martin Lipset’s modernization theory (1996), there is a strong relationship between socioeconomic development and the emergence of democratic politics as the growth of an educated middle class leads to demands for more liberal and political participation (Cichon, 2007). Given this general theoretical proposition about the association between economic development and democracy, it is worth asking whether China’s market reforms have created favourable social conditions for democracy and whether the country’s emerging entrepreneurial class will serve as a democratic social base. While Chinese society is in transition to a knowledge economy, the massive cohort of university students, equipped with advanced knowledge and broader horizons, will become the future force of this entrepreneurial class. Therefore, how they perceive civic issues and participate in civic activities will, to a great extent, determine the future trends of civil society development and democratization in China.

Strongly connected with economic and political developments, higher education has been expanding at an extraordinary rate, both to meet the demands of China’s citizens and to stimulate the national economy. The government has put emphasis on various areas of the higher education sector, such as governance, finance and graduate employment, to ensure a healthy trajectory of development. Citizenship education has also drawn considerable
attention in recent years. China is not an exception in using citizenship education as a tool for nation building and identity formation. Citizenship education at the university level covers a wide range of topics including not only political, ideological and moral issues, but also the values of citizenship and education and their effects on current events (Li, Chen, & Liu, 1990). However, there is no specific course called “citizenship education” or “civic education” in contemporary Chinese universities; rather, various elements of citizenship education are combined with ideological, moral and political education, which is delivered in courses with titles such as “Marxist Theory”, “Fundamentals of Law” and “Ideological and Moral Cultivation”. Not as similar as Western political discourse, these courses publicly declare their purpose of indoctrinating China's youth with a certain national ideology (Chu, 1977). Since the CCP initially adopted learning approaches from the former Soviet Union as the model for constructing socialism, theories related to Marxism, Leninism and Maoism were, and still are, compulsory subjects in universities, with nation-wide uniform curricula, syllabi, outlines and teaching hours (Yang, 2002). Not until recently has the concept of citizenship education officially appeared in government policy papers. In 2001, the government promulgated the Guidelines for the Implementation of Civic and Moral Construction, asserting that patriotism, collectivism and socialism are among the fundamental values to be boosted through citizenship education (Chinese Communist Party Central Committee [CCPCC]) and the State Council, 2001). In a recent report of the People’s Congress, it was explicitly stated that the government should “reinforce civic awareness education and establish the concepts of socialist democracy and legal governance, freedom and equality, fairness and justice” (CCP News Website, October 25, 2007). For the first time,
the Party-State elevated citizenship education to a high level, making it an engine of building so-called “socialist democratic politics”. This new approach in citizenship education has shaped the way universities cultivate student civic perceptions and promote student civic participation.

Some studies by Chinese scholars have questioned the adequacy of current citizenship education in universities. Xia and Tang (2006) suggest that an independent course of citizenship education incorporating experiential aspects of learning should be established, and the present government-led static unitary moral system should be adapted to recognize plural value systems and teach students contemporary social values. However, there are few systematic studies investigating the effectiveness or deficiencies of current citizenship education from the perspective of university students, nor is much known about how Chinese universities prepare their students for civic participation within the existing ideological and political indoctrination.

1.3. Research Questions

Both the issues of Chinese higher education development and Chinese civil society construction have drawn worldwide attention. This research aims to show how university students view and engage in the development of civil society during China’s transition to a mass higher education system. It is based on the analysis and interpretation of two distinctive sets of empirical data: the first set comes from a large-scale quantitative survey of students in twelve universities/colleges across the nation, while the second set is from 34 in-depth, face-
to-face interviews conducted in three of the twelve universities/colleges that were surveyed. The study addresses the following main research question:

As Chinese universities have moved to mass higher education, how do university students perceive civic issues and participate in civic activities, and in civil society development?

It also aims to answer three sub-questions; each has a more specific and distinctive focus:

1. Do students’ civic perceptions and civic participation vary according to their background characteristics (four factors: Socio-economic Status [SES], gender, institution type, and discipline)? If yes, what are the reasons for the variations in their civic perceptions and participation with respect to their background characteristics?

2. What are students’ experiences of the formal curriculum and pedagogy in terms of civic perceptions and civic participation?

3. What are students’ experiences of the informal curriculum in terms of civic perceptions and civic participation?

The literature on civic participation, mostly in the American context, suggests that differences among students are related to their backgrounds, with factors such as gender and family income level often mentioned (e.g., Nishishiba, Nelson, & Shinn, 2005). By using quantitative data obtained from 1,957 valid student questionnaires, this study intends to probe whether the background characteristics of individual Chinese university students, i.e., SES,
gender, institutional type, and discipline, affect their civic perceptions and civic participation and if so, in what ways. The findings of this study will provide a meaningful basis for Chinese universities to re-conceptualize their role in producing good citizens and building a civil society while revising and re-focusing curriculum-related strategies towards achieving this mission. Additionally, the study aims to enrich the understanding of civil society construction and the democratization process in China.

1.4. Objectives and Implications of the Study

The objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1. To understand how formal and informal curricula in university settings impact students’ perceptions of civil society, national identity, civic issues, civic knowledge, social justice and citizenship education, and their civic participation and engagement both on and off campus

2. To generate a description of university students’ civic perception and civic participation

3. To use these descriptions in tandem with the curriculum of citizenship education at national and institutional levels to explore the patterns of university students’ civic participation

4. To use the study’s focus on civic perceptions and civic participation to assist educators, researchers and practitioners in understanding the factors that enrich university curricula and foster civic participation among university students

5. To enrich the knowledge of current trends of civil society development and the democratization process in China by studying university students
To achieve these objectives, this study examines various related theories to provide a conceptual framework for developing an approach to analyzing university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation. This approach takes into account Chinese social, political and cultural conditions that are important for the formulation of a citizenship education curriculum. The theories and conceptual frameworks presented include approaches from political science and sociology, theories of higher education, citizenship education and civil society, theories on the civic role of the university, theories on curriculum and elements of civic perceptions and civic participation. These are elaborated in the literature review, presented in Chapter 2, and the conceptual framework, presented in Chapter 3.

The implications of the thesis findings vary for the different stakeholders in higher education, including practitioners, educators, researchers, and policy makers. The intention of this research was to provide a deeper understanding of the issues related to civic perceptions and civic participation among students, so that it may contribute to improving the delivery and implementation of citizenship education curricula in the higher education sector. Since the study was set in the specific historical, social, political, economic and cultural background of contemporary Chinese higher education, it should be of help in addressing issues of citizenship education at the present time and may have some relevance beyond the Chinese context. For educators, this study should offer them a better understanding of the impact of citizenship education on student civic attitudes and behaviour. For policy-makers, this research may also be a helpful resource when considering the reform and improvement of citizenship education aimed at university students, such that it can nurture positive civic perceptions and active civic participation.
1.5. Overview of the Chapters

This study is organized into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, which provides the context of and purpose for the study, Chapter 2 presents a literature review that examines the development of higher education in China and the concepts of citizenship education and civil society that are found in both Western and Chinese scholarship. In the first part of Chapter 3, Conceptual Framework and Methodology, I incorporate theories of the civic role of the university and elements of civic perceptions and civic participation, and develop a model for analyzing the patterns of civic perceptions and civic participation among Chinese students. In the methodology section that follows, I elaborate on the design of a mixed methods research approach, and explain the data collection and data analysis procedures that were chosen to suit the purposes of this study. In Chapter 4, based on the model of analysis presented in Chapter 3, I set out the quantitative analyses of the CMMHE dataset used for this study. In Chapter 5, I analyse the qualitative findings from the 34 follow-up interviews carried out in three universities and discuss how this part of the study supplements and enriches the quantitative analysis. Finally, in Chapter 6, I present the central arguments and locate the key findings in the existing literature to illustrate what this study has contributed. I then conclude the dissertation by discussing the limitations of the study and its implications for future exploration in the related areas.
CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

To describe Chinese university students’ civic perceptions, civic participation and interaction with civil society, it is necessary to position the study within a wider context. This chapter begins with an investigation into the evolution of ideas about “Civil Society”, both in the Western literature and in the Chinese context. Additionally, the first section will give a general summary of civil society development in China. The second section will address the role of the university in civil society. The university is not just a part of society, but a critical institution which should play a major role in creating a citizenship culture and in revitalizing civil society (Crick, 2000). Therefore, this section of the chapter will discuss the role the university plays in civil society construction from a historical perspective. The third section will then move to the literature on citizenship and citizenship education in contemporary China. Finally, the fourth section of the chapter will provide a brief overview of recent developments in higher education in China, with a particular focus on the massification process, offering a general background for the study.

2.1. The Evolution of the Concept of “Civil Society”

Although it is a commonly used term in the social sciences, civil society defies terminological precision and conceptualization. There is a puzzling disconnection between the contemporary status of civil society and the rich historical heritage of the concept of civil society, traceable from classical to modern social theories (Tai, 2004, 2006). This section will provide an overview of the historical, political and philosophical evolution of the theories of
civil society in Occidental thought. It will then consider parallel concepts and their development in the Chinese context.

2.1.1. Civil Society in the Western Context

2.1.1.1. Evolution of the Idea of Civil Society in the Ancient World

The idea of civil society can be traced back to ancient Greek political philosophy represented by Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics, sources which continue to be a valuable asset to scholars in Western countries today. However, there is a noticeable disconnect between contemporary concepts of civil society and this rich historical heritage (Tai, 2004, 2006). This makes the urgent need to examine the long tradition in the conceptual development of civil society.

Plato pictured the “polis” (translated into English as “city”, “state” or “city-state”) as a unity of various interests of society within a god-arranged unit of labour among the different classes, with civil society made possible by the Rulers’ power in providing the social welfare to all citizens in the polis (Ehnrenberg, 1999). For Plato, the “polis” is a combination of the state and civil society, with no distinction between the two (Cartledge, 2000). Aristotle developed the idea of “polis” based on Plato’s thoughts and included the basic relationships of family, villages and other associations in his idea of the polis.

In the Middle Ages, Rome replaced Athens as the core of Western political discourse. A small number of Roman scholars in a Christian context further developed political theory for Western civilization and for other parts of the world as well. Augustine, Aquinas and Machiavelli are the three most significant scholars among them. Aurelius Augustine (AD 354-
430) presented the notion that there are two different kinds of cities: the City of God, which is made up of citizens who know and love each other ‘in God’, and the City of man, which is resided in by those whose love of self predominates over their love of God. Augustine argued that civil society is a collection of human association; earthly citizens can only resort to the Church for spiritual guidance and God’s sacraments (Ehrenberg, 1999). Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) absorbed Aristotle’s political ideas and declared that the fundamental principle of civil society is firmly based on the nature and end of man. However, different from his predecessors, he claimed that it is man’s natural right to own property and this right is upheld through preserving order and maintaining peace among men in civil society (Ehrenberg, 1999). Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), who lived in the transition period from the medieval to the early modern world in Europe, was a pioneer in developing a new political theory, departing from the past European tradition. He challenged the foundations of medieval Christendom, and argued that the Church exerted a negative effect on civic politics as Christianity blinded people to the truth of the world. His secular approach to civil society is an important foundation for conceptualizing civil society in modern Western political discourse (Strauss, 1958).

2.1.1.2. Classical Theories of Civil Society in the European Context

In the late eighteenth century, Scotland was leading Europe in evolving into a commercial society in which economic activities were the core activities in social life. Adam Smith (1723-1790) was among the pioneers who came to realize the restraints in classical Aristotelian philosophy and Christian rationalism. He then began to develop a new theory that acknowledged the importance of economic motives and activities in human life (Fitzgibbons,
1995); this later made him known as the father of modern economics and of the political economy of civil society (Madison, 1998). Unlike the ancient Greek theorists who excluded the role of commerce in civil society and despised the individual pursuit of profit, Smith’s “commercial humanism” (Muller, 1993), which places commercial activities at the centre of human organizations, reversed this tradition. Two important concepts in Smith’s theory are “impartial spectator” (Smith, 1759, version 1892) and “invisible hand” (Smith, 1759, version 1976). Smith argued that human beings tend to put self-interest above all, but they still have “sympathy”, which is a “fellow-feeling with any passion whatever”, with other people (Smith, 1892, p.5). Using this sympathy, people could distance themselves from their own feelings, and judge their own and others’ actions without any bias, thus allowing them to become what Smith called “the impartial spectator(s)”. Through acting as “the impartial spectator”, a self-control mechanism is developed to regulate individual behaviour without any significant involvement of government. His metaphor of the “Invisible Hand” refers to “the positive unintended consequences in civil affairs resulting from cooperation in economic activities necessitated by a free market economy” (Tai, 2004, p.53). It is the “Invisible Hand”, he argued, that helps civil society to have a natural harmonious order. He favoured the role of state in securing the existence and functioning of commerce, although he objected to the direct interference of the government in the economy. He also had a strong faith in the positive effects of the motivation for gaining profit and the free market, on moral development and public ethics in society and their contributions to liberty and civility (Reisman, 1976). This was his idea of “commercial humanism”. Therefore, the essential role of civil society, according to him, lies in its ability to convert the basic human tendency to self-interest into a
dynamic that fosters not only the materialistic, but also the spiritual possessions of the nation (Tai, 2004, 2006).

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was the first to make the conceptual separation of civil society and the state explicit (e.g., Cohen & Arato, 1992; Seligman, 1992). Before Hegel, no noticeable separation was drawn between political and civil aspects in the concept of “civil society”. His conceptual idea of a unique sphere for civil society was an answer to the socio-economic changes of his time (Tai, 2004, 2006). In his masterpiece, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1991), Hegel defined civil society as “the [stage of] difference which interferes between the family and the state” (Hegel, 1991, p.200). In civil society, every human being is focused on his own particular end, but he has to rely on others to “accomplish the full extent of his ends” (Hegel, 1991, p.220). Throughout the process of pursuing this accomplishment, human beings spontaneously satisfy the welfare of others as “the particular ends take on the form of universality” (Hegel, 1991, p.221). So, in Hegel’s eyes, “civil society is the sphere where the particularity of the individual finds the fullest expression” (Tai, 2004, p.60). He sees the state in civil society as an association of associations instead of a composite of isolated individuals, different from other major philosophers of his time.

However, it is noteworthy that, Hegel’s conception of civil society is much narrower than that of most of the later scholars (Franco, 1999; Hardimon, 1994). Hegel gained the reputation of being an intellectual giant, and his philosophy was unsurpassed in its breadth and depth but hard to comprehend and vague in many areas (Tai, 2006).
Karl Marx (1818-1883), who is generally considered to be one of the most influential social theorists of the nineteenth century, developed his own social theory based primarily on a negative criticism of Hegel (Cohen, 1982). Many scholars have emphasized the original German term that both Hegel and Marx used: *bürgliche Gesellschaft* (e.g., Rauch, 1981). Hegel’s use of the word refers to both the civil and the bourgeois aspects, whereas Marx uses the concept to focus on the bourgeois side by diminishing civil society to the capitalist mechanism of production (Tai, 2006). “Bourgeois society” was used in the place of civil society by some scholars in analysing Marx’s conceptual scheme. In his manuscript entitled *The Critique of Hegel’s “Philosophy of Right”* (Marx, 1843, version 1970), Marx examined Hegel’s political philosophy carefully and pointed out the self-contradictory nature of the state expressed in Hegel’s arguments. He further argued that the political state represents particular interests rather than universal interests as Hegel claimed. Although civil society does not represent private and special interests well, these interests could find expression through “organs of the state” in the modern state (Teeple, 1984, p.46). Marx concluded that the political state fails to unify but stands against civil society, as material interests hold power in the political state (Tai, 2004).

Regarding the nature of human beings, Marx thought that man is a “species-being”, which means man is aware of his individual self as well as his species-character (i.e. his essential nature, behaviour and desire) (McCarthy, 1990; O’ Malley, 1970). Marx adopted Hegel’s concept of a universal class, “a class within society whose interests are identical with the interests of society as a whole, and therefore of man himself as a naturally social, species-being” (O’Malley, 1970, p.2). However, Marx did this with a different approach: he replaced
Hegel’s bureaucracy with the proletariat as a universal class and believed in the proletariat as the ultimate solution to the puzzles of civil society (Tai, 2006). Marx stated that civil society, which is the origin of contradictions in modern states, produced a universal class, the proletariat, as its own “grave digger” (Marx & Engels, 1846, version 1992, p. 23). Only a revolutionary transformation could eliminate the contradictions, and only the proletariat could lead this transformation.

The great influence of Marx’s thoughts on modern social and political theory is undeniable. However, as many have indicated (e.g., Cohen, 1982), Marx left much unsaid in his worldview. Marx’s sweeping criticism of Hegel’s theorization drove the idea of civil society into an intellectual limbo until its revival in Eastern Europe in the last century (e.g., Madison, 1998). Ironically, this revival was accompanied by the decline, if not complete decease, of Marxism in the world (Tai, 2006).

2.1.1.3. Revival of the Idea of Civil Society in the Contemporary World

The democratic implications of civil society were not examined by the thinkers and theorists mentioned above (Tai, 2004). Alex de Tocqueville (1805-1859), the first scholar to discuss the relationships of civil society and democracy in his masterpiece Democracy in America, is regarded as the scholar who laid “pluralist foundations” for modern civil society theories within political science (Ehrenberg, 1999, p.201). Tocqueville was amazed by the equality of conditions he observed among American people (Tocqueville, 1835, version 1985a), and the American way of treating each other equally, regardless of family, wealth, and abilities. He was also attracted by the popularity and varieties of associations originally founded by Americans. “Americans of all ages, all conditions and all dispositions constantly
form associations” (Tocqueville, 1840, version 1985b, p.106). He made the remark that “in
democratic countries the science of association is the mother of science; the progress of all the
rest depends upon the progress it has made” (Tocqueville, 1840, version 1985b, p.110). He
argued that autonomy of association is the critical feature of a solid and orderly democracy, as
the civil society of autonomous associations acting as an intermediate body between
individuals and the state could provide checks and balances that offered protection against the
political power of the government (Tai, 2006).

Tocqueville established his reputation after the publication of Democracy in America
Volume 1 and Volume 2 in 1835 and 1840, respectively (Tai, 2006). The Cold War era of the
mid-20th century witnessed a revival of Tocqueville’s ideas among American scholars who
realized their prophetic power (Rodgers, 1988). John Dewey and Hilary Putman are the two
most well-known scholars in this group.

Dewey viewed democracy as not being “an alternative to other principles of
associational life” but “the idea of community life itself” (Dewey, 1946, p.148). He believed
democratic ideas could not survive if they were not located in associational life (Dewey,
1966). Putnam also referred to the Tocquevillean tradition in his Making Democracy Work
(1993), which established the importance of voluntary association for consolidating
democracy in a society. He adopted the term social capital, which was first used in James O’
Connor’s The Fiscal Crisis of the State (1973) and was defined as “expenditures required for
profitable private accumulation; it is indirectly productive (as against social expenses)”
(Connor, 1973, p.6), to deal with the problem of an isolated society (Liu, 2007). Putnam
borrowed the term “social capital” from Connor and defined it as “features of social
organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993, p.167). He also called for attention to be given to the public and moral dimensions of social capital (Tai, 2006). Putnam’s research has stimulated a series of debates and studies on the key role played by voluntary associations in a vibrant civil society, with social capital at its center in sustaining political governance.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas carefully explored the communicative, deliberative conception of the “public sphere.” He traced the origins of the bourgeois public sphere in the 17th and 18th centuries and provided a critical analysis of Marx’s theory of the public sphere. For Habermas, the public sphere is conceived of as “the sphere of private people come together as a public” (1992, p. 27). He classified the public sphere into two types: the literary public sphere and the political public sphere. Both develop from the public interests of private people, and are the places where common concerns are discussed in conditions of freedom, equality and non-violent interaction. However, the political public sphere devolves out of the literary public sphere, and relies on private people’s social standing as both property owners and human beings. It is the erosion of the distinction between public and private sectors that makes way for a structural transformation of the public sphere, when state and society interpenetrate through organized interest groups and corporate actors (Habermas, 1989). Habermas borrowed the term "civil society" from Hegel. Civil society is the sphere of production and exchange that forms part of the private realm and is distinct from the state (Calhoun, 1992). Civil society is essentially “the economy” or “the market”, but it includes other social institutions. It operates according to its own laws, but is able to represent its interests to the state through the public sphere.
Habermas’s work has stimulated contention about the potential emancipatory possibilities of modern states (Tai, 2006). The search for public space has been a central focus of debate in conceptions of civil society, as civil society may make a reinvigorated or re-established public sphere possible (Cohen & Arato, 1992). Scholars in the Habermasian school may not equate civil society with the public sphere, but they generally agree about the importance of the public sphere in civil society today, due to its high degree of mediation (Tai, 2006).

2.1.1.4. In Search of Civil Society in Eastern Europe

In the 1970s, civil society appeared to be an essential concept in political forums in Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia, when the political activists against the Communist regimes shifted their strategy “from dissidence to opposition” (Bernhard, 1993, p.7). In the initial stage, dissenting forces struggled for reforms within the Marxist-Leninist model of communism without challenging it. Due to the inability of dissidents to create a new and consistent political ideology and to disseminate political and social power, initiatives such as the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Prague Spring Movement of 1968 failed (Tai, 2006). This failure led dissident groups to resort to a new oppositional approach: “to appeal to the forces of society from outside the framework of the party state” (Tai, 2006, p.24). Jacek Kuroń, the co-founder of the Worker’s Defense Committee (KOR in Polish), was a significant Polish political and social figure. His famous dictum “Don’t burn down committees, found your own” (Ekiert, 1996, p.232) greatly encouraged massive social movements in the post-communist world, even though many turned out to be failures. However, KOR “set the stage for a theoretical breakthrough in
oppositional political deliberations in Poland as well as in other nations within the former Soviet bloc” (Tai, 2006, p.26-27).

In searching for civil society in Eastern Europe, it should not be hastily concluded that civil society does not exist or cannot play its role as a democratic force in those nations, but rather that civil society should be conceived of as having different boundaries, considering the circumstances and contexts in which it exists (Tai, 2006). The extent of the relevance of the concept of civil society to the Chinese context, or whether the concept can be adopted to analyse China’s social conditions at all, has been a topic of continuous discussion (Tai, 2006), and will be addressed in a separate section.

2.1.1.5. Civil Society in a Globalizing Era

The recent trends towards an intensification of the globalization processes of the capitalist market and social relations require an updated understanding of civil society. Increasingly, what is termed global civil society is being commented on in the literature. Although the globalization of civil society is a recent phenomenon, the long history of international activities existing in this sphere should not be ignored.

The evolvement of global civil society remains an unfolding and uneven process (Falk, 1998). There is no agreement yet over the definition of global civil society among contemporary authors in this field. As Mary Kaldor (1999) puts it, the definition of global civil society should contain both normative and descriptive dimensions. However, recent discussions of global civil society tend to focus on its normative features. The well-known Global Civil Society Yearbook publishes empirical data about non-profit or voluntary sector
activities across the world annually. As the editors claim, global civil society “has both normative and descriptive content and it is not always possible to find an exact correspondence between the two” (Anheier, Glasius, & Kaldor, 2001, p. 11). John Keane suggests defining global civil society as an ideal-type which refers to “a dynamic non-governmental system of interconnected socio-economic institutions that straddle the whole earth, and that have complex effects that are felt in its four corners” (Keane, 2003, p.8). He also considers it as an undone project consisting of cross-border actors making deliberate efforts to connect the world in a different way. Mervyn Frost eschews a “political sociology” of civil society and thinks it is a practice involving the recognition of civil rights for oneself as well as for other people across geographical borders (Frost, 2002, p. 7). Most notions are based on the assumption that that the global production of civil society will promote a better world of peace, harmony and pluralism (Colas, 2005).

To further elaborate on this highly-debated term, John Keane’s view might be adopted. He pointed out five overlapping but distinctive features of global civil society: (1) “non-governmental structures and activities”; (2) “a dynamic ensemble of more or less tightly interlinked social processes”; (3) “civility”; (4) “pluralism and strong conflict potential”; and (5) “the global interactions that cross national boundaries” (Keane, 2003, p.8-p.17).

Global governance is another overdiscussed but underdefined concept, which is generally viewed as the political interaction of transnational actors with the aim of solving problems that affect more than one region or constituency (Weiss & Thakur, 2010). Higgott (2004) divides global governance into two types: Type I means the achieving of global public good via collective action, while Type II refers to institutional accountability, greater citizen
representation and justice. Higgott (2004) assets that the prerequisite of the continuance of Type I Global Governance through economic multilateralism should be the enhancement of Type II Global Governance.

Regarding the relationship between civil society and global governance, each of them restricts and promotes the other one’s development. Although there has been increased growth in global-scale governance institutions, i.e., the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, the legitimacy of these institutions is still not well recognized. However, the increasing scale of civil society engagement in global regulatory arrangements elevates the legitimation of the transnational institutions (Scholt, 2007). As Scholte (2007) proposes, greater positive legitimation of global governance could be achieved through more civil society engagement and “more inclusive, more competent, more coordinated, and more accountable civil society relations with global governance” (p.2).

2.1.2. Civil Society in the Chinese Context

2.1.2.1. The Evolution of the Idea of “Civil Society”

China has a civilization that traces its ancestry back continuously for 3,000 years. Thus, “China may have the longest sustained history of civic discourse of any nation in the world” (Powers & Kluver, 1999, p.1). However, most Western scholars see civil society as closely linked to the rise of Western democratic laws and institutions (e.g., Almond & Verba, 1963; Putnam, 2000), distinguishing authoritarianism by central state government from citizens enjoying rights to establish autonomous organizations within the state’s legal and institutional framework (Powers & Kluver, 1999). In this sense, although civil society was
vibrant in China in the early twentieth century (Yu, 2009), contemporary China was not in a position to build a civil society until the post-Mao reform era of the later 1970s, when “the seeds for a budding civil society found the conditions for sustained growth and development” (Powers & Kluver, 1999, p.1). There is a general consensus that China’s civil society is still in an incipient and embryonic state, and yet its nature, basic characteristics and functions have not become clear.

The dramatic transformations in Eastern Europe and the 1989 student democratic movement in China triggered a series of debates among Chinese scholars from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s; these debates concerned civil society in China and reflected a desire for “a democratic China” (Ma, 2006, p.17). The study of civil society among Chinese scholars can be viewed as a bottom-up effort, in contrast with the authoritarian government’s top-down approach in dealing with the state-society relationship (Deng & Jing, 1997). For Chinese intellectuals, the search for civil society reflected their efforts not only in developing a theory of modernization for China, but also in establishing civil society itself on Chinese soil (Ma, 2006).

The influence of Confucian values on Chinese civil society development has been much debated (e.g., Dallmayr, 2003; de Bary, 1998; Ma, 1994). Although Confucianism emphasizes state supremacy, it is not essentially hostile to the idea of civil society. For instance, shexue (community schools) and xiangxue (community compacts), which are related to Confucian thought, demonstrate the efforts made by Confucian scholars to “strengthen community life and build consensual fiduciary institutions” (de Bary, 1998, p. 13). The virtue of self-cultivation is greatly valued by Confucianism. Tu Wei-Ming argues that self-
cultivation is the origin of the growth of harmony attained in the family, which stimulates harmony in the community, the state and the world. In this sense, individual conduct has an impact on “the quality of life of the state as a whole” (1988, p.115). While the interaction between Confucianism and social life has changed along with social transformations, the philosophy itself has been developing, confronting new social conditions.

Anyone who studies civil society in China should realize that there is no precisely equal term in the Chinese language, but the three most commonly used terms are as follows: gongmin shehui (公民社会), shimin shehui (市民社会), minjian shehui (民间社会), with each having different connotations in Chinese (Ma, 2006). Although all three terms have been used interchangeably, there are subtle differences between their meanings (Yu, 2009).

*Gongmin shehui* (gongmin: citizen, shehui: society) is a modern political term adopted from European political theory by Chinese reformers. The term combines “gong”, which means public, and “min”, which means people. In Chinese, “gongmin” represents an image that people behave in the right way according to public expectations, in contrast with the Western notion of a signifier for individual rights of property, political power and social or economic welfare (Perry, 1994). This term emphasizes the political science part of *civil society* and conveys a positive connotation of citizens’ participation in public policy discussion and decision-making. It is becoming a popular term among many young Chinese scholars (Yu, 2009).

*Shimin shehui* (shimin: townspeople, or bourgeoisie) implies an attempt to challenge the orthodox interpretation of Marxism and advocate for people’s rights and the value of civil
society. Shen was the first Chinese scholar to suggest using “townspeople’s society” or civil society to translate the Marxist term *bürgliche Gesellschaft* (Ma, 2006, p20). Yu notes that this is the most widely used term and should be the standard translation for civil society (2009). However, it is easily misunderstood as meaning *urban residents*.

*Minjian shehui* (minjian: literally means people and their space, but can also be translated as popular society) was first introduced as a translation of *civil society* by scholars in Taiwan. It implies a popular society isolated from the government control. Liang (2001), who is a scholar of law, argues that “*minjian shehui*” should be the standard translation of civil society in Chinese, as it has a clear traditional Chinese connotation and it may be the only concept that can be found in the traditional vocabulary which is close to the concept of civil society. However, many scholars consider it to have a marginalized sense (Yu, 2009).

The debates over technical terms are not just for the sake of searching for a better translation, but rather indicate that Chinese scholars have been striving to define and redefine the concept of civil society according to their own cultural and political conditions (Ma, 2006). To them, from the very beginning, the discourse of civil society has indicated a mission for them to accomplish. Ma (2006) points out that the ultimate concern of Chinese intellectuals is to establish a workable theory for China’s political reform and the difficulty for them lies in applying Western concepts or theories to their understanding of China’s history and current events and to their efforts at reforming China’s political system. However, an original Chinese equivalent to the Western construct of “civil society”, which is inclusive of all essential elements related to civil society and is acceptable to all Chinese scholars, is still in absence (Tai, 2006).
With regard to the question of how to establish a civil society model for China, the most important contribution is the concept of a “constructive interaction” (liangxing hudong 良性互动) between the state and civil society (Deng & Jing, 1997). Most Chinese scholars believe that the “constructive interaction” relationship between the state and civil society is a unique Chinese characteristic; and they also tend to argue that Western ideas of civil society, which conceptualize a dichotomous model of state and society based on opposition, emphasizing either a state-dominated or a society-dominated model, are not applicable to the particularities of Chinese political realities (e.g., Deng & Jing, 1997; Ma, 2006). The civil society model advocated by Western theorists puts the state and civil society in two opposing positions, with the latter including the economy and economic associations. However, Yu (2009) argues Chinese civil society should be a public sphere outside of the government and the business sector that includes all sorts of civic organizations not affiliated with the state or the market, and which serves as a mediator between the state and the market. Deng and Jing (1997) define it as being a private sphere for members to engage in economic and social activities, as well as being a public sphere for citizens to involve themselves in public affairs.

Different from the discussion about economic reform, which involved political theorists as well as high Party officials, the open debate over civil society was initiated solely by Chinese scholars and has remained politically sensitive even in the late 1990s and the early years of the new millennium, as it bears the ultimate goal of reconstructing the current political system (Ma, 2006). However, some functional comparable elements of civil society have existed as an integral component of Chinese society and have evolved in different stages of Chinese history. Their relationship with the individual, family, social associations and the
state has gone through different configurations. Some distinctive features have been identified by some scholars. For instance, Yang (2003) argues that Chinese civil society is “incipient yet dynamic” (p.406), and that it provides fertile ground for the development of civil society organizations (CSOs).

Despite the controversy over the status of civil society development and the form of democracy in China, there is a general consensus among most scholars that civil society has achieved unprecedented growth in the last three decades, and it will be a critical force determining the future course of democracy in China (e.g., Moore, 2001; Tai, 2006; Yu, 2009).

2.1.2.2. The Development of Civil Society

It is generally agreed that civil society appeared in China with the beginning of the Republic of China after the 1911 Revolution. However, the normal process of its development did not occur until the 1980s when favourable conditions were created as a result of economic openness and prosperity (Tai, 2006; Yu, 2009).

In ancient China, unofficial and nongovernmental organizations were severely restricted, which is reflected in the political maxim found in the Confucian classics which says “the superior man avoids partisan associations” (Yu, 2009, p.47). In other words, civil society in China was always dwarfed by the state, and the emergence of civil society only came about in the early 20th century along with experiments in democracy and the rise of an entrepreneurial class. Two factors have led to the growth of CSOs: the diversification of various modern professions; and the introduction of Western knowledge, especially in sociology, biology and the literature on democracy in political science. At that critical point in
time, the beginning of the Republic, the nation was struggling for survival, and CSOs articulated the desire for the nation’s survival and salvation. Through the period of Republican China, a relatively complete institutional structure for CSOs was established, including laws and regulations to govern them. According to the record of the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1946, 46,000 registered people’s associations existed, which included around 40,000 business organizations and about 5,000 social associations (Yu, 2009).

After New China was founded by the CCP in 1949, the development of civil society was put on hold for three decades. Nearly all pre-existing CSOs were abolished, except for a few groups which were considered to be allies of the CCP during the civil war. The CCP created several mass organizations such as the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL), women’s federations at national and provincial levels, and trade unions. By the end of the 1970s, however, there were less than 100 national mass organizations in China (Yu, 2009). Many scholars have noted that the lack of any powerful social forces coming out of Mao’s absolutist state was a major factor impeding the appearance of a full-fledged civil society in contemporary China (e.g., Ding, 2001; He, 1997; Rosenbaum, 1992; Wang, 1998). State authority as a power that destroyed civil society reached its climax during the Great Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. During that period, a massive movement of class struggle responded fervently to the dictates of the supreme leader, Mao Zedong, and caused the complete destruction of any surviving CSOs. Tai (2006) argues that these mass actions were a part of the state mechanism in the Cultural Revolution rather than opposed to or separate from the state. It might thus be seen as exactly the reverse of civil society.
The reforms since 1978 have brought transformative social, economic, political and cultural changes to Chinese society, providing a conducive setting for civil society formation. The rise of an affluent middle class and the relatively loose economic environment provide a space for individuals to express their opinions by associating with others. It is the very first time in Chinese history that social organizations have been encouraged on a large scale (Yu, 2009). Both the socio-economic and socio-political transformations led to a proliferation of CSOs in the late 1980s. The official statistics show that the number of national and local mass organizations rose to 1,600 and 200,000, respectively, in 1989, dropped down to 1,200 national and 180,000 local ones in 1992 as a result of the political turbulence in Beijing in 1989 (MCA [Ministry of Civil Affairs], 1999), but since then have continued to increase over the past two decades (Yu, 2009). The recent official data shows that in 2005 there were 147,937 social associations in total, 131,322 of which were civilian non-enterprise organizations and 714 of which were foundations (Yu, 2009). However, as most of the existing CSOs have not been formally registered with Chinese government departments, it is estimated that the number of existing CSOs is between 2 million and 2.7 million (Yu, 2009). The nature of the new CSOs is different from the social organizations established in the earlier period, as they are more “citizen-oriented, self-determining, organized, voluntary, and legitimate” (Yu, 2009, p. 51)

China’s civil society by nature is different from its counterparts in Western societies due to the institutional environment that surrounds it. According to Yu (2009), there are a few defining characteristics of China’s civil society. First, although the macro-institutional environment is favourable for civil society, the micro-institutional environment tends to be
restraining, confining, and supervisory, especially with regard to CSOs. Second, there is no formal law concerning CSOs in China, but they are under official supervision according to the terms of two different sets of regulations (the Regulations Concerning the Registration and Supervision of Social Associations and the Regulations Concerning the Supervision of Civilian Non-enterprise Bodies). As a result of the current political system, the dual supervision system inevitably leads to multiple supervisions; CSOs are monitored by many party and government regulatory bodies at the same time. Third, currently the state laws and regulations and party policies are mutually complementary, and together they set up the institutional environment of China’s civil society. It will be a long time before China will achieve a genuine rule of law in the country (Yu, 2009).

Economic liberalization and the launch of a market economy have led to the gradual rise of China’s civil society, which is having a great impact on China’s social and political life. As indispensable elements of civil society, CSOs should be non-governmental, not-for-profit, and independent. However, the civic organizations in China are still very immature, not completely independent from the government nor voluntary, unlike their Western counterparts (Yu, 2009). Most of China’s civic organizations only began to come to the fore after the mid-1980s, and thus have had less than twenty years to mature.

As noted earlier, it is generally agreed that there are certain forms of civil society taking shape in China outside the power of the state. The intertwining relationship between the state and CSOs allows CSOs to be attentive to the state system of supervision while at the same time be responsive to their own interests. The relaxed social conditions and prosperous economic conditions in contemporary China allow individuals to seek protection for their
material benefits through the power of voluntary organizations and associative relations, a factor recognized by some scholars as leading to a “quiet revolution from within” Chinese society (e.g., Walder, 1995; Goodman & Hooper, 1996). Civil society in China is thus evolving and far from perfect, which necessitates taking a flexible view of it as “a dynamic, fluid process” (Tai, 2006, p.80).

2.1.2.3. The Rise of the “Middle-Class” in China and its Implications for Civil Society

Thanks to the rapid economic growth that has been sustained for three decades in China, new social groups emerged (Goodman & Zang, 2008). A recent report by Xinhua, an official press agency for the government, states that 7 percent of the population (100 million people) had an annual household income between RMB 60,000 and RMB 500,000 as against an average annual income of 11,759 for urban and 3,587 for rural residents in 2006 (Xinhua, May 6, 2007). Expanding at a rate of 1 percent every year, this group will constitute 55 percent of the whole population by 2020 (Lu, 2001). The formation of a strong middle class will help to build an olive-shaped social structure rather than a pyramid-shaped one, which suggests Chinese society may transit from socialistic authoritarianism to liberal democracy (Gallapher, 2002).

The possible connection between the emergence of a middle class and democratization has long been a topic of interest to social scientists. Various studies by Western social scientists have shown that the emergence of a middle class is strongly connected to the development of a democratic society. Seymour Martin Lipset’s pioneering work first identified some social requisites for democracy: “an open class system, economic wealth, an
equalitarian value system, a capitalist economy, and literacy and high participation in voluntary organizations” (Lipset, 1959, as cited in Wang, 2008, p.54). Lipset indicates that economic development is the factor leading to political democratization. According to Lipset, industrialization, urbanization, the dissemination of information, the higher level of education for the general population and the expansion of the middle class, all lead to the growth of democracy (Lipset, 1959). Lipset’s earlier work in political sociology asserts an emerging educated middle class with political orientations as a prerequisite condition for transiting to democracy. However, his view has been doubted by those adopting a comparative historical approach. In Moore’s study on democratic development in Europe and Latin America, he argues that the middle class often accept limited forms of democracy to obtain their own political inclusion and they have to rely on support from the working class in their push for democracy (Moore, 1966). Other scholars (e.g., O’Donnell, 1973; Przeworski & Limongi, 1997) criticized Lipset’s modernization theory for being deterministic, and argued that economic conditions do not produce democracies. It is possible to see the middle class playing a progressive role when an authoritarian state accepts the democratization process. The most important factor is not the increase in the average income level, but rather the changes in the social classes and structure caused by urbanization and industrialization. The middle class is impelled by its awareness of how democracy would have an impact on its material benefits (Huber, Rueschemeyer & Stephens, 1993). There is no consensus in the literature about the specific role played by the middle class in the democratization process, yet the majority of scholars suggest that the middle classes are more likely to play an important role.
Until recently, research about China’s middle class has been unbalanced and somewhat ambiguous (Goodman & Zang, 2008). Despite the importance of the emergence of the middle class for understanding social and economic dynamics, little attention has drawn to the civic behaviour, attitudes and values of this group, or its likely role in future social development. The common views in contemporary China consider the most progressive forces as those who create materialistic wealth based on large consumption of goods and services, departing from the doctrines in Mao’s China which assert the proletariats as the key players. Officially claiming to represent “China’s working class”, the Party-State’s attitude has shifted from denying the existence of a middle class to working on practical problems of social inequality between the new rich and the working class (Goodman & Zang, 2008). The political elites in the Party realized that the new middle class can only be a positive sign if the working class is becoming a disadvantaged group, a burden to the government and a source of instability and unrest (Guo, 2008). In the publication of the 16th National Congress in 2002, then President Jiang Zemin announced that the CCP was working towards “the objective of common prosperity by raising the proportion of those in the middle-income group and increasing the income of low-income groups” (Jiang, 2002). Scholars have pointed out that the CCP has been transformed from the “vanguard of the proletariat” to a body representing the advanced productive forces and advanced culture of the nation (Guo, 2008, p.40).

The middle class is viewed by many as playing a major role in Chinese transitional society, and it has even been labelled as the “New Master of the Country” (Guo, 2008). Yet, no consensus reached over the concept in the Chinese context and the criteria used to identify its members. There is an absence of a widely-accepted straightforward translation of the term
“middle class” in China. The word “jieji” (class) is used interchangeably with “jieceng” (stratum) and “qunti” (group). The English world “middle” can be translated in a number of different ways in Chinese, “zhongchan” (middle-propertied), “zhongjian” (intermediate) and “zhongdeng” (middle range). All phrases produced by the combination of these two terms have different political connotations, and may or may not always refer to the same grouping. There is a sense that it is inappropriate for the Party-State to use the term “middle-class” officially as it contradicts the orthodoxy of its continuing allegiance to Marxism, at least formally. Instead, “middle-income stratum” is a friendlier and more commonly used term (Wang, 2008). Traditionally wealth, which includes income and property, has always been the most commonly used indicator in referring to the “middle class”. This criterion is often criticized for overlooking political, social and intellectual capital possessed by the middle class and tends to exclude some segments from the group.

In a recent survey, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) defined a middle-income household as having an annual income between RMB 60,000 and RMB 500,000 (Renmin ribao [People’s Daily], January 20, 2005). In another nation-wide survey conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), occupation is used as the variable to identify the middle-income stratum because it reflects not only a person’s economic and social status but also their position in the power structure (Li, 2002). Some scholars use aggregated indicators combining occupation, income, consumption, and status to define this group (e.g., Li, 2002; Lu, 2001). While sociologists use various indicators to represent the middle class, the objective criteria for defining this group remain controversial. It makes the job of constructing a clear-cut definition for the middle class in China difficult. Regardless of the
measures used in this definition, citizens in this newly emerging stratum share some similar
economic and social characteristics. They have comparatively more stable and higher
incomes, which differentiate them from rural residents, the urban working class and laid-off
labourers. Middle-income families have a relatively higher level of education and can afford
private property, such as cars and housing, as well as other recreational expenditures (Wang,
2008).

The social scientists studying the middle class in China generally agreed about its
pivotal importance and why it is important. Being the established and politically moderate
social group, the middle class plays its role as “a buffer zone and a bridge between the rich
and poor” (Guo, 2008, p.45). Therefore, the size and feature of the middle class are important
for the erecting democratic political institutions. The middle class values social equality and
accountability in government policy making, and favours obtaining more civil rights and
political liberty. Moreover, the middle classes are capable to establish political and democratic
organizations, and it is the best qualified to convey, clarify and support the general public’s
demands. However, the existing literature on the subjective dimensions of the middle class is
largely notional and prescriptive, more idealistic than descriptive. The common intention of
those contributing to this literature is to uphold this class, together with its theoretic
characteristics of excellence, or to promote the values of equality and transparency in the hope
of their future contribution (Guo, 2008).

Given that it is an ontologically obscure category, the middle class in China is not
likely to follow the paths of neo-liberalism and mediated civil society that have emerged in the
West (Wang, 2008). China is still far from being a middle class society, and the newly rich are
not likely to behave in the same way as the middle classes of Western societies (Robinson & Goodman, 1996). In Wang’s survey (2008) on the civic awareness of the middle-income stratum, he found that respondents have divergent opinions about their self-identification. Wang also reported that less than 16 percent of respondents have participated in civic activities in the last three years. The newly emerging middle-income individuals in China are more interested in seeking ways to enrich their personal lives rather than to promote the public good. There is little evidence showing that this group will promote the forming of civil society. He argues that, as yet, there is little sign that the newly rich group will function as a cohesive individual social group. Their social behaviour demonstrated strong individual endeavour rather than a coordinated group effort. Whether this group will be a driving force for democratization and civil society remains questionable (Wang, 2008).

With a massive expansion of higher education since the late 1990s, more and more Chinese youth can enjoy the opportunity of acquiring advanced knowledge in universities. In the present knowledge society, they have become a defining force for the future growth of the middle-class, which gives hope that they will make a significant contribution to the development of civil society in China. Therefore, it is critical to explore the civic attitudes and behaviours of university students. A vibrant civil society is likely to emerge in China when the university students and the middle-class enjoy full status of citizenship with regard to participatory rights and demonstrate high levels of civic awareness.
2.2. The University as a Critical Player in Civil Society

Preparing students for citizenship has been evoked as a central goal of universities throughout the history of higher education. John Henry Newman, one of the pioneers in this area, elaborated his ideas in “The Idea of a University” (1873, version 1996) in which he states that the mission for a university is disseminating universal knowledge through liberal arts education. For him, if a “practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world” (Newman, 1873, version 1996, p.125). Newman’s work could be viewed as the Ideal of a university (Fallis, 2007). The value of Newman’s masterpiece is not in his specific ideas but in his “desire to elevate the university to the moral centre of modern culture and to do so by freeing the university from the grip of utilitarian and hedonistic schools of thought” (Rothbalatt, 1997, p.21).

In classical ideas, the notion of liberal learning inextricably connected to the ideas of freedom, citizenship, and democracy (Fallis, 2007). Liberal learning was generic civic in its history. The medieval university, which has three prototypes in the Universities of Bologna, Salerno and Paris, represents practical values. These institutions evolved as institutional responses to social requirements for education. As a result, primacy was given to professional education, which remains a noticeable feature of today’s university. The intellectual origins of modern university are in Humboldt’s model of the German research university (Fallis, 2007). Scientific research and the graduate school were greatly emphasized in Humboldt’s University of Berlin, which enhanced higher institutions’ role in promoting scientific development.
However, Humboldt also argued that universities, as autonomous agents free from the state, have the duty of providing civic learning to students.

With the developments that have taken place over a few centuries, higher education today differs from its earlier forms. However, the questions concerning the connection between higher education and the moral and civic responsibility of students are as critical today as they were for Newman and Humboldt (Fallis, 2007). Student bodies have become diversified in terms of age, race, gender and socioeconomic status. While higher education expanded at a striking rate, the governance systems and funding mechanisms of universities have witnessed some noticeable changes. Universities in this post-industrial age differ greatly from the time when the charters for medieval and even modern universities were written and they are often conceptualized as “multiversities” (Kerr, 2001), performing multiple functions for a large group of different stakeholders of various interests. In this sense, a university is not just a place for teaching, learning and research, but also an important institution for nurturing common good, sustaining democracy and promoting civil society.

How the contemporary university addresses its civic responsibility and delivers citizenship education through its liberal curriculum is a challenging task; different national contexts produce different responses. Most of the literature focuses on the United States. There the primary concern has been the development of students’ character, no less than their intellect (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, Rosner, & Stevens, 2000). For example, the founding charter of Stanford University specifies the objectives of a university as being “to qualify students for personal success and direct usefulness in life and to promote the public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilization…” (Colby et al., 2000, p.xxvii).
The vast majority of the founding charters of institutions across the United States address their responsibility for enhancing students’ moral and civic maturity (Colby et al., 2000). Recently, there has been a wave of interest among scholars in revitalizing the civic mission in American higher learning institutions, calling on them to

encourage and facilitate the development of students’ capacities to examine complex situations in which competing values are often at stake, to employ both substantive knowledge and moral reasoning to evaluate the problems and values involved, to develop their own judgments about those issues, and then to act on their judgments (Colby et al., 2000, p. xxiv).

As “civic” covers all social spheres beyond the family, including local, national and international arenas, higher education should advance not just one type of civic participation but civic participation as a whole. Thus, universities have both the opportunity and responsibility for promoting their graduates’ appreciation for the social obligations and rewards of civic participation, as well as cultivating their efficacies and capacities for deliberate participation in public affairs (Colby et al., 2000).

In ancient China, the goal of Confucian education was to cultivate and develop human nature so that virtue, wisdom and ultimately moral perfection would be attained. Once moral perfection was reached, a man would be in harmony with his fellow human beings and become capable of regulating worldly affairs (Tu, 1988). Since the founding of New China in 1949, the civic function of higher education has been found more in its role as a tool of political indoctrination and as an important agent in the struggle between classes and lines (socialism and capitalism). Not until 1978, when the focus of attention was shifted to economic construction, did Chinese higher education open a new chapter (Hayhoe, 1996). The aim of higher education then shifted to educating and cultivating citizens (Yang, 2002). In this
context, it should be mentioned that free tuition and job assignments, the benefits that university students used to enjoy under the then planned economy, were abolished in the late 1980s. The trend towards decentralization and diversification is noticeable in the higher education sector in the form of adjustments to financial and managerial structures, mergers of public universities, and the rapid development of private institutions. With a greater degree of institutional autonomy, the universities have been playing a significant role in the development of China’s civil society through shaping civic knowledge and facilitating the social participation of an increasingly large student population.

In the global context, driven by a variety of policy objectives and social demands, nation states have been investing heavily in higher education, and there has been a great increase in the scale of higher education on all continents. Higher education itself has taken on a global image as knowledge is often considered as borderless. In recent decades, the globalization of higher education has reached unprecedented levels (Scott, 2000). In fact, higher education is pushed by governmental power from one side, the market from another and civil society from yet another side. As higher education includes an increasingly diversified body of students, faculties, scholars, and intellectuals “motivated by an inner calling to query everything related to commonplace worldliness and the vulgarities and confusion of civil society” (Keane, 2003, p. 137), it becomes a supporter of global civil society, attempting to nurture and develop structures and ideals of pluralism and democracy. In short, higher education is potentially “a principal catalyst and defender of global civil society and its ethos” (Keane, 2003, p. 137).
2.3. Citizenship and Citizenship Education

2.3.1. The Concept of Citizenship

Citizenship is a perplexing and multidimensional concept which has developed from the Western tradition of democracy and its meaning has been associated with nation states, nationalism, liberal democracy and civil society (Ichilov, 1998). As Benjamin Barber (1994) rightly put it, the major issue of constructing civil society is the challenge of providing citizens with “the literacy required to live in a civil society, the competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberately in a pluralist world, the empathy that permits us to hear and thus accommodate others, all involv[ing] skills that must be acquired” (p.23). Citizenship education and service learning are seen by Barber (1994) and other political science theorists as key factors in maintaining civic virtue and civic participation.

Citizenship defines the rights, responsibilities and duties of individuals in a community. The British sociologist T. H. Marshall (1963, p.68) defines citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed". Marshall proposed that citizens should also adopt the values of that community of which they are members. These values are depicted as the virtues of liberty, equality, social justice and freedom in Western democratic settings (DeJeghere, 2008), whereas self-cultivation, the good of society, collectivism, harmony and spirituality are given more importance in East Asian societies (Lee, 2004). In addition, Marshall (1963) states that citizenship has three components: civil, political, and social. Civil rights are indispensable components for individual freedoms and
are regulated by the legislation of a state. Political citizenship entitles citizens to become involved in the community to practice their political rights either by voting or by becoming a representative for the public. Social citizenship guarantees the right to enjoy an appropriate standard of living, which is institutionalized by the welfare and educational systems of modern societies (Sridhara, 2003).

What was significant about Marshall's theory was his claim that there was a constant contention between the fundamental values of citizenship and the performance of the capitalist market (Tuner, 2009). Capitalism created inequalities between social classes, while citizenship requires redistribution of resources based on the principle of everyone shared equal rights (Marshall, 1998). Although Marshall’s theory has given rise to much dispute, most contemporary sociologists recognized the validity of his argument despite the criticism that it merely describes the English experience and that he failed to examine the social process undermining citizenship (Marshall, 1998).

Later scholars developed their concepts of citizenship based on modifications of his original ideas. For example, Kiwan (2005) claims that there are five broad conceptions of citizenship: moral, legal, identity-based, participatory and cosmopolitan. Walzer (1994) used a dichotomous classification to define citizenship as “thin” or “thick”. Although Walzer’s theory was questioned for the blurred line between the two categories of conceptions of citizenship, it does, however, present a practical and direct way to understand how citizens view their political roles (Kennedy, Hahn & Lee, 2008). Thin conceptions refer to rights-based citizenship while thick ones cover a much broader area, including citizens’ active participation and involvement in the community (Kennedy et al., 2008).
2.3.2. Citizenship Education

The fact that citizenship education is deeply embedded in particular historical, socio-economic and socio-political contexts probably explains why it is difficult to develop an internationally agreeable definition of this concept. Cogan offered a set of relevant definitions: a citizen is defined as “a constituent member of society”, and citizenship education is defined as “the contribution of education to the development of those characteristics of being a citizen” (2000, p.2). According to Cogan, though the attributes of citizenship vary in accordance with the nature of the political systems of which they are a part, there are five categories for classifying them: (1) “a sense of identity”; (2) “the enjoyment of certain rights”; (3) “the fulfilment of corresponding obligations”; (4) “a degree of interest and involvement in public affairs”; and (5) “an acceptance of basic societal values” (2000, p.2-5).

On the one hand, given the tide of globalization forces, citizenship education has been given great importance as part of a global development agenda. The IEA report on civic education indicates a universal or nearly universal interest of 24 societies in the way young people are prepared for citizenship and learn to participate in public affairs (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999, p. 12). There is also some literature suggesting that the strategies nation states use to enhance and protect national identities in face of globalization through citizenship education are still valid and important (Kennedy, 2004). For example, Kennedy reported case studies of five regions (USA, England, Hong Kong, Australia and Malaysia) and showed that moral and citizenship education still play key roles (Kennedy, 1997). The more recent work of Morris and Cogan (2001) compared citizenship education across six regions (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, Australia and USA) and reported the continuing
commitment of all these regions to promoting citizenship education. On the other hand, the classical notions that citizenship and citizenship education have been linked with, “such as political sovereignty and legitimacy, national identity, social membership, rights and duties, and the allocation of resources within national borders”, have been called into question by globalization (Law, 2007, p.20). Globalization greatly reduces nation states’ power to control political activity and legitimacy in the face of new economic, political and cultural arenas that transcend regional and national borders (Giddens, 1999; Preston, 1997). Thus, there is an emerging need for nation states to assess these tensions related to globalization and address them in citizenship education.

2.3.3. Service Learning

Service learning, as a special form of citizenship education, is an important approach for fostering university students’ civic and social responsibilities in universities in Western democracies, which in turn promotes social wellbeing (Zlotkowski, 2007). Bringle and Hatcher (1996) defined service learning as

a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a boarder appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (p.68)

Despite the wide acknowledgement of its crucial role, service learning is still struggling to win “full academic legitimacy and institutional permanence” (Furco, 2007, p.65). Thus, Furco suggested institutionalizing service learning to achieve its full potential in playing a core and pervasive role in higher education sector. He further pointed out the importance of
understanding specific institutional factors in engaging with local communities. Chinese campuses also witnessed initiatives of promoting organized voluntary activities among their students. Yet, civic engagement activities have not been combined with pedagogic strategies and set as credit-based. The following three sections (section 2.3.4 to section 2.3.6) will give a comprehensive overview of the notion of citizenship and citizenship education, and the situation of citizenship education in both basic and higher education in China.

The notion of citizenship epitomizes the role of the individual in the state’s political, economic, and public systems in Western democracies. However, China’s juristic and public systems differ from Western democratic ones (Wan, 2004). There are more expectations for the individual to obey the political system and to surrender to the state’s authority thoroughly (Goldman & Perry, 2002). The individual’s role in participating the state’s ideological and political matters is not well recognized. It is still a taboo for individuals to criticize the state’s public policy and political ideology. The Chinese Constitution explains citizenship in the following way: All those who have Chinese nationality are recognized as citizens of China (2004, p.1). It also specifies the rights and responsibilities of each individual. The knowledge of citizenship for Chinese people is primarily from the Constitution, which could be considered as a type of legal understanding of citizenship (Wan, 2004). In the early period of New China, the concept of citizenship was rarely used as it broadly referred to all people with Chinese nationality. Under the system of radical socialism of that time, people were not allowed to stress the term “individual”; instead, the concept of the collective was emphasized. For instance, there was a frequent usage of concepts such as the people, the masses, CCP members, the workers, peasants, and the bourgeoisie to indicate the presence of individuals in
society and this radical ideology still exerts some impact on the current education system. Wan (2004) argues that the concept of citizenship education was absent at that time. Since China’s adoption of an Open Door policy and market-oriented economic reform in the late 1970s, the concept of citizenship has appeared more frequently, in the Constitution first, and then in social life. The process of social democratization has increased the Chinese people’s comprehension of citizenship as well as the rights, obligations and responsibilities of a citizen, even though these are still somewhat narrow and ambiguous (Wan, 2004).

Being one of the few “surviving” communist countries in the world, China has commonly been regarded as a propaganda state (Yang, 2002). An essential part of its Leninist one-party system of government is the incontestable official ideology that has been the core substance of citizenship education, or ideological-political education, to be more precise (Schurmann, 1968; Walder, 1986). It is referred to as indoctrination, brain washing or propaganda in Western scholarship (Yang, 2002). In essence, ideological-political education is a kind of thought work, claimed Lynch (1999), which was previously used by CCP cadres at the lowest echelon of society to disseminate the legitimate knowledge of government policy in small units of study groups (Whyte, 1979).

2.3.5. Citizenship Education in Basic Education in China

Education has long been considered to be the means of cultivating citizens who can meet the needs and requirements of the state and the times (Green, 1997). According to Thomas Englund, education for democracy and citizenship has historically be considered as the responsibility for the compulsory school system and as “not relevant” to higher education
in Western democracies (2002, p.282). Civic missions of schools have been recognized by most states in their education framework (Tolo, 1999). Schools not only have the responsibility to prepare and cultivate students to be responsible citizens, but also have this ability, as they could reach most young persons, unlike universities.

One notable feature of citizenship education in China is that there has been confusion between traditional moral education, political education and citizenship education. Historically, there has been a close relationship between education and moral political education in China. When the 1911 Revolution brought an end to imperial China, Cai Yuanpei, the first minister of education for the Republic of China and later the Chancellor of Peking University, made it clear that “the approach of republican education (minguo jiaoyu 民国教育)” is to cultivate citizens of a republic for the first time (Bailey, 1990, p.110). He called for a comprehensive approach to education composed of five elements: military-citizen education; practical education; civic morality; cosmopolitanism; and aesthetic education (Bailey, 1990).

In the period of New China, schools have been the foremost means for disseminating and indoctrinating students in CCP values, beliefs and ideologies. The most recent Guideline for the Basic Education Curriculum Reform (jichu jiaoyu kecheng gaige gangyao 基础教育课程改革纲要) has explicitly expressed the purpose of Chinese basic education as follows:

Education should guide students to develop the spirit of patriotism and collectivism, love socialism, inherit and carry forward the excellent tradition of Chinese cultural and the revolutionary tradition; develop their socialist juristic and democratic consciousness; obey the country’s laws and socialist morality; gradually develop a right world outlook, life philosophy and values; have
social responsibility to serve the people; have initial creativeness, practical ability, scientific and human accomplishments, and environmental consciousness; lay the foundation of basic knowledge, skills and methods capable of adapting to life-long learning; have a strong physical and mental health, from a healthy life style to become a new generation with idealism, morality, culture and discipline. (MOE, 2001a, p.2)

Although there is an absence of individual citizenship education courses in Chinese schools, the structure and content of the curriculum have laid its main goals of “political socialization, moral education, patriotism and social development” (Wan, 2002, p. 358). In regard to the content, the compulsory subjects related to citizenship courses are Ideology and Morality (from Grade One to Six) and Ideology and Politics (from Grade Seven to Nine). According to the official document  Standards for the Subject of Ideology and Morality in Primary Schools and the Subject of Ideology and Politics in Secondary Schools (Jiunian yiwu jiaoyu xiaoxue sixing pingde ke he chuzhong sixiang zhengzhi ke kecheng biaozhun 九年义务教育小学思想品德课和初中思想政治课课程标准) (2001b) issued by the Ministry of Education, students are expected to meet both cognitive and behavioural requirements to develop the right political orientation, and to acquire proper behavioural habits, social perspectives and life philosophy, which will eventually prepare them well for the construction of socialist modernization.

The current model of citizenship education in China has been criticized by both local and international scholars. It is obvious that the Chinese government prioritizes citizenship education, given the reality that socialism is in turmoil and has suffered obstacles in Eastern Europe. While the government uses it as a means to develop students’ identification with the socialist system and the present national political system, citizenship education with uniform
curricula, content, methods and even teaching hours is carried out across the nation with no effort being made to address regional, ethnic and cultural differences (Wan, 2004). Some Chinese scholars (e.g., Zhao, 2010) draw on Western multicultural education theories and question the present ideology of citizenship education for failing to consider minority ethnic and cultural diversity. Recently, there have been efforts by the government to reform citizenship education in schools, with the two core subject areas being replaced by four subjects - *Morality and Life, Morality and Society, Science* and *Arts* - covering wider social, political and civic issues. However, the arduous task of adapting citizenship education to the ongoing national, social, economic and political transformations remains unsolved.

2.3.6. Citizenship Education in Higher Education in China

In addition to primary and secondary education, the university also plays a critical role in equipping students with competencies for responsible citizenship through both formal instruction and the informal curriculum. Universities help to preserve and develop critical thinking, which enables the conceptualization of the notion of citizenship and allows it to flourish in all of the modern states (Fallis, 2007).

In China, just as is the case in the schools, there is an absence of so-called “citizenship courses” in universities. The ideological-political education in Chinese universities is provided both by mandatory courses and extracurricular activities (Yang, 2002). The core courses in *Theories of Marxism and Maoism* have always been the central component of ideological-political education since the establishment of the PRC. Such heavy emphasis on Soviet-derived socialist ideology and values reflects the historical roots of “Learning from the Soviet Union” in the early period of New China. There have been a few major amendments to the
content of ideological-political education with the changing official ideology of the CCP. After the start of economic reform in the late 1970s, the introduction and analysis of other contemporary trends of thought appeared in the textbooks of ideological-political courses in university settings. In the 1990s, the six undergraduate teaching units included: *Moral and Ideological Cultivation; Fundamentals of Law; Fundamental Principles of Marxism Philosophy; Fundamental Principles of Marxism Political and Economic Theories; Theory of Mao Zedong; Thoughts of Deng Xiaoping.* These were set as compulsory courses for students across the nation. It shows that the government made careful efforts to change the knowledge structure of ideological-political education in the universities, to some degree even with “an altered attitude towards the current philosophical thinking in Western societies” (Yang, 2002, p.1).

In 2006, the Ministry of Education adopted a new approach to ideological and political education in Chinese universities after a comprehensive nationwide investigation. The original six required courses were merged into three, *Moral and Ideological Cultivation and Fundamentals of Law, Fundamental Principles of Marxism,* and the *Theory of Mao Zedong, Thoughts of Deng Xiaoping, and Three Representatives.* A history course, *Modern and Contemporary Chinese History,* was added as a newly mandatory course, aiming to illustrate how the Chinese people had experienced arduous periods of historical change since the late Qing dynasty and had developed a socialist regime under the leadership of the CCP. These required four courses will be referred as the “New Four” in the subsequent chapters of the thesis. A non-credit course on *Policy and Political Situation Analysis* has been put forward as another required course for students in all disciplines. It is only mandatory for students in the
social sciences and humanities. Moreover, universities in different regions are using different versions of textbooks edited under a single syllabus. As the Ministry of Education has seen the importance of the unification of textbooks across the nation, textbooks of all the listed courses have been amended and incorporated with new elements of social development, and are being used by all higher education institutions (Guo & Ye, 2007).

It is noteworthy that considerable attention has been given to citizenship education in China in recent years. Since the present leadership advocates “managing state affairs morally” (yide zhiguo 以德治国), the term “citizenship education” appears in policy papers constantly. In the recently released official document entitled “Action Plan for the Development of Civic Morality” (gongmin daode jianshe shishi gangyao 公民道德建设实施纲要), it states that serving the people and collectivism should be the foundation of moral construction in a socialist state. The specific content of moral construction is laid out in three key areas: social morality, professional morality, and familial virtue (Gongmin daode jianshe shishi gangyao, 2001). Moreover, in the report of the 17th People’s Congress, it states that the government should “reinforce civic awareness education and establish the concepts of socialist democracy and legal governance, freedom and equality, fairness and justice” (Renmin ribao [People’s Daily], June 10, 2009). It is the first time that the Chinese government has lifted citizenship education to a high level, making it an engine of building so-called “socialist democratic politics”.

Many Chinese scholars have expressed their concerns about the adequacy of current citizenship education. In today’s world, where dramatic political, economic and cultural changes have taken place and globalism and postmodernism prevail, there are enormous
pressures towards the disintegration of large political units, regional independence, localism and nationalism. Yang (2002) warns of three challenges for citizenship education from the immediate environment of the higher education system, from the wider society and from the external international setting: marketization of higher education; attitudinal changes of university students; and influences from external sources. He further notes the awkward position of current citizenship education: while it is made to stick to the original targets based on traditional content and ways of delivery, the new contextual changes have presented many challenges. Xia and Tang (2006) suggest that an independent course of citizenship education should be established, and the present government-led static unitary moral system should be adapted to enable students to understand contemporary social values. Their proposal also includes the experiential aspect of learning, which means students should be offered more chances to exercise their civil rights, such as electing student leaders, in order to strengthen their interest in civic issues (Xia and Tang, 2006).

2.4. An Overview of Higher Education Development in China

This literature review concludes with a brief review of the Chinese higher education system, as a general background to the study. The first modern Chinese university, Beiyang gongxue (the forerunner of Tianjin University), was established in 1895 (Hayhoe, 1996). Throughout the period of Republican China, from 1911 to 1949, the Western idea of the university had been introduced with a series of adaptations. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, China leaned towards the Soviet Union for support, due to the Western policy of isolating the New China. Thus, a strong Soviet influence transformed the whole Chinese higher education sector, and this had a more lasting influence than all other foreign influences.
over the past century (Jacob, 2004). With the belief that higher education should be geared towards the struggle between classes and lines (socialism and capitalism), the Chinese communist government launched some political movements aimed at protecting the new China against western ideological influence. The most prominent of these movements was the *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (1966-1976). As a result of the Cultural Revolution, higher education was devastated and the basic values associated with it, those that had developed for nearly a century in China, were completely rejected (Jacob, 2004; Yang, 2002; Hayhoe, 1996). Fortunately, after Mao’s death in 1976 and the subsequent fall of the Gang of Four, China moved into a new phrase of rapid development under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. The year 1978 is of tremendous historical significance to China. Ever since then, the Chinese government prioritizes economic construction, adopting an Open Door policy with the aim of transforming China into a powerful state (Qiang, 1996).

Thanks to a stronger economy and a more democratic society, the higher education sector in China has undergone dramatic transformations in the past three decades, including the move towards mass higher education, structural reform, and a shifting role of the government regarding funding and administrative oversight. The Chinese economy has become a more active player in the international market as a result of sustaining an annual GDP growth rate of 8 percent for the past twenty years, and by implementing economic reform and an Open Door policy since the late 1970s. In this era of a knowledge-based information economy, higher education has been seen as a core element in nation-building in modern societies (Gibbons, 1998). Driven by the motivation of making China prosperous and powerful through education and science (“*kejiao xingguo*”), China has viewed higher
education as essential to the enhancement of national competitiveness and the achievement of modernization. With rapid enrolment expansion since the late 1990s, Chinese higher education was accommodating 29.07 million students in 2008 and had thus become the largest provider in the world (MOE, 2009). Higher education institutions in China have also build strategic partnership with universities in major industrialized states and have become more integrated into the international academic community (Min, 2004).

In spite of astonishing economic growth, government investment in the whole education sector, particularly in higher education, has remained relatively low by international standards (OECD, 2000). For example, while the percentage of its GDP spending on higher education in China increased to 1.3 percent in 2008 as a result of government efforts and initiatives, the GDP contribution to higher education in the US was 2.9 percent in the same year (The Russell Higher Education Group, 2010). However, increased funding has been allocated to a select number of top universities, including Peking University and Tsinghua University, due to the implementation of two prominent national university projects, Project 21/1 and Project 98/5. Project 21/1 gives special financial support to the 100 top universities, in order to bring them up to “world standards” in the 21st century, and Project 98/5 provides substantial financial support to 39 selected universities in order to create world class universities in China. The rationale for the allocation of these funds to the selected universities was that limited resources should be concentrated on some strategic priority institutions rather than be spread out among all higher learning institutions (Min, 2004). The special funding programs have intensified the gap between a handful of elite universities and the remaining mass institutions and enhanced the institutional hierarchical structure of the higher education
system. Critics of these schemes have pointed out that they are favouring a few elite universities at the expense of the rest of the local institutions. One important point about an institutional hierarchy is that it contains a determinist element that puts a particular model of an institution at the top and creates conditions that offer almost invincible barriers to lower ranked institutions emulating the higher ranked (Yang, 2004).

Another noteworthy recent development is the rapid expansion of private higher education institutions; these had disappeared for three decades after the CCP took power and only re-emerged in the early 1980s. While there are more than 1,000 institutions in operation at present in the Chinese private higher education sector, only one fourth of them offer regular higher education and are eligible to confer bachelor degrees. The most recent official data show that around 4.01 million students are enrolled in private institutions, constituting 13.8 percent of the total 29.07 million enrolments in 2008 (MOE, 2009). This picture suggests that “China has already shifted from a state monopoly to a mixed economy of education” (Zha, 2006a, p.60). However, most private institutions cannot guarantee high quality instruction and learning, and they thus play a supplementary role to the public universities.

To sum up, the transition of Chinese higher education to mass higher education is neither a simple continuation of its unique traditional approach to higher learning, nor is it a wholesale transplantation of foreign experience; rather it is a product of both domestic and international forces. The rapid expansion of the higher education system has greatly diminished the longstanding gap between social demand and higher education supply. However, as the future trends in Chinese higher education development are likely to be a mixed story, there is no clear answer to the question of how higher education development
contributes to the well-being of the wider Chinese society. Hopefully, as average university students gain more individual freedom and personal benefits from the recent economic boom and higher education expansion, they are more likely to contribute to the formation of civil society forces and push the democratization process in China.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for situating this study in the existing literature. The first two sections aimed to help readers develop a good understanding of the concepts of “civil society”, “citizenship”, and “citizenship education” in both Western and Chinese intellectual discourse. In the latter two sections, the reflective analysis of the civic role of universities in Western and Chinese contexts and the overview of higher education development in China help to provide a background for this study.

Theoretical sensitivity, defined by Corbin and Strauss (1990), refers to how a researcher “…can come to the research situation with varying degrees of sensitivity depending upon previous readings and experience with relevance to an area” (p.41). Sources contributing to theoretical sensitivity include reviewing various kinds of literature from previous research, publications and government documents, as well as the researcher’s personal and professional experience. In this chapter, I examined the literature pertaining to civil society, citizenship education, and the civic responsibility of the university. I will carry forward the analysis of civic attitudes and behaviour of university students in the next chapter in order to establish an analytical framework for the quantitative and qualitative analyses that follow in Chapters 4 and 5. While discussing the survey and interview findings, I will incorporate my own personal
experience, as well as findings from government and institutional document analysis on higher education in China.
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the conceptual framework and research methodology for the study. The first part of the chapter develops two analytic frameworks for analyzing the data: the first one is at the macro level for the qualitative part of the research; the second is at the micro level for the quantitative part of the research. The first framework aims to locate the individual university student in a wider context in order to understand the mechanisms through which students receive citizenship education, while the second framework examines the interaction between students’ backgrounds, their civic perceptions and their civic participation. In the second half of the chapter, I will explain the research methodology that has been adopted and the methods that have been used in conducting the study. I will begin with a discussion of the appropriateness of using a mixed methods approach. Then, I will explain the research design used in the two consecutive phases of the study in detail. This is followed by a discussion of the issues of neutrality, reliability and validity in the study.

3.1. Enacting Citizenship: University Students as Active Recipients

The civic perceptions and participation of university students are not only shaped by their university education, but also by various other factors such as their own distinctive backgrounds, their families and the society at large. In Kennedy and Fairbrother’s (2004) discussion of some key findings about citizenship education across the Asia-Pacific region, they noted that students should not be regarded as passive recipients of citizenship education. Students are not unaware of the aims of citizenship education, and they are competent to react to what is offered to them. Moreover, their response is not as predictable as is often presumed.
This resonates with the intention and goals of this study, which aim at depicting Chinese university students’ responses to citizenship education and describing their civic perceptions, their experiences of civic participation, and their involvement in civil society.

It is necessary to position university students inside their institutional and social contexts to understand outside impacts on their civic perceptions and civic participation. In the multi-nation study conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), the research team proposed an octagonal model to analyze the situation of civic education in various national settings (Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amedeo, 1999). The model was inspired by contemporary psychological and sociological theories, namely Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach (1988) to studying development and cognition formation, and the views and perspectives of other scholars such as Lave and Wagner (1991) and Conover and Searing (1994). However, as school students aged 10 to 14 years old were the subject of study in the IEA project, I only adopted some elements of this model and have proposed a new one in the current study to show the position of university students as recipients of citizenship education in institutional and societal settings, and to understand the impact of the institution and society on their civic perceptions and civic participation (See Figure 3.1).

The model has two levels: micro and macro. In the micro-system, individual students are at the core of the inner circle surrounded by two pairs of contrasting concepts: university and society, formal curriculum and informal curriculum. It suggests that students’ civic perceptions and civic participation are influenced by the relationships and interactions in both of the settings, university and society, through formal instruction and through exposure to the
informal curriculum. The outer circle indicates a macro-system in which institutions, processes and values are involved in domains such as politics, economics, education and religion. It also takes into account a country’s international position, including the symbols or narratives of the country that are deemed important at international, national and local levels.

Figure 3.1. The environmental setting of university students as recipients of citizenship education

3.2. Assessing University Students’ Background, Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation

Nowadays, it is commonly recognized that young people are the largest politically unrepresented members of the world's population and they face extreme disparities in access to economic, technological and socio-cultural resources (Barber, 2007). More than one quarter of the world's population (1.7 billion) is aged 10 to 24 years; this represents, proportionately,
the largest group in history ever to be entering adulthood (United Nations, 2003). Reports from across the globe suggest that young people tend to be viewed as “apathetic” or “disengaged”, (e.g., United Nations, 2005). Many proposals have been put forward to promote civic participation in this group; however, the conceptual frameworks are often badly defined and theorization is largely missing (Barber, 2007).

Having long been viewed as a qualitative concept, theoretical models which purport to explain the dynamics of youth participation in relation to their own individual background and their civic concepts, values, beliefs and attitudes are critically reviewed in this section. From this review, a new model with adaptations based on the Chinese context is developed for examining university students’ background, civic perceptions and civic participation in preparation for further data analyses in the following chapters.

3.2.1. Student Background-related Factors that Affect Their Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation

Previous research has shown that young people’s knowledge, competencies, and beliefs in civic perceptions and civic participation have been influenced by a number of factors, including the context of the home environment, the context of schools and classrooms, and such personal characteristics as ethnicity, age and gender. This section will examine the indicators for these factors often used by researchers, and explain the rationale for the four indicators used in this study, SES, Institutional Type, Gender, and Discipline, to analyse the civic perspectives and civic participation of Chinese university students.
The Context of the Family

Previous sociological studies have often emphasised the role of family background in developing positive attitudes towards civic participation in young people (Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Renshon, 1975; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Family background is also generally regarded as an influential variable in the civic and political development of young people. The socio-economic background can be seen as a consequential factor in providing a stimulating environment, as well as in enhancing the educational attainment and future prospects of young adults; these, in turn, enhance civic participation as an individual resource.

Recent studies of civic participation have emphasized the importance of the access of families and individuals to different forms of capital. Bourdieu (1986) sees economic capital as the source of other forms of capital and distinguishes between human, cultural and social capital. Whereas human capital refers to the skills, knowledge and qualifications of an individual, cultural capital is seen as commonly shared attitudes, knowledge and behaviours that are often used for social and cultural demarcation (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Social capital is conceptualized as a societal resource that links citizens to each other to achieve goals more effectively (Stolle with Lewis, 2002). Putnam (1993, p. 185) defines social capital as the “key to making democracy work” in his study of institutional performance in Italy. He further explains that three components of social capital (social trust, social norms and social networks) form a “virtuous cycle” that provides a context for successful cooperation and participation in a society. In the field of social science, studies on social capital have examined multiple factors, including socioeconomic status, personal networks, memberships in organizations, interpersonal trust and personal communication. Consequently, the concept of
social capital has frequently been criticized for being obscure and for lacking suitable indicators (Woolcock, 2001). The indicators that are usually used for addressing family environment factors related to social capital include: parental socio-economic status (SES) (such as parental occupation, parental education, and household possessions), cultural/ethnic background, and family composition.

It is generally agreed that using a combination of three indicators for SES (income, education and occupation) is better than using only one (Gottfried, 1985; White, 1982). In this study, the concept of SES is constructed using three variables: family annual income level, father’s education level and father’s occupation. Informed by the existing studies of social structures in China, I built a category of SES that has three different groups: upper SES strata, middle SES strata and disadvantaged SES strata. Upper SES strata is constructed based on the features of middle-classes in China, which referring to those students with an annual family income above RMB 60,000, father’s education at post-secondary level or above, and father’s occupation falling into the group of “middle-class profession”\(^2\). Disadvantaged SES strata refers to students coming from families with an annual income lower than RMB 8,000, father’s education level of secondary education or lower, and father’s occupation not included in “middle-class profession”. The rest were grouped into a middle SES group.

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2 In the Chinese context, occupation is often used as a major denominator for defining “middle class”. In the Research Report on the Social Strata (2002) by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), “middle class” consists of several groups: private business owners and entrepreneurs; “white collar” office workers; managers and senior administrators of state-owned enterprises; and professionals with specialized knowledge. In the original dataset, the variable of “Father’s Occupation” consisted of 7 categories: office worker; professional; administrator/manager; job-hunter/laid-off/retired; farmer; worker; service industry employee. Therefore, the first 3 categories were regrouped as “middle-class profession”, while the last 4 were regrouped as “non-middle-class profession”.
The Context of the Institution

Besides family, school is the other most important institution for the socialization of young people (Almond & Verba, 1963). Previous studies on civic participation of adolescents show that school is an important agent, sometimes considered to be more influential than home background. (Hess & Torney, 1968). The IEA CIVED study found that the context of schools and classrooms, which refers to the classroom climate for civic and citizenship education at school, has an effect on students’ sense of belonging at school and perceptions about their influence on decision-making at school (Torney-Purta et al., 1999). In the higher education sector, it was found that those who attended four-year colleges demonstrated a higher level of civic participation than those who attended two-year institutions (Lopez & Brown, 2006).

As this study’s subject is university students, the environment of universities became an important factor to consider. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Chinese higher education system is becoming more hierarchical, with prominent disparities across different types of institutions. The variable of institutional type is therefore used here as an indicator of different educational environments, and consists of three groups: public elite (referring to those listed in Project 98/5); public less-elite (referring to those not being listed in Project 98/5); and private institutions.

The Context of the Individual Student

Gender
The first IEA Civic Education Study in 1971 found considerable gender differences with respect to cognitive achievement with males tending to have higher civic knowledge scores (Torney, Oppenheim & Farnen, 1975). The IEA CIVED study (Torney-Purta et al., 1999), however, showed a different picture: Whereas in some countries males showed slightly higher average scores, in other countries females were performing better. Interestingly, gender differences showing somewhat higher scores for males were found in a follow-up study of upper secondary students (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002). The IEA CIVED study (Torney-Purta et al., 1999) also showed that gender differences existed with regards to indicators of civic participation. In most countries males tended to have higher levels of political interest and expected participation. Gender differences were also noted in regards to attitudes toward immigrants’ and women’s rights (Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Amadeo et al., 2002). Therefore, the variable of gender is included for analysis in this study.

**Academic Disciplines**

There are certain differences across disciplines in pedagogical practice due to the focus on particular types of academic knowledge (Chatman, 2007). Whether there will be different patterns in civic perception and civic participation across different disciplines is therefore interesting to explore. I included this variable, consisting of three groups - natural science/technology, social sciences and humanities - as one of the indicators of students’ individual characteristics.
Other individual attributes of students were found to be associated with their civic behaviours such as age, ethnicity, religion and citizenship (Amadeo et. al., 2002; Hess & Torney, 1967; Foster-Bey, 2008; Tossutti &Wang, 2006). As this study is targeting senior university students, most participants in both stages of the research are students registered in their third year of university. Therefore, the differences in age are not expected to be a major concern. China is a multi-ethnic country with a 91.59 percent Han ethnic composition. Therefore the ethnicity indicator is not expected to be a significant factor and has not been taken into account in this study.

3.2.2. Previously proposed models of civic participation

Although criticized by later scholars, Almond and Verba’s work, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (1963), is still a ground-breaking work in investigating civic participation and political socialization. It was the first effort to systematically collect and codify variables measuring civic participation in cross-national settings. In this study, the analysis was based on a cross-national survey of 1,000-person samples in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Mexico. Almond and Verba attempted to establish a theory of civic culture, a political culture explaining the political involvement of citizens or lack thereof in democracies. They built an analytic framework comprising different themes related to civic perceptions and civic participation, including political cognition, feelings toward government and politics, patterns of partisanship, the obligation to participate, the sense of civic competence, political allegiance,

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3 This data was obtained from the Fifth National Population Census of 2000, published by the National Statistics Bureau (2001).
social relations and civic cooperation, organizational membership and political socialization. However, Almond and Verba did not study factors such as demographic variables, family background, and community contexts, which may also influence citizens’ civic participation.

Studies conducted by the IEA, targeting adolescents in the domain of civic education, are generally considered to have great significance and influence worldwide. The first such study (Torney et al., 1975) was conducted as part of the so-called Six Subject Study, with data collected in 1971 (for a summary, see Walker, 1976). The second study, the IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED), was carried out in 1999 (Tornety-Purta et al., 1999). It was designed to enhance the empirical bases of civic education by supplying the latest information about the civic knowledge, values, understandings and actions of 14-year-olds. CIVED had a double focus on school-based learning and off-school opportunities for civic engagement. The analytical framework IEA adopted was based on three civic-related domains: democracy/citizenship; national identity/international relations; and social cohesion/diversity.

In Li’s paper (2009) analyzing the same dataset that is used in this study, he incorporates critical components of Almond and Verba’s (1963) political culture theory, and articulates a combined model for examining civic participation and political socialization in the Chinese socio-economic context. He notes that students’ political orientation, which includes cognitive, affective and evaluative aspects, has a reciprocal relationship with political socialization, under the influence of various agents such as the university, the local community and other social agents.
I believe the framework for interpreting university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation should represent dynamic, context-bound, multi-levelled social constructions. With the purpose of providing a comprehensive understanding of current university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation in China, this study proposed a new analytical model to examine the multi-dimensional nature of these two concepts, and to explore the possible correlation between civic perceptions and civic participation and the possible effect of individual background characteristics on civic perceptions and civic participation.

3.2.3. The Model Proposed for This Study

The Measurement of Civic Perceptions

“Civic Perceptions” refers to students’ civic values, behaviours, attitudes and opinions that may lead to their participation in civic activities. This construct has five dimensions: National Identity, Civic Knowledge, Social Justice, Social Trust, and Civic Commitment.

Domain 1: National Identity

This domain reflects students’ sense of belonging to the nation of China and their attitudes towards Chinese culture, history and language. The concept of national identity is different from patriotism or nationalism (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). A strong sense of national identity has been emphasized by political theorists as an active expression of citizenship that is likely to lead to political participation (Habermas 1996). Previous studies have indicated
that national identity is positively related to political involvement (e.g., Huddy & Khatib, 2007).

Domain 2: Civic knowledge

Civic knowledge makes citizens realized their interests as individuals and as members of communities and societies. The greater civic knowledge they possess, the more likely they have consistent views of issues across time, the more effectively they can realize their interests in the political process (Galston, 2007). Researchers have suggested that there is a linear relationship between political knowledge and the stability of political attitudes. Civic knowledge promotes political participation in both quantitative and qualitative ways (Galston, 2001).

Domain 3: Social Justice

This construct reflects students’ beliefs and sense of a moral imperative about contributing to the public good of all citizens. Previous research shows that a commitment to social justice stimulates an individual to work actively towards equality for all in their society (Monard-Weissman, 2003).

Domain 4: Social Trust

Social capital theory stresses two primary components promoting civic participation in the political process: membership in associational organizations and reciprocal norms and trust between citizens (Putnam, 1995). Comparing trends between social trust and voting turnout, Putnam’s thesis argued that the decline of social trust between citizens is a driving
factor for the low rate in electoral participation. The regeneration of social trust is believed to increase voting turnout and other modes of civic participation in politics (Putnam, 1995). Putnam’s theory is criticized for being too exclusively focused on social activities in identifying the political implications of civil society, and for overestimating the political consequences of social capital (Kim, 2006). Although his recent work states that political trust is different from social trust (Putnam, 2000), there is little focus on how the former is related to the latter. In Kaase’s study of social capital in nine European countries, he maintains that interpersonal trust should not “assume the role of an important antecedent to political trust” (1999, p.24).

Domain 5: Civic commitment

This construct reflects students’ recognition of their obligation to participate in civic activities. Recent studies have demonstrated that young adults who express a strong commitment to civic and political participation are more civically and politically engaged than their peers who show less of a commitment to take action (Ajzen, 2001; Fishbein, Ajzen, & Hinkle, 1980; Oesterle, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004).

The Measurement of Civic Participation

Participation in civic activities is seen as a key indicator and determinant of a socially healthy, engaged, and equal society (Longford, 2005). Civic participation is often used interchangeably with “civic engagement”, and “political engagement”. The notion of civic participation used in this study is close but not exactly equal to the definition developed by the Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership at the University of Maryland, which refers to
“acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one’s communities. This includes a wide range of activities, including developing civic sensitivity, participation in building civil society, and benefiting the common good” (Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership, 2007, p.1). With the focus on civic participation of Chinese university students, the concept of “civic participation” covers one or more of the following:

1. demonstrating active citizenship by actively participating in both on and off campus civic activities
2. taking on leadership and membership roles in student or social civic organizations
3. educating themselves with available resources to develop informed perspectives on civic and social issues
4. promoting social justice in the local community and in a larger context
5. involving themselves in political activities

As a multi-dimensional concept, scholars have suggested “civic participation” can be broken down into a few distinct categories. According to Jenkins et al. (2002), there are three types of civic involvement: electoral activity, civic activity and political voice. Electoral activity involves voting behaviour and political office. Civic activity is based on problem-solving and helping others in the community, including volunteering. Political voice is those activities that allow for political expression, which may include communicating with those in power or those having decision-making positions, and participating in boycotts, petitions and other demonstrations. Longford used another three-category classification to define civic
participation: “community service (volunteering and charitable work); political participation (voting, attending public meetings, etc.); and cultural participation (participating in arts and crafts guilds or cultural groups, communal storytelling, etc.)” (2005, p 5-6).

In this study, I used three indicators for civic participation: (1) organization participation, (2) volunteering, and, (3) voting. The first one is measured as the frequency of participating in political, activist, interest and leisure organizations on and off campus, and is an objective measure of civic participation. The last two are subjective measures: one is a self-reporting indicator of activeness in volunteering activities; the other one measures students’ preferences in different voting choices.

**The Model and Hypotheses**

Building on previously used models of civic participation, I propose a new model to operationalize the examination of three kinds of interaction: (1) the impact of student background on the formation of civic perceptions as process variables; (2) the impact of student background on engagement in civic participation as outcome variables; and (3) correlation between students’ civic perceptions and their civic participation (See Figure 3.2). As indicated earlier, previous research found that positive civic attitudes and higher levels of civic knowledge have positive relationships with civic participation (Metz & Youniss, 2005). A recent study by Metzger (2007) revealed that more involved young citizens tend to rate all types of civic participation as more obligatory and more worthy of respect. Based on his findings, Metzger (2007) suggested that the relationship between young adults’ civic attitudes and their civic involvement is more reciprocal than directional, as beliefs motivate their civic participation and their civic experiences and, in turn, impact the way they perceive and
conceptualize civic issues. Therefore, in Figure 3.2, the two-way arrow was used to link the concept of “Civic Perceptions” and “Civic Participation”, indicating the bidirectional relationship between the two.

Thus, the first hypothesis this study will examine is:

**H1:** When university students have more positive civic perceptions, they will be more likely to participate in civic activities and civil society development both on and off campus.

As discussed in section 3.2.1, earlier studies conducted in North American settings suggest that family SES, defined by education and family income, has a positive relationship with civic participation. Individuals from lower SES backgrounds are less civically-engaged than their peers from higher SES backgrounds (Foster-Bey, 2008; Tossutti & Wang, 2006). This study will explore whether students coming from different SES backgrounds demonstrate differences in their civic perceptions and civic participation:

**H2:** Students from higher SES backgrounds have more positive civic perceptions than their peers from lower SES backgrounds.

**H3:** Students from higher SES backgrounds are more involved in civic participation than their peers from lower SES backgrounds.

Having discussed and analyzed the existing literature on civic perceptions and civic engagement, I developed two analytic frameworks for both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and proposed three hypotheses to be examined in the following chapters. I now move on to explain the research design of this study.
Figure 3.2. The analytical model for this study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Name</th>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>Survey Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Perceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>Q34</td>
<td>Everybody should be patriotic and loyal to her/his country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q35</td>
<td>Everybody should know about the history of her/his country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q36</td>
<td>I love China as my motherland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Knowledge</td>
<td>Q31</td>
<td>As a university student, I have a clear understanding of the concept of civil society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>As a Chinese citizen, I understand my rights and responsibilities inscribed in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Q38</td>
<td>I care about the gap between the rich and the poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q40</td>
<td>Women should run for public office and take part in the government just as men do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q41</td>
<td>All ethnic groups in China should have equal opportunities for education and jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q42</td>
<td>The children of migrant workers should have the same opportunities for education as children in cities have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Trust</td>
<td>Q47</td>
<td>In our society, people generally trust each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Commitment</td>
<td>Q43</td>
<td>As a university student, I have an obligation to actively participate in activities that benefit the community and society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Participation</td>
<td>Q58</td>
<td>Think about all the organizations/associations listed below (a student council/class parliament; a youth organization affiliated with the government; an environmental organization a group conducting [voluntary] activities to help the community; a charity collecting money for a social cause; an art, music or drama organization; a sports organization or team; an association of fellow folks from the same region (Tongxianghui); any other non-governmental or non-profit organization). How often do you participate in activities for any or all of these organizations/associations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>Q60</td>
<td>Generally speaking, how actively do you participate in voluntary/non-profit activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>Q67</td>
<td>What kind of elections are you most likely to participate in?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3. Research Design: A Mixed Methods Approach

With the aim of understanding how university students in China perceive civic issues and engage in civic activities, this study will explore not only the general pattern of their civic perceptions and civic participation as a whole group, but also individual experiences that may bring a greater nuance to the details of student civic attitudes and behaviours. In this circumstance, applying either solely quantitative or solely qualitative research methods would not serve the purpose well. Therefore, I chose to use a mixed methods research approach with both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. According to Creswell and Clark, “mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry” (2007, p.5). It is established on the premise that the combination of both approaches can offer a better interpretation and analysis of research problems than either research method used alone. The complexity of research problems demands answers that are beyond “simply numbers in a quantitative sense or words in a qualitative sense” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.13). The research design applied in this study is often identified as a kind of “explanatory design” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.86), the purpose of which is to use qualitative data to explain or build upon initial quantitative results with a sequential design in which the qualitative phase follows the quantitative phase. Creswell and Clark (2007) identified two types of explanatory design: a follow-up explanation model and a participant selection model. The first model places greater emphasis on the quantitative methods, while the qualitative part serves to explain the results from the earlier phase. The second model stresses the qualitative phase, with the earlier quantitative phase helping in the process of purposefully selecting participants who can address qualitative questions.
I hesitate to label this study as either a follow-up explanation model or a participant selection model. Rather, it may fit with the tenets of both models in some ways. In order to address university students’ civic perceptions, civic participation and citizenship education experience in China, a preliminary quantitative data analysis, based on an existing nationwide student survey dataset, was used to construct the design of the qualitative research, including the criteria for participants’ selection and interview questions. The second and qualitative phase, however, not only explained and elaborated on the findings derived from the quantitative phase, but also probed issues related to the research question in greater depth. After collecting the qualitative data, I refined the quantitative data analysis and then processed the qualitative data. The empirical qualitative data built on the first phase, and the two phases were connected in the intermediate stage in the study. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provided a general understanding of the existing situation of university students’ civic perceptions and civic participation, and the potential differences among different groups with different individual characteristics. The analysis of the qualitative data then refined and explained those statistical results by exploring participants’ views and experiences of civic participation in more depth, and by addressing some issues not included in the survey questionnaire. Overall, however, a slightly greater emphasis was put on the qualitative investigation.

3.4. Phase One: Quantitative Methods

In Phase One, quantitative methods were used to explore current university students’ perceptions of civil society and experiences of civic participation. First-hand data was drawn from the Year Two and Year Three university students’ responses to a student survey.
questionnaire carried out under a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)-funded project entitled “China’s Move to Mass Higher Education (CMMHE)”.

3.4.1. Sampling Procedures

Due to issues of feasibility, a purposive sampling approach was adopted for the survey instead of random sampling. Eligible students were selected from three disciplines: natural sciences and technology, social sciences, and humanities. Units of classes from each of the twelve universities were surveyed.

The survey was conducted by the team of the CMMHE project from May to June 2007, and 2321 valid questionnaires were collected from twelve Chinese universities. Nine of them are public universities (Peking University, East China Normal University, Xiamen University, Nanjing University, University of Science and Technology of China, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Northwest Agricultural and Forest University, Southwest University, and Yanbian University), and the remaining three are private universities (Huanghe University of Science and Technology, Blue Sky College, Xi’an International College). The universities are found in all of China’s major geographical regions, and they represent the main types of institutions in the Chinese system, including three comprehensive universities, three science and technology universities, three education-related universities, and three private universities. The targeted respondents of this survey were Year Three undergraduate students majoring in the three disciplinary areas, but a few classes in their second year were included due to the unavailability of Year Three classes in a few institutions. The questionnaires were distributed to the entire classes. The total number of questionnaires distributed for this research was 2332, with 2,321 valid response sheets.
returned, giving a valid return rate of 99.5 percent. However, a check for logical consistency was performed, and 179 response sheets were considered to be invalid and therefore were removed⁴. Of the remaining 2142 response sheets, 1957 respondents provided valid background information. Table 3.2 shows a summary of the 1957 valid cases in the CMMHE dataset that this study used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>1442</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional type</td>
<td>Public Elite</td>
<td>1218</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Less-Elite</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Natural sciences/technology</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Returned</td>
<td>2321</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.4.2. Quality Control of the Design and Data Entry

This questionnaire was originally designed in English and later translated into Chinese, with meticulous verification by bilingual native Chinese and English researchers. The questionnaire was finalized after feedback obtained from a pilot survey conducted in two case study universities in December 2006 (Li, 2009).

⁴ In the questionnaire, there are 30 questions (Q55, Q56, Q62, Q63) asking whether students participate in civic organizations and activities. It was found that 179 students chose “YES” for all 30 questions. From the histogram of distribution, this group of students did not agree with the general trend of the data. This group of students must have been those who did not treat the questions seriously and simply ticked “YES” to all. Therefore, the response sheets of 179 students were removed for the sake of accuracy and authenticity.
Data was entered into SPSS and verified by a cross-random check with the data accuracy rate, which was found to be 99.91 percent (Li, 2009). Logical consistency and completeness have also been checked, leaving 1957 valid responses and a valid response rate of 84.3 percent.

3.5. Quantitative Data Analysis

The questionnaire contains 70 questions in total, consisting of four major parts: (1) respondents’ personal information; and their views on (2) China’s move to mass higher education; (3) civic knowledge, awareness and attitude; and (4) participation and involvement in action related to civil society. My thesis project used the data from Parts 1, 3 and 4 which consisted of 43 closed questions and 3 open questions. Most survey questions were measured using a five point ordinal scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = somewhat agree; and, 5 = strongly agree). There were some yes or no questions assessing whether respondents participated in a particular event, association, or the like, as well as a few questions with categorical answers. The 3 open questions were for students to freely jot down their opinions or observations. A copy of the CMMHE survey questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

SPSS 16.0.1 was used to analyse the CMMHE dataset, exploring the patterns of university students’ civic perceptions and the degree of their civic involvement, engagement and the possible association with their individual characteristics of SES, gender, institutional type, and discipline. Descriptive statistics were calculated for variables of interest. Means and standard deviations were used to summarize continuous variables, whereas counts and percentages were used for categorical variables.
To first assess the reliability of domains of interest among the survey questions, a Cronbach’s alpha statistic was calculated. Values of 0.7 or greater for this statistic indicate good reliability. In these cases, an aggregate average score was created for the domains. Correlation statistics were conducted to see if there was any significant correlation between any two of the indicators of civic perceptions and civic participation. The study used an ordinal multiple regression model to assess the combined effect of students’ individual characteristics on their civic perceptions and civic participation patterns.

Various quantitative researchers in the social sciences have emphasized the correspondence between data characteristics and statistical methods (Hand, 1996; Long, 2005; Michell, 1986; Stine, 1989; Velleman & Wilkinson, 1993). In the quantitative dataset for this study, the dependent variables for civic perceptions were all five point Likert scale items and those for civic participation were categorical variables. Applying least squares multiple regression (LSMR) would result in biased estimates because, firstly, the data is not normally distributed and, secondly, LSMR assumes data are interval level when they are in fact ordinal. Long (2005) warned that ordinal data have sometimes mistakenly been treated as interval data because they can display more desirable statistical properties than individual items. In other words, when the data violate the assumptions of LSMR about normal distribution and homogeneity of variance, the statistical power can be relatively low. In this case, ordinal multiple regression is a robust alternative to LSMR. Therefore, I conducted 11 ordinal regression estimations for variables included in measures for civic perceptions, and 3 ordinal regression tests for variables measuring civic participations, to see what effect each individual characteristic had on them.
3.6. Phase Two: Qualitative Methods

As qualitative research is “fundamentally interpretive” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p3), I aimed at using it to further explain the patterns of civic perceptions and civic participation found among university students in the quantitative phase, to investigate how students’ civic perceptions are shaped by formal and informal curricula received at the university, as well as by influences from the society and family, and to explore in greater depth the diversity and disparity of views among students from different backgrounds. Moreover, the qualitative phase of the research was expected to address some critical issues concerning students’ civic participation experiences in order to show a more complex and nuanced picture than quantitative methods alone could do.

The qualitative phase of this study allowed the informants themselves to explain their own civic experiences and to describe what was relevant to them according to their own sense. In turn, it allowed me, as a researcher, to interpret these civic experiences in a rational and systematic manner, as subjective meanings were “negotiated socially and historically” (Creswell, 2003, p8). I chose the method of individual interviews for this investigation: it allowed nuance, depth and complexity to be captured during the process as social explanations and arguments were constructed by my subjects. Punch (1998) argues that interviews are a useful means to access the interviewees’ views, meanings, perceptions of the situations and the reality. The qualitative data collected through interviews provided me with many insights into the understandings, opinions, attitudes, feelings and experiences of the interviewees and also insights into things that could not be “seen or heard, such as the interviewee’s inner state” (Seale, 1998, p202).
I decided to choose one-on-one, in-depth, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews, as they were less tightly structured and less formal than structured interviews. This approach provided space for more flexibility in the data collection format, with each individual interviewee being encouraged to elaborate on feelings and experiences that were important to them.

3.6.1. Ethics Approval

Before I took the field trip to China to conduct the interviews, ethics approval was obtained from The Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto. Copies of the Ethics Approval Letters from the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics are attached in Appendices C and D. Institutional consent for field work in each campus was obtained from the Directors of Student Affairs Department at both Peking University and Southwest University, and from the one of the Vice-Presidents at Blue Sky Colleges. Both English and Chinese versions of the Letter of Consent for Institutional Participation are attached in the thesis as Appendices E and F.

3.6.2. Rationale for Choosing the Research Sites

Since the 1990s, government initiatives have intensified the stratification and diversity of the Chinese higher education system (Zha, 2006b). In order to maximize the variation of types of institution, I purposefully selected three comprehensive universities out of the chosen 12 in the earlier quantitative phase, namely, Peking University, Southwest University and Blue Sky College, with each representing a distinct intuitional type. Adopting Zha’s (2006b)
classification framework of Chinese higher education institutions\(^5\), these three universities fit into three distinctive types: Peking University belongs to the type called “Doctoral/Research University Extensive”; Southwest University fits into the type called “Masters Teaching University II”; and Blue Sky College falls into the type called “Associates Colleges”.

Geographically, each of three universities is located in one of China’s three major regions, the northeast, the southwest, and the southeast.

### 3.6.3. Locating the Qualitative Research within its Specific Institutional Context

Clegg and Hardy (1996) emphasized the significance of understanding institutional context when a researcher attempts to draw coherent patterns of meaning from information obtained during a qualitative investigation within an organization. The qualitative part of this study was intended to reveal the common patterns of how university students form civic attitudes, perceive civic issues, and engage in civic activities, as well as show the possible distinctive features of each one of the three selected universities in China.

Peking University, which enjoys a world-wide reputation in research, is also one of the first established modern universities in China, with a history going back to 1898. It is renowned for its pioneering spirit and student activism, and it was a major player in China’s New Culture Movement, the May Fourth Movement of 1919 and the Tiananmen Square protest of 1989, and many other significant events in Chinese history. Some scholars perceive it as a kind of representative icon for elite Chinese youth. I was curious to see how the current

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\(^5\) Zha listed ten types of higher education institutions in China: Doctoral/Research University Extensive, Doctoral/Research University Intensive, Master/Teaching University I, Master/Teaching University II, Baccalaureate Colleges-Liberal Arts, Baccalaureate Colleges-Science and Technology, Baccalaureate Colleges-Social Science, Baccalaureate/Associates Colleges-General, Associate Colleges, and Specialized Institutions (2006b, p.224-226).
students in Peking University embody this long-established institutional culture of civic engagement.

Southwest University is a university under the Ministry of Education of China in the municipality of Chongqing. It was the result of a significant merger of two universities, Southwest China Normal University and Southwest Agricultural University. The chosen interviewee students from this institution were all from the cohort of teacher education. Probably they will pursue their future careers as secondary or primary teachers, and their civic attitudes and values will have a considerable impact on future generations.

Blue Sky College is a private institution located in Nanchang, a southeast city in China. Established in 1994 as a secondary vocational school, it has been developed into an influential vocational and academic institution which has made remarkable progress over a relatively short period of time. The founder, Yu Guo, who is physically handicapped himself, is well-known for being committed to providing educational opportunities to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students in this campus environment are assumed to be sensitive to social equality issues.

In the drafted interview questions, I included one that asked how each institutional culture and distinctive environment had affected students’ civic perceptions and civic participation.

3.6.4. Sampling Strategy

From May 10 to June 24 of 2009, I visited the three Chinese universities to conduct one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with 10 to 12 university students at each institution, around 34 in total.
As suggested by the quantitative data, four of the students’ background characteristics, SES, institution type, gender and discipline, turned out to be quite powerful indicators in relation to civic perceptions and civic participation (Chapter 4 will elaborate on these findings). For the sake of consistency with the quantitative study, in the initial research design for the qualitative study three predictor variables (institutional type, gender and discipline) were taken into account in the composition of the three groups of 12 interviewees to be recruited at each of the three research sites. SES was not included in the criteria for selecting interviewees because of its sensitive nature and manageability. The design map for selecting interviewees is shown on the chart below (See Figure 3.3):

![Design Map for Selecting Interviewees](chart.png)

**Figure 3.3. Design Map for Selecting Interviewees**

**Table 3.3. Distribution of Student Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Natural Sciences</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peking University</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest University</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Sky College</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, due to time constraints and availability of participants, I was not able to identify every single student interviewee exactly as the map above shows. Thus, the chart only serves as a guideline for an ideal set of participants. The actual distribution of student interviewees across three campuses is presented in Table 3.3. It shows that, generally, the selection of participants in interviews was realized through the method of quotas divided according to gender and disciplines. A few Year Four students were included due to the difficulty in finding suitable Year Three students. As the interviewees were kept anonymous except for the name of the institution, their discipline and gender, the code was based on a student’s affiliated institution, and each student within each institution was allocated a number. Additional information about students’ gender and discipline was also made clear in the code. So, for example, within Peking University (which had 10 participants), the range of codes representing the 10 students went from PK01 to PK10. For example, the participant PK01 was a female and a student studying Humanities so the code for her was PK01, F (F=female), H (H=Humanities).

Regarding the sampling strategy, a few techniques were employed in this qualitative study. Firstly, I used a “confirming sampling” strategy (Creswell & Clark, 2007) to choose the participants for the interview. As the qualitative study was conducted after the initial stage of the quantitative data analysis, its main purpose was to confirm the preliminary findings, clarify the hypotheses and elaborate on answers to the major research questions. Secondly, the

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6 During my visit to Peking University in May 2009, I was told that a large number of Year Three students were taking an internship and many of them were not living on campus, which made it hard to find enough Year Three participants.

7 In the codes, “PK” is short for Peking University, “SW” for Southwest University and “BS” for Blue Sky College.

8 In the codes, “F” is for female and “M” is for male; “NS” is short for the discipline of natural sciences, “SS” is for social sciences, “H” is for humanities.
strategy of “maximum variation sampling” (Mertens, 1998) was used to choose the samples. The research sites and individual interviewees were chosen based on the criterion of maximizing variation within the sample in terms of different institutional types, gender and disciplines; the hope was that the results would indicate what is unique about each situation, as well as what is common across these diverse settings. Thirdly, “snowballing sampling” (Mertens, 1998) was adopted, as the interviews started with some volunteer students, and I asked them to recommend their classmates or friends who would be eligible and willing to join this study.

3.6.5. Approaching Interview Candidates

With each institution’s consent (see Appendices E and F), expressed by the signature of the Director of Student Affairs on an informed consent form, I was able to recruit eligible interview candidates by myself. I was allowed to post the “Interviewee Outreach Flyer” (attached in Appendices G and H) with my contact information on a notice board located at the student activity center on each campus. Students’ motivations for joining this study were varied: (1) they may have needed a channel to express or exchange their ideas and opinions about civic issues and their experiences of civic participation; (2) they may have been curious about the research itself conducted by a Chinese PhD student studying in a Canadian university; or (3) they may have been seeking information in certain areas that I might be able to provide.

However, I had a few students who took the initiative to contact me and indicated their willingness to participate this study. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, I had to approach targeted interviewees through the personal contact of insiders (faculty and students)
in each institution in order to gain their trust. Most student interviewees were recruited through a “snowballing” strategy.

3.6.6. Pilot Study and Interview Schedule

The interview included 15 main questions and each interview lasted approximately an hour. It was semi-structured and open-ended in order to allow more room for participants to express their opinions freely. A pilot study had been conducted in Toronto with 5 Chinese young people who had the experience of studying in Chinese universities in the recent past. Throughout the pilot study, certain adjustments to the wording and revisions of questions were made to refine the interview questions and make them more appropriate.

Here is the list of interview questions:

1. Which one do you think is more important in cultivating your civic perceptions: formal curriculum (the political or other related courses offered by university), or informal curriculum (experience of participating in student associations or other civil society organizations)?

2. Would you like to talk about your experience of taking the required civic and political courses? How about other students’ experiences according to your observation?

3. Would you like to talk about your experience of participating in student associations or other civil society organizations outside of the campus?

4. What are the expected goals for your civic participation? Do you think you have achieved these goals?
5. Have you experienced anything disappointing/frustrating in participating in civic activities?

6. Are you a member of the Party? Do you think students who are party members are more active in participating in civic activities?

7. Our previous quantitative study indicated students from different SES, classes, genders, and disciplines have minor variations in their civic perceptions and participation. What do you think about that?

8. The factor of institutions in affecting students’ civic perceptions and participation

a. As a student of Peking University, which enjoys a long history of student movements and serves as a base for the Chinese intellectual elite, what role do you think the institution plays in affecting your civic perceptions and participation?

b. As a student of Southwest University, which is a merger of an agriculture institution and a teacher training university, how would you comment on the role the institution plays in affecting your civic perceptions and participation?

c. As a student of Blue Sky College, the founder of which shows a genuine and persistent interest in helping the students from disadvantaged groups (esp. handicapped students), how would you comment on the role the institution plays in affecting your civic perceptions and participation?

9. Would you like to share your views of social justice? What do you think about the disadvantaged groups in Chinese society?
10. Do you think the elections on campus are just, fair and transparent? Do you have any interest in participating in political elections (e.g. People’s Representatives)?

11. For some major events in China in 2008 (Olympic Games in Beijing, Sichuan Earthquake), did you show any support for them? How does your experience of involvement affect your civic perceptions?

12. How do you view the independence movement in Tibet (Xinjiang and Taiwan)?

13. Have you ever come across the concept ‘Civil society’? What is your interpretation of it? What do you think about the construction of civil society (the democratization process) in China? What do you think about the call to build a “Harmonious Society” in China?

14. What would you say about university students’ civic perceptions and participation in general?

15. In the future, in what way would you like to participate in student associations or other civil society organizations to promote civil society in China?

3.7. Interview Process

Before the interviews, I briefly introduced myself and thanked the participants for taking part in my study. I informed them of the purpose of my study and the types of questions I was going to ask. The participants were also told that their participation was completely voluntary and they would be free to withdraw at any time without any penalty. If they agreed to proceed with an interview, I gave them the Informed Consent Form (attached in Appendix I) to be read and signed. When the interview started, if they did not want to continue at any
point, I would stop the interview. After the interview, I left my contact information with them, so that they could contact me at any time if they should wish to withdraw before my thesis was completed. However, no interviewees approached me for withdrawal.

The questions were constructed in a semi-structured and open-ended way. The interviews lasted from around fifty to ninety minutes and were recorded by a digital recorder with the consent of interviewees. The interviews did not follow a rigid structure as this might jeopardize participants’ willingness to share their personal experiences about engaging in civic activities. Wengraf (2004) warned researchers that if they let the participants know that they have preferred responses to one of the questions in the interview schedule, the participants are more likely to tailor their responses to what the researcher seems to expect. I did explain to every interviewee at the beginning that I was looking for their views, opinions, perceptions and experience of civic issues and civic participation, and I would never judge them or expect “right” or “wrong” answers.

The relationship between interviewer and interviewee is a key element in determining the quality of the information collected (e.g., Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). I was concerned about power relations between myself and my interviewees. Power in interviewing situations is usually on the interviewer’s side (Wengraf, 2001; Yow, 1994). However, the power relation is also dynamic and changeable from time to time (Foucault, 1994). I viewed my participants as equal subjects. When I was asking questions I anticipated trustworthy answers to my questions, and when my participants were answering the questions, they expected trustworthiness and respect for their stories and their presentations of them.
I was aware of the issues of confidentiality and anonymity as I gained access to the participants’ individual experiences. I used pseudo codes to represent each participant in the following analysis chapters, and kept both the paper documents and electronic files related to the interviews confidential. My participants also learned that the analysis of the collected data would be used to produce my PhD thesis, articles and books and be presented in lectures, seminars and conferences. After the interview, I asked the participants if they had anything they would like to say or ask about the study and the interview. Most of them requested an electronic copy of a summary of my PhD thesis. Generally, they indicated that they were interested in the final results of this study.

The Chinese language was used for the interviews and transcriptions, and translation into English was done afterwards. A digital recorder was used with the consent of interviewees for all the interviews and the recorded information was transferred into the computer for data security. After the text of each interview was transcribed in Chinese, the transcripts of the interviews were sent to each interviewee for verification and for any suggestions they would like to give.

3.8. Observations

During my visits to the three institutions, I took a campus tour led by faculty or students within the institution and visited the Students’ Activity Center. I also had the chance to speak with some student leaders in Student Clubs while they were promoting their organizations on campus. Although I did not formally observe the citizenship education classes in the chosen research sites, I could draw on my own experiences as a former undergraduate student in a Chinese university 10 years ago. I also approached some lecturers
teaching citizenship education classes and university administrators in charge of students’ affairs, and had conversations with them informally.

I jotted down my reflections on a daily basis in my field notes based on these observations. In the following data analysis chapters, I will use the related observation materials for the interview findings to enhance the discussion.

3.9. Qualitative Data Analysis

As an effective and efficient tool for qualitative data analysis, I used NVivo 8 from Qualitative Solutions and Research. When I read through the transcripts of the interviews, I manually coded them for recurrent themes which emerged from the replies of interviewees. I also used NVivo 8 for a more detailed coding and identification of patterns and themes and linking of codes to facilitate the formulation of assertions and inferences. Data analysis in my study was conducted by examining the data on three levels: literal, interpretive and reflexive (Mason, 1998). On the literal level, I concentrated on the literal meanings of words and sentences in the transcriptions; on the interpretive level, I focused on what the data conveyed beyond the literal meaning; and, on the reflexive level, I interpreted the data based on my own perspective as a researcher and my understanding of the relevant literature and the current socio-political and socio-economic conditions the study embedded.

3.10. Neutrality in the Study

It is commonly agreed that social science research is value-laden rather than value-free (Bryman, 2001; Janesick, 1998; Kelly, Regan, & Burton, 1995). I recognize that my study was influenced by my own perceptions as I designed the research, collected and analyzed the data. However, both my values and the values of my participants were constantly contested
throughout the study. I presented the participants’ perceptions of civic issues and their experience of civic participation in the best way I possibly could, and examined these perceptions in relation to the wider context of citizenship development in Chinese society and the situation of citizenship education in universities. As Patton (2002) has indicated, detachment from the subject and data is expected to reduce bias. However, detachment or objectiveness does not simply equal neutrality, as neutrality cannot be easily attained. My strategy was to be alert about judging any participants, treating any participants or any groups with favour or prejudice, and about taking any positions in this study.

3.11. Reliability and Validity of the Study

The importance of reliability and validity has been emphasized in both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, but with different meanings in each paradigm (Golafshani, 2003). In quantitative research, Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the degree to which results are consistent over time and the degree to which a precise image of the total population is presented. If the results of a study can be reproduced using similar methodology, the study’s instrument is reliable. She further notes, reliability refers to whether the study has measured what it is intended to measure and to the trustworthiness of the findings.

Although the concepts of reliability and validity are viewed differently by qualitative researchers (Golafshani, 2003), they are still the two significant factors that any qualitative researcher must pay careful attention to (Patton, 2002). However, scholars suggest that different terms should be used (e.g., credibility, neutrality, consistency, applicability) when talking about the quality of qualitative research in order to reflect interpretive conceptions, since the concepts of reliability and validity are more applicable in the quantitative tradition.
The use of a mixed methods approach calls for a review of issues concerning research rigour as it combines elements from both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. In this study, the findings from the quantitative survey dataset were examined in relation to follow-up interviews. As a result, some of the findings were confirmed but some were not. Interview data were also used to further explain the major findings resulting from the quantitative investigation. In this way, the rigour of this study was ensured and enhanced.

Howe and Eisenhart (1990) introduced some areas to be considered for increasing the rigour of research: (1) the fit between the research question, data collection and data analysis strategies; (2) the good use of data collection and analysis techniques; (3) caution over background assumptions; (4) justification in the discussion of disconfirming data and theories; (5) external and internal values. I have carried these important considerations in my mind since the beginning stages of the study. I have linked each part - the research questions, the literature review, the theoretical framework, the methodology, data collection, and interpretation of results - to the others, and made the whole thesis a coherent piece. In the interview process, I followed suggestions by Arksey and Knight (1999) about enhancing the validity of the interviews by making sure that my interview technique would build trust and openness and give informants the scope to express the way they see things and what they have experienced. I also made sure that the interview questions contained questions drawn from the relevant literature, the pilot study and quantitative findings in the first phase; the questions covered issues raised by the research question and no questions irrelevant to the research agenda were asked.
This chapter has given an overview of the conceptual framework and research methodology this study adopted. The next three chapters will move beyond the contextual background, literature review, theoretical framework and methodology, and focus on the findings and the interpretation of those findings. Chapter 4 will describe the important findings from the student survey. Chapter 5 will present findings from the interviews that enrich and complement the survey findings. The last chapter, Chapter 6, will link the findings of this study to the local, national, and global contexts, and discuss the implications of this study.
CHAPTER 4:

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT SURVEY DATA ON CIVIC PERCEPTIONS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Based on a statistical analysis of the CMMHE student survey data, this chapter intends to answer the first sub-question raised at the beginning of the thesis: “Do students’ civic perceptions and civic participation vary according to their background characteristics (the four factors of Socio-economic Status [SES], gender, institution type, and discipline)? If yes, what are the reasons for the variations in their civic perceptions and civic participation with respect to their background characteristics?” The first section of the chapter gives a snapshot of the university students’ civic attitudes and civic behaviours in eight areas: National Identity, Civic Knowledge, Social Justice, Social Trust, Civic Commitment, Civic Organization Participation, Volunteering and Voting, by treating all valid replies in the sample as a whole group. The second section tests the three hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3, exploring the possible correlation between civic perceptions and civic participation, and potential variations in civic perceptions and civic participation across different student groups according to their background characteristics. The final section of the chapter seeks to explain the findings in relation to a wide range of literature, and discusses how the follow-up interview data collected in the qualitative phase of this study might help to further explain the patterns in “the big picture”, as well as introduce some nuances that were not captured by the student survey data.

4.1. An overview of University Students’ Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation

A high degree of patriotism is one of the most prominent characteristics of Chinese university students’ civic perceptions. Since the establishment of New China in 1949, Chinese
universities have been conducting patriotic education. Universities are viewed as the most important places to provide so-called ideological-political education and moral education to shape citizens’ knowledge, attitudes and conduct towards society, the nation and the state (Fairbrother, 2004). After the 1989 student movement associated with the “Tiananmen Square Incident”, when the state perceived serious challenges to its authority, it launched a specific campaign to more strongly promote patriotic education as presented in a document entitled Aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu shishi gangyao (The Outline on the Implementation of Patriotic Education) (CCPCC, 1995). Fairbrother (2004) has suggested that patriotic education in China is designed to fulfill at least four main functions: (1) to sustain China’s territorial integrity, national unity, and national pride; (2) to help students to gain a proper understanding of international relations; (3) to promote the socialist system and state legitimacy; and (4) to encourage contributions to China’s program of development and modernization. In Chinese schools, the content of patriotic education is included not only in the ideological-political courses but is also infused into courses such as history, Chinese language and literature and geography.

This study found that current university students’ views reflected the success of these programs in patriotic education. Students’ responses to the statements of “I love China as my motherland” and “Everybody should be patriotic and loyal to his/her country” were remarkably positive, with an overwhelming majority of students (94.2 percent and 82.3 percent, respectively) indicating that they agreed with these statements. Over 90 percent of students in this study thought people should have the obligation to study the history of their country. This shows that the overall student body has a respect for the nation and a sense of the need to acquire relevant knowledge out of self-motivation (See Table 4.1). A major
explanation for these findings must lie with the long-existing emphasis placed on nationalism and patriotism in the Chinese education system.

In terms of civic knowledge, over half of those surveyed indicated that they consider themselves equipped with an adequate level of that knowledge. Only 16.1 percent and 14.4 percent respectively considered themselves to be lacking a clear understanding of the concept of civil society and to be lacking a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities as depicted in the National Constitution, while 52.2 percent and 57.4 percent respectively felt that they had a good understanding. The fact that the majority of students agreed with these two questions indicates that universities have managed to disseminate civic and political knowledge well.

In general, the overwhelming majority of students showed that they were concerned with social justice. Of the four social equity issues, the one showing the highest degree of consensus was the equal rights of migrant workers’ children in receiving education (94.7 percent), followed by equal opportunities for all ethnic groups (93.5 percent), the equal rights of women in political affairs (86.1 percent), and concern over disparities between the rich and poor (76.1 percent).

Studies in social science have demonstrated that trust is a key to the social capital development and democratization process (Putnam, 2000). Generalized social trust is commonly considered to exert a great impact on social interactions, associated lifestyle, and civic engagement in Western societies. According to Fukuyama (1995), the level of social trust is tied to a nation’s economic prosperity and competitive ability. He also categorizes China as a “low-trust society”, as certain elements of functions of the society in China are
replaced by particularized trust, such as the strong trust between family members and close friends (Fukuyama, 1995) and trust in guanxi networks (Yang, 1994). Yang’s study, based on a large-scale cross-national survey dataset (2007), revealed that the trust level in China is connected with government behaviour. In this study, 29.6 percent of respondents believed “people generally trust each other”, 30.0 percent disagreed with this statement, and 40.4 percent did not have a preference. No other items related to civic perceptions drew such a negative response. The lack of general social trust shown by the majority of university students reflects a social crisis in contemporary China. The issue of the deterioration of three “xins”: “xinyang (faith), xinren (trust), xinyong (credibility)” has been the topic of heated debates in relation to the rapid and dramatic social, economic and cultural changes in the post-Mao era (Zhang & Jennings, 2009).

In terms of civic commitment, the study found that most students (87.8 percent) agreed they should “actively participate in activities that benefit the community and society”, while 10 percent held a neutral opinion, and a very small group (2.1 percent) disagreed. The results show that Chinese university students generally have a strong commitment to civic activities as their duty.

Students’ high scores in social justice and civic commitment reflect the emphasis of Chinese culture on social responsibility. “A benevolent love for others” is the main theme of the Confucian classics. Two thousand years ago, Mencius, the ancient classical scholar, taught the Duke of Qi, that he should “extend the respect of the aged in one’s family to that of other families; extend the love of the young ones in one’s family to that of other families; then you can rule the land under heaven”. As Lee (2005, p.240) puts it, the Chinese ideal of citizenship is “social citizenship” or “socially concerned citizenship”.

The study also found that only 13.8 percent of respondents had high levels of participation in the activities of civic organizations, while 34.4 percent had moderate levels, and the remainder (51.8 percent) hardly took part in any civic activities. This domain reveals more about the reality of civic participation than the other domains based on self-reported questions. In response to a question about volunteering, one third (33.7 percent) of students considered themselves as either very active or active volunteers, 41.5 percent as somewhat active, and one out of four (24.7 percent) indicated a lack of passion for taking part in volunteering activities. Another question about voting asked students which voting event they would most likely participate in among the four provided choices. Of all the respondents, 39.5 percent indicated that they had a strong desire to vote for “representatives in the People’s Congress”, 17.6 percent chose “student government representatives”, 7.4 percent favoured voting for “winners of the ‘Super Girls’ Competition”\(^9\), and the remaining 23.7 percent indicated that they wanted to vote for “best performance in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala Show”. These findings suggest that the largest group of Chinese university students were in favour of political voting, compared to the other options provided in the questionnaire. However, one predominate form of mass media, TV, has a great impact on students’ daily life. Three out of ten preferred to vote for a national TV singing competition or a TV Gala Show than any other types of voting options (see Table 4.2).

\(^9\) “Super Girl Competition” is a Chinese version of the “American Idol” TV show.
### Table 4.1. Frequency Table for Items in Civic Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original questions</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain One: National Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love China as my motherland. (Q.36)</td>
<td>N 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>1378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody should be patriotic and loyal to her/his country. (Q.34)</td>
<td>N 16</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody should know about the history of her/his country. (Q.35)</td>
<td>N 4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>1148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain Two: Civic Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a university student, I have a clear understanding of the concept of civil society. (Q.31)</td>
<td>N 30</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand my rights and responsibilities inscribed in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China. (Q.32)</td>
<td>N 36</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain Three: Sense of Social Justice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about the gap between the rich and the poor. (Q.38)</td>
<td>N 15</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women should run for public office and take part in the government just as men do. (Q.40)</td>
<td>N 20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>1013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ethnic groups in China should have equal opportunities for education and jobs. (Q.41)</td>
<td>N 8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children of migrant workers should have the same opportunities for education as children in cities have. (Q.42)</td>
<td>N 8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>1460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain Four: Social Trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our society, people generally trust each other. (Q.47)</td>
<td>N 107</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain Five: Civic Commitment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an obligation to actively participate in activities that benefit the community and society. (Q.43)</td>
<td>N 7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Name</td>
<td>Original Questions</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Participation</td>
<td>How often do you participate in activities for any or all of these organizations/associations? (Q.58)(^{10})</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>51.80%</td>
<td>34.40%</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>Generally speaking, how actively do you participate in voluntary/non-profit activities? (Q.60)(^{11})</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>24.70%</td>
<td>41.50%</td>
<td>33.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>What kind of elections are you most likely to participate in? (Q.67)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) The answers to the original Q 58 are: A. Never or almost never; B. Once or twice a year; C. Once or twice a month; D. Once a week or more often. This variable was recoded into a new one with three categories: (1) low level of frequency (referring to those choosing A and B); (2) medium level of frequency (those who chose C); and (3) high level of frequency (those who chose D)

\(^{11}\) Q 60 was originally a five-Likert-scale variable (A. Never Participate to E. Very active). It was transformed into a three-scale one, aggregating ‘Never Participate’ and ‘Not Active’ (A and B) to low level of activity, transforming ‘Somewhat Active’ (C) to medium level, and aggregating ‘Active’ and ‘Very Active’ (D and E) to high level.
4.2. Major Findings from the Analysis of the Student Survey Data

To address the three stated hypotheses, I conducted analyses that assessed: (1) the correlation between civic perceptions and civic participation; and (2) the differences among students’ civic perceptions and civic participation as related to SES and the three other student background characteristics of gender, institutional type and discipline.

4.2.1. Correlation between Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation

H1: When university students have more positive civic perceptions, they will be more likely to participate in civic activities and civil society development both on and off campus.

Reliability among questions in domains was first assessed using a Cronbach’s alpha statistic. Given that the Cronbach’s alpha statistic indicated satisfactory reliability (values around 0.7 or greater), domains with multiple variables were aggregated. As questions under the domains of “National Identity”, “Civic Knowledge”, and “Social Justice” are measuring students’ responses under the same theme, reliability tests were conducted to see if the scale consistently reflected the construct it was measuring. Three internal consistency estimates of reliability were computed for each cluster of items (see Table 4.3): the computing subscale in these three domains appeared to have good internal consistency (National Identity, \( \alpha = .761 \); Civic Knowledge, \( \alpha = .684 \); Social Justice, \( \alpha = .682 \)). The mean score of variables in these domains was computed and used to represent each domain.
Table 4.3. Reliability Test Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Valid Cases=</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>0.761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic knowledge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>0.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>0.692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4. Intercorrelation Table of Items in Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation (N=1950)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. National Identity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.301**</td>
<td>.447***</td>
<td>.110***</td>
<td>.439***</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>.171***</td>
<td>.104***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Civic Knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.248***</td>
<td>.202***</td>
<td>.271***</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>.180***</td>
<td>.123***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social Justice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.068**</td>
<td>.520***</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>.148***</td>
<td>.088***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Trust</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.137**</td>
<td>.062**</td>
<td>.155***</td>
<td>.066**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Civic Commitment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.049*</td>
<td>.251***</td>
<td>.114***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Organization Participation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.267***</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Volunteering</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.067**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Voting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

The intercorrelation matrix in Table 4.4 shows three types of correlations: intercorrelation within civic perceptions, intercorrelation within civic participation and correlations between civic perceptions and civic participation.

Significant and positive correlation coefficients were observed between any two domains in civic perceptions. The strongest correlations were among the domains of “National Identity”, “Social Justice”, and “Civic Commitment”, with coefficients ranging from 0.44 to 0.52, which indicates a moderately strong correlation. The stronger sense of national identity students express, the more likely they are to have greater belief in social justice and a higher level of civic commitment, and vice versa. However, the associations between social trust and other domains in civic perceptions were relatively weaker.
Generally, the correlations between certain aspects of civic perceptions and civic participation were positive and significant at a very marginal level. This shows that positive civic perceptions in certain aspects, referring to a greater sense of social trust, and a higher level of civic commitment, do promote active civic participation, although the magnitude of these effects is modest. Among all domains of civic perceptions, social trust had the strongest correlation with civic participation (p<.01), but to a small extent. An even more modest association was observed between civic commitment and civic participation, indicating students’ recognition that their participatory duty in civic activities leads to their active participation to a marginal degree. However, the associations between the domains of civic perceptions and “volunteering”, which is the self-reported variable indicating how active the respondent thinks he/she has been in volunteering activities, were all positive and significant, indicating a greater strength of relationship. The results suggest that having more positive civic perceptions, especially a higher level of civic commitment, will lead to their claim of involving themselves in voluntary activities at a more active level, but not necessarily more frequent participation in all civic activities. The minor connection between civic perceptions and the actual civic participation pattern relates to that found in the literature where civic knowledge, values, beliefs and attitudes do not directly contribute to active civic participation. In other words, hypothesis one is somewhat supported, yet more positive civic perceptions only relate to active civic participation to a very small extent (r<.10) in the case of Chinese university students.

4.2.2. SES as a Factor Affecting Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation

H2: Students from higher SES backgrounds have more positive civic perceptions than their peers from lower SES backgrounds.
H3: Students from higher SES backgrounds are more involved in civic participation than their peers from lower SES backgrounds.

From the descriptive statistics shown in Table 4.5, there is no noticeable difference in the means of civic perceptions scores among students in the three SES groups (upper strata, middle strata, and disadvantaged strata), except for the measure of civic commitment. The lower the SES background of the student, the slightly higher the sense of obligation toward civic participation he or she may have. However, students’ experiences of civic participation in terms of frequency of organizational involvement and voting are statistically different by SES background. The two-way contingency table presented in Table 4.6 shows that students from upper SES strata are 2 and 3.13 times more likely than their counterparts from middle and disadvantaged SES strata respectively to be highly frequent participants in civic activities. Students in different SES groups also demonstrate different patterns in terms of the voting behaviour they favour. A higher percentage of students from upper SES strata have a strong interest in voting in their local community as compared to their peers from lower SES backgrounds, 1.55 and 1.93 times higher than middle SES and disadvantaged SES groups respectively. While more students from upper SES strata favour voting for the new and trendy TV show of “Super girl”, which is a Chinese version of “American Idol”, more students from lower SES strata prefer voting for a more traditional TV voting opportunity, Spring Festival Gala Show. This is an interesting contrast that shows that higher SES students are comparatively more likely to embrace the latest social phenomena.

The results of ordinal multiple regressions using indicators of civic perceptions and civic participation as outcome variables illustrate that, when SES was entered into the models with other individual characteristics, e.g. gender, discipline and institutional type, there was no
statistically significant effect of SES on any indicator of civic perceptions, except for the indicator of “social justice” and the indicator of “civic commitment” (see Appendix J to N). As the findings do not support Hypothesis 2, therefore Hypothesis 2 is rejected: the results do not show that students from higher SES demonstrate more positive civic perceptions. However, SES is significantly associated with the frequency of participating in civic activities. In Appendix O, compared to the other individual characteristics, the impact of SES was both sizable and substantially larger in the model looking at “Civic Organization Participation”. Adjusting for other variables in the model, the odds of upper SES strata students having a higher level of frequent civic participation is $1.85 \left(1/e^{-0.615}\right)$ times and $3.33 \left(1/e^{-1.193}\right)$ times greater than their peers from middle and disadvantaged groups respectively (see Appendix O). As pronounced SES differences were found when looking at civic participation, with students from higher SES strata engaged in civic activities more frequently than their counterparts from lower SES strata, Hypothesis 3 is retained.
Table 4.5. Mean and Standard Deviation of Civic Perception Indicators by Individual Background Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Disadvantaged</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Knowledge</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Trust</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic commitment</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Knowledge</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Trust</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic commitment</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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<th>Public Less-Elite</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<td>0.75</td>
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<td>0.71</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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Table 4.6. Two-way Contingency Table for Civic Participation Indicators by Individual Characteristics

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Organization Participation</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>527</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Volunteering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>602</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>462</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Voting</td>
<td>Representatives in People's Congress</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student government representatives</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Super Girls&quot; Competition</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best performances in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>333</td>
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<table>
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<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<td>483</td>
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<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Volunteering</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>38.6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>292</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student government representatives</td>
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<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Super Girls&quot; Competition</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>Best performances in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala</td>
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<th>%</th>
<th>Public Less-Elite</th>
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<th>%</th>
<th>Private</th>
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<th>%</th>
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<tr>
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<td>low</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>226</td>
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<td>38.0</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Volunteering</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td></td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>147</td>
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<td>30.3</td>
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<td>161</td>
<td>40.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43.9</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>56.2</td>
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4.2.3. **Relationship between Individual Background Characteristics and Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation**

In the multivariable ordinal regression analyses, gender differences were generally small, except for the following results: boys indicated more cognitive adherence to national history, a better understanding of civic-related knowledge and higher concerns for the gap between the rich and the poor. By contrast, girls showed greater concern for gender and ethnic equity, and higher levels of civic commitment. The effect of gender differences on voting was also statistically significant. Table 4.6 shows that 53.3 percent of boys and 38.0 percent of girls had a strong interest in voting for representatives of the People’s Congress. However, the percentage of girls who would like to vote for their local communities (student government representatives) surpassed that of boys, 22.9 percent versus 16.3 percent. The finding showing
men’s greater interest in national politics confirms those reported in Western Europe and the US (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). It is not surprising that a higher percentage of Chinese male students demonstrated a strong interest in national politics, since male politicians have traditionally dominated politics and the decision-making sphere in China. For instance, all nine members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 17th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (CCPCC) were male. Even among the newly elected leaders in the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in 2008, which is the top political advisory body in China, only 4 out of 24 Chairpersons were female. Women’s low level of both political presence and participation is “taken-for-granted” in the Chinese political system (Li, 2009). Previous studies suggest that the growth of civil society would enhance the influence of women as they are more closely tied to their communities and have less access to national politics because they lack the necessary cultural, structural and personal prerequisites. Based on their study of a world-wide survey, Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that there is a stereotypical gender division in civil society organizations: women are more interested in involving in organizations related to “feminine” areas, such as education, health care, art, religion, and women’s issues, and men are more interested in the “masculine” areas - they are more active members of political parties, sports, and professional unions and organizations. Although the design of the survey questionnaire does not allow for further exploration of the different types of civic organizations male and female students are involved in, the follow-up interviews included this question, and section 5.5.2 will discuss this issue further based on the informants’ opinions and experiences.
Notably, students’ majors shape their civic perceptions and civic participation to a certain degree. Students from a non-natural sciences background, particular those in the humanities, demonstrated a stronger sense of national identity, a better understanding of civic knowledge, a higher concern for social equity issues related to income disparities and migrant workers, a higher level of civic commitment, and greater involvement in civic engagement than their counterparts in other disciplines, especially students in the natural sciences and technology. The differences in civic perceptions by disciplinary orientation could be explained by the fact that humanities students are more exposed to courses in areas such as history, politics and other liberal arts subjects that help to cultivate positive civic attitudes, values and opinions, and promote their civic engagement.

In addition, the type of institutions students attend has some effect on their civic perceptions and civic participation. Although the institutional type was not a strong factor, students attending private universities displayed a slightly higher level of civic perceptions than their peers in public elite institutions in the domains of national identity, civic knowledge, and social justice. Interestingly, if students attending these two different types of institutions are compared, public elite university students participated in civic activities at a more frequent level, yet private university students were more likely to claim their involvement in voluntary activities. As indicated in Chapter 2, there are pronounced differences between public universities, especially public elite ones, and private universities in terms of direct governmental support, governance structure, financial support and research productivity. Students enrolled in public elite institutions are much more academically competent than their peers in private institutions, as the admissions are based on their performance in the National Higher Education Entrance Examinations (高考 Gaokao). Since
civic education is integrated into the formal education system, it might be assumed that students with higher academic competence would have more positive civic perceptions. However, the findings contradict this assumption. Nevertheless, the more positive civic perceptions of private university students do not lead to their more active civic participation, compared to students in public elite universities. The coefficients in Appendix O show that a public elite student is $1.28 (e^{0.243})$ times more likely to be involved in civic activities with a higher level of frequency than a private university student.

The 11 multivariable ordinal regression models reveal that there are variations in students’ civic perceptions and civic participation according to their different individual background characteristics. The reported chi-square statistics are generally large and significant in all 11 models, indicating significant differences for the corresponding regression coefficients across the response categories. However, the pseudo r-square statistics for the 11 models ranged from 0.009 to 0.038, showing that the models are relatively weak in terms of the proportion of variability explained in the outcome measures. In other words, the combined effects of individual characteristics can only explain the variations of outcome variables in civic perceptions and civic participation to a relatively small extent. The explanatory power of all variables related to the effect of personal background factors on civic participation frequency (pseudo R-square=0.038) is the strongest among all the models.

4.3. Conclusion

The above statistical analyses provided an examination of the significance of individual background characteristics in relation to the impact of civic perceptions and civic participation. One of the most important findings from this study is that socio-economic
background can have a significant impact on Chinese university students’ involvement in civic participation. The following paragraphs discuss this and other findings from this quantitative phase of the study.

Firstly, there is strong evidence that the disparities in socio-economic capital are likely to contribute to civic inequality among Chinese university students. In line with previous findings, largely in the U.S. settings, Chinese students from more affluent and better educated families with greater social and economic resources are more likely to be civically active than their peers from lower SES backgrounds. Therefore, the possible barriers preventing students in disadvantaged SES strata from civic participation are worth further exploration. The next chapter will shed light on this issue, based on the answers from interviewed students.

Secondly, this study also shows that civic perceptions, including civic knowledge, values, and orientations, are not necessarily an effective means of fostering active civic participation. This finding draws attention to a deficiency of current citizenship education in China, in that it does not seem to adequately encourage active civic participation. How do university students view and evaluate the classroom-based civic education they have received? Are they also influenced by the informal curriculum through interaction with their peers, teachers and other members in community, and if so, to what extent? Their experience with the formal and informal curricula of civic education will be an important focus for Chapter 5, where the discussion is informed by an analysis of students’ interview data on three campuses.

Thirdly, there are important variations among university students related to their SES, gender, disciplinary orientations and institutional contexts in relation to their civic attitudes and experiences. Individual characteristics are shown to be marginally significant predictors
for students’ civic attitudes and behaviours in certain ways only. The students’ tendencies to be more emphatic about civic rights appear to be related to their backgrounds. Thus, low SES students are more likely to show support for the equal education rights of migrant workers’ children; female students tend to agree more strongly with the equal political rights of women. It is counterintuitive to see private university students demonstrating the same or even higher levels of civic attitude than their peers enrolled in public elite universities in the many aspects examined in this study. However, students in public elite institutions were found to participate in civic activities more frequently. The findings from the quantitative part have revealed the complexity of civic perceptions and civic participation patterns of Chinese university students. In order to understand how distinctive institutional cultures encourage students to become educated citizens, and to understand the nature of the similarities and differences among students’ civic participation across different institutional contexts, it is important to explore more deeply the interplay of influences within institutional settings that impact their civic participation patterns. The qualitative phase of this study, which is discussed in Chapter 5, will carry forward this enquiry using the analysis of the interviews done with 34 students on three campuses representing different types of higher education institutions, each with its own distinctive culture and context.
CHAPTER 5:
ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS ON THREE DISTINCTIVE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

This chapter details the thematic findings regarding students’ civic perceptions and civic participation that emerged from the qualitative data collected at three Chinese universities. It aims to address the second and third sub-questions of this study: What are students’ experiences of the formal curriculum and pedagogy as they relate to civic perceptions and civic participation? What are students’ experiences of the informal curriculum in terms of civic perceptions and civic participation? The findings of this part of the study are limited to individual perspectives and experience in civic issues and civic activities. They also reflect the social and personal contexts the interviewees are imbedded in, which are presented in the theoretical framework.

The findings presented in Chapter 4 revealed that the factor of institutional type has an impact on student civic participation. To further explore this point, a qualitative investigation was conducted in three Chinese higher education institutions, Peking University (PKU), Southwest University (SWU), and Blue Sky College (BSC), each with a distinctive institutional history, culture and policy. Chapter 3 explained the rationale for site selection: to maximize the variation across sites. PKU, SWU, and BSC are elite universities of different types (public university, public teacher’s college/agriculture university, and private university, respectively) located in different regions in China (North, Southwest and Southeast). Both PKU and SWU are enlisted in Project 21/1, and PKU is part of Project 98/5. They offer

12 Both Project 21/1 and Project 98/5 are key national policy actions launched by China’s Ministry of Education to improve the quality of public universities. Universities enlisted in the two national projects have received priority funding, with Project 21/1 focusing on 100 universities and Project 98/5 targeting 43 more selective institutions that are being promoted to become world-class.
different approaches to civic learning and civic participation in relation to distinctive institutional missions, traditions and history, as well as the local socio-economic and socio-political contexts.

This chapter has five sections: the first section focuses on how institutional history, culture and policy shape student civic values and behaviours on three distinctive Chinese campuses; the second section then articulates how students view the influence of formal and informal curricula, and mass media on their civic perceptions; the third section reports interview findings about the themes related to civic perceptions; the fourth section reveals how students participate in civic activities both on and off campus; and the last section discusses how students’ background characteristics affect the patterns of civic participation, from the perspectives of the students themselves. Findings from the previous quantitative phase of the study are incorporated into this chapter to supplement and enrich the understanding of the interview findings and to interpret civic attitudes and behaviours among university students.

5.1. Civic Perceptions and Participation within Distinctive Institutional Contexts

In this section, I will provide a “virtual tour” for the reader of the three campuses where I conducted the second-phase qualitative investigations. I will draw on the interviewees’ answers to the question of how they saw the impact of institutional policy and culture affecting their civic attitudes and behaviours. Not surprisingly, participants identified the institutional culture and context as something that exerted a great deal of influence on their individual experience in terms of civic perceptions and civic participation.
**Peking University**

PKU is located in the west of Beijing Municipality. The predecessor of PKU, the Imperial University, was founded in 1898 as a result of the Hundred Day Reform. It is often considered to be the first Chinese national university, and its establishment has had a profound impact on the development of the modern Chinese university. One of the early chancellors of PKU, Cai Yuanpei, absorbed the European ideas of institutional autonomy and academic freedom through his lengthy studies in France and Germany. Cai was an enthusiastic advocate for encouraging different or even contradictory schools of thought to develop within the university (Hayhoe & Zha, 2010). Cai’s commitment to fundamental democratic principles, individual rights and civil liberties is often considered to have put in place a climate for activist movements at PKU. Student activism thus has a long history there: its students were a pioneering force in the May Fourth Movement of 1919\(^\text{13}\), protesting against the weak response from the Chinese government to the Treaty of Versailles. Seventy years later, its students again led the demonstrations demanding democracy, which sparked off the tragic June Fourth Incident in 1989 (Weston, 2004).

PKU has enjoyed the status of the leading university in China since its establishment. On the celebration of its 100th anniversary in May, 1998, the then President of China, Jiang Zemin, called for “Kejiao xingguo [the revitalization of the nation through education and science]” in his speech (*Reminwang [People’s Net]*, 1998). Soon after that, the government launched Project 98/5 with the aim of building a handful of world-class Chinese universities

\(^{13}\)The May Fourth Movement (*Wusi Yundong* 五四运动) was an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal cultural and political movement led by student demonstrators in Beijing on May 4, 1919. Students from Beijing were protesting against the Chinese authority’s disappointing reaction to the Treaty of Versailles. The Movement marked the beginning of an outburst of nationalistic feelings among patriotic Chinese people of all classes and was a turning point in Chinese political life (Schoppa, 2006).
by investing tremendous financial resources in a select group. This significant project was
named after the anniversary, showing PKU’s exceptional status in Chinese higher education
(Hayhoe & Zha, 2010). After a major merger with Beijing Medical University in 2000, PKU
strengthened its disciplinary structures and declared its ambition to “rank among the world's
best universities in the future” (Institutional Archive of PKU, 2010, p.1). Certainly, PKU is
more than an elite institution in China. Regarded as “the most radical of Chinese universities”
(Weston, 2004, p.253), the institutional culture is historically linked with an involvement in
national affairs, which has combined values of patriotism, critical mindedness, and intellectual
inquiry.

Enrolled in what is arguably China’s best university, students from PKU are exposed
to more diverse civic attitudes and more opportunities for civic participation than their
counterparts in other institutional settings. For example, when the official organizers were
recruiting volunteers among Chinese youth for the 2008 Olympic Games, PKU students were
given preference. According to informants, around 3,000 PKU students were chosen to be
volunteers for the Games, while the number of selected volunteers in SWU was three and
BSC had none. Interviewees in PKU stated they had been inspired and invigorated by the
campaigns and other activities hosted by more than 200 students’ clubs since the beginning of
their university life. They mentioned they had a sense of being elite in the internationalized
environment PKU had provided for them. They thought the great tolerance of diversity PKU
had offered to them was crucial in enabling them to develop a more critical sense of
citizenship. The quotes below capture the pride PKU students feel for its unique culture and
atmosphere:
Our school tradition is “Jianrong Bingbao” (兼容并包, meaning being compatible with and inclusive of different schools of ideas). Maybe they are not aware of the tradition themselves, yet PKU students are carrying the brand of “PKU”. We have been provided with lots of wonderful opportunities to meet well-known world figures like Hilary Clinton, Henry Kissinger, Jackie Chan, etc. (PK02, M, NS)

The resources we are exposed to are at a different level, compared to what they [students studying in other universities] are exposed to. We receive more information from our teachers. We have a better understanding of what is a democratic society or regime. (PK03, M, NS)

Your self-identity and self-position are different once you get into PKU, as there are high social expectations of you. You have to become someone useful for society. There is a great historical tradition of civic participation on our campus, and also a wide range of activities you can choose to participate in. (PK04, M, SS)

PKU students repeatedly expressed their admiration for their senior alumni who were forerunners of the national student activism movement. According to PK06 (F, H),

The leaders of the May Fourth Movement, the December Ninth Movement\(^{14}\), and the recent Tiananmen Square Movement were all from our university. Their devotion, outstanding bravery and strength will for the sake of the survival and prosperity of our nation greatly motivate us to become responsible citizens.

Her fellow student, PK02 (M, NS) was also proud of the tradition of PKU in student activism, but further commented that:

The influence that PKU exerted in the May Fourth Movement of mobilizing all youth across the country is not going to happen in today’s China. One reason is that we are living in a more stable society rather than at a critical point of survival. I sometimes feel we have a lower level of national consciousness. Another reason is that the student body is more diversified. It is harder to get everyone to resonate. It does not mean we do not care about the nation’s fate. Maybe we can say that the role the present university playing is not as important as before in shaping our civic awareness. There are more emphases on adaptability to the society. In this globalized world, we are connected with other nations. The university helps us to acquire citizenship in a different way.

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\(^{14}\) The December Ninth Movement was a mass resistance movement led by students in Beijing in 1935, demanding that the Chinese government take active action against potential Japanese aggression.
PK10 (F, H) reported certain elements of civil society were witnessed in PKU, where students were allowed and encouraged to express their own opinions freely and take part in various students’ clubs and organizations connected with a wider society. Overall, PKU students exhibited a strong sense of civic awareness and civic identity cultivated by the unique PKU heritage and culture. They showed their critical thinking, outspoken courage and tolerance for other ideas, which are the critical features of responsible citizens. While PKU is orienting itself to excel internationally, its students are placed on a broad national and international platform to exercise their civic participation, and they enjoy remarkable social, cultural and educational resources for this participation. Will PKU students carry on its tradition of student activism and lead the youth of China to be pioneering forces of civil society construction and democratization? The answer remains unknown, but it can be assumed that they are the most likely leaders among their peers.

**Southwest University**

SWU is located in the northern suburb of Chongqing Municipality, and has a less elite status compared to PKU. It was included in Project 21/1 as one of the hundred top public universities to be given preference in financial support, but not in the more exclusive Project 98/5. SWU was a result of the merger in 2005 of two neighbouring universities, Southwest Normal and Southwest Agriculture, which were national-level universities in teacher education and agriculture. After the major merger, SWU adopted a new mission, “*te li xinan, xue xing tianxia* (特立西南，学行天下, literally: uniquely established in the southwest, with the integration of learning and practice in all under heaven)” (SWU Official Website, 2010). This vision shows SWU’s aim of serving the local communities in the southwest region and its commitment to cultivating a distinct ethos and morality among faculty and students.
However, challenges have arisen from the merger in terms of administration efficiency, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and the faculty’s heavy workload (Li & Lin, 2010). SWU is a pioneer in assigning teacher education students to a one year internship in rural schools as substitute teachers. This strategy has been recognized by the Ministry of Education as an effective means to provide teaching resources to the remote rural areas, which in turn promotes educational development in the local community, and offers young students a wonderful chance to equip themselves with practical experience (Li & Lin, 2010).

The participants I interviewed in SWU were all from the cohort of teacher education students. Having been trained to be teachers in primary or secondary education, students actively participated in the internship program and social practice during vacations to gain practical teaching experience. The importance of education in the development of critical and informed citizens is generally recognized. Teacher education is also crucial for producing committed educators for the future.

SWU’s new mission resonated with the students interviewed, who expressed enthusiasm for teaching and education. SWU students generally reported that they actively participated in internship programs and social service during vacations to gain practical experience. They also reported that their teaching practice experience or internships helped them realize their civic responsibility in changing their students’ lives. SW05 (F, SS) stated, “We are not just disseminating knowledge to the students, but we are also shaping their views of the world”. SW11 (F, NS) also commented on the uniqueness of teaching as a profession. According to her, teachers should be responsible not only for students’ intellectual development but also for their growth as well-rounded social beings. Her experience as an apprentice teacher gave her a deeper understanding of her civic responsibilities to the society.
as a citizen. Another participant (SW09, F, SS) mentioned that by working with children in a rural remote area, she now had a stronger sense of social justice. She decided to become a volunteer in the national “Western Development” project to help the children there who are in need of good resources for general knowledge and civic knowledge.

Through their internships and teaching practice experiences, student teachers in Southwest are imparting their civic values and attitudes to the younger generation. In educating others to be good citizens, they themselves are striving to be role models of “good citizens”. Different from their counterparts enrolled in other types of universities, they are playing dual roles in citizenship education, as recipients and as providers (Lee & Fouts, 2005).

**Blue Sky College**

BSC was the youngest institute among the three chosen sites. Unlike the other two, it is a private higher learning institution established in 1994 as a vocational college (Lin & Zha, 2010). BSC is situated in the city of Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi Province, in the southeast of China. The economic development of Jiangxi lags behind the neighbouring eastern and southern coastal provinces. However, Jiangxi’s private universities enjoy a high national profile as a result of encouraging government policies, and because of the boldness and vision of leaders like Yu Guo, the founder of Blue Sky (Lin & Zha, 2010). In the late 1970s, Mr Yu was rejected for admission to university due to his physical disabilities, even though he had achieved much higher academic results than the required level. His ambition of establishing a school for socially marginalized students arose from this experience. Ranked as one of the top private universities, Blue Sky is also one of the few private universities accredited by the Ministry of Education to admit four-year undergraduate students. Blue Sky
is well-known for being committed to students’ welfare, and this can be seen in its slogan, “everything is for students; it is for all students; and for all aspects of students’ well-being” (Lin & Zha, 2010).

Participants from Blue Sky constantly mentioned that the institute is devoted to providing a caring place for all students, especially those from socially marginalized family backgrounds. According to them, there are generous scholarships and working opportunities on campus for students who lack financial resources. Led by Mr. Yu’s dedication and commitment to including disabled students, they themselves have become more sensitive to the needs of those suffering from different forms of disadvantage.

I admire our president for providing schooling opportunities to disabled students. The college set up some role models for us to follow. I greatly appreciate their bravery. I constantly think of their courage when I confront difficulties. It is inspirational. (BS01, M, NS)

I think our school treats students from disadvantaged groups nicely. There is a handicapped boy living in my dormitory building. I see many students helping him every morning. This environmental influence on us is subtle but it has transformed our thinking and behaviour. (BS02, M, NS)

Every year, our school selects a few students to be “Stars of Self-Reliance” (自强之星). It is a great encouragement not only for the disabled students, but also to us [who are not suffering from that]. I consider it is a good stimulus, and I realized that I should study harder, as I have a physical advantage. (BS03, M, NS)

According to students from BSC, how to be a good human being and to reciprocate the love they have received from others is the most valuable thing they have learned in school. Studying and living on a campus that welcomes the physically disabled, students mentioned they were volunteering to assist their classmates, roommates and schoolmates with physical

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15 The criteria for Stars of Self-Reliance are as follows: those who exhibit great courage to overcome academic or physical difficulties, show extraordinary and indomitable perseverance, and have outstanding achievements.
challenges whenever they could. The compassion and volunteerism for this disadvantaged group is a prominent feature of civic engagement patterns in BSC.

The institutional environment in which civic participation is being practiced has definitely shown itself to be significant in the findings of this qualitative part of the investigation; this is consistent with the previous findings from the student survey database. To sum up, the study suggests that students associate their civic attitudes and civic participation experiences with the varying and dynamic emphases on civic participation on different campuses. These different campuses have been shaped by institutional traditions, regional culture, and leadership policy, as well as the changing external environment. Having presented the varied patterns of civic participation on three distinctive campuses, I will now discuss the key findings that emerged in the second phase of the study, drawing on the whole group of informants. The university identity of respondent quotations can be derived from the coding pattern, with PK denoting students from Peking University, SW students from Southwest University and BS students from Blue Sky College.

5.2. Formal and Informal Citizenship Education Curricula in the Formation of Civic Perceptions

One of the primary purposes of this thesis is to examine how formal and informal curricula exert influence on the formation of university students’ civic perceptions. There are various dimensions of curriculum, which can be put into seven categories: “curriculum as content or subject matter”; “curriculum as discrete tasks and concepts”; “curriculum as a program of planned activities”; “curriculum as intended learning outcomes”; “curriculum as cultural reproduction”; “curriculum as an agenda for social reconstruction”; and “curriculum as experience and curriculum as ‘currere’ (interpretations of lived experience)” (Schubert,
1986, p. 26-33). In Michael Apple’s Ideology and Curriculum (2004), he claims there are very strong associations between formal and informal knowledge taught in educational institutions, and both of them contribute to the reproduction of existing social relations. In this study, formal and informal curricula, sometimes also called overt and hidden curricula, are framed as what students learn about civics and citizenship education formally under the instruction and supervision of their teachers, mainly in classroom settings with structured syllabi, and the civic perceptions students form through informal interaction with their peers and teachers, and through engaging in civic activities on and off campus.

5.2.1. Formal Curriculum vs. Informal Curriculum

When asked whether formal or informal curricula played a greater role in forming their civic perceptions, most of the participants interviewed chose the informal curriculum, while a few insisted that the formal curriculum had a greater impact. Although the mandatory political and moral education courses take up to 10 percent of the total course time in university, the influence of these courses was not considered to be as significant as the informal curriculum in shaping their civic values and attitudes by the majority of informants.

A student reported:

The political courses are just a kind of formalism, even in Peking University. We don’t really care what we learn from the compulsory political courses. Nowadays, students have their own opinion about politics. A few classes of political studies are not so powerful to change our opinions about the development of Chinese politics, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the society. (PK02, M, NS)

Many students were uninterested in what the compulsory courses deliver to them, indicating they preferred to acquire civic knowledge through the mass media. Student participants stated:
What has been taught and discussed in class are all about rules and regulations. We have been studying this [kind of knowledge] since primary school. Most students, including me, would like to acquire civic knowledge through news on the Internet. (PK04, M, SS)

I am from Canton, where we can view Hong Kong TV channels. I think the information I have received is more diversified than my peers from inland provinces. … I found the tone of the news is different from Hong Kong TV channels, such as the views towards the ‘June 4th Incident’. The Hong Kong side provided more democratic views. (SW01, M, H)

My civic perceptions are influenced by all kinds of factors, especially the mass media. I watched a film called Nanking! Nanking! last month. It made me have strong negative feelings towards Japan. Now I am refusing to buy any products imported from Japan. (BS09, F, SS)

The input from informants echoes the survey findings about the considerable impact of the mass media on student civic perceptions. In the Survey Questionnaire, Q 29 asked from which sources students get information about social events. The mass media was found to be the most popular source with 75.5 percent of student choosing it, far surpassing the other types of information sources (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Different sources that students obtain social information from (in percentages) (N=1947)
Interview participants not only agreed with the survey findings, but also further stressed the important role of the Internet, among other kinds of mass media, in shaping their civic views. According to them, the Internet is more than a preferred way to access information about social events; it is also a kind of public sphere to express their personal opinions, learn about other net users’ views, and communicate with a larger group of citizens on specific issues online. However, as BS01 (M, NS) noticed, “A great number of net users tend to go extremes on controversial social issues”. Information transmitted by the Internet can reach a sizeable population in a short period of time. Although China’s government is well-known for its efforts to build a “fence” around the Internet in order to filter out sensitive information or ideology that is contradictory to its own orthodoxy, students still managed to access information that they were not “supposed to” be able to access. According to another informant (PK03, M, NS), information obtained from the Internet, especially from non-Chinese websites, provided an alternative channel for them to learn civic knowledge other than the official sources they were exposed to. One student respondent (PK02, M, NS) explained that when he learned the history of Tibet it was presented in a different way from what he was used to on various foreign websites, he began to realize the Pro-Tibet Independence people probably were being educated with information about the same historical events in an opposite way. “Then I learned to tolerate conflicting viewpoints,” he said.

The University-Sponsored-BBS (bulletin board system) on each campus is very popular among students, particularly the Weiming (未名) BBS\textsuperscript{16} of PKU (bdwm.net). An

\textsuperscript{16} The BBS was named after Weiming Lake (The Unnamed Lake in English), which is a symbol of Peking University.
interviewee (PK04, M, SS) declared that, “Every PKU student uses it”. Triangle Place in the Weiming (未名) BBS, which is a virtual world version of the original Triangle Place\textsuperscript{17} on campus, a place identified with free and liberal speech, has attracted the largest number of virtual communities (PK10, F, H). “I visit Triangle Place on the Weiming BBS every day. What other fellow students say about recent social issues is very inspiring”, stated another PKU student (PK07, M, NS).

The boom in Internet users in China has drawn worldwide attention in both journalistic and academic circles. Among all Chinese Internet users, students represent the largest group. A recent study shows 80 percent of Chinese university students own personal computers, and they spend around 3 hours per day using computers, of which 2.5 hours are devoted to online activities (Li, 2008). Obviously, the advancement of new media, especially the Internet, provides students with a different space in terms of a public arena and offers them more chances to participate in public affairs. The mass media plays an increasingly critical role in shaping students’ sense of morality, tolerance, social responsibility, solidarity and motivation for participation in public affairs. In other words, how the mass media influences students’ civic perceptions reflects the process of civil society development.

In addition to the mass media, extracurricular activities were identified by students, especially those who have been actively involved in students’ clubs and associations, to have more influence on civic perceptions than the mere theories taught in class. One participant (PK03, M, NS), claimed: “[I acquire civic knowledge] mainly through social experience,

\textsuperscript{17}Triangle Place (Sanjiaodi 三角地 in Chinese) is a well-known discussion area for liberal, progressive and democratic ideas on the campus of Peking University. Students, professors, and public intellectuals used to meet in Triangle Place regularly to discuss their concerns about social affairs. It was generally considered to play an important role in Chinese university student activism, especially the 1989 Student Movement.
including club activities and social activities, and through social circles and my friends around me.” Another student (PK10, F, H) claimed that she experienced a subtle transforming influence from the supervisor in the Student Affairs Department she worked with, through a kind of teaching by precept and example.

However, a few students indicated that ideological-political courses have shaped their civic attitudes and opinions. For example, one participant explained:

I like taking political courses. Being a student majoring in natural sciences, if the school did not provide us this platform, I would not have learned so much rich information and [civic] knowledge. I think the discussions with lecturers deepen our understanding of civic issues. (SW11, F, NS)

Other respondents, who considered that the formal curriculum had a greater impact on their civic perceptions than the informal curriculum, did not mean solely political education courses but a wide range of courses and lectures they were exposed to in university settings. A student from Peking University (PK06, F, H), taking a minor major in economics along with Mongolian language, reported that she enjoyed the classes taught by the best economists in the nation at the National School of Development in her university. She noted, “The teachers did not just teach us economics courses, they also told us what kind of people we should become, and what kind of social expectations we should meet”. According to her, the class activities designed by the teachers had a strong focus on social issues, such as the reform of the health system, greatly enhancing their understanding of existing social problems. Another student (PK08, F, SS) whose major is International Politics and Economics said the fundamental theories in the arena of politics she acquired in class to a great extent shaped her political and civic opinions. Another participant majoring in History (SW06, M, H) stated he gradually
realized the sense of social responsibility as a citizen through reading Chinese classical works in philosophy and history.

In addition to what they acquired on campus, students reported that family was another factor which contributed to their civic perception formation. Some participants recognized the influence exerted by their parents. A student reported (SW05, F, SS), “I was born and brought up in a warm, dedicated and harmonious family, which makes me think the world is nice and good. I was also told that I should bear the responsibility of a citizen when I am capable to take it on.”

Both findings from interviews and the survey indicated that the informal curriculum was considered to have a greater impact on civic perceptions by student interviewees than the formal curriculum. Mass media, the Internet in particular, were popular means for obtaining social information. Teachers and peers within school settings and parents beyond school settings were all identified as important agents exerting subtle influences.

5.2.2. General Dissatisfaction with the Current Curriculum of the “New Four”

In 2006, the Ministry of Education introduced a new curriculum for ideological and political education in Chinese universities, after a comprehensive nationwide revision process. A nation-wide “New Four” curriculum was adopted in the place of the former “Old Six” curriculum\(^\text{18}\). Before this curriculum was introduced, universities in different regions were using various versions of textbooks edited under a single syllabus. As the Ministry of

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\(^{18}\)“Old Six” refers to Moral and Ideological Cultivation; Fundamentals in Law; Fundamental Principles of Marxist Philosophy; Fundamental Principles of Marxist Political and Economic Theories; Theory of Mao Zedong; Thoughts of Deng Xiaoping. “New Four” refers to Modern and Contemporary Chinese History; Moral and Ideological Cultivation and Fundamentals in Law; Fundamental Principles of Marxism; Theory of Mao Zedong, Thoughts of Deng Xiaoping, and Three Representatives; and a non-credit course in Policy and Political Situation Analysis.
Education has seen the importance of unifying all textbooks across the nation in this sensitive area, textbooks for all the listed courses have been amended with new elements of social development incorporated. They are now to be used by all higher education institutions across the nation (Guo & Ye, 2007).

The Third Year students I interviewed happened to be the first cohort of students to take these courses after the major curricular change in ideological and political education. Their opinions and feedback are thus constructive for any review and evaluation of the curricular content and delivery of the “New Four” courses. The interviewees showed diverse opinions. Most students saw the necessity of taking the required “New Four” courses. One participant (SW05, F, SS) noted that the courses “… are about political beliefs, value systems and our moral sense.” Another participant (SW08, M, NS) said, “As a citizen in social settings, we should enhance our understanding of China as a socialist state.” While another (SW09, F, SS) stated, “The teacher helps to clarify the theories for us and enlightens us when we are a bit lost.”

When asked their personal feelings about the “New Four”, the interviewees showed mixed feelings and opinions. Some of them showed a genuine interest in the “New Four”. One participant (SW02, M, H) described himself as a “lover” of philosophy and politics. From the time he was a student in primary school, he has read books on introductory principles of philosophy. He reiterated the importance of learning Marxist dialectical materialism during college life. Another student who thought along the same lines (SW08, M, NS), explained that he appreciates Marxist philosophy because it is a philosophy without national boundaries and a summary of universal patterns applicable to all societies.
However, the majority of informants displayed dissatisfaction and a lack of interest in what was being taught in political courses. As an “insider” of a Chinese university who did undergraduate studies there for four years, I was not surprised to hear complaints from the participants about deficiencies and inadequacies in current ideological and political education. The Weekly Journal of Oriental Outlook (Shu, 2006) reported a Second Year student who described his experience of taking political courses as a “headache”. Many interview participants echoed his feelings about political education in university: they felt the mandatory ideological-political courses were boring and dull, and they escaped by reading novels, reciting English words or sleeping during classes. Some informants mentioned there was a high rate of truancy in the classes of the “New Four”, even at the elite universities. According to a participant from Peking University (PK02, M., NS),

It is common to see students skipping political courses, even in Peking University…. The textbooks have not changed for decades. The content is pretty much the same as what we learned in primary and secondary school. We think it is full of empty talk, out-of-date stuff and clichés.

Two other students from PKU observed: “students think they can get ready for the exam just with two weeks’ preparation, and do not have to go to each class.” (PK06, F, H); “I think there is high rate of absence in all political courses. There is no direct connection between political courses and our daily life, they are not really helpful. It won’t affect us if we skip the class.” (PK07, F, NS) Yet another student (BS05, M, H) claimed, “Subconsciously, we consider political classes as full of boring stuff. Students usually skip the classes. And even those who show up at class do not concentrate on what the teachers are saying at all.” The rate of absenteeism is related to whether teachers keep track of students’ attendance and whether there is a chance of failure in the final exam. However, this “iron hand” means of
ensuring attendance does not appear to have a positive impact on students’ involvement in the classroom.

Regarding the contents of the “New Four”, many participants did not think there was any major change after the national curriculum reform, but considered the contents to be a repetition of what they had learned in previous educational settings. They expected to have more relevant and updated materials. One participant (SW02, M, H) observed “most students [including me] think that some of these political courses could be deleted or combined together”. Another participant (SW12, F, H) observed, “Some old content in the textbook should be deleted. As we are now in a different historical period, there should be some new elements enhancing patriotism, rather than keeping mentioning the Anti-Japan War.”

To summarize, participants in this study showed that their expectations of what they would learn through ideological and political education were beyond what they had been offered. They were not content with the current curriculum of the “New Four”, especially the fact that much of it was a repetition of what they already been taught in secondary school. They also urged the Ministry of Education and the universities to provide up-to-date knowledge, theories and information in this area so that the examples used for teaching were more relevant and illustrative.

5.2.3. The Critical Role Lecturers of Citizenship Education are Playing

In higher education, it is commonly accepted that there is a relationship between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning. Previous studies have shown that there is a relationship between a teacher’s approach to teaching and the students’ approaches to learning in that teacher’s class (e.g., Laurillard, 1997, 2002; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999).
Teachers are considered to play a significant role in shaping students’ perceptions, which, in turn, largely determine students’ learning outcomes (Laurillard, 1997, 2002). A lack of improvement in student learning was found to be caused by the lack of strategies applied by the teachers, which meant effective learning did not take place (Trigwell, Prosser, & Taylor, 1994).

A typical Chinese classroom is “teacher-centered” and structured, using a kind of passive pedagogy. However, it is also has been recognized that Chinese teachers do pay attention to students’ development in non-academic areas, as they believe they are more responsible for “cultivating students” in an all-round way than is the case with most Western teachers (Rao & Chan, 2010). Almost all of the participants mentioned they did not enjoy taking the “New Four” classes if the lecturer taught in an old-fashioned way by merely disseminating theories and information from the textbooks. Some of them also observed that their fellow students showed greater interest if the lecturer used certain kinds of strategies, combined current events with theories or had a humorous personality. Here are a few quotes from the interviewees:

The political courses were often offered by a few lecturers; each delivered some sessions. They did not know the students well and had little interaction with students. …We don’t like the teachers just reading theories from the textbook. We hope they could talk about some current social issues and have more engagement with us. (PK03, M, NS)

I believe the lecturers are playing important roles because all the theories in the textbooks are highly abstract. If the lecturers could deliver the abstract theories in a vivid way by linking them with our daily life, it would arouse students’ interest. (PK09, M, H)

The lecturer’s skills in delivering the course are important. We are very familiar with the content. We will get bored if the lecturer uses a cramming style. We like lecturers who talk freely about their views without holding a textbook. At this moment, we are much focused. (SW03, M, SS)
One of the lecturers is a PhD who graduated from Peking University. He usually uses his personal experience to motivate and encourage us. We think it is enlightening. What we learned from him is not just the political theories. (SW05, F, SS)

According to a report in Zhongqing Zaixian [Chinese Youth Online] (Guo & Ye, 2007), some universities assign the lecturers with the worst teaching skills and strategies to offer ideological and political education courses due to the insignificant position of these courses in the university curricular system. This creates a vicious circle of passive teaching and learning outcomes. Scholars (e.g. Sander, Stevenson, King, & Coates, 2000) suggest that a good understanding of students’ expectations of teachers would help the design and delivery of knowledge and information in the classroom. According to the participants in this study, a good lecturer in citizenship education should not only possess a wide range of knowledge in the area he or she is teaching, but also have good interaction with students and know how to motivate them. The feedback from the students shows that it is worthwhile for universities to provide lecturers with the necessary pedagogical training in order to meet students’ expectations and to produce better learning outcomes in citizenship education.

5.3. Themes Related to Civic Perceptions

This section reports on students’ civic views in a few areas: civil society and democracy; social equity; and several recent major events happening in China that gained international visibility, including the 2008 Olympic Games, the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, the Tibet Independence Movement and the turmoil in Xinjiang. I will discuss the findings from the interviews in relation to other relevant studies examining the perceptions of these issues among Chinese youth and the general public.
5.3.1. Understanding of Civil Society and Democracy

Inconsistent with the survey data which indicated that over half of the university students have a good understanding of the concept of “Civil Society”, three quarters of the participants in the interviews admitted that they have a very vague impression of civil society, and some even claimed they had not heard of it. For example, PK05 (F, NS) declared that she had heard of this concept, but she did not “know exactly what it means”. BS02 (M, NS) made similar comments: “I have heard of it before, but I never thought about the connotation of it.” A few students even stated this is a brand new concept to them. BS05 (M, H) said, “I have not heard of it. I think it means the relationship between citizens and society.”

Based on the literal meaning of this term, most of them said that it meant the rights and obligations of citizens in society. PK07 (M, NS) stated:

I have heard of this term [civil society] often. But I have never thought about this seriously. I think we are all citizens, but I do not have a clear idea of what specific elements make a citizen. I think society is a network of all human beings….Citizens have their own rights and obligations. (PK07, M, NS)

Other participants made comments such as the following: “I think it means equality and tolerance. [In civil society,] there should be some forms of unwritten agreement among all citizens [about proper conduct]” (PK08, F, SS); “It refers to a strong sense of affinity holding all people together” (SW04, F, H); “I have a vague understanding of it. [It means] civic participation and the self-management of citizens” (SW06, M, H); “I have some impression of [civil society] but I lack a deep understanding. I think it means democracy, equality, rights and obligations” (BS01, M, NS).
One student tried to interpret the concept of “Civil Society” within his own frame of reference. According to him, “it is similar to the communistic advocacy of ‘proletariats becoming masters of their homeland’.” (SW11, F, NS) It is actually erroneous to equate the concept of “citizen” with “proletariat”; nor does the Marxist ideal of a “Communist Society” equate with the notion of “Civil Society”. The way this participant substituted “Civil Society” for “Communist Society” probably reflects the overwhelming Chinese official ideology expressed through Marxist theories that he and his peers have been taught. It also indicates that normative theories of democracy, especially from Western ideological thought, have not been introduced in a clear way to Chinese university students. A couple of participants showed they have a fairly good understanding of the concept of “Civil Society” based on knowledge that they claimed to have absorbed outside of the classroom. They stated:

“Citizen” is a political concept. We have heard a lot about the concept of “people” (renmin 人民), but not “citizen” (gongmin 公民). In civil society, the authority of government should be restrained by the civil and political rights of citizens. We have not reached this stage yet. (SW02, M, H)

In civil society, citizens should be the dominating forces for the development of society. However, in the Chinese case, it [the dominating force] is the political elites…. Democracy is built on certain foundations. I think China is becoming more democratic. Cyberspace is a good reflection of this. People can express their opinions on the Internet. Government has to solve some knotty issues under the pressure of the public opinion disseminated on the Internet. I think this is a good expression of democracy. (PK01, F, H)

When asked about the situation of building a civil society in China, most of the participants exhibited a positive attitude, but a few were sceptical about the future of civil society development. SW07 (F, NS) commented that, “I think this is a concept adopted from the U.S. Even though people use it in China, [civil society] has not yet taken form here.” Other informants expressed the following views:
I think there is a relationship between civil society and economic development. … If the people are not assured of having adequate food and clothing, they will not care about global warming issues at all. I think civil society is taking form in China. (PK10, F, H)

I think the essence of civil society is equality. Civil society is our ultimate goal. It is something we are striving to achieve but that can never be achieved. ….. Civil society is an ideal condition. Everyone in civil society should have their rights of speech, be able to protect their own rights and interests, and comply with their duties. It is not easy to achieve, especially in China, with centralism and one-party dictatorship….. There is no way China could become a civil society. There are so many unfair things. I have been thinking about a question recently, which is whether Western capitalist states or Socialist China exploit their people more. But so far I don’t have a good answer yet. (PK02, M, NS)

As discussed in Chapter 2, there have been continuous debates about the emerging civil society in China since the late 1970s. Words such as “nascent” or “incipient” are often used to characterize civil society in China. As one participant rightly mentioned (PK01, F, H), cyberspace in China has provided a place for public debate and for the articulation of social problems. Moreover, it also has been playing a supervisory role in public life and affairs (Yang, 2003).

Following this question, when asked their opinion about the democratization process, all participants expressed approval of the progress China has achieved so far. Students, especially those from PKU, demonstrated a good comprehension of the nature and significance of democracy and went into some depth in their responses, as illustrated by the following quotes:

There is a long way to go for China to become a democratic state. But a lot of progress has been achieved. At least the Cultural Revolution won’t happen in today’s China. Although there is an absence of a sound legal system, I am still positive about the future. Western-style democracy does not go with China. (PK01, F, H)
Compared with Anglo-American states, democratization in China lags behind. A semi-authoritarian state does not fit into the ideal of democracy. However, without the current political system, it will be an impossible task for any political party in the world to govern a country with a population of 1.3 billion … I think strong government control has a good side. For example, China did not suffer so much in the recent financial recession. (PK03, M, NS)

Participants also distinguished between the understandings of democracy in Chinese society from that in other contexts. “The definition of democracy is different in various contexts…. Democracy is not necessarily a good thing. Neither does it guarantee good social outcomes.” (SW02, M, H) Some of them expressed their satisfaction with the current situation in China:

I think it is difficult to adopt a full version of democracy in China, decided by its one-party system. Actually, China is a very democratic state now. Most people are satisfied with the freedom of speech they enjoy. Is Western-style democracy as good as it claims to be? We cannot say which type of democracy is better. I think the current situation is great. (PK05, F, NS)

As a socialist state, I think we have done our best [to build democracy]. Other people may say the U.S. is a good example. But it has gone through a long development process. So I think, for now, no matter whether the situation [of democracy in the county] is good or bad, our nation has made its best effort for us. (SW11, F, NS)

One participant (PK09, M, H) provided a more pragmatic insight into this issue. According to him, the focus should shift from debating which political system is better (democratic or authoritarian) to resolving the existing problems in the system. He stated:

Under the current political system, citizens are involved in selecting representatives to exercise power. However, the elections do not seem to be fair enough. Usually one candidate is running for one seat. But civil society is emerging, especially in the villages and towns, with full participation of all citizens. I think the challenge is not adopting a new democratic political system but rather solving the problems associated with the system.
China continues to be criticized by the Western media and scholars for being an authoritarian state without public accountability for the merciless crushing of the democracy movement at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, for tight control over the Internet, and even for being a threat to global forces of democracy (e.g. Diamond, 2008; Friedman, 2008). Nonetheless, it is generally recognized that the Chinese government, in response to both external and internal pressures, has been adjusting its authoritarian approach through various policies and practices, which have led to greater decentralization of control and greater citizen participation. Although the democratic elements in these reforms were not intended to promote liberal democracy but rather more effective governance, the CCP has made the Party-State less authoritarian and more democratic (Landry, 2008; Odgen, 2002). In international political forums, the CCP has repeatedly emphasized that China will never adopt Western-style democracy with a multi-party political system as it does not fit into the Chinese context (Reynolds, 2009). The perceptions of university students generally conform to the official position of the Chinese leadership.

Previous studies found that Chinese youth showed less support for socialist ideology, detested political education, and were more cynical and individualistic than the older generations (Min, 1989). Nesbitt-Larking and Chan (1997) characterised Chinese youth as “critical citizens” and claimed that government indoctrination proved to be futile in terms of influencing them. However, the findings from this study do not accord with their claim; rather the university students interviewed in this study showed respect for the current political system and support for government authorities. At the same time, they remained critical of the imperfect aspects of the regime and the CCP leadership, and demanded a better version of
civil society and democracy that was Chinese-style; however, they were not able to define this better version with much clarity.

5.3.2. Views of Social Equity

Findings from the quantitative data (discussed in Chapter 4) revealed that the entire group of Chinese university students demonstrated a high level of concern for social justice. Confirming that, participants in the interviews also indicated that they paid close attention to issues related to social equality, which is a prominent social concern in today’s China. Premier Wen Jiabao said in a recent press conference that “it is the reality that injustice exists in our society in terms of income distribution, judicial issues and other matters to which we should pay great attention” (Xinhua, 14 March 2010). Most of them approved of the efforts the Chinese government had been making to resolve social inequality:

I think all societies are unequal. Can you say the U.S. is an equal society? Such indicators as the Lorenz Curve and Gini Coefficient show the inequality in all societies. But the Chinese government is working to make our society better, with a focus on the children of migrant workers and other disadvantaged groups. (PK06, F, H)

I cannot say if the inequality issues in our country are more serious than those in other countries, as I have not been living in any other countries up till now. But I think the inequality is quite obvious inside China. … There is little that we university students can do to solve this problem. We can only show our concern and make appeals to the society. (PK09, M, H)

Students told me they are greatly concerned about recent social incidents that have been widely discussed in the mass media, such as Xu Ting’s trial, the Deng Yujiao Incident, and the death of Tan Zhuo. They also expressed their dissatisfaction with the response from

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19 These recent three incidents provoked much public controversy and criticism of the authorities. In 2007, Xu Ting, a migrant worker in Guangzhou, took advantage of the ATM system dysfunction (the machine deducting 1 yuan from his account for every 1,000 yuan withdrawn, and he withdrew 175,000 yuan at one ATM). He was sentenced for life and sent to jail (Xinhua, January 9, 2008).
government authorities and their distrust of the legal system. One participant (BS10, M, SS) said: “These unjust incidents will only be redressed when there is media coverage. The verdict could be changed from A to B overnight, making the legal system not so sacred. The entire country is not ruled by law but rather by the political elites.” However, from another angle, the shifting responses from the authorities reflect the power of public outrage and disbelief. In these three incidents, the Internet played a vital role in the timely dissemination of the news to a national audience base. Tens of thousands of Internet users went to chat rooms and bulletin boards online to express their feelings. This kind of explosive, spontaneous outpouring of opinions on the Internet creates a platform that is hard for the regime to ignore.

Many students expressed the feeling that they are powerless in solving problems related to social equality: “Even though we realize it [social inequality], there is nothing we can do.” (BS02, M, NS); “We should treat people from disadvantaged groups equally....But it is beyond our capability to develop a fundamental solution [to social inequality].” (BS12, F, H) Another respondent suggested adopting a Buddhist philosophical principle to change self-perspective when one feels incapable and powerless in current society. “Even though we are

The Deng Yujiao Incident occurred on May 10, 2009 in Hubei Province. Deng, a 21-year-old female pedicure worker allegedly stabbed Deng Guida (a local township officer who was seeking sexual services) while she was rebuffing his advances and this led to his death. Deng was soon arrested by the local police and was charged with homicide. This case resonated with the public and their anger over their impotence in the face of corrupt and immoral officials kicked off discussions in cyberspace. Due to the public pressure, Deng was later charged with a lesser offense of “intentional assault”. Although she was still found guilty, she did not receive a sentence due to her mental state (Wikipedia, 2010).

Tan Zhuo, a 25-year-old graduate student in Zhejiang University, was killed by a speeding car driven by Hu Bin in a drag race in downtown Hangzhou on May 7, 2009. Tan was tossed five meters in the air and landed 20 meters away. Hu, the driver, allegedly joked around and smoked some cigarettes with his friends after the accident. In the later government press conference, it was claimed that the speed of the car was only 70 km/h. However, a forensic analysis later revealed that Hu’s car was traveling between 84 and 101 km/h on a road with a speed limit of 50 km/h. Hu was eventually sentenced to 3 years for "traffic offense resulting in death". Hu’s disrespectful behavior aroused public outrage. In court, Hu appeared much heavier than in his photos from the accident scenes, arousing Internet rumors that his family had paid for a stand-in. But the Chinese authorities have denied it (Zhongguo Ribao [China Daily], June 30, 2009).
aware of [social inequality], there is nothing we can do to change it. I think many things are unfair in the world. For example, some people are living in Iraq and Afghanistan and have to face wars. So we can only balance our own minds to reach a sense of peace.” (BS02, M, NS)

With regard to what the government should do to ensure social equality, however, the participants had diverse opinions. Most thought the government should be proactive in protecting the rights of disadvantaged groups, whereas one participant said the government should be laid back, and let the market decide. The opinions from both sides are illustrated by the following quotes:

If the current government is striving to become a serving government as it claims to be, it should pay close attention to the living conditions of the masses and support the development of disadvantaged groups. (SW02, M, H)

A fair environment for competition should be assured. Then if everyone follows the Law of the Jungle, you know, the weak serve as a prey to the strong. The spirit of governing should be laissez-faire. It is a long way to go. (PK08, F, SS)

Unlike the portrait that usually appears in the media of Chinese youth being a fun-seeking, self-interested generation, the university students interviewed in this study showed they have great concern about current social problems. Participants generally were aware that social equity is a key to social stability and economic development, which is in agreement with Guo’s study (2007). He also outlined the top issues that Chinese youth indicated should be addressed promptly: punishing corruption; invigorating state-owned enterprises; combating crime; and improving practices of social justice. The participants in this study also demonstrated that they had absorbed a wide range of information about contemporary social issues related to social equity. The points they made were insightful and they firmly demanded that more effective measures should be taken to handle the problems affecting social equity and social stability.
5.3.3. Other Aspects of Students’ Civic Views

This section reports on informants’ opinions of several major social events that recently occurred in China to further illustrate their civic values and attitudes in various areas, including social equity, national identity, and their sense of participatory activities.

The 2008 Olympic Games

It was the first time for a developing country to host this major international multi-sport event, the summer Olympic Games. From August 8 to August 24, 2008, the Games of the XXIX Olympiad took place in Beijing, China. When asked their feelings about the Olympic Games being held in China in 2008, all of the participants showed a sense of pride. They all told me that they were greatly interested in the performances of Chinese athletes through watching TV and reading the news on the Internet and in the newspapers.

One student (PK01, F, H) said she was an exchange student in Australia at that time, and she regretted that she had missed the chance to be a volunteer at the Olympic Games. She also noted that she and her Chinese friends had to rent DVDs of the opening ceremony and watch Chinese players’ performances on the Internet due to their unavailability on Australian TV channels. Three participants from PKU happened to have been volunteers for the Olympic Games and shared with me their experience of this major sports event (It will be elaborated on in the following section 5.4.2 on “Off-Campus Civic Participation”). According to them, it was a great honour to make this contribution to their homeland, although they complained about the inexperience shown in the hosting agencies’ organization.

Students from SWU (SW04, F, H; SW06, M, H) replied that they organized and participated in a series of activities for Youth League members, such as an English speech
competition, a simulated Torch Relay, and lectures promoting knowledge about the Olympic Games. One participant (SW03, M, SS) reported that one of the Olympic Gold Medal winners in badminton was a student at SWU, making him feel proud of his own institution. Another student (SW10, M, NS) indicated his disapproval of Tibetan separatists’ attempts to stop the Torch Relay in France\(^{20}\). He expressed his admiration for the torchbearer, Jin Jing, and considered her to be a national heroine.

Supportive actions from Blue Sky College students showed enormous enthusiasm as well. They took pride in the President of their college, Mr. Yu Guo, who was selected to be a torch bearer in Jiangxi Province. With the national flag painted on their faces, some of them went to the overcrowded city square and waited for a whole night to watch the Torch Relay and show their support. Their narratives indicated the deep feelings they had: “the whole city was immersed in great excitement” (BS04, M, NS); “everyone was impassioned” (BS06, F, H); “I burst into tears when I saw the torch passing by. I felt our nation has become strong now.” (BS09, F, SS)

Despite the fact that the Olympic Games greatly boosted his national pride, one participant (PK02, M, NS) took a more critical perspective on this matter, and stated that Chinese sports had become too politicized. He felt that Chinese athletes had had too much pressure put on them to win medals, as the Chinese people had high expectations of a national triumph being achieved by the athletes. “Gold medals should not be tasks or obligations”, he said.

\(^{20}\)The Torch Relay aroused many protests. The most notable case happened on 7 April, 2008, in Paris. Jin Jing, a disabled athlete torchbearer, was assaulted several times by unidentified protestors seemingly from the pro-Tibet independence camp. Jin stayed calm and tried her very best to protect the torch. She received praise from ethnic Chinese worldwide as an “Angel in a Wheelchair” for her bravery (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Torch Relay, 2008).
The Sichuan Earthquake

A great tragedy happened in China shortly before the Olympic Games. On the afternoon of May 12, 2008, a 7.9-magnitude earthquake happened in Sichuan Province in Western China, leading to around 70,000 deaths and 375,000 injured, with 18,000 more missing. The population of the affected area was 15 million, of which 4 million were living in the city of Chengdu (The New York Times, May 6, 2009). When talking about this tragedy, all the participants expressed their grief, sorrow and condolences for those who suffered as a result of it. All of them gave donations of money, clothes and even blood to the victims. They were especially concerned about their friends and classmates who came from Sichuan. They also noted that their institutions demonstrated great support and care for students whose families were affected in the earthquake. One participant (PK06, F, H) said the President of PKU even called her classmate and asked what the university could do for her. The following quotes from PKU students illustrate their sympathy concerning the national tragedy and their search for knowledge about what happened in the earthquake:

I donated blood. There was a blood donation vehicle from the Red Cross collecting blood on our campus. It was said that the vehicle was going to stay for a week on campus. But within only two days, the blood banks in Beijing were fully supplied. (PK01, F, H)

I was doing a course about the environment and human development in that term. We were about to do a presentation about energy saving, but the earthquake happened and our group switched the topic to earthquakes. We did a great amount of research and tried to promote knowledge in this area. So when we are better equipped with knowledge, we should be able to respond to natural disasters in a better way when they happen next time. (PK05, F, NS)

SWU, located in Chongqing, is 350 km from the epicentre of the earthquake in Wenchuan (汶川). With a much greater percentage of students from Sichuan Province, it was
not surprising to learn that some of them or their classmates were victims of this disaster.

Geographic proximity led to a series of aftershocks in this region; this made students have more personal thoughts and feelings. This is what one participant from there recounted:

We felt the aftershocks. It was in the lunch break when we were having a rest in our dormitories. We felt the walls and the beds shaking strongly...We ran out. When we came back, we learned from the Internet that a 7.9 magnitude earthquake happened in Wenchuan. We had to stay outside overnight. When we were watching TV in school we saw the rescue scenes and learned about the casualties. All of us were sad and kept crying. We wanted to organize groups to Wenchuan to help the local people, but could not do anything except make donations. (SW03, M, SS)

I also interviewed a student there who was a victim suffering from the earthquake. He stated:

My family members were victims of the earthquake. I am from Mianzhu, less than 50 km from Wenchuan. There was no fatal casualty in my family, but we had serious property damage. Our house collapsed. But it will be rebuilt soon, and I am not worried about that. I think this earthquake is a test for the government as well as for the whole nation. I used to think that Chinese national character was disappearing. However, after the earthquake happened, I realized that Chinese people are patriotic and compassionate. I am very satisfied with the efforts the authorities have made to reconstruct our villages. (SW02, M, H)

A student reported she was involved in organizing a large-scale activity across the school right after earthquake, called “I am a continuation of your life”. By asking every student to identify themselves with a local hero in the earthquake, it aimed to urge students to complete their unfinished tasks. She noted,

“this [event] encouraged inspirational reflection and taught us to cherish our own lives. Only when you love yourselves, are you capable of loving someone else. We feel we are not just living for ourselves but also for those who lost their lives in the earthquake”. (SW04, F, H)
Similar events, such as holding a candle light vigil, also took place in Blue Sky College. Students described their feelings as “inconsolable” for the great loss of the nation. For example, BS06 (F, H) stated, “Everyone was crying so hard on the day of mourning…. I could not recall the scenes. I still feel like crying when recalling the scenes.” One of her peers, who was a guitar player in a student band, gave a performance with his band in the city center and participated in fundraising.

We were invited to perform on the pedestrian street in Nanchang for fundraising by the Jiangxi Philanthropy Committee….I felt badly [for the earthquake]. We will not be afraid of difficulties and natural disasters if everyone is united to give their love. As long as people show solidarity, I believe “nothing is impossible” (BS04, M, NS)

The sudden and unexpectedly severe natural disaster also shaped students’ belief in a strong and united Chinese nation and a capable Chinese government. PK03 (M, NS) reported that he felt, “Through the response to the earthquake, China has shown to the world what is a strong country with a strong democracy”. Similarly, another informant (SW11, F, NS) commented, “When there is a disaster, everyone is united. It shows Chinese national cohesion is very strong. Without the existence of this cohesion, people would be like loose sand, and only mind their own business”.

The Tibet Independence Movement and the Turmoil in Xinjiang

When asked their opinions about the social disturbance related to the independence of Tibet and Xinjiang in China, all participants declared that they were not supportive of the independence forces at all. They believed that the unity of China is an irresistible trend. Many of them distinguished “Zangdu (藏独)” (Tibet Independence forces) from “Zangzu (藏族)” (the Tibetan ethnic group). Some participants from PKU showed their awareness of the
different perspectives held by other nations and their tolerance of diverse views, while sticking to their commitment to a peaceful resolution for such controversies.

I found my Tibetan classmates are very nice. … I am aware that the international society may have a different view in this matter. For example, my German friend told me he thinks Tibet is independent. But I think Tibet is an inseparable part of China. Our sovereignty is inviolate. Those who want to separate Tibet from China have their own political purposes, and they do not represent all Tibetan people. My Tibetan friends feel grateful for what the central government has done to help them. (PK06, F, H)

I think they [referring to those involved in the independence movement] have different perspectives of history and a different value system. … Individually, there is no antagonism arising from different views and perspectives. However, at the level of the nation, I think we should protect our territory and our sovereignty so they are intact. I can understand the request [for independence] from an individual person. But the request won’t be approved from the standpoint of our nation. (PK09, M, H)

Although they were largely supporting the side of the Chinese government, one participant (PK01, F, H) pointed out that some improper actions had been taken by the government. She noted, “we might have not been dealing with the ethnic minority problem well. We should think about why they want independence.” A few participants stated that those involved in independence movements are not evil but have been taken advantage of by their leaders or have been indoctrinated with a different set of beliefs. According to BS01 (M, NS), the foreign countries support the independence force in Tibet because they lack a good understanding of Chinese history. He suggested that the Chinese government should actively publicize and promote Chinese history and culture across the world.

The responses collected from two other campuses, Southwest and Blue Sky, showed a more radical sense of outrage and anger, and a more conforming stance regarding the position that all independence movements should be suppressed. This is captured in the quotes listed below:
I think every Chinese should adhere to the principle that our motherland should not be separated. I have a strong hatred for separatist activities (SW01, M, H)

I think those people [who are involved in any independence activities] are very hateful. I often watch the news, and have learned that there are also independence movements in Quebec, Canada. They might get a lot of benefits by separating from the nation, but they betray their ancestors and their national heritage. I hate the Taiwan Independence Movement most of all. (SW08, M, NS)

Some of them [those who are involved in any independence activities] are inspired by ethnic extremists; some are controlled by people behind the scenes. I think they are in collusion with foreign anti-China groups. I am 100 percent opposed to independence movements. (SW10, M, NS)

I cannot tolerate any actions violating Chinese sovereignty. Those [involved in any independence activities] deserve contempt. I will not tolerate these acts, or organizations such as Falun Gong21. They are harming themselves and others. (BS05, M, H)

I am very disgusted by independence movements and the foreign recognition of the Dalai Lama as head of an independent government. (BS10, M, SS)

I think they [those involved in independence movements] have a distorted mindset. We should be proud of being a Chinese. I cannot understand their thoughts. (BS04, M, NS)

They [those who are involved in any independence activities] will not become the mainstream. (BS06, F, H)

The views of participants on the three significant social issues in China recently, the Olympic Games, the Sichuan earthquake and the Independence Movements in Tibet and Xinjiang, unanimously showed their strong sense of national identity, national pride and national unity, which confirms the quantitative findings discussed in Chapter 4.

The Olympic Games were regarded as a realization of a nation’s dream and a declaration of world status by Chinese citizens. With a history of being a weak and backward

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21 Falun Gong (法轮功) is a set of belief systems and practices founded by Li Hongzhi in China in 1992, with teachings derived from Buddhism, Taoism, and Taiji. It was banned by the CCP in 1999 as an "evil cult".
country in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, China’s great success in hosting and in winning the most gold medals\textsuperscript{22} strongly boosted national pride and social cohesion among citizens. As members of Chinese society, the university students not only demonstrated high emotions about this positive and uplifting event, but also actively participated by volunteering and showing spiritual support.

Compared with research done recently on the social attitudes of the general public on the Internet after the earthquake (Yu, Li, Li, Liang, & Liu, 2009), university students in this study showed a more positive attitude. That research found that some Internet users strongly blamed the National Seismological Bureau for doing a poor job and showed indifference to the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. However, during the interviews done for this study, no similar attitudes were reported. Rather, there was a consensus in the way students revealed strong patriotism and a positive appraisal of government rescue and reconstruction efforts. They also felt confident about being able to overcome disasters or difficulties in the future.

In keeping with the majority of the Chinese population, the participants in this study were also found to be in strong opposition to Tibetan independence. The tolerance of diversified political opinions and ethnic and cultural pluralism exhibited by some participants, showed that they possess a more critical form of citizenship than might be the norm. All in all, despite some interviewees presenting critical opinions on the three events discussed, their stance was on the side of the official position taken by government authorities. Students’ perceptions of the social issues further demonstrated the profound influence of the social environment and institutional contexts.

\textsuperscript{22} China won 51 gold medals in the 2008 Olympic Games, and the U.S., next on the ranking table, won 36 gold.
5.4. Themes Related to Civic Participation

This section will discuss specific aspects of civic participation on and off campus among university students, including various kinds of civic activities they became involved in, their motivation and perceived benefits, membership in the CCP and political voting. It intends to provide an in-depth and thorough examination of several important themes related to student civic participation.

5.4.1. On-Campus Civic Participation

Engagement in civil society takes many forms for Chinese university students, with on-campus activities being particularly important. Generally speaking, students participate in two types of on-campus activities: acting as student leaders in classes, departments, the student union, CCP branches or the Communist Youth League; and taking part in student organizations involved with the local community. The first type of activity is usually strongly supported and supervised by the universities, and the latter is under less control and receives limited institutional support. A student affairs office at each university that oversees all student-related issues (e.g. employment, ideological education) supervises student organizations and recruits student Party members. According to the statistics provided by the student affair offices in each university, there are around 200, 150, and 100 registered student organizations in PKU, SWU and BSC respectively.

23 There are no equivalent positions for students in Western universities. The corresponding Chinese terms for these positions are Secretary of the Youth League Branch Committee and the CCP (团支书, 党支书); a chief leader in Students’ Union and class monitor (学生会骨干, 班长); leaders for study matters, arts matters, and daily life matters (学习委员，文艺委员，生活委员).
Students involved in leadership activities generally expressed interest in serving the local student communities and enhancing their own leadership and organizational skills. Student leaders are usually selected by Class Advisors\(^\text{24}\) and then elected by all students, on the basis of demonstrating either academic excellence or outstanding organizing capabilities. They are supposed to serve their peer students under guidance from the university. For example, PK10 (F, H) was a Secretary of the Party in her school. She noted, “I joined the CCP in high school. I was assigned to be Party Secretary once I got into university. I have been in charge of the Party Branch and am responsible for providing training to future Party members and organizing political study groups for all interested students. I want to build this political community to be a cohesive group and to attract more students to join the Party.” Similarly, SW05 (F, SS), a Secretary of the Youth League Branch Committee, reported that she organized student activities required by the university, such as events celebrating “the 30 Year Anniversary of Economic Reform” and “the 60 Year Anniversary of the Establishment of the P.R.C.” to promote students’ political morale. Informants involved in student leadership mentioned the substantial amount of time they had devoted to carrying out leadership roles, and some even indicated that this had a negative influence on their studies. This is reflected in the comments of a student (SW04, F, H), who claimed to work “at least twenty hours a week on administrative duties” since becoming a class leader. While she appreciated the people skills and confidence she gained in the position, she did express regrets over her unsatisfactory academic performance during this period.

\(^{24}\) A class advisor is an administrator assigned to each class by the university. The main responsibilities of class advisors are overseeing students’ ideological and political development and assisting students in their university lives.
However, students also indicated that the leadership experience helped them gain recognition from the university, which is advantageous for their future careers or admission into a graduate school. According to one informant (PK10, F, H), “PKU offers students who take on leadership roles … an opportunity to work as a class advisor for two years after they graduate. Then they will be guaranteed a place in graduate school at PKU if they want to pursue further [graduate] studies.”

Joining student organizations is common for undergraduate students in China. Students are drawn to clubs that cater for a range of social and personal interests. One informant (SW05, F, SS) summarizes the general view among students on the three campuses:

I think joining student organizations in university is an indispensable part of university life. After ten years of hard work to get into university, we finally could enjoy a social life away from the single emphasis on academic performance. That's why you can see all freshmen joining no less than two student organizations. We want to make friends, take part in leisure activities, and learn some skills … besides studying.

Driven by their various interests, participants reported a number of different student associations they were participating in or had participated in, showing a diversity of interests and hobbies: PK04 (M, SS) joined the Stray Animal Protection Association for taking care of stray cats on campus; PK05 (F, NS) joined the Electronic Economic Association as he was fond of computer games; SW02 (M, H) enjoyed his involvement in the Taiji (martial arts) Association; SW09 (F, SS) liked participating in the Calligraphy Association and Speech and Debate Association; and BS05 (M, H) joined the Piano and Guitar Association due to his interest in music.

While some of these student organizations are focused on leisure activities, many are engaged in civic affairs and work with the local community.
I joined Loving Heart Club (aixinshe 愛心社), one the ten best students’ clubs in Peking University. They organized a lot of civic activities for the public benefit. I strongly agree with their philosophy, which is to use your own limited capability to offer as much help as possible to others. (PK02, M, NS)

I participated in an international student organization called GENS (Global Exchange Network for Student), which aims at promoting understanding and knowledge of other cultures across the world. Every year, we accommodated two groups of international students visiting China. And we also have had chances to visit other countries. I had a chance to visit Slovakia last year. But regrettably, I did not make it as I was busy with my own study. (PK03, M, NS)

I joined the Psychological Association in order to provide a free counselling service. We disseminated psychological tests among fellow students, helped them understand their mental states, and helped them to handle any problems they may have. (BS07, F, SS)

Participants involved in the latter two types of civic participation mentioned the pressure and difficulty of fundraising (lazanzu 拉赞助). They mentioned that financial resources are the key to organizing and hosting successful activities.

The biggest challenge for managing a club is fundraising. Once you have enough funds, you can organize good activities. (PK02, M, NS)

I participated in the Computer Association in my first year. I thought I could learn some computer skills. But to my disappointment, there were always endless boring meetings, and we were asked to raise funds for organizing some events. Nobody told us how to do it. We were rejected so many times by shop owners in the Computer Plaza. (BS03, M, NS)

5.4.2. Off-Campus Civic Participation

Volunteering is often considered to be a key element in civic participation. Of the 34 participants in this study, three had been volunteers for the 2008 Olympic Games held in China. All of them were from PKU. They felt extremely honoured and proud to be involved in
this historical event for China. Although they devoted enormous hours to training and working as volunteers, they felt they were obligated to make a contribution when they were needed by the nation. However, they complained about the overstaffing situation with volunteers. They felt that the organizing committee recruited far too many volunteers, which made the system unwieldy.

…the memory of the experience [of working as a volunteer for the Olympic Games] will stay with me forever. Even though the work I did was very trifling and was not something to boast about, I felt I should make a contribution to the country. During the process, everyone involved was making concerted efforts for the Olympic Games. We all sacrificed our own time and freedom. It was laborious. But I was quite impressed by the consensus and synergy. (PK08, F, SS)

I was 100 percent devoted to volunteering. When I dressed in the uniform, I was very proud of myself. As my major is Mongolian, I was first assigned to the Mongolian Delegation Team. I felt a sense of achievement when I could use my expertise. I treated every training class seriously. I also participated in the rehearsal called ‘Good Luck, Beijing’, working in the Judo section. I stayed there instead of going back to the Mongolian Delegation Team, as the supervisor there requested me to continue to work there. I was a bit upset at first, because I could not utilize my advantage in this foreign language. But I was still working diligently……In the following Paralympic Games which lasted for 18 days, I did not take one day off. ….. In the end, I was awarded the honour of being ‘Excellent Volunteer’. That is because I have been working extremely hard. (PK06, F, H)

The efficiency was not high and the system was inflexible. I can understand, as this was the first time to organize such a big event in China. … At the beginning we were enthusiastic to make contributions. When we found out we could not do meaningful things, we were quite upset. We were required to take more than enough training classes. … But we persisted with it. The sense of national pride kept us staying on. (PK10, F, H)

A few participants mentioned they participated in youth volunteering associations in their institutions, and were sent to take part in civic engagements off-campus, such as providing lectures to migrant workers’ children (PK08, F, SS), campaigns for blood donation,
fundraising for kids suffering leukemia, visiting elderly houses (BS01, M, NS), visiting local schools and offering free writing utensils (BS03, M, NS). Illustrated by BS03 (M, NS), “I think it is a great experience. Civic participation has made my life more colourful and I am happier by helping others.”

Participants also mentioned social practice activities organized by universities in the summer vacation whereby students are sent to rural and remote areas for social service. While they showed a desire for a better connection with the society through civic engagement, they also expressed their hope that the university would provide better guidance and policies.

5.4.3. Motivation and Perceived Benefits of Civic Participation

For the pool of 1957 surveyed students, the most important factor that motivated them to engage in volunteering was their sense of obligation as a university student (82.4 percent), followed by the public benefits (78.8 percent) and personal benefits (76.2 percent; see Figure 5.2). More than half of the respondents considered policies of encouragement from the university led to their volunteerism, while one in three and one in ten indicated they were simply following others and they did not have any clue about their motivations, respectively. However, interviewees from the qualitative study emphasized that students’ motivations were related mainly to personal benefits, such as improving their socializing, organization and management skills.

With regard to the benefits they derived from civic participation, statistics from the survey dataset show that most students believed it enhanced their networking and socializing abilities (91.7 percent), followed by learning (76.6 percent), leisure and enjoyment (73.7 percent), and leadership development (70.1 percent; see Figure 5.3). The majority of students
gained benefits from civic participation in various ways. The quotes from interviewees further confirmed that:

The scope of Students’ Club activities goes far beyond the university. A lot of clubs have a department of liaison, which serves as a bridge between the university and society. The biggest gain for me is to observe this society from a good perspective, and to get in touch with people from different walks of life. …… [the experience of working in students’ clubs] gives me a better understanding of society and the market. It is real and vivid. (PK02, M, NS)

I made lots of good friends through participating in student clubs. And it also has improved my ability in planning and organizing activities. It is like a rehearsal before entering into society. (PK03, M, NS)

Just for fun. I joined two clubs, the Club for Protecting Stray Cats and the Club for Roller Skating because I think cats are cute and I want to learn roller skating. (PK04, M, SS)

… I am a member of society. I should make a contribution back to society since I received a lot of help from society. I want to give back. I never think about what I could gain. As long as there is a chance for me to contribute, I will be more than happy to do so. Maybe not everyone thinks in my way. There is a group of volunteers aiming for fame and personal benefit. But since they are dedicated to the volunteering service, we should approve their contribution. (PK08, F, SS)

![Figure 5.2](image.png)

**Figure 5.2. Motivation for participation in volunteering (in percentages) (N=1957)**
To summarize, students were motivated to participate in civic activities due to their civic commitment and their wish to benefit a wider community and society. They also acknowledged various personal benefits they gained through civic participation. Both the survey results and the interviews showed that contemporary university students have a genuine concern for the wellbeing of society and a strong sense of responsibility to contribute to its further progress. At the same time, they were aware that participating in all kinds of civic activities on and off campus would be beneficial for their personal careers.

**5.4.4. Becoming a Member of the CCP**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, decentralization is a noticeable trend in China’s higher education sector. However, the role the Party-State is playing in regulating and coordinating the higher education system has been strengthened rather than weakened through recent reforms (Mok, 2005). One important way for the Party-State to exert its influence on
universities is through building a seamless network of Party organizations, covering the whole higher education sector, with organs being set up at every level in each institution. In fact, the recruitment of young intellectuals, especially university students, has been a crucial part of the Party’s expansion strategy since its establishment (Guo, 2005).

Previous studies have shown that the motivation for many university students joining the Party was not their adherence to communism, nor the desire to serve the people and the society (Guo, 2005; Zhang, 2002). Some students even acknowledged that it was because the status of being a member of the CCP may be beneficial to them in job-hunting. The efforts to force the Party’s ideology on students were, however, found to be ineffective (Guo, 2005).

In this study, 14 of the 34 participants were Party members or probationary Party members. Although some of them acknowledged the existence of the above-mentioned phenomena, most of the participants stated that the progressive quality of Party members attracted them. A couple of participants even expressed their strong belief in communism. Previous research has found that Party members tend to engage in civic activities at a higher level than the general public (Guo, 2005). Unfortunately, due to sensitivity, the survey questionnaire did not include a question about student membership in the Party. However, informants who were Party members declared they had a stronger sense of motivation towards civic participation, as they were expected to be moral leaders for their fellow students.

5.4.5. Participation in Political Elections

Students’ low interest in political elections has been reported in some studies. Through the interviews, the majority (nearly 60 percent) of participants declared that they would like to vote if there was an opportunity, partly due to a sense of obligation and partly due to their own
interest. For those who declared a lack of interest in voting, they explained why: (1) they were not familiar with the candidates and not aware of their achievements; (2) there was little connection between the candidates after they were elected and the voters; and (3) they didn’t think their participation in political elections made any change to the existing political system.

I don’t know how to participate in it [political election]. We were asked to vote for representatives before. But the problem is we don’t know the candidates at all. For the election of People’s Representatives, you cannot see what happens next. You vote for somebody, and once he/she is elected, you won’t know whether the person fulfills his/her duty or not. That is why the voters are indifferent about elections. (PK09, M, H)

We haven’t been put in this position yet [voting for political elections]. But if there is a chance, I will vote. It is about the nation. We are members of the nation. We should be part of it [political election]. (BS03, M, NS)

I am just an ordinary student, one of the 50,000 students in our university. It is not realistic to make everyone vote. Although I didn’t participate, I didn’t have any regrets. I believe good and talented candidates will be elected. (BS04, M, NS)

There have been discussions both in academia and in the media about Chinese young people’s low interest in voting for political candidates but great enthusiasm in voting for a Favourite Singer in American Idol-like shows. Lieberthal (2004) claimed that the absence of stable and autonomous institutions was the cause of low political participation among Chinese citizens. Voting in China differs greatly from similar political activity in Western democratic regimes, being far more complex and cumbersome (Guo, 2005). In a principle component analysis of a nationwide survey done in 1993-1994, voting for People’s Congress elections was found to have different underlying factors in 18 distinctive organizational and political participation activities (Shi, 1997). The findings from this study confirm the political science literature, suggesting that university students are discouraged by the complexity of mechanisms that exist for political voting. If they felt a greater sense of empowerment through participating in the political voting system, they would probably display a greater interest.
5.5. Student Background Characteristics Affecting Civic Participation

This section further discusses how students’ individual background factors affect their civic participation using both the interview findings and the relevant survey findings reported in Chapter 4. The survey findings already identified certain factors, SES in particular, as being crucial in relation to the levels of civic participation, while the interview findings will explore this issue in greater depth by highlighting the vivid experiences of student participants.

5.5.1. SES as a Factor Affecting Civic Participation

The previous quantitative findings showed that students from lower SES backgrounds participated less frequently in civic activities but had a higher level of civic commitment, compared with their counterparts from higher SES backgrounds. As explained by a number of participants in the interviews, the lack of financial resources can be a barrier to civic participation for students from lower SES backgrounds. However, they further stated this did not mean poorer students had lower levels of intention to take part in civic activities. According to their observations, “joining a club or association requires a membership fee. Later, you also have to pay a few hundred yuan for buying a uniform. It could be a burden for students from poor families” (BS03, M, NS); “socialization in the clubs costs money. After events, all students go out for dinner or other activities. The costs are shared. Some students choose not to join because of this” (PK10, F, H); “poor students won’t join the Animation Clubs or Computer Clubs, simply because they cannot afford expensive electronic gadgets.” (SW08, M, NS).

The lack of financial resources and social networks also implied that low SES students were in a disadvantageous position in fundraising for clubs, which greatly limited their ability
to be higher ranked student leaders within the clubs. According to PK03 (M, NS)’s observation, those who are leaders in student clubs and organizations are usually from urban areas and better-off family backgrounds. He commented that it is because high SES students have been exposed to a wider range of social activities and have a higher level of acceptance for new things.

One participant (SW03, M, SS) stated he had low self-esteem and low self-confidence because his background was rural. He did not feel comfortable taking part in civic activities and socializing with his peers. Furthermore, he had to take part-time jobs, such as tutoring secondary school students, in order to earn his living expenses. Insufficient time was another factor he claimed as limiting his civic participation.

5.5.2. Gender and Discipline as Factors Affecting Civic Participation

According to participants’ observations, the differences across gender and discipline in civic participation were minor. Girls and boys could join different kinds of civic organizations driven by their different interests. Disciplines also had an impact on students’ choice of what kind of civic organizations they would participate in. Some of them preferred to join students’ clubs related to their major. Compared with their peers in the social sciences and humanities, students in natural science disciplines tended to participate less because of their heavier assignments and busier schedules. Lack of time was a good explanation. PK02 (M, NS) noted that there was a division between arts and science students at Peking University, and the winners in debates, stage plays, and singing competitions were usually arts students, who were also more willing to appear on stage. But he added, “This does not mean science students are indifferent to civic issues. They are more focused on their academic areas.” Agreeing with his
schoolmates, PK03 (M, NS) commented that “arts students tend to think more creatively. They do not have the same heavy load of courses and lab assignments as science students. Their future professions also require them to do something more creative.”

5.6. Conclusion

In terms of civic perceptions, although university students were found to be caught up in a kind of contradiction between communist morals of collectivism and self-sacrifice and contemporary values of individualism and profit-seeking, this study did not completely agree with the “ideological crisis” among Chinese youth that has been identified by some scholars (e.g. Chan, 2010). They may be uninterested in what being offered to them in ideological and political courses, yet they demonstrated high levels of patriotism, national pride and social justice and a strong commitment in the well-being of their local communities and the wider society. Regarding civic participation, this study revealed a more diverse picture in the amounts of time student devoted to participation, the types of activities they became involved in and their motivations, which were in turn affected by their attitudes, their goals and the resources available to them. Contemporary Chinese university students tend to adopt a more pragmatic and down-to-earth approach rather than an idealistic one: they pursue their own self-advancement and future careers while still having a strong desire to serve society, especially when they are needed.

The qualitative investigations into civic perceptions and civic participation among students in three Chinese universities have shed light on an important area that has not been given much attention in the past. The three universities in the study are unique in terms of their status, resources, administrative system, and approaches to linking students with society.
Different civic patterns across institutions identified in this study have shown a complex picture regarding the degree of impact of the university environment, policy, history and culture. One important implication of this study is that the role of the university in preparing their students to be well-rounded, civic-minded citizens should not be underestimated. However, although university environments were found to have an important impact on student civic participation, students still felt that their universities failed to provide enough support, especially in terms of the existing citizenship education curriculum and support for their participation in off-campus-based civic engagement. The dissatisfaction and disappointment expressed by students in this study with the curriculum and the pedagogy used in citizenship education is consistent with commonly held views of citizenship education in China. Evidently, the existing citizenship education conducted in Chinese higher education institutions is problematic (Yang, 2002). The recent curriculum reforms in citizenship education, which still retain political and ideological indoctrination as the core component, have failed to provide students with opportunities to nurture their civic development in the ways they desire.
CHAPTER 6:
DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter provides an extended discussion of a number of themes that have been identified in this study, and their implications for the future of citizenship education, higher education and civil society development in the Chinese context.

6.1. Citizenship Education with Chinese Characteristics

Some important facets of Chinese conceptions of citizenship have been identified in the literature: emotional attachment to the national flag and national anthem, to China’s long and remarkable history and recent accomplishments, and more generally to patriotism and nationalism (Fairbrother, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Lee, 1998, 2005; Li, 2009). This study shows that two distinctive features of civic perceptions among Chinese university students are their loyalty to the nation and their willingness to accept Communist Party leadership, as revealed in both survey analyses and interview findings. For example, 94.2 percent of surveyed students indicated their love for China as their homeland. The interview participants all expressed their strong feelings of national pride in response to recent major events that occurred in China, in particular the 2008 Olympic Games held in Beijing. A high percentage of interviewees also indicated that they frequently participated in political study organized by the Party Branch on campus. In fact, around 40 percent of them (14 out of 34 interviewees) were Party members or probationary Party members. These findings are mostly consistent with previous studies. A large-scale national survey of 14,521 university students in 75 higher education institutions conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2000 showed university students had a high sense of patriotism, a strong concern for the state and international affairs.
and generally approved of the work of the Party-State (Guangming ribao [Guangming Daily], June 3, 2000). These affective tendencies among Chinese students were once again confirmed by this study, reflecting the fact that the Party-State has been successful in transferring its central values to younger generations through the Chinese version of “citizenship education”, with a long-existing tradition of patriotic and moral education at its core.

Historically, national educational system development is intertwined with modern state formation as a contributing force as well as a function of state formation (Green, 1997). China is no exception. The construction of China’s education system, especially its citizenship education system, provides another illustration of education as state formation in its formative period. Ever since the establishment of new China in 1949, the government has promoted patriotic education in face of external threats to its authority and domestic turbulence resulting from political movements in certain periods (Fairbrother, 2004a). Breaking from the pre-1949 Confucian tradition, the Party-State has emphasized new values and patterns of conduct appropriate to socialism (Yang, 1988).

The 1989 Student Democracy Movement, which culminated in the June 4th tragedy in Tiananmen Square, has had long-lasting effects on the development of citizenship education. Drawing on newspaper articles, textbooks and scholarly papers published in China, Hayhoe (1993) suggested there was an obvious contrast between the approaches to political education in the pre-Tiananmen and post-Tiananmen periods. The fact that political education had been overlooked was identified by government leaders as the main cause of the 1989 Student Movement. Hence, official reforms were initiated in ideological political education in the face of perceived challenges to the CCP’s leadership and the Chinese government’s legitimacy (Rosen, 1993). Having perceived a weakening in the public’s faith in Marxist-Leninist
ideology, the state launched specific campaigns to promote education in patriotism and recent Chinese history (Fairbrother, 2004b). The underlying reasons were as follows: (1) patriotic education and history education were considered to be more appealing and more inclusive than Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy; (2) history could be used as incontrovertible evidence to legitimate the CCP as China’s liberator and saviour and the current socialist regime as the best option for China.

With political ideology running through all its dimensions, education in a semi-authoritarian Party-State like that of China has been vulnerable to changing international and domestic political situations (Lee, 1996). From the historical waves of reform in ideological-political education, the government’s intent to use citizenship education as a tool to achieve national identity and social cohesion, and to maintain and strengthen the Party’s authority and legitimacy is apparent.

The continuous changes in the citizenship education curriculum reflect rather precisely the changes in political leadership and policies (Li, 1990). At the same time, citizenship education has also aimed to stimulate and reinforce the young people’s commitment to the nation’s social, economic and political development. To a certain degree, the current system of citizenship education in formal schooling is effective, as indicated by the findings that university students have affection for and a sense of duty to the nation, pride in the nation’s recent accomplishments and a sense of unity in confronting natural disasters and major international events. The informants in this study generally recognized the value of mandatory citizenship education; however, they also showed their dissatisfaction with various aspects of the citizenship education they had received, including the content, the form, the teaching methods and the quality or approach of the lecturers. Having been exposed to similar forms of
citizenship education in primary and secondary school for over 10 years, university students indicated they would like to be given updated information related to China’s socio-economic transformation rather than the old and repetitive material that appeared in their textbooks. Although citizenship education has adopted a new unified set of curricula across the nation since 2006, students considered this reform to be unsatisfactory and the contents of citizenship courses to still be out of touch with what they were really interested in. In most cases, citizenship education courses were still conducted in the form of teachers lecturing and students listening. Students had to memorize selections from the textbooks and news items from official newspapers in order to pass the exams. This approach was not conducive to their developing a full comprehension of civic knowledge and genuine love for the nation, and to participating in civic activities wholeheartedly for the public good.

It is obvious that China’s citizenship education has a number of serious problems. First, the overwhelming amount of attention given to political matters and current affairs has caused the focus of the curriculum to be unbalanced. The rapid economic and cultural development over the last two decades has had an impact on the expectations of citizenship and citizenship education. However, the development of the curriculum for citizenship education at university level has failed to keep pace with the demands of the times, due to a long-term neglect of research on theoretical issues and curriculum design (Chen & Reld, 2002). Second, insufficient teacher preparation and ineffective teaching methods for citizenship education constitute another set of problems that are in critical need of attention. Since citizenship education has been given low priority, a substantial number of university lecturers who are responsible for teaching the related courses have not received proper training, and many do not even fully understand what citizenship education encompasses (Tse,
According to student interviewees, they would prefer to learn the content of the citizenship course through such interactive activities as discussions, research, simulation and games, rather than teacher-centered pedagogy. For example, outside the classroom settings, volunteer service activities in the community were found to benefit students, not only by training them to gain practical skills but also by preparing them to be better and more responsible citizens in civil society. Third, the passive mode of pen and paper assessment methods for citizenship education needs to be improved. Citizenship practices, like debate, discussion, and community service, could be incorporated into the assessment system, together with the traditional examination method. Only when the academic knowledge associated with citizenship courses is accompanied by other dimensions of knowledge and experience for citizenship, is it likely that an effective and enjoyable citizenship education experience will be provided for university students in China.

With China’s fuller integration into the international sphere, it is anticipated that citizenship education will be further affected by changes arising from external forces (Kennedy et al., 2008). The existing ideological-political education system, and Chinese traditional values on the one hand, and Western democratic and multicultural values on the other, have produced tension, creating a need for genuine innovation in citizenship education. This innovation is essential if university students are to be prepared effectively to meet the new social expectations for Chinese citizens in the local, national and global communities. To be more specific, citizenship education needs to be given a certain degree of autonomy from the Party-State and its own integrity. It needs to move beyond its present role as an ideological and political tool for moulding all university students into passive citizens who tend to demonstrate an excessive patriotism and nationalism.
6.2. “Thin” Citizenship Demonstrated by the Disconnect Between Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation

Another key finding from this study is the notable disparity between positive civic perceptions and active civic participation among the surveyed students. Chapter 4 demonstrated that most university students in the sample achieved high scores in National Identity, Civic Knowledge, Social Trust, Social Justice and Civic Commitment, the five major domains related to Civic Perceptions. However, with regard to civic participation, at least half of them were found to be relatively inactive, being involved in civic activities only a few times a year or even less. This apparent disconnect between civic perceptions and civic participation could be partly attributed to the ineffectiveness of current citizenship education practices that give excessive weight to cultivating obedience, patriotism and nationalism at the expense of more dynamic forms of learning and practice, as discussed in the first section of this chapter.

In scholarly discussions, this low level of civic participation is often labelled “thin” citizenship, a morally and ideologically grounded citizenship, as opposed to “thick” citizenship that has a more rounded set of expectations of citizens (Bubeck, 1995; Walzer, 1994). Although a dichotomous category of “thin” and “thick” may not adequately capture the complexity of civic values, attitudes, and behaviours this study has presented so far, it serves as a useful tool to analyze a multidimensional concept of citizenship (Kennedy et al., 2008). Having examined school student civic attitudes and expected civic participation in Australia, Hong Kong, and the United States, Kennedy et al. (2008) argue that there is a global trend among young people of demonstrating civic views that fit into “thin” conceptions of citizenship. For instance, in the three societies, more students think a good citizen should
respect political leaders rather than participating in political activities that are disseminating different views.

Echoing previous research, this current study demonstrates that Chinese university students are also more inclined to a “thin” conception of citizenship than a “thick” one, a civic orientation that could be attributed to citizenship education, traditional social values, and the level of democratic development of Chinese society. Since citizenship education in China is explicitly aimed at maintaining and promoting a strong sense of national identity and patriotism, it should not be surprising to see the positive picture of student civic perceptions revealed by the findings. However, even though the university is a critical player in influencing student civic attitudes and actions, students are exposed to other external forces which contribute to forming their viewpoints and behaviours. Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3 shows that university and family are two agents for cultivating student civic values in the microsystem of the environmental setting, surrounded by a wider macrosystem including social, political, economic and cultural values and processes. Traditional values and the state of democratic development in the nation are two of the main elements in the macro-system which may account for “thin” citizenship.

Firstly, the traditional values, expressed in the philosophy of Confucianism, as suggested in Chapter 2, place much more weight on emphasizing individual responsibilities than individual rights. In contrast to modern Western philosophy, Confucianism views individuals as born with obligations rather than rights. The Party-State has strategically adopted certain Confucian traditions to constrain “negative” influences such as Western individualism that have accompanied economic liberalization. Traditional values associated with Confucianism have served to complement the orthodox Marxist ideology that was
challenged by the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe; moreover, they have also helped to construct strong nationalistic emotions around the idea of a Greater China, embracing all ethnic Chinese throughout the world. Although individual and human rights are now protected by law in China\textsuperscript{26}, citizenship rights are still given a relatively low profile, compared with the responsibility of individuals to their society and the Party-State. This tendency to underemphasize individual rights needs to be understood in the specific historical context of the present period, a period when China is striving for national unity and dignity as it confronts external threats to its sovereignty (Odgen, 2003).

However, while recent social developments in China have altered the relations between the individual and society, the ideological emphasis on citizenship responsibilities over rights remains largely unchanged (Zhao, 2010). The long-standing tendency to overlook individual rights, partly as a result of traditional Confucian values, may be restricting students from developing into civically-engaged citizens. They express a strong sense of commitment to civic duties and responsibility, but actually participate in civic activities and political elections at a much lower level than would be expected. It seems as if they do not reflect much on the fact that they might practice their citizenship rights through civic participation.

Secondly, the failure of radical democratic movements in China and the painfully slow progress of democratic development may have greatly discouraged students from being political activists. Different from university students in the 1980s who enjoyed assigned employment after graduation, students of this generation are under great pressure to seek jobs

\textsuperscript{26}In the Constitution of People's Republic of China (2004), Article 35 specifies Chinese citizens should “enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.”
or pursue further study, which drives them to be more interested in self-advancement than in political activities. Moreover, the escalating speed of economic development has also diverted students’ interest to commercial activities. Thus university students have become more oriented towards utilitarianism and pragmatism, as suggested by a series of surveys conducted in the 1990s (Chan, 1999). In another recent study, they showed disinterest in elections that they considered lacked meaningfulness, and one of them even used the terms “hollow elections” and “fake democracy” (Kim, 2008, p. 21). Reported in the survey findings of this study, only 39.5 percent of students indicated a strong interest in voting for People’s Congress Representatives at either the national or local level (See Table 4.2 in Chapter 4). This situation probably reflects students’ low interest in political participation, low trust in the political system, and possibly a practical orientation towards matters of personal interest and benefit. In the near future, it is likely this generation of university students will pursue a kind of self-advancement through engaging with the community and society, while still making a contribution to the nation’s progress.

Despite the external influences of the university, the family, community and society, university students can still exercise personal agency in the process of receiving citizenship education and forming their conceptions of citizenship (Fairbrother, 2003). It should not be taken for granted that students are simply “moulded” by the kinds of citizenship education they are exposed to. The diversity of ideas expressed by the student interviewees with regard to civic issues in this study does confirm that students are able to counteract external forces and construct their own civic values, attitudes and behaviours. While recognising the complexity of student perspectives and participation as citizens, they must be respected as active agents and reflect on what factors might help them to build a smooth transition from
positive civic perceptions to active civic participation. Since this study has shown that students have negative opinions about current citizenship pedagogy, future research needs to explore ways of improving this. Only when students develop their own initiatives in terms of civic participation, rather participating as matter of obligation, will more “thick” forms of participatory citizenship become common among Chinese university students.

6.3. The Influence of SES on Inequality in Civic Participation

While the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 cannot prove that a better socio-economic status leads directly to a higher level of civic participation, they suggest a strong connection. In terms of civic participation frequency, Table 4.6 in Chapter 4 shows that 28.2 percent, 14.1 percent, and 9.0 percent of upper, middle, and disadvantaged SES strata students respectively were involved in civic activities at a high frequency level (at least a couple of times a week), while 35.3 percent, 49.0 percent, and 64.3 percent showed a low frequency level of less than a couple times a year. Upper SES strata students were thus around 2 or 3 times more likely than their peers from the middle and disadvantaged strata to be found engaging in civic activities on a regular weekly basis. The issue of youth civic participation in China has generally been understudied and, as far as I know, no previous research has examined the relationship between the SES factor and civic behaviour among Chinese youth. This finding in my study is thus worth exploring.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the interplay among SES, social capital and civic participation has been studied in some depth by Western scholars, especially in the U.S. context. Higher social status has often been hypothesized as positively associated with greater resources in terms of social networks, which in turn are seen as encouraging higher levels of
civic engagement and political participation. Putnam (1993, 2000) is known for connecting social capital with civic engagement and political participation. Social capital, defined by him as “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p.19), was found to have an empirical relationship with volunteer activism and political participation. Inspired by Putnam’s work, Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) developed a resource-based model, beyond the traditional SES and rational-choice models, to link socio-economic capital with political behaviour. They defined resources as time, money and civic skills. According to them, resources created through non-political activity, such as organizational and interpersonal skills developed through voluntary activities, are helpful for political participation. Voluntary association participation, therefore, is found to be a strong predictor of political participation.

The survey findings suggested that only SES (annual family income in particular), among all factors representing student background characteristics, had a significant positive relationship with level of civic participation. The interview protocol, which was designed after the first stage of quantitative analysis, included this finding and allowed students to either confirm or disagree with it. Not surprisingly, many of them acknowledged low SES as an obstacle to active civic participation. As reported in Chapter 5, with regard to how SES affects civic participation, they replied by pointing to a lack of necessary resources in terms of both money and time, low levels of self-confidence, and a lack of organizational and communication skills as the main barriers that resulted from low SES and low social capital for civic engagement.

There is one interesting difference in the Chinese context from what has been suggested in the literature (e.g. Brady et al., 1995). This study did not find a clear relationship
between SES and political behaviour, at least not in the question about voting that was included in the questionnaire. This may have to do with the political climate in China and the lack of democratic institutions, as discussed in the previous section. Political participation among youth has been supervised closely by the State since 1989 and political rights have not yet been perceived by Chinese people as inherent or inborn rights. However, if we focus on the reciprocal relationship between SES and civic rather than political participation, the logic of the resource-based model offers a plausible explanation for the case of Chinese university students. The results of this study suggest that social capital, as a kind of structurally embedded resource, influences student propensity to engage in civic participation. It could be put more strongly and it might be concluded that the extent to which students participate in civic activities is largely determined by their social resources.

In this study, the construct for upper SES strata was designed according to a commonly cited definition of “Middle-Class” coined by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Lu, 2002), a combination of family income level, father’s education and occupation (See Chapter 3). The possible association of the rise of the “Middle-Class” and civil society development in China has been widely discussed (e.g., Robison & Goodman, 1996; Wang, 2008; 2009). This critical finding of youth from “Middle-Class” families being more active participants in civic activities extends the current discussion and provides some empirical evidence. Students from upper SES strata (middle-class) families share many common characteristics: urban residence, family with a medium to high income, father with a good occupation and higher education attainment, and study opportunities in an elite public

\[27\] In the CMMHE database, of the 111 upper SES strata students, 107 (96.4%) of them were from urban areas.
university. They have a more modern and comfortable lifestyle and are more engaged in various leisure activities related to their interests, due to having more time and financial resources compared to their counterparts with less socio-economic capital. According to a recent interview-based study of university students in Chengdu, a city in the southwest region of China, there is some similarity between the Chinese case and international trends concerning consumption patterns (i.e. travel, cinema, and art) of middle-class students (Thakur, 2005). Different consumer behaviours were identified by gender, with male students spending more time and money on the Internet, games and sports while female students tended to spend more on fashion and art. Associational participatory activities are obviously connected to or even a part of this “Middle-Class” lifestyle. It raises the question of how this group of students from upper SES strata (the middle-class) will contribute to the progress of democracy and civil society construction in China.

Previous research has warned against too quickly concluding that the middle-class will be the driving force for democracy and civil society development in China (Wang, 2009). The individuals in this newly-emerging stratum (class) may have a stronger interest in enhancing their personal lifestyles than in advancing the public good. Although they may have a high level of social awareness, they may be more comfortable with consolidating the social status they already enjoy rather than taking political risks that could threaten their economic privilege and power. So far they have not really been seen to function as a group. While a range of social transformations keeps driving Chinese society into more complex and

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28 In the CMMHE database, of the 111 upper SES strata students, 109 (98.2%) of them were enrolled in Public Elite Universities (which are enlisted in the National 98/5 Project), and only 2 enrolled in private institutions, in comparison to 61.7 percent and 54.5 percent of middle and disadvantaged SES strata students who were admitted to Public Elite Universities.
increasingly hierarchical forms, the civic tendencies of university students from upper SES strata (middle-class) are not yet well enough understood for predictions to be made about their future impact. Nevertheless, the students in this group were found to have greater amounts of social capital and higher levels of civic participation. Thus it may be safe to anticipate that, given the advanced knowledge they have acquired in their university studies, they are the force that is most likely to push China to become more democratic and have a more genuine civil society.

Meanwhile, educational practitioners and researchers should pay close attention to the possible barriers associated with socio-economic capital that impede low SES students’ civic participation in university settings. Unlike their parents, low SES students have been able to access higher education in the recent period of massification, and they have the aspirations and capabilities to be part of a dynamic middle class in the future. Their experience of civic participation during their university years will probably affect their future civic orientation towards social, cultural, and political affairs. Necessary facilitation should be provided at national and institutional levels to create more opportunities for them to engage in civic activity, and to develop an active role in civic life.

The findings presented here are only a small step towards examining the civic behaviour of different SES groups. Further analysis should be carried out to explore the civic and political tendencies of university students from different SES strata. For example, longitudinal in-depth studies could be conducted to investigate changes in their civic life and political engagement after their full entry to society, with attention paid to the way in which changing government policies might affect their civic and political involvement.
6.4. The Role of the University in Fostering Active Citizenship

As mentioned earlier, the question of how students engage in various civic activities across universities does not receive enough attention. This study took an important step forward by probing that question and found that civic perceptions and civic participation among Chinese university students are multifaceted. Not only was university policy identified by more than half of the surveyed students as a critical factor in encouraging their civic participation, but also, through interview findings presented in the first section of Chapter 5, the status, resources, culture and history of particular universities were confirmed as having an influence on shaping the student civic participation of these universities in distinctive patterns. Although citizenship education is still coordinated by the Ministry of Education, with the curriculum unified at the national level in China’s relatively centralized higher education system, one should not underestimate the extent of influence of the university environment, policy, history and culture on student civic tendencies and citizenship development.

However, the key findings of the study also point toward a paradoxical role played by universities in terms of fostering active citizenry and encouraging civic participation among students. On the one hand, students indicated that the university environment had an important impact on their civic engagement while, on the other hand, they felt their universities failed to provide enough support, especially in terms of the existing citizenship education curriculum. This is consistent with commonly held views of citizenship education in China (Yang, 2002). Evidently, the existing citizenship education in Chinese higher education institutions has failed to respond to students’ needs and expectations in terms of content and pedagogy. However, the interview data also showed that there is an apparent consensus among leaders in
Chinese universities about the importance of civic participation and the necessity to address the needs of the local community and society.

The universities seem to be caught up in the growing tension between the supervision imposed on them by the Party-State and the more general call they feel to link their students with their local communities and with society more broadly. The leadership of the CCP over Chinese universities makes them somewhat different from their counterparts in the Western democracies, which have a relatively high degree of autonomy. In spite of the unavoidably strong state control over student civic development, Chinese universities still enjoy a certain amount of autonomy in designing and promoting civic engagement practices. In the near future, it is most likely that the Chinese political system will retain its present character as a semi-authoritarian state. Thus, the Party-State will have to maintain and even strengthen its control over citizenship education through unified curricula and a strong emphasis on ideological and political indoctrination. For Chinese universities, becoming effective agents to cultivate responsible and participatory citizens in a situation of limited autonomy is not an easy task to fulfill. The key may lie in a gradual shift in the relationship of state, society and university, which may then make possible the development of a dynamic framework for citizenship education that encourages critical thinking and action in the context of the changing circumstances of different localities and regions.

6.5. The Potential Role of the Mass Media in Civil Society

Both survey findings and interview results suggest that the mass media, especially the Internet, is a significant player in shaping university students’ civic perceptions. Almost every informant in the interviews reported being an active discussant or browser on their
university’s BBS (Bulletin Board Sites) or the forums of other public websites. The implications of these findings are worth exploring.

China has the largest population of Internet users in the world at present, and young people are a substantial force among them. It is estimated that 31.8 percent of China’s total population are Internet users. The number of users reached 420 million by the end of June 2010 and of these at least 200 million are young adults below the age of 24 (China Internet Network Information Center [CNNIC], 2010a, 2010b). More than 75 percent of Chinese youth were also found to use the Internet on their mobile phones (CINIC, 2010b). The figures are expected to keep increasing at a staggering rate. This exponential expansion of Internet users has attracted attention from both Western and Chinese scholars. The role of the mass media in democracy development and civil society formation in China has thus been widely discussed (Tai, 2004). Diamond (2010) has warned that the mass media are only tools. While it might be tempting to believe that the Internet, as a new form of “liberation technology” (Diamond, 2010, p.70), possesses unprecedented potential for advancing civil society, the historical lessons from such newly invented media as the printing press in the 15th century and the telegraph in the 19th century have taught us that technologies do not always serve political progress. Like any media, such as radio and television, the Internet could be a means to widen the public sphere for pluralism and open-ended discussion, but it could also be a vehicle for a totalitarian government to exercise total state control. However, the Internet, due to its decentralized nature and its capacity for mobilizing mass movements, is generally considered to be a powerful weapon for “transparency and accountability, documenting and deterring abuses of human rights and democratic procedures” (Diamond, 2010, p.71).
The sophisticated Internet filtering and surveillance system in China, represented by the well-known “Great Firewall”, limits the possibility of an independent public sphere emerging (Diamond, 2010). Under this censorship system, sensitive words, such as *min zhu* (democracy), *ren quan* (human rights), and *zang du* (Tibet Independence), have all been filtered in the search engines that are used (Jin, 2008). It aroused worldwide attention and heated debates when Google announced its withdrawal from the China mainland in March 2010, and it is well-known that many widely-used websites (such as Facebook and Blogspot) are being blocked as a result of the Chinese government’s Internet censorship policy. In these circumstances, no one should expect that the Internet will play exactly the same role in shaping public opinion in the Chinese context as has happened in democratic regimes. However, it has played and will continue to play an important role in shaping Chinese civil society (Tai, 2004).

As an empowering element within the mass media, the Internet provides a space for individuals or CSOs to escape the government’s control and negotiate new forms of freedom online, which is promising for civil society growth. Chinese university students are major forces in pushing this forward. Recent statistical data on online behaviour indicates that browsing the BBS and publishing posts are the main activities among young Chinese Internet users (Jin, 2008). In fact, an active, vigorous and devoted BBS culture has emerged among them: there are 1.6 billion daily page views and 10 million daily published posts on BBS across China, and 70 percent of BBS users are aged 18-30 and have received some higher education (Lu, 2008). The informants in this study indicated that they enjoyed the freedom of speech and opportunities to express their personal views on governmental affairs and social issues through the BBS. The recent online debates over several social issues (mentioned in
sections 5.2.4 and 5.3.2 of Chapter 5) even exerted tremendous pressure on the government, which had to respond in different ways to the sentiments expressed by its citizens in the “virtual” world.

University students, as regular Internet users, are familiar with those online “movements” and recognize the social impact that the online world can exert. They use the Internet as an empowering mode of communication and a socialization tool to engage with the larger community and society, another hopeful avenue for the development of civil society in an increasingly connected cyber world. Tai (2004), who sees the Internet as having “the most revolutionizing effects” (p.385) over civil society, believes it will realize its potential when ordinary citizens embrace it as a core part of their daily life. However, the revolution has not yet occurred, nor will it occur in the near future as long as the Internet is being closely controlled by the government. Nevertheless, this study suggests that university students rely heavily on the Internet to provide information, and the Internet has already become an ingrained aspect of their lifestyle. They have been and will continue to be a pioneering force in using the Internet as a tool for articulating critical and liberated views, which will ultimately bring transformative changes to the society and serve in the negotiation with the Party-State for a public sphere of power.

To sum up, activities related to the social media differ from traditional and explicit modes of civic participation, yet these activities have stimulated collaborative efforts to seek social equality and justice, as illustrated by the case of Chinese university students. The Internet is an important player in the development of citizenship values and roles among university students, as revealed in this study; yet there are many related issues that need to be explored, including the patterns of activities students engage in on-line and the types of cyber
communities students become involved with on the Internet. These need to be studied further to better understand their implications for civil society construction in China.

6.6. Civil Society in the Making

I gave this thesis the title, “A Chinese Civil Society in the Making”, as I understand that a civil society will not appear overnight, and that its development is a gradual and fluid process constrained by social, economic, political and cultural conditions. Thanks to three decades of economic reform and development, certain elements of those conditions that helped to cause the birth and growth of civil society in western democracies are emerging in China. One of the most important elements is that the Chinese higher education sector has achieved remarkable expansion. As Kamens (2009) argues, expanding higher education “produces more mobilized citizenry, changed cognitions, new forms of authority, and new political discourses” (p.106); this, in turn, will promote liberal democracy. In this sense, the massification of higher education has profound implications for the rise of a fully-fledged Chinese civil society.

In this study both the civic perceptions and civic participation of contemporary university students were carefully examined to gain a better understanding of their implications for Chinese civil society. Based on both quantitative and qualitative data, the study showed the following: (1) On the one hand, university students acquired civic skills and knowledge through formal citizenship education courses and extracurricular activities. On the other hand, they extensively used the mass media, especially the Internet, to obtain different types of information, to express their views of public affairs, and to engage with virtual communities. (2) They displayed a high sense of individual responsibility and commitment to
society; and they were critical of, rational about and even sceptical towards the government authorities, while demonstrating a strong concern over issues of social equality. (3) Some of them were active participants in community service and volunteering activities, devoted to the well-being of their local communities and a wider society. All of these are positive signs revealing some progress in a *Chinese Civil Society in the Making*.

However, while individual responsibility and rights are considered to be significant components of civil society (Shils, 1996), China’s university students tend to view civic participation and political engagement more as a matter of responsibility than of individual rights. It thus remains uncertain when Chinese university students will demonstrate genuine democratic citizenship and active civic behaviour. It is tempting to rest the hope of seeing a mature Chinese civil society on the shoulders of university students. In the late 1980s, they were described as “the conscience of the nation” and seen as pioneering forces for democracy and civil society. However, they often found themselves disappointed by the Party-State’s refusal to accept the “reality of nascent civil society in China” (Gold, 1990, p.31).

Young adults in contemporary China differ from this earlier generation. Certain contradictions can be seen in their civic orientations. They have a strong sense of national identity and civic commitment, yet they have adopted more of an individualistic and pragmatic approach to civic participation, as they are more oriented to promoting the “self” than “others”. Being part of the post-1980s, only-child generation, they are criticized for being indifferent to socialist-collectivist values and for displaying a self that one scholar has viewed as consistent with “the autonomous, self-authoring and individualistic neoliberal subject” (Liu, 2008, p.193). The findings of this study do not completely concur with the above criticism. University students’ feelings about and contribution to the 2008 Olympic Games
and the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake showed that they were active participatory citizens, particularly in circumstances with a high national profile. A high percentage of them also showed their concern about social justice, critical thinking, political engagement and global awareness. These are qualities essential to the development of a healthy civil society, a society which requires the collective capacities of all citizens, rather than a few social elites, to learn, talk, argue, innovate and ultimately solve problems together (Edwards, 2004).

In this thesis I would argue, however, that civil society needs to be contextualized and historicized in particular national settings. The specific social, economic, political and cultural conditions in China require a different understanding of civil society from that found in the West, which is based on liberal democratic regimes. In the short term, it is unlikely that civic organizations in China will be completely free from government control and interference. However, it is necessary to be aware that civil society development should be considered as more of a continuum than a descriptive ideal-typical concept. With the increasing number of Chinese young adults receiving higher education, absorbing advanced knowledge, being influenced by positive policies and a culture that encourages active civic participation in distinctive university settings, and using the Internet as a communication tool for expressing critical views about social affairs, it is highly probable that the expanding scale and scope of higher education will contribute to the construction of a version of civil society with Chinese characteristics.

6.7. Limitations of the Study

Generalization has conventionally been seen as a major aim of science and a process for formulating universal theories that may be tested in further applications. Some social
scientists criticize the concept, either because of the insufficiency of arguments or because of the context particularity of all scientific findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mayring, 2007).

By design, this study has several limitations. First, there are 4135 higher education institutions in China at present (MOE, 2009), and the data used in the two parts of this study were drawn from twelve institutions that had been selected for the survey, of which three provided interview candidates. The survey analysed in the first quantitative part was not based on a random sample and the interview subjects of the second part cannot be seen as representative of students across the whole nation. Therefore, the study itself is not empirically generalizable and the intent is not to produce findings that can be generalized to all of China’s higher education students and institutions.

Second, the notions of citizenship education and civil society are complex, versatile and evolving; also, a multitude of historical, social and cultural factors are intricately involved in these conceptions. This study thus serves only to explore the complicated phenomenon of civil society in the Chinese context and to probe the problems of citizenship education on contemporary Chinese campuses. Considering the fact that the sample size is relatively small for a nationwide study, it should be seen as a snapshot of university students’ views on citizenship education, civil society, national identity and civic participation. The study also intends to develop an analysis of the interplay between higher education expansion and civil society development in China. Future studies could examine the perspectives of other stakeholders in higher education, i.e., teachers, university leaders, and policy-makers, to complement the research done for this thesis.
Third, though this study draws on an extensive literature on citizenship education, civic participation and civil society, mostly from the contexts of Western countries, it was not designed as a comparative study of university students’ civic perspectives and participation in China and abroad. Rather it attempts to present a fine-grained analysis of contemporary Chinese university students which shows how far their contribution to an emerging civil society reflects or diverges from the historical experience in other parts of the world.

Last but not least, the scope of this study was limited to the Chinese context, but hopefully it may stimulate other scholars to widen the lens and investigate how citizenship education curricula and programs affect students’ civic perceptions and civic participation in other contexts, and how higher education expansion may have an impact on the growth of civil society. Parallel studies in other Asian countries that share similar Confucian values would be particularly interesting. Similarly, comparative perceptions of Asian definitions of citizenship, civil society, national identity and civic participation would be worthwhile.

6.8. Summary and Implications

In spite of the ineffectiveness of current citizenship education in Chinese universities and the barriers to civic participation arising from a lack of socio-economic resources among low SES students, I still tend to look at the future of student civic participation in China as promising. Overall, almost all Chinese university students showed positive civic perceptions and half of them reported themselves as being active civic participants, while most of them desired to become even more involved. The interviews carried out in the qualitative phase of the study suggest that there is a strong demand among university students for more opportunities for civic participation.
These findings and implications, however, do present several lessons that researchers, education practitioners and policy makers should pay attention to. First, civic participation is not uniformly high among university students. For example, students from upper SES strata are the most engaged, while students from disadvantaged strata are less engaged. At the very least, this suggests that there is an argument for providing more opportunities for students from disadvantaged groups to become engaged, so that the gap between students of differing SES backgrounds can be reduced.

Second, the current forms of citizenship education have failed to cultivate active civic participation. Students have a strong desire for more experiential learning in their citizenship education programs, and more opportunities to be connected with the larger community and society. As indicated in the interview findings in Chapter 5, this desire for more engagement opportunities includes civic, voluntary and political opportunities. Higher education institutions already offer plentiful opportunities for students to practice citizenship. However, students seek high-quality opportunities to engage themselves in civic activities so that they can develop social and organization skills in the process. One possible way is to offer voluntary civic activities related to their major field, so they will have a higher motivation to participate as it will benefit their future careers; at the same time, they will develop “thicker” forms of citizenship as they gain experience with volunteering in civic activities.

Third, the university can play a greater role in promoting its students’ civic participation at a more general level. The university culture, policies, and traditions seem to influence student views and activities related to the broader civil society. Students commonly link their civic attitudes and engagement experiences with the campus climate. This implies that the role of universities in China as gateways for student engagement in local, regional,
and national affairs should not be underestimated. With clearer policies and better guidance, students will benefit from engaging more actively with the larger community and civil society.

The findings of this study raise the possibility of exploring many interesting and complex issues in further investigations. These include the role that Chinese universities ought to play in civil society construction, particularly in helping students to develop an active citizenship; the development of forms of citizenship education that respond to the demands of students and the society; the potential of the Internet in promoting civic participation among university students; and the relationship between socio-economic capital and civic participation among university students and the general public, particularly the newly-rising middle class. It is hoped that subsequent studies will be able to carry the conversation about these issues forward in greater depth and with a wider scope.
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Zhang, Y. (2002). Yinshilidao, jiaqiang he gaijin gaoxiao xuesheng dangjian gongzuo [Adroitly guide action according to circumstances to strengthen and to improve Party-
building work among students at institutions of higher education]. *Minjiang zhiye daxue xuebao [Journal of Minjiang Professional University]*, 2, 39.


Appendix A

List of Acronyms

BBS Bulletin Board System
BSC Blue Sky College
CASS Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP Chinese Communist Party
CCPCC Chinese Communist Party Central Committee
CCYL Chinese Communist Youth League
CMMHE China’s Move Mass Higher Education
CNNIC China Internet Network Information Center
CPPCC Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference
CSO Civil Society Organization
IEA International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IMF International Monetary Fund
MCA Ministry of Civil Affairs (China)
MOE Ministry of Education (China)
PKU Peking University
P.R.C. People’s Republic of China
SWU Southwest University
WTO World Trade Organization
Appendix B

Student Survey Questionnaire

(Printed on OISE/UT Letterhead)

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**Marking Instructions:** Please carefully read each of the following questions and answer them as instructed. Choose your answer by circling the letter next to the answer, or the number in the column or mark with a ✓ in the bracket which fits you best, or provide your own answer as required.

**PART I**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

*For Questions 1-7, please circle the letter next to the answer or mark with a ✓ in the bracket which fits you best, or provide your own answer.*

1. My gender is
   - A. Female
   - B. Male

2. My major is ____________________________

3. Before I began my studies as a university student, I had grown up in
   - A. A rural area (township or village)
   - B. An urban area (city or county town)

4. Educational level of my father and mother
   
   *(Please mark only one answer with a ✓ in the bracket in each of the two columns)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4.1. My father</th>
<th>4.2. My mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school or equivalent</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior high school or equivalent</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior high school or equivalent</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/University or equivalent</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above college/university</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Occupational status of my father and mother
   
   *(Please mark only one answer with a ✓ in the bracket in each of the two columns)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5.1. My father</th>
<th>5.2. My mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job hunter/laid-off/retired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service industry employee</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (lawyers, professors, etc.)</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of private business</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of the state-owned enterprise</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government official</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The total gross annual income in my family is roughly estimated as
   - A. Less than 8,000 RMB
   - B. 8,000-25,000 RMB
   - C. 25,000-45,000 RMB
   - D. 45,000-60,000 RMB
   - E. More than 60,000 RMB
7. The average class size in my university is about
   A. 80 students or more B. 60-79 students C. 40-59 students D. 20-39 students E. below 20 students

PART II

VIEWS ON CHINA’S MOVE TO MASS HIGHER EDUCATION

For Questions 8-67, please circle the number in the column or the letter next to the answer which fits you best.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Students</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Overall, I have a positive feeling about the changes in my university after China’s move to mass higher education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. There is now greater access to higher education for minorities and women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Students from rural areas have greater access to university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Students from wealthy families have greater access to university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Students from families of government officials have greater access to university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Cost</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Overall, I feel that university tuitions are too expensive for most families</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My family can afford to support me to finish my four-year’s university studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If it were not for higher education expansion, I would not have been admitted into my university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I feel the education provided by my university is worthy of the tuition I paid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. My professors teach us with up-to-date contents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My professors teach us in creative ways</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I can meet my professors/advisors for advices whenever there is a need</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I am able to select whatever courses or programs I have interest to study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The size of my class is too big</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I feel that learning resources such as university library holdings are sufficient</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Development</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. My university provides appropriate career guidance to me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I have grave concerns about finding a job after I graduate from university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization and Social Impact</td>
<td>Disagree strongly</td>
<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree somewhat</td>
<td>Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I have opportunities to get to learn English from native English speaking teachers on campus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I notice there are more foreign students who are studying Chinese language and other subjects in my university</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The move to mass higher education enables China to develop faster in science and technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. The move to mass higher education produces more qualified talents for China’s socioeconomic development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PART III**

**CIVIL KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure to Civil Knowledge</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Most</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. By the following, I obtain the information about important social events:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal communications with professors, advisors, classmates, or friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet, newspapers, magazines, or TV programs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political or related courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official group activities including political studies (zhengzhi xuexi)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other group activities organized by self-organized associations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own observation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. When I watch TV or surf the internet, I pay attention to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice and political issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular movie or singing stars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Economy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories of the outlaws</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education /culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Knowledge</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. As a university student, I have a clear understanding of the concept of civil society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. As a Chinese citizen, I understand my rights and responsibilities inscribed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Gu Yanwu said: “Everybody has an obligation for the well-being of her/his country.”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Everybody should be patriotic and loyal to her/his country</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Everybody should know about the history of her/his country</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I love China as my motherland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Social Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37. I pay attention to debates on social and political issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I care about the gap between the rich and the poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. There should be a wide range of channels for people to voice their</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social concerns in order to build up a harmonious society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Women should run for public office and take part in the government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just as men do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. All ethnic groups in China should have equal opportunities for</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education and jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. The children of migrant workers should have the same opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of education as children in cities have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Civil Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43. As a university student, I have an obligation to actively participate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in activities that benefit the community and society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Today we have freedom in choosing our life style</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. It is good that different organizations are available for people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to join if they wish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Young people today care about themselves only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. In our society, people generally trust each other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. I have serious concerns about the decline of morality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I am worried about the deterioration of the natural environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Civil Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50. I think people should cooperate with each other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Everybody should take part in activities to protect our environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. There are many voluntary organizations in China. I have strong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in supporting their programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. I support our government’s effort to build a “harmonious society”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. I believe that the values and traditions of Chinese culture should</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be revived to help build a better society for China and the world as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part IV

PART IV

PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN ACTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

55. Have you ever participated in the following organizations/associations? (Please check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization/Association</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student council/class parliament</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A youth organization affiliated with the government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An environmental organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group conducting [voluntary] activities to help the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A charity collecting money for a social cause</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An art, music or drama organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sports organization or team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An association of fellow folks from the same region (*Tongxianghui*)
Any other non-governmental or non-profit organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>56. Have you ever organized the following organizations/associations? (Please check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student council/class parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A youth organization affiliated with the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An environmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group conducting [voluntary] activities to help the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A charity collecting money for a social cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An art, music or drama organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sports organization or team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An association of fellow folks from the same region (<em>Tongxianghui</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other non-governmental or non-profit organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>57. Think about all the organizations/associations listed above. What do you normally get out of the participation? (Please check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure/enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking/socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership ability development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>58. Think about all the organizations/associations listed above. How often do you participate in activities for any or all of these organizations/associations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Never or almost never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>59. In total, how many voluntary/non-profit associations have you participated in?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>60. Generally speaking, how actively do you participate in voluntary/non-profit activities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never participated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>61. Generally speaking, how actively do other students participate in voluntary/non-profit activities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>62. I have organized or participated in the following voluntary activities (Please check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising for tuition for poor children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for protecting environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for education in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for disadvantaged groups such as aging people, homeless or children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions of social issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team study of a subject or discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>63. I have voluntarily helped the following people (Please check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sick people: 1, 2
Aging people: 1, 2
Rural students who can not continue school due to poverty: 1, 2
None of them: 1, 2

64. I have participated in voluntary activities such as the ones listed in Question 62 and Question 63, because –
(Please check all that apply)
I just follow others to participate in such kind of activities: 1, 2
My university has policies to encourage such student participations: 1, 2
I personally benefit from these voluntary activities: 1, 2
People or society usually benefit from these voluntary activities: 1, 2
I have obligations to participate in these activities as a university student: 1, 2
I don’t know why I participate: 1, 2

65. When I received unfair treatment, I usually go to talk with
(Please check all that apply)
University/departmental leader or official: 1, 2
My student supervisor or professor: 1, 2
Student parliament: 1, 2
My friends: 1, 2
My family: 1, 2
None of them: 1, 2

66. What kind of activities are you most interested in?
A. Celebrating China’s success in bidding for the 2008 Olympic Games
B. A Lantern Festival celebration
C. the “Super Girls” voting campaign
D. A National Day parade
E. Others (Please specify____________________)

67. What kind of elections are you most likely to participate in?
A. Voting for representatives in the People’s Congress
B. Voting for student government representatives
C. Screening winners of the “Super Girls” Competition
D. Selecting best performances in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala Show
E. Others (Please specify____________________)

For Questions 68-70, please provide your own answers.

68. What are your suggestions for improving the quality of education for university students?
A.
B.
C.

69. What should universities do more to enhance students’ role in improving society?
A.
B.
C.

70. What do you want to say but you have not been asked in this survey?
A.
B.
C.
Appendix C

University of Toronto Ethics Review Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Office of the Vice-President, Research
Office of Research Ethics

ETHICS REVIEW PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM FOR
SUPERVISED AND SPONSORED RESEARCHERS
(For use by graduate students, post-docs and visiting professors and researchers)

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

A Chinese Civil Society in the Making? Civic Perceptions and Civic Participation of University Students in an Era of Massification

2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Investigator:
Title: Miss
Name: Yuxin Tu
Department: Department of Theory and Policy Studies, OISE
Mailing address:
Phone: Fax: Email: yuxin.tu@utoronto.ca

Level of Project
Faculty Research Post-Doctoral Research Student Research: Doctoral Masters Student Number 995353834

Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor:
Title: Prof
Name: Ruth Hayhoe
Department: Department of Theory and Policy Studies, OISE
Mailing address: 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, M6S 1V6
Phone: Fax: Email:

Co-investigators:
Are co-investigators involved? Yes No
Title: Name:
Department:
Mailing address:
Phone: Fax: Email:

Title: Name:
Department:
Mailing address:
Phone: Fax: Email:

Please append additional pages if necessary.
3. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Health Sciences ☐  Education ☒  Social Science & Humanities ☐
Please consult http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_rebs.html to determine which Research Ethics Board your proposal should be submitted to.

4. LOCATION(S) WHERE THE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED:

If the research is to be conducted at a site requiring administrative approval/consent (e.g. in a school), please include all draft administrative consent letters. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what other means of approval are required, and to obtain approval prior to starting the project.

University of Toronto ☐
Hospital ☐  specify site(s)
School board or community agency ☐  specify site(s)
Community within the GTA ☐  specify site(s)
International ☒  China (Peking University, Southwest University, and Blue Sky College) specify site(s)
Other ☐  specify site(s)

The University of Toronto has recently reached an agreement with the University-Affiliated Teaching Hospitals, regarding ethics review of hospital-based research. Based on this agreement, certain hospital-based research is now exempt from ethics review at the University of Toronto. If your research is based at a University-Affiliated Teaching Hospital please consult the following document to determine whether or not your research requires review at the University of Toronto http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_where_tabshn.html.

5. OTHER RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL(S)

(a) Does the research involve another institution or site?  Yes ☒  No ☐
(b) Has any other REB approved this project?  Yes ☐  No ☒
   If Yes please provide a copy of the approval letter upon submission of this application.
   If No, will any other REB be asked for approval?
      Yes ☐  (please specify which REB)  No ☒

6. FUNDING OF THE PROJECT

(a) Please check one:
   
   | Funded ☐ | Agency: | Fund #: |
   | Applied for funding ☐ | Agency: | Submission date: |
   | Unfunded ☒ | Agency: | Submission date: |

If one protocol is to cover more than one grant, please include all fund numbers.

(b) If waiting for funding, do you wish to postdate ethics approval to the release of funds?
   Yes ☐  No ☐

(c) For funded research, will more than one protocol be submitted to cover all research funded by the respective grant?  Yes ☐  No ☒
If Yes, this is # of

7. CONTRACTS

Is there a funding or non-funded agreement associated with the research?
Yes ☐ No ☐
If Yes, please include 3 copies upon submission of this application.

8. PROJECT START AND END DATES

Estimated start date for this project: 1 May, 2009
Estimated completion date for this project: 1 September, 2009

9. SCHOLARLY REVIEW

Please check one:

☐ The research has been approved by a thesis committee (required for thesis research)
☐ The research has undergone scholarly review prior to this submission for ethical review
   (specify review committee)
☐ The research will undergo scholarly review prior to funding
   (specify review committee)
☐ The research will not undergo scholarly review apart from this ethics review

10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

(a) Will the researcher(s), members of the research team, and/or their partners or immediate family members:
   (i) Receive any personal benefits (e.g. financial benefit such as remuneration, intellectual property
       rights, rights of employment, consultancies, board membership, share ownership, stock options, etc.) as a
       result of or in connection to this study? Yes ☐ No ☒
   (ii) If Yes, please describe the benefits below. (Do not include conference and travel expense
        coverage, or other benefits which are standard to the conduct of research.)

(b) Describe any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information (during or at the end of the
    study) that has been placed on the investigator(s). This includes controls placed by sponsor, advisory or
    steering committee:

N/A

(c) Where relevant, please explain any pre-existing relationship between the researcher(s) and the
    researched (e.g. instructor-student; manager-employee; minister-congregant).
SECTION B – SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

Please include a list of appendices for all additional materials submitted.

11. RATIONALE

Describe the purpose and background rationale for the proposed project, and, if relevant, the hypotheses/research questions to be examined.

The explosive growth in the number of university students in China since late 1990s has opened up new conditions for the advance of democratization and civil society. Civil society epitomizes such values as openness and horizontal social and institutional bonds, while civic activity implies responsibility, solidarity and commitment to the well-being of the larger community. Currently, nearly one quarter of Chinese youth aged 18-24 benefit from some form of higher education (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2008). Bearing in mind the fact that such a large cohort of Chinese young people receives higher education, I intend to explore students' attitudes and perspectives towards civil society and their experiences of civic participation, then assess the impact of higher education expansion on civil society construction in China.

Background of the study

Currently the fourth economic power in terms of gross GDP output (after USA, Japan and Germany), China has been playing an increasingly active role in the world community both economically and politically. The reforms initiated since 1978 are considered to be of great importance for China's higher education (Hayhoe, 1996) as well as in the development of civil society.

Against the background of national economic prosperity, Chinese higher education has achieved striking developments both in terms of quantitative expansion and qualitative enhancement in recent years. Ever since the last decade, many countries witnessed an increase in the number of students enrolled in higher education and China is no exception. As a result of a national policy of massification, higher education in China experienced a striking quantitative expansion; and the overall scale quadrupled from 6.23 million in 1998 to 27 million in 2007, with the gross enrolment rate increasing from 9.8% in 1998 to 23% in 2007. This ranks China as the largest provider of higher education in the world (Hayhoe & Zha, 2006; MOE, 2008).

Two national higher education projects Project 211 (which gives special financial support to 100 top universities, in order to bring them up to "world standards" in the 21st century) and Project 985 (which provides substantial financial support to 39 selected universities at different government levels in order to create Chinese world class universities) have pushed universities to be more engaged in strategic planning and systematic mergers. The result is that most top tier institutions are providing more comprehensive curriculums and are capable of performing intellectual directions in multiple knowledge areas and collaborating with their counterparts across the world (Hayhoe & Zha, 2006).

China's political system is still a one-party system, which casts some doubt on the possibility of democratic developments. There has been dramatic economic growth, yet Chinese society faces many problems. To resolve escalating social issues, Communist Party leaders have carried out a series of political reforms. Two
recent influential movements are Jiang Zemin’s Three represents” (sang daibao) (which means the Communist Party claims to represent China’s advanced productive forces, the orientation of China’s advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the majority of the Chinese people), and Hu Jintao’s “Harmonious society” (hexie shehui). These movements were initiated to mitigate the most pressing social problems and to ensure stability while sticking to the belief that rapid economic development should continue.

The market reform of more than two and a half decades has aroused interesting questions over China’s future political direction. According to Seymour Martin Lipset’s modernization theory, there is a strong relationship between socioeconomic development and the emergence of democratic politics as the growth of an educated middle class leads to demands for more participation in politics (Lipset, 1996). Given this general theoretical proposition about the relationship between economic development and democracy, it is worth asking whether China’s market reforms have created favorable social conditions for democracy and whether the country’s emerging entrepreneurial class will serve as a democratic social base.

Both the issues of Chinese higher education development and Chinese civil society construction process have drawn lots of worldwide attentions. This research aims to illustrate how university students view and engage in the growth of civil society during China’s transition to a mass higher education system. It is based on the interpretation of empirical data, some of which has already been gathered by a large-scale survey, while the rest will be gathered through interviews.

Research Question:

As Chinese universities moved to mass higher education, how do university students perceive and engage in citizenship learning and civil society development?

Four sub-questions will be asked with a more specific focus:

1) Do students’ perception of citizenship learning and civil society development vary by their background characteristics (five factors: the status of universities they attend, their genders, their disciplines, their geographic origins and their SES classes)? And how do their background characteristics affect their views?

2) What are the reasons for the variation of students’ perception of citizenship learning and civil society development as they relate to each factor in their background characteristics?

3) What are students’ experiences of the formal curriculum and pedagogy related to citizenship learning and civil society development?

4) What are students’ experiences of the informal curriculum in terms of citizenship learning and civil society development?

Reference:


12. METHODS

Please describe all formal and informal procedures to be used, settings and types of information to be involved, as well as how data will be analyzed.

Attach a copy of all questionnaires, interview guides or other non-standard test instruments.

My research will use mixed method research, which combines a large-scale student survey analysis and follow up indepth interviews.

1. The first part of my thesis project is a quantitative analysis of the survey dataset of a SSHRC project titled 'China's Move to Mass Higher Education: Implications for Civil Society and Global Cultural Dialogue'. My supervisor, Prof Ruth Hayhoe is the principle investigator of this project. Ethical permission has already been given for the student survey from Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto (Protocol Number:22478, Original No: 15801).

2. Secondly, based on the quantitative analysis, I will use qualitative methods to further explain the understanding of civil society and civic participation among university students and also to explore the diversity and disparity of the views among students of different genders, disciplines, family origins and university types.

3. I will conduct a pilot study in Toronto with 5 Chinese young people who had experiences of studying in Chinese universities in the recent past. I will use a digital recorder and then transfer the recorded information into the computer for data security. The technique of textual analysis will be used to process the interview data. After the text of each interview is transcribed in Chinese and translated into English, the bilingual version will be sent to each interviewee for verification and any suggestions they would like to give. Throughout the pilot study, certain adjustment of the wording and revision of questions will be made to polish and develop the interview questions to make them more appropriate.

4. In the fieldtrip, I will conduct around 30 interviews. The rationale for identifying participants will be explained in section 13 (Participants or Data Subjects). The interviews will be taken on three campuses of selected Chinese universities. The interview will include 6-8 main questions and each will last for approximately an hour. It will be semi-structured and open-ended in order to allow more room for participants to express their opinions freely. Chinese language will be used for the interviews and transcription, and translation into English will be done afterwards.

5. As the quantitative analysis is classified in five different categories, interview questions are drafted by these categories as well to keep the consistency. Here is the list of tentative interview questions:

1) National identity
Our previous quantitative study has shown that the overall student body has a very strong sense of national identity and loyalty, how do you see this? How do you feel about some specific events happening recently
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(Sichuan earthquake, 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, etc) that might enhance or weaken your feeling of national identity?

2) Civic knowledge and awareness
What did you learn from the citizenship education/civic education you received at the university through the formal curriculum and campus life? What are your comments on your learning experiences on campus? Have you ever come across the concept of 'Civil society'? What is your interpretation of it? How do you view global influences on the construction of Chinese civil society?

3) Social cohesion and social diversity
How do you view governmental efforts in building a “Harmonious Society”? What do you think about the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups? What kind of contribution do you want to make to a “Harmonious Society”?

4) Political participation
How do you view political elections in China? Do you have a strong desire to participate in them?

5) Civic involvement
How have you been involved in student associations or NGOs/NPOs? What are your motivations and expectations?

As a university student, how have you engaged in building Chinese civil society? What kind of participation would you like to have in order to promote civil society in China?

In the actual interview, the techniques will be similar to those used in the pilot study. Again, a digital recorder will be used and all data will be transferred into computer files.

13. PARTICIPANTS OR DATA SUBJECTS
Describe the participants that will be recruited, or the subjects about whom personal information will be collected. Where active recruitment is required, please describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection of personal information, please describe from whom the information will be obtained and what it will include.

This study is targeting Year Two and Three undergraduate university students in China.
As explained earlier in section 12 (Methods), my thesis project also includes a quantitative portion of student survey analysis of the SSHRC project which involved 12 Chinese universities, for consistency of the research participants, I will select interview subjects within the cohort. However, I will select interview participants from three of the twelve universities, since they represent three different types of university - a national comprehensive university (Peking University), a second-tier public university (Southwest University) and a private university (Blue Sky Colleges) in order to maximize the variations in participants’ responses related to the type of institution they attend, as different institutional approaches to citizenship education may affect students’ perceptions of civil issues. In the spring of 2009, I will visit the three Chinese universities to conduct one-to-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with 8 to 12 universities students at each institution, around 30 in total. I will gain informed consent for institutional participation from the Director of Student Affairs in each university.

In the design plan, for the sake of consistency with the previous quantitative study, five predictor variables (socio-economic status, institutional type, gender, disciplines, and family origin) will be taken into account in identifying the interviewees and 12 interviewee in each institution with distinctive characteristics shall be included. Among the five predictor variables, socio-economic status will be a control variable in this study, as all 12 students will be selected from the middle ranked class (which means their family annual income is between RMB 8,000 and 60,000). The other predictor variables are included for the composition of the group of participants, which is shown on the chart below:

![Design map for selecting interviewees](image)

**Figure 1:** Design map for selecting interviewees

However, due to time constraints and the availability of participants, I may not able to identify every single student interviewee exactly as this map above shows. Besides, this research is an exploratory study. The map only serves as a guideline for an ideal set of participants.

In the prescreening process, I expect students to share their information of the five indicators (socio-economic status, institutional type, gender, disciplines, and family origin) on voluntary basis to decide their eligibility for the interview.
14. EXPERIENCE

For projects that involve collection of sensitive data, methods that pose greater than minimal risk to participants, or involves a vulnerable population, please provide a brief description of the researcher's/research team's experience with this type of research.

N/A

15. RECRUITMENT

Where there is formal recruitment, please describe how and from where the participants will be recruited. Where participant observation is to be used, please explain the form of insertion of the researcher into the research setting (e.g. living in a community, visiting on a bi-weekly basis, attending organized functions).

Attach a copy of any posters, advertisements, flyers, letters, or telephone scripts to be used for recruitment.

Approaching interview candidates

Through the SSHRC project's link with the 3 universities in my study, I will approach the Director of Student Affairs on each campus and inform them the purpose and process of my study. With each institution's consent, expressed through the signature of the Director of Student Affairs on an consent form, I will recruit eligible interview candidates by myself. Before physically visiting the campus, I will put up an Interviewee Outreach Flyer (Please see the attached Appendix A) on the discussion board of each institution's student website to attract students' attention to this study. If they are interested in participating, they will have to provide answers to a few questions about their gender, discipline, family origin, and family annual income to me through email. I will then determine their eligibility for the study. Hopefully, before I visit the campuses, I will have a list of some suitable candidates who would like to participate. After I arrive at each institution, I shall post the 'Interviewee Outreach Flyer' with my contact information on a notice board located at the student activity center.

Regarding the sampling strategy, a few techniques will be employed in this qualitative study. First, I will use "confirming sampling" strategy (Creswell and Clark, 2007) to choose the participants for the
Interview. As the qualitative study will be conducted after the initial stage of quantitative data analysis, its main purpose is for confirming the preliminary findings, clarify the hypothesis, and elaborate answers to the major research questions. Secondly, the combined strategy of “homogeneous samples” and “maximum variation sampling” (Mertens, 1998) will be used to choose the samples. On the one hand, I am seeking to describe the experience of the subgroup of students with similar characteristics of social-economic status represented by family annual income. On the other hand, the research sites and individual interviewees will be chose based on the criterion of maximizing variation within the sample in terms of different institutional type, gender, disciplines and geographic origins with the hope that the results could indicate what is unique about each situation as well as what is common across these diverse settings. Thirdly, “snowballing sampling” (Mertens, 1998) will be adopted, as the interview will start with some voluntary students, and I will ask them to recommend their classmates or friends who would be eligible and willing to join this study.

Reference:


16. COMPENSATION

(a) Will participants receive compensation for participation?

Financial  Yes ☐  No ☐
In-kind  Yes ☐  No ☐
Other  Yes ☒  No ☐

(b) If Yes, please provide details.

Some incentives will be provided for students to participate in this study, e.g. souvenirs from University of Toronto, and providing information of Canadian universities to them if they are interested. Their motivations for joining this study could be various, for example, 1) they may need a channel to express or exchange their ideas and opinions of civil issues and their experience of civil participation, 2) they may be curious at the research itself conducted by a Chinese PHD student studying in a Canadian university, 3) they may seek information in certain areas that I may be able to provide, etc.
(c) Where there is a withdrawal clause in the research procedure, if participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

Let them keep the compensation.

SECTION C – DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

17. POSSIBLE RISKS

1. Indicate if the participants as individuals or as part of an identifiable group or community might experience any of the following risks by being part of this research project:

(a) Physical risks (including any bodily contact or administration of any substance)? Yes ☐ No ☑

(b) Psychological/emotional risks (feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, anxious or upset)? Yes ☐ No ☑

(c) Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation)? Yes ☐ No ☑

(d) Is there any deception involved? (See Debriefing, #21) Yes ☐ No ☑

2. If you answered Yes to any of the above, please explain the risks, and describe how they will be managed and/or minimized.

18. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

Discuss any potential direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project. Comment on the (potential) benefits to the scientific/scholarly community or society that would justify involvement of participants in this study.

This will provide a good opportunity for students to reflect on their experience in participating in civic activities; it may also provide incentives for students to get more involved in civil society.
Regarding the benefits to the scholarly community and society, I believe this study will contribute to the growing body of research on citizenship education provision in the higher education sector by exploring students' lived experiences. It will also have some implications for policy makers and educational practitioners concerned about enhancing citizenship education and building civil society.

SECTION D – THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

19. THE CONSENT PROCESS

Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain informed consent. Please include the experience of the team member with this participant population and/or training that this person will receive prior to recruitment. If there will be no written consent form, please explain (e.g. discipline, cultural appropriateness, etc.). Please note, it is the quality of the consent, not the format that is important. If the research involves extraction or collection of personal information from a data subject, please describe how consent from the individual or authorization from the custodian will be obtained.

For information about the required elements in the information letter and consent form, please refer to http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_best.html.

Where applicable, please attach a copy of the Information Letter/Consent Form, the content of any telephone script, letters of administrative consent or authorization and/or any other material which will be used in the informed consent process.

Through contacts established in connection with my supervisor's SSHRC funded project, I already contacted Directors of Students Affairs of 3 chosen universities where students will be interviewed, and already gained informal agreement from them for taking part in my project. I will contact them again by email after the approval of ethics review protocol and request them to sign the Letter of Consent for Institutional Participation (Please see the attached Appendix B) before the Interviewee Outreach Flyer is posted on a student site on the university's Internet. The researcher will also pay a personal visit on arrival at the campus, and before beginning the interview process.

Prior to participation in the interview, participants will be given a letter outlining their participation (Please see the attached Appendix C: Letter of Consent for an In-depth Interview). The letter will contain information that participants need to know in order to sign the consent form. The letter will contain the title of the project and my contact information and that of my supervisor. Participants will be informed that the project will depict Chinese university students' experiences of civic participation and their attitudes and perspectives on civil society. They will be told that the interview will take around one hour and will ask about their views and participation into citizenship education, civic activities and civil issues. They will be told that the session will be tape recorded and transcribed and they will sign for their specific approval of this point. They will be told their participation is completely voluntary and they will be free to withdraw at any time. Participants will be told that at no time will they be judged or evaluated and at no time will be at risk of harm and no value judgment will be placed on their responses. They will be informed that they may also refuse to answer any questions that they are not comfortable with. They will be informed that the information will be retained in a locked drawer of my office and kept confidential as their names will not be used in the study in reports, publications and presentations.
20. CONSENT BY AN AUTHORIZED PARTY

If the participants are children, or are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission/information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the alternate consent as well as the assent process for participants.

N/A

21. DEBRIEFING

(a) If deception will be used in the research study, please explain what information/feedback will be provided to participants after participation in the project.

Please provide a copy of the written debriefing form, if applicable.
Letter of Consent for an in-depth interview will have a check box that states: If you would like a summary of the results of the study please check here. It will be e-mailed to them after completion of the study.

(b) How will participants be informed of study results?

Letter of Consent for an in-depth interview will have a check box that states: If you would like a summary of the results of the study please check here. It will be e-mailed to them after completion of the study.

22. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

(a) Where applicable, please describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project. Outline the procedures which will be followed to allow them to exercise this right.

I will inform the participants before the interview that their participation is completely voluntary and they will be ensured that they are free to withdraw at any time, or that they can refuse to answer any questions in the interview and choose to terminate the interview at any time. Prior to their participation, the participants will be informed of their rights through the consent form, which I will review with them and they will keep for their records. When the interview starts, if they do not want to continue at any point, I will stop the interview. After the interview, I will leave my contact information with them, so that they can contact me at any time if they should wish to withdraw before my thesis is completed.

(b) Indicate what will be done with the participant's data and any consequences which withdrawal may have on the participant.

If the participants want to withdraw from the project at any point, I will allow them to do so. I will destroy all the relevant audio information, original transcripts of the interview, the consent form they have signed at once. I will not release their identity, I will keep it confidential.

(c) If participants will not have the right to withdraw from the project at all, or beyond a certain point, please explain.

When my thesis is handed in, the participants may not able to withdraw.
### SECTION E – CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

#### 23. CONFIDENTIALITY

(a) Will the data be treated as confidential? Yes ☒ No ☐

(b) Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants or informants, where applicable, or the confidentiality of data during the conduct of research and dissemination of results.

| 1. The participants’ identity will remain fully confidential. I will use a pseudonym, and will leave out any details that might identify them. Information on participants will only be retained by me and stored at a locked drawer at my office.  |
| 2. The data might be used for other reports, publications or public presentations, but the data will continue to be confidential in these publications as well. The participants will be informed of this fact in the Letter of Content. |

(c) Explain how written records, video/audio tapes and questionnaires will be secured, how long they will be retained, and provide details of their final disposal or storage.

The data will be stored in a locked drawer at the researcher’s office and will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the study. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the raw data, audiotapes, and transcripts.

(d) If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, please explain.

N/A

#### 24. PRIVACY REGULATIONS
For research involving extraction or collection of personal information, provincial, national and/or international laws may apply. My signature as Principal Investigator, in Section G of this protocol form, confirms that I understand and will comply with all relevant laws governing the collection and use of personal information in research.

SECTION F – CONTINUING REVIEW OF ONGOING RESEARCH

RISK MATRIX: REVIEW TYPE BY GROUP VULNERABILITY AND RESEARCH RISK – check one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Vulnerability</th>
<th>Research Risk</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the Instructions for Ethics Review Protocol Submission Form for detailed information about the Risk Matrix.

Briefly explain/justify the level of risk and group vulnerability reported above (max 100 words):

We are confident that the risk level is very low for these students who will share their perspectives and experiences with the researcher in the interview process, as the data is not sensitive, and the participants are highly educated students who can make rational decisions about participating. There is no more risk involved than in everyday interactions. It is highly unlikely that they would be individually known to university authorities, since they will be selected informally and randomly. Even if they should be known, it would be impossible to attribute particular comments or perspectives to individuals.

Review Type

Based on the level of risk, please submit the appropriate number of copies of the Protocol Submission Form for Review Type:

Risk level = 1: Expedited Review
Risk level = 2 or 3: Full Review
Information about individual REBs, including the number of copies required for each review type, can be found here: [www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_rebs.html](http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_rebs.html)

Please note that the final determination of Review Type and program of Continuing Review will be made by the University of Toronto REB and the Ethics Review Office.

**SECTION G – SIGNATURES**

All researchers and their respective Departmental Chair/Dean or designate must sign below:

As the Investigator on this project, my signature confirms that I will ensure that all procedures performed under the project will be conducted in accordance with all relevant University, provincial, national and international policies and regulations that govern research involving human participants. Any deviation from the project as originally approved will be submitted to the Research Ethics Board for approval prior to its implementation.

For student researchers, my signature confirms that I am a registered student in good standing with the University of Toronto. My project has been reviewed and approved by my advisory committee (where applicable). If my status as a student changes, I will inform the Ethics Review Office.

| Signature of Investigator: | Date: |

For Graduate Students the signature of the Faculty Supervisor is required. For Post-Doctoral Fellows and Visiting Professors or Researchers, the signature of the Faculty Sponsor is required.

As the Faculty Supervisor of this project, my signature confirms that I have reviewed and approve the scientific merit of the research project and this ethics protocol submission. I will provide the necessary supervision to the student researcher throughout the project, to ensure that all procedures performed under the research project will be conducted in accordance with relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human subjects. This includes ensuring that the level of risk inherent to the project is managed by the level of research experience that the student has, combined with the extent of oversight that will be provided by the Faculty Supervisor and/or On-site Supervisor.

As the Faculty Sponsor for this project, my signature confirms that I have reviewed and approve of the research project and will assume responsibility, as the University representative, for this research project. I will ensure that all procedures performed under the project will be conducted in accordance with all relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human participants.

| Signature of Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor: | Date: |
As the Departmental Chair/Dean, my signature confirms that I am aware of the proposed activity. My administrative unit will follow guidelines and procedures which ensure compliance with all relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human subjects. My signature also reflects the willingness of the department, faculty or division to administer the research funds, if there are any, in accordance with University, regulatory agency and sponsor agency policies.

Name of Departmental Chair/Dean (or designate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Departmental Chair/Dean: (or designate)</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

UT Ethics Review Office – Protocol Submission Form for Supervised and Sponsored Researchers
Version Date: February 1, 2007
Appendix D

Ethics Approval Letter

University of Toronto
Office of the Vice-President, Research
Office of Research Ethics

PROTOCOL REFERENCE #23698

January 8, 2009

Prof. Ruth Hayhoe
Dept. of Theory and Policy Studies, OISE
University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6

Ms. Yuxin Tu
1012- 33 Isabella Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 2P7

Dear Prof. Hayhoe and Ms. Tu:

Re: Your research protocol entitled "A Chinese Civil Society in the Making: Civic Participation and the Perceptions of University Students in an Era of Massification"

ETHICS APPROVAL

Original Approval Date: January 8, 2009
Expiry Date: January 7, 2010
Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that a member of the Social Sciences, Humanities & Education Research Ethics Board has granted approval to the above-named research study, for a period of one year, under the REB's expedited review process. Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report at least 30 days prior to the expiry date of your study.

The following consent documents received November 24, 2008 have been approved for use in this study: Interviewee Outreach Flyer, Letter of Consent for Institutional Participation, and Letter of Consent for In-depth Interview.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

If your research has funding attached, please contact the relevant Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely,

Dean Shappe, Ph.D.
Research Ethics Officer--Social Sciences and Humanities
Appendix E
Letter of Consent for Institutional Participation (English Version)

March, 2009

Dear __________

I would like to request your institution’s agreement to participate in my doctoral thesis project, “A Chinese Civil Society in the Making? Civic Participation and the Perceptions of University Students in an Era of Massification”. This project focuses on the interplay of the massification of higher education with the construction of civil society in China. It will explore Chinese university students’ experiences of civic participation and their attitudes and perspectives on civil society. The findings of the study will help policy-makers, university leaders, students and administrators to better understand citizenship education in Chinese universities. It may also be of interest to researchers in the field of higher education and civil society more generally.

The study will be carried out in three Chinese universities under the supervision of Prof Ruth Hayhoe, Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. The data is being collected for the purposes of a PhD thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles. The study is a mixed methods research project, which includes a quantitative study and follow-up interviews with university students. The quantitative study is based on a student survey dataset of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Project about China’s move to mass higher education led by Prof Ruth Hayhoe. The survey was carried out in May and June of 2007 and 2,321 copies of valid returned questionnaires were collected at 12 Chinese universities. Nine of them are public universities (Beijing University, East China Normal University, Xiamen University, Nanjing University, The University of Science and Technology of China, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Northwest Agricultural and Forestry University, Southwest University, and Yanbian University), and the remaining three are private universities (Huanghe University of Science and Technology, Blue Sky Vocational College, Xi’an International College). In the survey questionnaire, there were 39 closed questions and 3 open questions on students’ views of citizenship and civil society.

Building upon the findings of the quantitative study, the interviews I am going to conduct aim to further explore the understanding of civil society and civic participation among university students and to reveal the possible diversity and disparity of the views among them based on their genders, different family backgrounds, and disciplines. The interview questions are semi-structured and related to the findings of the quantitative data analysis. For the consistency of the study, the 3 universities selected for this qualitative study are among the previous 12 universities in the quantitative study.
With your institution’s consent, 8 to 12 third year undergraduate students will be selected for interviews based on their socio-economic status, institutional types, genders, disciplines, and family origins. Regarding the way to recruit student participants for the interview, I request your approval to post an ‘Interviewee Outreach Flyer’ on a notice board located at your student activity center. A copy of the flyer is attached for your reference. The interview will be semi-structured lasting approximately one hour and including about 8 questions. Students will be invited to explain their experiences of civic participation within their university and in the wider society and give their perspectives on civil society and citizenship education. For the purpose of data verification, the interviews will be audio recorded with participant’s consent. As the interview is completely voluntary, the participants will be free to withdraw at any point or refuse to answer any of the questions without penalty. The information gathered from the interviews will be kept in strict confidence and stored in a locked drawer at the researcher’s office. The identity of participants will remain confidential. Original data of the interviews will only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor and will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the thesis. There is no intention of evaluating individual institutions or students in this research. However, I will be glad to provide you with a summary of the findings of my research as soon as I am able to do so.

Should you have any questions or concerns about research ethics, you are welcome to contact the Research Ethic Board at the University of Toronto at the address below:

Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto
McMurrich Building, 3rd floor
12 Queen's Park Crescent West
Toronto, ON M5S 1S8
Tel: +001 416-946-3273
Fax: +001 416-946-5763

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely

Yuxin Tu  PhD Candidate,
Theory and Policy Studies in Education, OISE/UT

Supervisor:  Prof Ruth Hayhoe
Theory and Policy Studies in Education, OISE/UT
If your institution accepts the conditions above and is willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter in the space below and return it to me by airmail, or in person.

Please indicate if you agree that I could put on the ‘Interviewee Outreach Flyer’ on campus  
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Name of Institution  ___________________________________________

Name of Signatory Person  ________________________________________

Position  _________________________________________________________

Signature_________________________________________________________

Date_____________________________________________________________

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.
Appendix F

Letter of Consent for Institutional Participation (Chinese Version)

院校同意书

尊敬的__________

恳请贵校同意我来此进行博士论文课题的调研，课题题目是：“成形之中的中国公民社会？高等教育大众化时代大学生的公民参与和感受”。本课题主要关注中国高等教育的发展和公民社会的建设之间的相互影响，探究在中国高等教育迈向大众化时期大学生团体在公民事务参与的经验，以及他们对公民社会的意识，态度和想法。研究的成果对于中国大学公民教育的政策制定者，院校领导，学生和管理者都有着积极重要的意义。同时对于研究高等教育和公民社会的研究者也有一定启示作用。

本课题在多伦多大学安大略教育研究院许美德教授的指导下将在中国三所高等院校开展。课题采用混合式的调查方法，包括定量研究和后续的面对大学生的采访。定量研究是基于多伦多大学安大略教育研究院许美德教授带领的由加拿大社会科学和人文学科研究委员会赞助的中国迈向大众化高等教育课题的学生问卷数据库。此项调查开展于2007年5月至6月，在12所中国大学收集了2321份有效学生问卷。12所大学中，9所为公立大学（北京大学，华东师范大学，厦门大学，南京大学，中国科技大学，华中科技大学，西北农林大学，西南大学和延边大学），3所为私立大学（黄河科技大学，蓝天学院，西安国际学院）。在这份学生调查问卷里，有39个选择题和3项开放式问答题是有关学生对于公民教育和公民社会的看法和理解的。

基于已有的定量研究，本人对学生进行采访的目的是进一步探究大学生群体对于公民社会的理解和公民事务的参与经验，同时详细阐述由于学生性别，家庭背景和所学专业的不同而可能存在存在的意识的多样性和差异性。采访为半开放式，采访问题源自定量研究的发现。为保持课题调查方法的一致性，定性研究的对象为已经参与定量研究12所高校中的3所大学的三年级学生。

在征得贵校的同意后，我将会对贵校8至12位来自三个不同主要学科领域的大三学生进行个人采访。通过在学生活动中心公告栏张贴海报的方式，我将选择一些不同性别，不同家庭背景和专业的学生进行采访（海报已随信附上）。采访过程将持续一个小时左右，包含大约8个问题，将请他们描述他们在大学和社会大环境下参与公民事务的经验，以及他们对于公民教育和公民社会建设的意见和看法。为了确保数据的准确性，采访会在得到被采访者同意的基础上录音。采访完全基于自愿，采访者在任何时候都可以退出，或者拒绝回答任何问题。采访中收集到的信息都将保密，同时存放在安全之处。研究参与者的身份将被严格保密。只有我本人才能接触到采访数据，该数据在我论文答辩通过后会被完全销毁。本项调研没有任何目的对于贵校和学生进行评价。但是，如果您需要的话，在可以做到的时候，我很乐意向您提供我博士论文的概要。
如果您对于学术道德规范方面有任何的问题和关心，您可以和多伦多大学的研究道德规范办公室联系，联系方式为:

Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto
McMurrich Building, 3rd floor
12 Queen's Park Crescent West
Toronto, ON M5S 1S8
Tel: 416-946-3273
Fax: 416-946-5763

非常感谢您的同意和参与！

涂玉欣
多伦多大学安大略教育研究院 理论与政策研究系 博士候选人
导师：许美德教授(Prof Ruth Hayhoe)
多伦多大学安大略教育研究院 理论与政策研究系

如果贵校愿意接受以上条件并且愿意参与本项研究，请签署本文件并且将它通过航空信邮寄或者面交于本人。

请表明是否允许本人在校园张贴募集受访学生的海报 □ 是 □ 否

院校名称 Name of Institution_____________________________________________
签名人姓名 Name of Signatory Person_____________________________________
签名人职务 Position_____________________________________________________
签名 Signature____________________________________________________________
日期 Date______________________________________________________________
Appendix G

Interviewee Outreach Flyer (English Version)

Dear Students at X University,

As a doctoral candidate from OISE/University of Toronto, I would like to invite you to participate in my research for my thesis entitled “A Chinese Civil Society in the Making? Civic Participation and the Perceptions of University Students in an Era of Massification”. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Professor Ruth Hayhoe, Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. This project focuses on the interplay of the development of Chinese higher education and the construction of civil society in China. It will explore students’ experiences of civic participation and their views on civil society in China’s move to mass higher education.

I plan to do interviews with some third year undergraduates at your university. The interview will last about an hour with semi-structured questions such as your personal experiences of civic participation and your views on civil society in China. The interviews will be audio recorded if you agree to this.

As the interview is completely voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any point or refuse to answer any questions without any penalty. The information gathered from you will be kept in strict confidence and stored at in a locked drawer in my office. Your name will not be revealed to anyone and your participation will remain fully confidential. For compensation of your time, a souvenir from Canada will be offered after the interview is finished.

Your contribution to this project will be highly appreciated. If you are willing to participate in my research, please feel free to contact me at my cell phone (cell number) or by email (xxxx.xx@utoronto.ca.)

Sincerely,

Yuxin Tu

PhD Student, OISE/University of Toronto
各位同学:

我是一位多伦多大学安大略教育研究院的一名博士生，想邀请您参加我博士论文的调研，主题是“成形之中的中国公民社会？高等教育大众化时代大学生的公民参与和感受”。这个课题主要关注中国高等教育的发展和公民社会的建设之间的相互影响，探究在中国高等教育迈向大众化时期大学生在公民事务中参与的经验，以及他们对公民社会的观点和见解。

我计划在您的学校对一些三年级的本科生进行访谈。这些访谈将是半开放式的，大约持续一个小时。问题主要围绕关于您个人参与公民活动的经验和对公民社会的看法。在征得您同意的基础上，访问将会被录音。

访问完全基于自愿。在访谈的任何时候您都可以选择退出，或者不回答任何问题。有关你的个人信息会完全保密并存放在安全之处。你的名字不会向任何人泄露，你对于本次访问的参与也会完全保密。

我非常感激您对本课题的贡献。如果您有参与意向，请通过下列方式与本人取得联系：手机号码 (xxxxxxxxxxx); 电子邮件: xxxx.xx@utoronto.ca.

加拿大多伦多大学博士生:
涂玉欣
Appendix I

Letter of Consent for In-depth Interview

May, 2009

To the participants in this study,

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in a qualitative study which forms part of my doctoral thesis project, “A Chinese Civil Society in the Making? Civic Participation and the Perceptions of University Students in an Era of Massification”. This project focuses on the interplay of the development of Chinese higher education and the construction of civil society in China. It will explore Chinese university students’ experiences of civic participation and their attitudes and perspectives on civil society. Around 30 student participants in this study will be selected based on their socio-economic status, institutional types, genders, disciplines, and family origins.

The study will be carried out in three Chinese universities under the supervision of Professor Ruth Hayhoe, Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. The data is being collected for the purposes of a PhD thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles.

The face-to-face interview will last for one hour approximately. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your views and experiences of civic participations and other civic issues. As the interview proceeds, I may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and the reasons you believe the things you do. This might be a good opportunity for you to reflect on your experience of participating in civic activities. This study will contribute to the growing body of research on citizenship education provision in the higher education sector and have some policy implications about enhancing citizenship education and building civil society.

It is the intention that each interview will be audiotaped with your permission and later transcribed to paper; you have the choice of declining to have the interview taped. Your identity will remain fully confidential. I will use a pseudonym in any references to your ideas, and will leave out any details that might identify you. After the interview is transcribed, your transcript will be sent to you to read by e-mail in order for you to add any further information or to correct any misinterpretations that could result. I would greatly appreciate your assistance if you could send back your comments by email within another week. Furthermore, when you review my transcription of your interview conversation, you can remove any points you do not wish to be made public. The information obtained in the interview will be kept in strict confidence and stored at a locked drawer in my office, and will only be accessible to the researcher and the supervisor. All raw data (i.e. transcripts, field notes) will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.
You may at any time refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process. You may request that any information, whether in written form or audiotape, be eliminated from the project. At no time will judgments be placed nor will any evaluation be made upon you. No value judgments will be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the research and your involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings of the study.

Should you have any questions or concerns about research ethics, you are welcome to contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto at the address below:

Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto
McMurrich Building, 3rd floor
12 Queen's Park Crescent West
Toronto, ON M5S 1S8
Tel: +001 416-946-3273
Fax: +001 416-946-5763

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Yuxin Tu Dr. Ruth Hayhoe
PhD Candidate, Professor
OISE/University of Toronto OISE/University of Toronto

By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: _____________________________
School: _____________________________
Signed: _____________________________
Date: ______________________________

Please indicate if you would like a summary of the findings of the study upon completion:

□ YES □ NO

Please indicate if you agree to have your interview audiotaped:

□ YES □ NO

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.
Appendix J

Ordinal Multivariate Regression Models for Three Indicators in the Domain of National Identity (Civic Perceptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Q34: Everybody should be patriotic and loyal to her/his country.</th>
<th>Q35: Everybody should know about the history of her/his country.</th>
<th>Q36: I love China as my motherland.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>-5.420***</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>-6.961***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>-3.943***</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>-4.932***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>-2.153***</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>-3.303***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>-0.350</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>-1.116***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES (Upper Strata as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.125</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>-0.264**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (Humanity as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Science</td>
<td>-0.347**</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>-0.607***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>-0.236*</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>-0.445***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Type (Private University as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Elite</td>
<td>-0.508***</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>-0.298*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Less-Elite</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>χ², df</td>
<td>55.201***, df=7</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.800***, df=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Appendix K

Ordinal Multivariate Regression Models for Two Indicators in the Domain of Civic Knowledge (Civic Perceptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Q31. As a university student, I have a clear understanding of the concept of civil society</th>
<th>Q32. As a Chinese citizen, I understand my rights and responsibilities inscribed in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>-4.572***</td>
<td>0.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>-2.053***</td>
<td>0.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>-0.493*</td>
<td>0.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>1.902***</td>
<td>0.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES (Upper Strata as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>0.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-0.088</td>
<td>0.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.239**</td>
<td>0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (Humanity as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Science</td>
<td>-0.232*</td>
<td>0.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>0.155</td>
<td>0.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Type (Private University as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Elite</td>
<td>-0.213</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Less-Elite</td>
<td>-0.138</td>
<td>0.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$, df</td>
<td>24.563**, df=7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
### Appendix L

**Ordinal Multivariate Regression Models for Four Indicators in the Domain of Social Justice (Civic Perceptions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Q38. I care about the gap between the rich and the poor.</th>
<th>Q40. Women should run for public office and take part in the government just as men do</th>
<th>Q41. All ethnic groups in China should have equal opportunities for education and jobs</th>
<th>Q42. The children of migrant workers should have the same opportunities of education as children in cities have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>-5.287***</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>-4.424***</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>-3.409***</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>-3.206***</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>-1.587***</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>-1.548***</td>
<td>0.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>0.450</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>0.243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SES (Upper Strata as reference group)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>0.383</td>
<td>0.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.422***</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Discipline (Humanity as reference group)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature Science</td>
<td>-0.394***</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>-0.028</td>
<td>0.110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institutional Type (Private University as reference group)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Elite</td>
<td>-0.131</td>
<td>0.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Less-Elite</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>0.141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>χ², df</td>
<td>46.573***, df=7</td>
<td>163.940***, df=7</td>
<td>37.302***, df=7</td>
<td>47.214***, df=7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Appendix M

Ordinal Multivariate Regression Model for the Indicator in the Domain of Social Trust (Civic Perceptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Q47. In our society, people generally trust each other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>-2.835***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>-0.824***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>0.907***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>2.962***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES (Upper Strata as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.180*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (Humanity as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Science</td>
<td>0.210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>0.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Type (Private University as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Elite</td>
<td>-0.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Less-Elite</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$, df</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Appendix N

Ordinal Multivariate Regression Model for the Indicator in the Domain of Civic Commitment (Civic Perceptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Q43. As a university student, I have an obligation to actively participate in activities that benefit the community and society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>-5.408***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>-3.646***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>-1.764***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES (Upper Strata as reference group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
### Appendix O

#### Ordinal Multivariate Regression Models for Three Indicators in Civic Participation

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<th>Independent Variable</th>
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*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001